Current Affairs Notes for Interview Prep

Source: The Hindu, Monday 19 October 2026 | Political news left out | Each item: what happened, then impact on citizens

How to use: For each topic, learn the fact in one line, then practise the 'so what' for citizens, business and the economy. Interviewers usually test whether you can link an event to a cause, an impact and a view, and then offer a balanced opinion.

Economy, Business and Personal Finance

Ethanol made from sugar barred for 2026-27

What: Oil companies' tender for 11 billion litres (for 20% ethanol-in-petrol, E20) excludes ethanol from cane juice, sugar syrup and B-heavy molasses. Only maize, broken rice, FCI surplus rice and C-heavy molasses are allowed. The maize price premium is cut (Rs 5.79 to Rs 2.79 per litre). Reason: poor rain in Maharashtra and Karnataka has hurt sugar output.

Impact on citizens: Protects sugar availability and prices at home during the festival season. Sugar mills lose an income stream, maize/rice distilleries gain demand, and farmers may shift towards grain. Food-versus-fuel is the trade-off: fuel security and cleaner petrol against food prices.

Jagdish Farshan raises first outside funding

What: The Vadodara snack brand (29 outlets, about 500 products, 38-year-old family business) raised a Series A from Sharp Ventures (Mariwala family office). It targets Rs 170-180 crore revenue against Rs 112 crore last year and plans a bigger plant plus quick-commerce expansion.

Impact on citizens: Shows how regional legacy brands are professionalising and going national. Creates local jobs and gives consumers wider access. Also shows rising input costs (milk, sugar, oil) squeezing the sector.

Influencer and talent marketing (Rs 3,700 crore)

What: About 70% of Indian brands use influencers. Agencies now represent niche artists (musicians, photographers), not just film and cricket stars.

Impact on citizens: More income routes for creators; more ads shaped by social media. Consumers face blurred lines between ads and opinion, which raises the need for disclosure rules.

Logistics gets 'grey-collar' workers

What: The sector employs about 22 million people, earns over $228 billion, and could pass $350 billion by 2030 (4.7 million more workers needed). Attrition is high. Mobile-first skilling and apprenticeships are urged.

Impact on citizens: Better-paid, skilled jobs for youth and faster delivery for consumers. Without career paths, attrition and worker precarity continue.

'Cashless' health insurance is not 'costless'

What: Cashless only means the insurer pays the hospital for the admissible part. Exclusions, waiting periods, co-pay, room-rent caps and sums above the insured amount are billed to the patient.

Impact on citizens: Families should read policy terms, check room-rent limits and keep a super top-up. India's out-of-pocket health spending remains high, so insurance literacy directly protects household savings.

Cheque bounce rules (Section 138, NI Act)

What: Bounced cheque can mean up to 2 years in jail or a fine up to twice the amount. Process: demand notice within 30 days, 15 days to pay, then complaint within a month. Civil recovery is also possible within 3 years.

Impact on citizens: Gives small traders and individuals a quick legal remedy and builds trust in credit. Careless issuers risk criminal cases.

Finance for persons with disabilities

What: Disability raises costs (care, home changes) and healthcare inflation is 11-13% against 5-6% general inflation. Suggestions: equity mutual funds, term cover, Sec 80U/80DD deductions, Special Needs Trusts, assistive tech.

Impact on citizens: Highlights a gap in the social safety net and the importance of long-term planning for about 2.7 crore Indians with disabilities.

Deposit and loan rates (14 Oct snapshot)

What: Fixed deposit rates: small finance banks up to about 8.25%, large banks 6.5-7.25%. Home loans: PSU banks from about 7.2-7.5%, housing finance companies 7.15-9.25%.

Impact on citizens: Savers can earn more at small finance banks but with higher risk (DICGC cover is Rs 5 lakh per depositor per bank). Borrowers should compare rates before choosing a lender.

Interview angle: be ready to discuss food-versus-fuel trade-offs, E20 and energy security, inflation (food and healthcare), regional brands scaling up, and financial literacy as a policy tool.

Policy, Law and Governance

Supreme Court: no mid-course fee hikes

What: Students in professional courses must know the total fee at admission. Fee changes are allowed only for unforeseeable or statutory reasons. The court noted professional courses cost about 711% more than general courses.

Impact on citizens: Protects middle-class families and loan-takers from surprise costs. Colleges must plan fees better, which may affect quality and finances of private institutions if not managed.

