GENERAL STUDIES II

UPSC Current Affairs 16 October 2026: Food Security, India’s UNSC Bid & Prelims Notes

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Explore UPSC Current Affairs for 16 October 2026 with concise, exam-oriented notes on India’s food and nutrition security, the 2028–29 UN Security Council bid, Ayurveda research, Ramsar sites, the Kigali Amendment, OCI and Panama mapping. Includes GS paper connections, Prelims revision points and a Mains practice question.

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Daily UPSC Exam PreparationUPSC Current Affairs – 16 October 2026

An exam-focused guide to food and nutrition security, India's United Nations Security Council campaign, environmental developments, governance and important Prelims concepts.

16 October 2026 | UPSC Prelims & Mains | Civil Service Gurukul

Current affairs become valuable for civil services preparation when students connect daily developments with constitutional principles, government policies, economic challenges and long-term public policy. This edition of **UPSC Current Affairs 16 October 2026** covers major issues relevant to General Studies Papers II and III, along with factual topics for Prelims revision.

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1. World Food Day 2026: From Food Security to Nutritional Security

Relevant syllabus: GS Paper II – Health and social-sector policies; GS Paper III – Agriculture, food security and inclusive development.

World Food Day is observed every year on 16 October to mark the establishment of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in 1945. It draws attention to hunger, malnutrition, sustainable agriculture and the need for accessible, healthy diets.

Understanding food security

Food security means that people have reliable physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs. It involves more than the availability of food grains: affordability, nutritional quality, stability of supply and effective distribution are equally important.

Availability

Ensuring sufficient food production, imports where necessary and adequate buffer stocks.

Accessibility

Making food physically accessible and affordable to vulnerable households.

Utilisation

Supporting nutrition, safe drinking water, sanitation, healthcare and balanced diets.

Stability

Protecting food access against price shocks, extreme weather and supply disruptions.

Evolution of India's food distribution system

1. **Green Revolution:** Improved wheat and rice production through high-yielding varieties, irrigation, fertilisers and supportive agricultural policies.
2. **Targeted Public Distribution System:** Strengthened the targeting of subsidised food grains to eligible households.
3. **National Food Security Act, 2013:** Established statutory food-grain entitlements for eligible beneficiaries.
4. **Digital reforms:** Digitised ration cards, electronic point-of-sale systems and portability initiatives have sought to improve transparency and access.

Prelims fact: Under the National Food Security Act, eligible priority households are generally entitled to 5 kg of food grains per person per month, while Antyodaya Anna Yojana households are entitled to 35 kg per household per month, subject to applicable provisions.

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Important government initiatives

1. **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana:** Supports eligible beneficiaries with free food grains under the applicable scheme provisions.
2. **One Nation One Ration Card:** Enables eligible beneficiaries to access ration entitlements across participating locations, supporting migrant workers and mobile families.
3. **Millet promotion:** Encourages climate-resilient, nutrient-rich millets, commonly referred to as Shree Anna.
4. **Digital Public Distribution System:** Uses technology to improve records, portability and monitoring of food-grain delivery.

Why food security must evolve into nutritional security

A household may receive adequate calories yet continue to experience deficiencies in iron, protein, vitamins and other essential nutrients. This is often described as hidden hunger. Food policy must therefore address the quality and diversity of diets alongside the quantity of food supplied.

1. **Micronutrient deficiencies:** Poor dietary diversity can contribute to anaemia and other nutritional problems.
2. **Climate vulnerability:** Heatwaves, erratic rainfall and extreme weather threaten farm productivity and food prices.
3. **Storage and logistics:** Weak cold chains and inadequate processing facilities contribute to post-harvest losses.
4. **Unsustainable cropping patterns:** Excessive dependence on water-intensive crops can worsen groundwater depletion.
5. **Unequal access:** Poverty, poor sanitation, inadequate healthcare and limited nutrition awareness can prevent people from benefiting fully from food assistance.

Way forward

1. Diversify food assistance where feasible by improving access to pulses, millets and other nutritious foods.
2. Strengthen maternal and child nutrition, school meals and community-level nutrition services.
3. Invest in climate-resilient farming, micro-irrigation, crop diversification and weather advisories.
4. Improve storage, food processing, cold-chain infrastructure and market access for farmers.
5. Expand transparent digital delivery while ensuring grievance redressal and access for people facing authentication difficulties.
6. Promote nutrition awareness, safe water, sanitation and preventive healthcare.

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Conclusion: India's food policy must move beyond the narrow goal of distributing calories. A sustainable approach combines reliable food access with dietary diversity, public health, resilient agriculture and accountable delivery systems.

