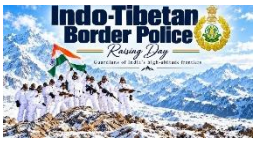
Current Affairs - 24 October 2026

INDO-TIBETAN BORDER POLICE



- It is a **Central Armed Police Force** functioning under the **Ministry of Home Affairs**, Government of India.
- It guards the **India-China borders** ranging from the Karakoram Pass in Ladakh to Jachep La in **Arunachal Pradesh.**
- **Background:**
  - It was **raised in 1962**, in the wake of the Sino-Indian War of 1962, for deployment along India's border with China's Tibet Autonomous Region.
  - ITBP was **initially raised under the CRPF Act.** However, in 1992, parliament enacted the ITBPF Act, and the rules thereunder were framed in 1994.
  - In 2004, ITBP was declared as a full-fledged central armed police force under the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- **Motto:** "Shaurya-Dridhata-Karma Nishtha" (Valour – Determination – Devotion to Duty).
- It is known as one of the most specialized mountain forces in the world, ITBP operates in some of the harshest and most remote areas.
- ITBP trains its personnel in **mountaineering, skiing, and tactical combat,** in addition to maintaining readiness for disaster response and relief operations in the Himalayan region.
- **Headed By:** It is headed by a **Director General under the Ministry of Home Affairs.**
- **Headquarters:** New Delhi.



SAKHAROV PRIZE

- It is **European Union's** highest honour dedicated to **human rights work.**
- It is named after Soviet physicist and political dissident **Andrei Sakharov**.

Cross And Climb

- **Background:** It was **established in 1988 and** inaugural prize was jointly conferred to **Nelson Mandela and Anatoli Marchenko.**
- It is **awarded annually by the European Parliament during** its plenary session.
- This prize consists of **€ 50, 000 endowments,** along with an official citation.
- **Focus:** Recognizes individuals, groups, or organizations that make an outstanding contribution to defending human rights, freedom of thought, free expression, minority rights and international law.

Key Facts about International Criminal Court

- It is a **permanent and independent criminal court** established to prosecute offenders of serious crimes in the international community.
- It is the only permanent international criminal tribunal.
- It was **created by the Rome Statute,** which came into force on **July 1, 2002.**
- **Mandate:** ICC investigates and, where warranted, tries individuals charged with the gravest crimes of concern to the international community.
    - Specifically, the ICC is intended to prosecute the following crimes: Genocide, Crimes against humanity, War crimes and the crime of aggression.
- **Members:** There are 125 member countries (China, **India**, Israel, Russia, and the United States are **not ICC parties**).

Composition:

- **Judges:** The court **has eighteen judges,** each from a different member country, elected to non-renewable nine-year terms.
- **The Presidency:**
    - Consists of **three judges** (the President and two Vice-Presidents) elected from among the judges.
    - It represents the Court to the outside world and helps with the organization of the work of the judges.

INDIA-CHINA BORDER TENSIONS - LAC, ITBP AND BORDER MANAGEMENT

- India and China share an approximately 3,488-km-long disputed boundary, commonly referred to as the **Line of Actual Control (LAC)**.
- Unlike an internationally demarcated border, the LAC reflects the areas where the two countries exercise actual control, and differences in its perception have contributed to recurring confrontations.
- The 1962 India-China war deepened mutual distrust and shaped India's approach to border security.

Strategic Significance of the LAC

- The India-China border has considerable strategic importance because of its difficult terrain, proximity to sensitive military positions and implications for regional security.
- **Arunachal Pradesh** is particularly significant. China claims parts of the Indian state and refers to it as "Zangnan" or southern Tibet, while India maintains that Arunachal Pradesh is an integral and inalienable part of the country.
- Border management therefore requires effective surveillance, infrastructure development, military preparedness and reliable communication between local commanders and diplomatic authorities.

Border Management and Confidence-Building Mechanisms

- **Corps Commander-level talks:** Facilitate negotiations on troop deployments, disengagement and specific border tensions.
- **Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination (WMCC):** Provides a diplomatic platform for discussing border affairs and coordinating efforts to maintain peace.
- **Border Personnel Meetings:** Enable local military commanders to communicate directly and address incidents.
- **Diplomatic engagement:** Helps clarify positions, manage disagreements and maintain channels for negotiations.