FSSAI: keep perishables cold

What: Food businesses must transport khoa, paneer, meat and fish under controlled temperature, keep records and follow hygiene rules. States must inspect strictly.

Impact on citizens: Fewer food-poisoning cases in festival season. Small dairies and sweet shops face extra cost for cold chain; consumers may see slight price rises.

Cancer drug prices cut by up to 70%

What: 137 cancer drugs come under tighter price control, with trade margins capped at 30% of MRP.

Impact on citizens: Lower treatment costs for patients and lower out-of-pocket spending. Risk: availability problems if manufacturers find margins too thin.

Delhi plans cap of 2.5 lakh e-rickshaws

What: A draft scheme proposes registration and an upper limit to reduce congestion and improve safety.

Impact on citizens: Better roads and safety, but a cap may limit livelihoods for drivers and last-mile transport for commuters.

Karnataka: app-based night attendance for doctors; RTI portal

What: Doctors at taluk hospitals and PHCs must log presence after 9 p.m. on the 'Kartavya' app from 1 Nov. Contract staff salaries link to app attendance from Jan 2027. RTI applications must be registered online within 2 days, or the applicant is compensated.

Impact on citizens: Better availability of doctors in rural areas and faster RTI handling. Concern: network and technology access for field staff.

CISF reorganised by sector (from 1 Nov)

What: The force is restructured into sectors such as ports, coal, steel, power, petroleum and government buildings. It is now the nodal agency for aerial security of critical infrastructure and a Recognised Security Organisation for ports.

Impact on citizens: Better protection for airports, ports and plants that keep the economy running; stronger trade and supply-chain security.

Keralam revokes bakery's hortiwine licence

What: A rule allowing bakeries and malls to sell 15% alcohol hortiwine led to a row over underage drinking.

Impact on citizens: Shows tension between farm-based liquor (support for farmers) and public health; consumers see tighter control.

Interview angle: price regulation versus supply, ease of doing business versus consumer protection, technology for accountability (attendance apps, RTI portals), and cold-chain infrastructure.

Agriculture and Environment

Cauvery delta farmers depend on monsoon

What: Poor Southwest monsoon and low Karnataka inflows left Mettur Dam low. Water was released late (1 Sept, not 12 June) and discharge fell from 15,000 to 8,000 cusecs. Farmers sowed samba/thaladi on 18 lakh acres hoping for the Northeast monsoon. They want drought relief and crop insurance (PMFBY) payouts.
Impact on citizens: Risk of lower rice output and farmer debt. Heavy rain could also submerge young crops. Rice and food prices may be affected. Calls for drought-tolerant and submergence-tolerant varieties.

Telangana drought; asks Centre for full MSP buying

What: 315 of 621 mandals are drought-hit. The state wants wage work under the rural jobs scheme, MSP purchase of all maize and jowar (lifting the 25% cap), and fertiliser price relief. El Nino is cited.
Impact on citizens: Rural incomes and food prices are exposed to climate shocks. Strengthens the case for crop diversification and better procurement.

Sugarcane farmers' agitation (Karnataka)

What: Farmers are marching for better cane prices (State Advised Price of Rs 1,000 per tonne demanded) while crops dry in the field. A Delhi rally is planned for 23 Oct.
Impact on citizens: Cane payment delays hurt rural cash flow; higher cane prices can raise sugar prices for consumers.

India and carbon markets (OCCCM)

What: India's Carbon Credit Trading Scheme went live in July with about 500 companies. A column argues India should join the Open Coalition on Compliance Carbon Markets (EU, China, Brazil lead) to shape rules and prepare for carbon border taxes like the EU's CBAM.
Impact on citizens: Exporters (steel, aluminium, cement) face carbon-tax risk in Europe. Joining could ease compliance, though industrial costs may rise.

Satellite radio leakage hurts astronomy

What: Starlink, OneWeb and Guowang satellites emit unwanted radio signals that interfere with telescopes (some 100 billion times brighter than cosmic sources).
Impact on citizens: Mostly long-term science impact; also relevant to India's space and satellite-internet regulation.

Interview angle: climate risk and food security, MSP and procurement reform, crop insurance effectiveness, carbon pricing and trade (CBAM), and El Nino impact on inflation.