2. India's Bid for a Non-Permanent UN Security Council Seat, 2028–29

Relevant syllabus: GS Paper II – International relations, global institutions and India's role in world affairs.

India's campaign for a non-permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council for the 2028–29 term highlights its ambition to contribute to international peace and security and to strengthen the voice of developing countries in global decision-making.

How the Security Council works

1. The UN Security Council has 15 members: five permanent members and ten non-permanent members.
2. Non-permanent members are elected by the UN General Assembly for two-year terms.
3. Seats are allocated across regional groups to reflect geographical representation.
4. Election requires a two-thirds majority of members present and voting, under the applicable UN rules.
5. Permanent members hold veto power on substantive decisions, a central feature of the current institutional structure.

Why a seat matters to India

1. **Global South representation:** India can advocate concerns involving development finance, debt sustainability, climate action and equitable global governance.
2. **Counter-terrorism:** Participation offers a platform to advance international cooperation against terrorism.
3. **Multilateral reform:** India's participation can support wider discussions on Security Council reform and representation.
4. **Peace and security:** Membership provides an opportunity to contribute directly to debates on international conflicts and peacekeeping.

Challenges and strategic choices

Winning a seat depends on diplomatic outreach, regional coordination and support from a broad coalition of UN members. Competing regional candidates may create difficult choices, especially when they are important partners in India's wider foreign-policy relationships.

1. Building support across regions and political groupings.

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2. Balancing national ambitions with relationships with neighbouring and regional partners.
3. Engaging smaller states and addressing concerns about fair geographical representation.
4. Explaining how India's membership would contribute to peace, development and multilateral cooperation.

India's longer-term objective of Security Council reform is distinct from the immediate task of securing a non-permanent seat. The latter provides temporary membership; it does not confer permanent status or veto power.

Mains insight: A strong answer should distinguish between improving representation through elected membership and restructuring the Council's permanent membership. Discuss both diplomatic opportunities and institutional limitations.

Conclusion: India's diplomatic strategy must combine broad coalition-building with constructive engagement and a credible agenda for reforming multilateral institutions.

3. CCRAS SPARK 5.0 and Ayurshodh 2026

Relevant syllabus: GS Paper II – Health and government initiatives; GS Paper III – Research, innovation and science and technology.

The Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS), under the Ministry of AYUSH, supports research in Ayurveda. Student research and recognition initiatives can help build scientific skills, encourage original work and strengthen the evidence base for traditional medicine.

Key concepts

1. **SPARK:** The Studentship Program for Ayurveda Research Ken is designed to encourage research exposure among eligible undergraduate Ayurveda students.
2. **Ayurshodh:** A research-recognition initiative intended to encourage scholarly communication, original publications and innovation in Ayurveda.
3. **Scientific relevance:** Research programmes can help develop research methodology, data analysis, critical thinking and evidence-based evaluation.

Why it matters

1. Promotes research aptitude among students and early-career researchers.
2. Encourages documentation, publication and communication of research findings.
3. Creates opportunities to examine traditional medical practices using appropriate scientific methods.
4. Supports discussion on research quality, patient safety and evidence-based healthcare.

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UPSC angle: Link traditional medicine research with scientific validation, ethical research, quality standards, public health and responsible innovation. Verify current eligibility, application dates and award details through official notifications before relying on them.

4. Jeypore Ground Gecko: Biodiversity and Habitat Conservation

Relevant syllabus: GS Paper III – Environment, biodiversity and conservation.

The Jeypore Ground Gecko is a rare ground-dwelling reptile associated with parts of the Eastern Ghats. Its restricted habitat makes it vulnerable to activities that disturb rocky landscapes, forest floors and natural shelter sites.

Important facts for Prelims

1. **Habitat:** Associated with rocky terrain and forest floor microhabitats in the Eastern Ghats region.
2. **Behaviour:** Ground-dwelling and largely nocturnal.
3. **Conservation concern:** Habitat disturbance, mining and fragmentation may threaten small or geographically restricted populations.
4. **Ecological significance:** The species highlights the importance of conserving less visible, specialised biodiversity.

Development and conservation

Mining and infrastructure projects can generate employment and raw materials, but environmental assessments must account for habitat loss, cumulative impacts and the vulnerability of species with restricted ranges.

Better planning can include robust biodiversity surveys, avoidance of critical habitats, mitigation measures, ecological monitoring and transparent assessment of alternatives.

Prelims tip: Remember the connection between the Jeypore Ground Gecko, the Eastern Ghats and habitat-conservation concerns. Confirm its latest conservation classification from a recognised, current assessment before quoting a status category.

5. Ten Years of the Kigali Amendment

Relevant syllabus: GS Paper III – Climate change, international environmental agreements and sustainable development.