- **Confidence-building measures:** Agreements and communication arrangements seek to prevent misunderstandings and reduce the risk of unintended escalation.

ITBP's Shaurya Commandos and Continuing Face-offs in Arunachal Pradesh

- Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) Director General stated that the force's newly established **Shaurya commando teams** had performed effectively during face-offs with China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) at several locations in Arunachal Pradesh.
- The ITBP is expanding these specialised teams across its border battalions, with the objective of developing a dedicated high-altitude combat capability.
- The force is also strengthening modernisation, drone operations and counter-drone capabilities.
- He highlighted the need to adapt to changing warfare technologies.
- He cited increased investment in drones, drone-pilot training and indigenous drone production as important elements of the ITBP's modernisation programme.

Challenges and the Way Forward

- India's border strategy must combine operational readiness with sustained diplomatic engagement.
- **Strengthen surveillance:** Expand the use of drones, sensors, satellite imagery and secure communication systems.
- **Improve infrastructure:** Develop roads, bridges, logistics facilities and communications in border regions.
- **Modernise border forces:** Provide specialised high-altitude training, modern equipment and integrated drone and counter-drone capabilities.
- **Maintain dialogue:** Continue military and diplomatic negotiations to clarify the LAC and resolve outstanding disputes.
- **Prevent escalation:** Strengthen local communication and incident-management protocols to reduce the possibility of miscalculation.
- **Ensure transparency:** Provide accurate and timely information about significant border developments while protecting operationally sensitive details.

EUROPE'S PROTEST WAVE: UNPACKING THE ECONOMICS OF SOCIAL UNREST

A wave of social unrest is sweeping across Europe — France, Albania, Belgium, Italy, and Portugal are all witnessing widespread street protests. As in France, where unrest began with student dissatisfaction over school facilities, many of these movements have evolved into a broader outcry over the cost-of-living crisis.

While the timing is political — with countries like France and Italy heading into 2027 national elections — the underlying drivers are predominantly economic. This raises a crucial question: what actually causes such unrest, and what are its economic consequences?

Is Rising Inequality the Real Culprit?

- A common explanation — including arguments made by anti-immigration voices — is that rising economic inequality fuels unrest.
- The World Inequality Report (WIR) 2026, using data through 2024, measures this via the "Income Gap" — defined as the ratio between the income share of the top 10% and the bottom 50% of a population. A higher ratio means greater inequality.
- France: The income gap has increased between 2014 and 2024 — similarly for Italy.
- Conclusion: Rising inequality in France is real, but it is not exceptionally severe by global standards — suggesting **inequality alone is an incomplete explanation**.

What Else Predicts Social Unrest?

- IMF economists noted: "Although inequality has crept up slowly in recent decades, it has not significantly worsened over the past decade in a way that would explain the recent surge of discontent."
- IMF researchers used machine learning on over 340 economic and social indicators to identify unrest predictors. Their central finding:
    - **Past turmoil** — both **domestic and in neighbouring countries** — is by far the most important predictor of future unrest, roughly **10 times** more informative than any economic or social factor.

- **The Bank Run Analogy**: Just as people rush to withdraw deposits when they see others doing so, visible protests elsewhere act as "coordinating signals" — encouraging people to join in, especially in culturally similar neighbouring countries.
- **Other Predictive Factors Identified**: Digital access and social media penetration — suggesting that the ability to communicate and coordinate at scale is crucial for mobilising protest activity.
- That said, economic factors aren't irrelevant — researchers noted "prices, particularly of food and fuel, seem to be particularly important" as triggers.

The Economic Consequences of Unrest

- While economic factors may not be the biggest predictor of unrest, they play a much larger role in its aftermath:
    - IMF economists found a close link between unrest and subsequent economic performance.
    - Key finding: On average, major unrest events are followed by a **1 percentage point reduction in GDP**, measured six quarters after the event.
- **Nature of Unrest Matters**
    - Unrest driven by socioeconomic factors leads to sharper GDP contractions than unrest driven by purely political motives.
    - Unrest triggered by a combination of both socioeconomic and political factors produces the sharpest GDP contractions of all.