Health, Education and Society

Children and the internet (ICSSR study)

What: About 97.6% of children access the internet at home, mostly on smartphones, for about 4.5 hours a day. Anxiety, sleep problems and mood changes are the top effects. About 47% talked to strangers online. Boys get less-controlled access, girls less digital literacy.
Impact on citizens: Parents and schools need digital-literacy and screen-time rules. An editorial adds that AI use can weaken independent thinking and urges oral exams and supervised writing.

RelB protein and inflammatory bowel disease

What: National Institute of Immunology (Delhi) found RelB helps create gut immune cells but also suppresses calming cells elsewhere. Drugs targeting it need care; so far only mice studies.
Impact on citizens: A step towards better IBD treatment. Shows Indian research capability, but human benefit is years away.

IIT-Bombay student suicide protest

What: Police detained the parents and protesters, and removed a month-long protest site demanding action against a professor named in the FIR.
Impact on citizens: Raises concern about student mental health and accountability in elite institutions. (Helpline: Tele-MANAS 14416.)

Tamasha dancers of Maharashtra

What: Kolhati women are often sole breadwinners in a folk-art tradition tied to exploitation. At least 10,000 children are out of school. Residential schools and hostels run by activists try to break the cycle.
Impact on citizens: Shows how culture, poverty and gender inequality overlap; points to the need for schooling, documentation and caste-certificate support for nomadic tribes.

Female workforce participation (PLFS)

What: Female labour participation rose from 33% to 45.9% in rural and 23.3% to 27.7% in urban areas since 2019-20, with the North-East (Arunachal, Assam, Manipur, Tripura) leading. Delhi and Lakshadweep fell.
Impact on citizens: Rising women's employment boosts household income and GDP potential, but urban gains are slower and uneven across states.

Pattanam (Keralam) archaeology

What: An ancient trading site linked to Muziris shows Indian Ocean trade links with Rome and China, but research stalled after 2016. A global research centre is proposed.
Impact on citizens: Heritage tourism and research jobs; strengthens India's soft power and maritime history narrative.

Interview angle: demographic dividend and women's labour force participation, mental health in education, screen addiction and AI in learning, heritage as a development tool.

Safety, Disasters and Infrastructure

Kolkata Durga Puja stampede (19 dead)

What: Rain drove crowds into a pandal; a confusing 'structure may collapse' announcement caused panic. Seven were arrested; a judge-led SIT is planned; possible access limits at pandals. Rs 25 lakh compensation per victim.
Impact on citizens: Reminder that mass-gathering safety needs a trained announcer, marked exits, crowd limits, rain plans and drills. Citizens may see tighter rules at festivals.

Gwalior temple truck crash (15 dead)

What: A paddy-laden truck rolled down a slope and hit devotees at 1:30 a.m.; the driver says brakes failed. Barricades did not stop the truck.
Impact on citizens: Highlights heavy-vehicle regulation, vehicle fitness checks, GPS routing near religious sites and festival traffic management.

Road and transport accidents (Beed, Bengaluru, Sabarimala)

What: A car swerved to avoid potholes and hit a bus in Beed (5 dead); a chemical truck burned on Bengaluru's NICE Road; Pampa pilgrims stranded without buses.
Impact on citizens: Poor road quality, hazardous-goods transport and festival transport planning affect daily safety and travel.

Ganga boat accident (Bihar)

What: 13 children drowned when an overloaded, damaged boat capsized at night. Enforcement follows only after accidents; river crossings lack alternatives.
Impact on citizens: Safe transport for remote villages remains a basic public service gap.

Chennai heavy rain

What: Parts of Chennai got over 20 cm of rain as the Northeast monsoon began; waterlogging cleared by Sunday.
Impact on citizens: Urban flooding and drainage preparedness remain a yearly issue for coastal cities.

Crime and security headlines

What: Actor Tiger Shroff's car was fired at in Mumbai (gang claimed responsibility); a Srinagar-bound bus was stoned in Karnal after a parking row; a Bengal man was held in Karnataka over alleged LeT links; a Kuki group announced a 4-day highway shutdown in Manipur.
Impact on citizens: Law and order, gang crime, inter-state harmony and the need for background verification of workers. Manipur shutdown can disrupt supplies to the state.

Interview angle: crowd management as an operations problem (risk planning, communication, drills), road safety and enforcement, and disaster preparedness. A good case-style answer uses 'prevention, response, accountability'.