Adopted in Kigali, Rwanda, in October 2016, the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol provides for the phasedown of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs). HFCs became widely used as alternatives to certain ozone-depleting substances, but many have a high global-warming potential.

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Why the agreement is important

1. **Climate mitigation:** Reducing HFC use can help limit warming because many HFCs are potent greenhouse gases.
2. **Cooling sector:** The agreement is relevant to refrigeration, air conditioning and related equipment.
3. **Differentiated timelines:** Country groups have different schedules that reflect their circumstances.
4. **Technology transition:** Implementation requires suitable refrigerants, equipment redesign, skilled technicians and energy-efficient systems.
5. **International cooperation:** Financial and technical assistance can support developing countries during the transition.

Kigali Amendment versus the original Montreal Protocol

Aspect Montreal Protocol Kigali Amendment		
Core concern	Protection of the ozone layer	Climate impact of HFCs
Key substances	Ozone-depleting substances such as CFCs	Hydrofluorocarbons
Policy approach	Controls and phase-out schedules for covered ozone-depleting substances	Phasedown of HFC production and consumption

Conclusion: The Kigali Amendment shows how an existing environmental treaty framework can be extended to address an additional global environmental challenge. For India, the transition should combine emissions reduction with affordable cooling, energy efficiency and technological readiness.

6. Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI)

Relevant syllabus: GS Paper II – Citizenship, constitutional principles and governance.

Overseas Citizenship of India is a special immigration status available to eligible foreign citizens of Indian origin, subject to statutory eligibility rules and exclusions. Despite its name, OCI does not amount to dual citizenship under Indian law.

Key points

1. OCI cardholders remain foreign nationals and travel on their foreign passports.
2. The status provides specified immigration and other privileges under the applicable legal framework.
3. OCI cardholders do not have the same political rights as Indian citizens, including the right to vote in Indian elections.

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4. Some activities may require prior permission or be subject to specific conditions.
5. Registration can be cancelled on statutory grounds, subject to the relevant legal safeguards.

Constitutional connection

Articles 14 and 21 protect persons within their applicable scope, while Article 19 freedoms are guaranteed to citizens. This distinction is important when examining the rights of foreign nationals, immigration regulation and executive decision-making.

Questions concerning a particular OCI holder must be assessed under the current legislation, notifications and facts of the case. Avoid assuming that OCI status confers all the rights of citizenship or that every restriction applies identically in every situation.

Prelims distinction: OCI is not dual citizenship. It is a statutory status with defined benefits and restrictions.

7. India's Ramsar Network: Sukhna Wetland and Sauj Jheel

Relevant syllabus: GS Paper III - Wetlands, biodiversity and environmental conservation.

Ramsar sites are wetlands designated under the Convention on Wetlands, an international framework for wetland conservation and the wise use of wetland resources. Wetlands support biodiversity, water regulation, flood moderation and local livelihoods.

Why wetlands matter

1. Provide habitats for resident and migratory birds and other wildlife.
2. Help regulate water flows and can reduce some flood impacts.
3. Support groundwater recharge and local ecological processes in appropriate settings.
4. Store carbon in certain wetland ecosystems.
5. Provide economic and cultural benefits to surrounding communities.

Sites to revise

Sukhna Wetland

Located in Chandigarh, Sukhna is a man-made freshwater reservoir associated with the Shivalik foothills.

Sauj Jheel

A wetland in Uttar Pradesh highlighted in current-affairs reporting on India's Ramsar network.

Wetland designation is only the beginning of conservation. Long-term protection requires catchment management, pollution control, sustainable water use, habitat restoration and cooperation with local communities.

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Prelims tip: Memorise the site name, state or Union Territory, ecological characteristics and the purpose of the Ramsar Convention. Verify the latest national site count against an official current list before using it in an examination answer.

8. National Strategic Trade Command Centre (NSTCC)

Relevant syllabus: GS Paper II – Governance and security; GS Paper III – Economic security and strategic trade controls.

Strategic trade controls seek to prevent sensitive goods, technologies and materials from being diverted to unauthorised or prohibited end uses. They are relevant to national security, international trade compliance and the protection of sensitive technologies.

Why strategic trade controls matter

1. Support compliance with applicable export-control rules.
2. Help identify risks involving sensitive dual-use goods and technologies.
3. Improve coordination between relevant agencies and stakeholders.
4. Strengthen responsible trade while facilitating legitimate commercial activity.

For examination preparation, distinguish strategic trade controls from ordinary customs procedures. They may overlap operationally, but strategic controls focus particularly on the security implications and end-use of specified items and technologies.

9. Mapping Practice: Panama

Relevant syllabus: Geography and international strategic locations.

Panama is a Central American country connecting North and South America. Its geographical position gives it considerable importance in global maritime trade.