Conclusion

Europe's protests tell us something simple: inequality alone doesn't explain unrest. Economic grievances, especially rising food and fuel prices, do play a role. But they are not main trigger.

Often, it is the sight of protests elsewhere that pushes people to join in. Digital connectivity speeds this up. Once unrest begins, though, its economic cost is real. GDP falls the most when economic and political causes mix together. This leaves governments in a tough spot.

Fixing cost-of-living problems may not stop unrest from spreading. But ignoring them only deepens the economic damage that follows.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCILS IN INDIA: WHY SOME STATES HAVE A SECOND CHAMBER

- Just as the Indian Union has a **bicameral Parliament** (Lok Sabha + Rajya Sabha), some states have a bicameral legislature — a Legislative Assembly plus a Legislative Council.
- Currently **six states** have Legislative Councils: Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Telangana, and Andhra Pradesh.
- **Colonial Origins**
    - Traces back to the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, which created the Council of State at the national level in 1919.
    - The Government of India Act, 1935 established bicameral legislatures in provinces.
    - The first Legislative Council began functioning in Bengal in 1937.

Similarities With the Rajya Sabha

- Acts as a "second layer" of deliberation in the law-making process.
- Bills require its approval to become law.
- Minimum age to contest: above 30 years (versus 25 for Lok Sabha/Assembly elections).
- Members serve six-year terms via indirect elections.
- Cannot be dissolved; one-third of members retire every two years.

The Constituent Assembly Debate

- Views on the need for Legislative Councils were sharply divided.
- Leaders argued for a check on the Lower House, citing concerns about placing all power "in the hands of those... not only literate but wise too." (His reasoning reflected the era's elitist anxieties about universal adult franchise.)
- Critics pointed out the Council's limited powers — notably, it cannot reject the Assembly's decisions on a Money Bill — questioning whether a body with such restricted authority justified the added public expenditure.

Cross And Climb

Political Significance of MLC Elections

- Though not contested on party symbols, candidates are still backed by political parties.
- These elections function as a political barometer — signalling party strength among educated groups and professionals, or indicating overall political standing ahead of major elections (as seen currently in Uttar Pradesh).

Constitutional Framework: How Councils Are Created and Composed

- **Article 169:** Parliament can create or abolish a Legislative Council if the state's Legislative Assembly passes a resolution by:
  - A majority of total Assembly membership, and
  - A majority of at least two-thirds of members present and voting.
- **Article 171** — Composition rules:
  - Total MLCs cannot exceed one-third of the state's total MLAs.
  - Total MLCs cannot be fewer than 40.

How MLCs Are Elected: The Composition Formula

- Elections use proportional representation via the single transferable vote, with electors ranking candidates by preference. The composition breaks down as:
  - **One-third**: Elected by municipalities, district boards, and other local authorities.
  - **One-twelfth**: Elected by graduates (minimum 3 years as a university graduate, or equivalent qualification) residing in the state — the "Graduates' constituency."
  - **One-twelfth**: Elected by teachers with at least 3 years of teaching experience in institutions of secondary school level or above — the "Teachers' constituency."
  - **Remaining members**: Partly elected by MLAs themselves, and partly nominated by the Governor, chosen for "special knowledge or practical experience" in fields like literature, science, art, and social service.

Conclusion

The Legislative Council remains one of India's more underexamined constitutional institutions — a colonial-era holdover retained in only a handful of states, serving as a deliberative check rather than a co-equal legislative power.

AMUR FALCON



- It is a **migratory raptor of the falcon family.**
- **Other Names:** Eastern Red-footed Falcon, Eastern Red-footed Kestrel, Manchurian Falcon, and Red-legged Falcon.

Habitat: It is found across **open forests, grasslands, wetlands** and agricultural landscapes.

Distribution: They breed in **southeastern Siberia and Northern China** and migrate long distances in large flocks to winter in **Southern and East Africa.**
Along the way, large numbers pass through India, with the biggest congregations seen in the **northeastern states mainly in Nagaland, Manipur, and parts of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh.**

Threats: Hunting during migration and habitat loss at roosting sites, and changing weather patterns.

Conservation Status

- **IUCN Red List:** Least Concern.

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