International Affairs

US: Vance on H-1B 'indentured servants'

What: VP J.D. Vance admitted his words were 'imperfect' and said he meant the visa system, not workers. Indians hold over 70% of approved H-1B petitions. India had called the phrase offensive.

Impact on citizens: Directly relevant to Indian IT professionals and families, and to remittances. Visa tightening can shift jobs offshore to India (GCCs) or reduce opportunities abroad.

Russia-Ukraine: 1,000+ drones hit St. Petersburg; US weighs sanctions

What: Ukraine attacked Russian oil sites; Zelenskyy says intelligence sharing with the US has resumed; the US has up to 60 days to decide on Russia sanctions.

Impact on citizens: Oil and fertiliser prices and the rupee depend on this. Sanctions affect Indian purchases of discounted Russian crude.

Iran, Yemen and Israel

What: Iran's new defence minister warned the US of 'enormous damage'. A strike in Saada, Yemen killed 9. Israel votes on 27 Oct; Trump backs Netanyahu.

Impact on citizens: West Asia conflict risks oil prices, shipping (Red Sea) costs, and safety of about 90 lakh Indians working in the Gulf. India also advised citizens in Saudi Arabia to follow safety directives.

France riots over cost of living

What: Over 1,800 arrested, 500+ officers hurt, Limoges city hall burned. Inflation linked in part to the US-Iran war.

Impact on citizens: Shows global inflation fallout; Indian exporters and tourists to Europe may face disruption.

Taiwan strait, Pakistan airspace, Ebola

What: Taiwan drove away 16 Chinese vessels. Pakistan extended its airspace ban on Indian aircraft to 24 Nov. Ebola in Congo: 9,415 cases and 4,536 deaths.

Impact on citizens: Taiwan tensions threaten chip supply chains. The Pakistan ban lengthens some flights and raises fares. Ebola mainly needs travel-health vigilance.

Greenland: forced IUD scandal

What: Denmark apologised for fitting over 4,000 Inuit women and girls with IUDs without consent; compensation is 3,00,000 Danish kroner (about $47,000) each. UN experts want accountability; Greenland plans a reconciliation commission.

Impact on citizens: A case study on colonial legacy, informed consent and reproductive rights, relevant to India's own debates on health ethics.

Russian satellite shadowing a US radar satellite

What: Cosmos-2612 manoeuvred close to ICEYE-X36, which supplies images to Ukraine. No international rule fixes minimum distance.

Impact on citizens: Space is becoming a war domain; Indian satellite-based services (navigation, communications) need protection.

Interview angle: how global conflicts feed into oil, inflation, the rupee and jobs; India's multi-alignment; the importance of the Indian diaspora (H-1B, Gulf).

Sports (Quick Notes)

India's cricket calendar overload

What: India played 21 matches in 114 days across 5+ countries; the 5 West Indies T20Is were squeezed into 12 nights, and the New Zealand tour (5 T20Is, 5 ODIs, 2 Tests) starts soon. Writer argues fatigue and weak bowling at 220+ totals are linked to scheduling.

Impact on citizens: Fans get more cricket; players risk burnout. A useful case on workload management and revenue-versus-welfare trade-offs.

Other results

What: Chacarra won the DP World India Championship (Delhi); India's women beat Zimbabwe 2-0 (Shafali 55, Smriti 47*); Matata set a Delhi Half Marathon record (58:52); Mighty Marathas won the Archery Premier League; Fokina won the Shanghai Masters. LIV Golf may shut if PIF withdraws funding.

Impact on citizens: India is hosting more global events and leagues, boosting sports tourism and franchise sports business. Women's cricket is getting more visibility.

Five Themes to Quote in an Interview

- **Inflation and cost of living:** poor monsoon, ethanol diversion, sugar and rice prices, healthcare costs and the France protests all point to price pressure.
- **Energy and climate:** E20 blending, carbon markets, CBAM exposure, and oil risk from West Asia and Russia.
- **Public safety and state capacity:** stampede, truck crash, boat and road accidents show gaps in planning, enforcement and accountability.
- **Jobs, skills and diaspora:** grey-collar logistics jobs, women's workforce growth and H-1B uncertainty.
- **Technology with guardrails:** attendance and RTI apps, AI in education, and children's screen time need rules and evidence.

Figures are taken from the newspaper's reports of 19 Oct 2026. Verify exact numbers before quoting them in an interview.