Map-based points to remember

1. **Location:** The country lies between Costa Rica to the west and Colombia to the east.
2. **Coastlines:** It has coastlines along the Caribbean Sea, part of the Atlantic basin, and the Pacific Ocean.
3. **Panama Canal:** A major artificial waterway linking Atlantic and Pacific shipping routes through the isthmus.
4. **Strategic importance:** The canal influences shipping routes, transport costs and global supply chains.
5. **Physical geography:** Panama lies in a tectonically active region, making earthquakes and related geological processes relevant to regional geography.

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On a blank world map, locate Central America, Panama, the Caribbean Sea, the Pacific Ocean and the Panama Canal. Practise explaining how narrow maritime passages can influence international trade and strategic relations.

10. Quick Revision Table for UPSC Prelims

Topic Core fact Exam connection		
World Food Day	Observed on 16 October	Food security and SDG 2
NFSA, 2013	Statutory food-grain entitlements for eligible households	Welfare and food distribution
One Nation One Ration Card	Portability of eligible ration entitlements	Migration and inclusive governance
UNSC	15 members, including five permanent members	International relations
CCRAS	Research body under the Ministry of AYUSH	Health and research policy
Jeypore Ground Gecko	Rare ground-dwelling reptile associated with the Eastern Ghats	Biodiversity conservation
Kigali Amendment	Phasedown of HFCs under the Montreal Protocol framework	Climate change
OCI	Special status, not dual citizenship	Citizenship and constitutional law
Ramsar Convention	International framework for wetlands	Environment and ecology
Panama Canal	Connects Atlantic and Pacific maritime routes	World geography and trade

11. UPSC Mains Answer-Writing Practice

Question 1 – GS Paper II / Health and Social Justice"The need of the hour is to move from basic food security to nutritional security." Elucidate.

Suggested structure:

1. **Introduction:** Define food security and nutritional security.
2. **Body:** Discuss the role of food distribution, dietary diversity, micronutrients, public health and sanitation.
3. **Challenges:** Explain hidden hunger, affordability, climate risks and gaps in nutrition awareness.
4. **Way forward:** Recommend diversified food assistance, nutrition services, resilient agriculture and accountable delivery.

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5. **Conclusion:** Link nutrition security to human development and inclusive growth.

Question 2 – GS Paper II / International Relations Explain the structural limitations of the UN Security Council in addressing contemporary conflicts. Suggest reforms to improve its legitimacy and effectiveness.

Suggested structure: Introduce the Council's mandate, analyse veto power and representation gaps, examine geopolitical divisions, and propose reforms that balance effectiveness with broader representation.

Question 3 – GS Paper III / Environment How can India balance infrastructure development with the conservation of ecologically sensitive habitats?

Suggested structure: Discuss environmental assessment, biodiversity surveys, alternatives analysis, mitigation, monitoring and community participation.

12. Frequently Asked Questions

Which topics are most important in this current-affairs edition?Prioritise food and nutrition security, India's UNSC campaign, the Vigan Amendment, wetlands, OCI status and biodiversity conservation. These topics connect well with the UPSC syllabus and can support both Prelims and Mains preparation.

How should I prepare current affairs for UPSC Prelims?Learn the basic concept, relevant institution or law, geographical location and important distinctions. Use short revision tables and practise multiple-choice questions. Verify changing facts through official sources.

How can I use current affairs in UPSC Mains answers?Connect the event to the syllabus, explain its causes and implications, use relevant examples, analyse challenges and provide practical, balanced recommendations.

Why is nutritional security important for India?Food-grain access alone cannot address every form of malnutrition. Nutritional security also requires diverse diets, essential micronutrients, safe water, sanitation, healthcare and nutrition awareness.

Does OCI status mean that a person has Indian citizenship?No. OCI is a statutory immigration status for eligible foreign citizens of Indian origin. It does not confer Indian citizenship or the full political rights available to Indian citizens.

Conclusion: Turn Daily News into Exam-Ready Knowledge

UPSC Current Affairs preparation is most effective when daily news is connected to core concepts and the official syllabus. The developments covered in this edition highlight the relationship between nutrition and human development, diplomacy and multilateral reform, and environmental protection

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and sustainable growth.

For stronger preparation, revise the key facts, practise the Mains questions and maintain separate short notes for static concepts, government initiatives and geographical locations. Always verify changing statistics, scheme details, deadlines and legal provisions before using them in examination answers.

Civil Service Gurukul Build conceptual clarity, strengthen answer writing and prepare for the Civil Services Examination with a disciplined, syllabus-oriented approach.

Educational content for UPSC aspirants. Verify time-sensitive information and official notifications before relying on specific figures or administrative details.

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