

Current Affairs - 02 October 2026

A REFLECTION ON TWO SONGS AND THEIR NATIONALISMS

- National symbols are intended to create a shared sense of belonging in a diverse nation.
- However, nationalism becomes meaningful only when it accommodates **pluralism, individual freedom and constitutional equality**.
- The contemporary debate surrounding **Vande Mataram** raises a larger question: Can patriotism be strengthened through compulsion, or does genuine national belonging emerge from voluntary participation?

Historical and Constitutional Context

- The history of Vande Mataram demonstrates that India has previously addressed disagreements surrounding national symbols through accommodation.
- In 1937, the Congress Working Committee accepted objections to the later stanzas and adopted the first two for national gatherings.
- In 1950, Jana Gana Mana was adopted as the **National Anthem**, while Vande Mataram was accorded equal honour.
- This created an important distinction between **respecting a national symbol** and legally compelling participation in it.

Vande Mataram

- **Inclusive and Contested Dimensions**
 - The first two stanzas celebrate the natural beauty and abundance of the motherland, making them accessible across religious communities.
 - The subsequent stanzas employ explicitly Hindu imagery, invoking Goddesses Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswati.
 - This generated objections among sections of Muslims and contributed to the eventual political compromise of 1937.
- **The 1937 Settlement**
 - The decision to use the first two stanzas for national gatherings represented an attempt to balance **cultural heritage with religious pluralism**.

Current Affairs - 02 October 2026

- Rabindranath Tagore supported this accommodation.
- The settlement demonstrated that modifying the public use of a cultural work does not necessarily diminish its historical significance.
- Rather, adapting a work to a diverse constitutional society can itself represent respect for its broader national importance.
- **From Cultural Adaptation to Popular Identification**
 - The later transformation of Vande Mataram illustrates the strength of voluntary cultural engagement.

A.R. Rahman's Maa Tujhe Salaam introduced the song to a new generation and demonstrated how artistic reinterpretation can create emotional ownership without coercion.

- **Nationalism and Individual Freedom**
 - The controversy also raises the relationship between patriotism and **freedom of conscience**.
 - A citizen may respect the nation while declining to participate in a particular religiously or culturally loaded expression.
 - Therefore, patriotism should not automatically be equated with **uniformity of conduct**. Constitutional democracy permits citizens to express national loyalty through different forms.

Conclusion

- National symbols can inspire collective pride, but **genuine patriotism cannot be reduced to compulsory gestures**.
- A citizen's commitment to the nation is also reflected in how they treat fellow citizens, with equality, dignity, empathy and respect.
- Vande Mataram represents the emotional attachment to the motherland, while Vaishnava Jana To represents the ethical responsibilities of citizenship.
- The ultimate objective of nationalism should therefore not be merely to make citizens **sing the same song**, but to cultivate citizens who live by the values that make a nation worth belonging to.

Current Affairs - 02 October 2026

HOW TO FINANCE RURAL PROSPERITY

- India's **agricultural transformation** is among the major achievements of independent India.
- Over six decades, it has become a leading producer of cereals, milk, fruits, vegetables and fisheries products.
- This progress resulted from public policy, scientific innovation, irrigation, institutional credit and farmers' enterprise.
- The **first transformation prioritised food security**; the next must focus on rural prosperity by enabling farmers and rural enterprises to capture greater value beyond production.

From Food Security to Rural Prosperity

- Every agricultural commodity moves through a **value chain** involving production, aggregation, storage, logistics, processing, branding and marketing.
- Significant employment and enterprise opportunities arise at these stages.
- Therefore, **agricultural finance** must move beyond farm production towards financing the entire value chain.
- For decades, bank nationalisation, rural banks, cooperatives and the **Kisan Credit Card** expanded production credit.
- These institutions successfully supported the food-security objective.
- The emerging challenge, however, is to finance commercially viable activities that create value between the farm and final consumer.

The Challenge of Seasonal Agriculture

- Dairy, poultry and fisheries operate through **continuous procurement** and marketing cycles, generating relatively predictable cash flows and regular working-capital turnover.
- **Seasonal commodities** face greater financial pressure. Processors must procure large quantities during a short harvest period and finance inventories for the rest of the year.

Current Affairs - 02 October 2026

- A company investing ₹500 crores in processing capacity may require ₹700–₹800 crore to procure, store and carry seasonal inventory.
- Without suitable working capital, even efficient enterprises can become commercially vulnerable.
- **The sugar sector** demonstrates how inventory finance and warehouse-backed lending can address seasonal constraints.
- Thus, sectoral growth depends not only on production potential but also on the availability and structure of finance.

Necessary Steps Towards Effective Agriculture Finance Mechanism

- **Need for new mechanisms**
 - India must build mechanisms for financing **commercially viable** activities across agricultural value chains.
 - Banks have introduced warehouse-receipt financing, receivables financing, **food-processing finance** and agricultural-infrastructure finance, while agri-focused NBFCs have developed innovative models.
- **Processing and Value Addition**
 - India's relatively **low agricultural processing** rate demonstrates considerable untapped potential.
 - Greater processing can generate **value addition, longer shelf life**, better market access and employment.
 - Achieving this requires financing systems aligned with commodity-specific value chains, rather than production alone.

Conclusion

- India's **first agricultural transformation** secured national food security; the next must create rural prosperity.
- Increasing production remains important, but sustainable prosperity requires greater value addition after harvest and wider participation in **agricultural value chains**.

Current Affairs - 02 October 2026

UPSC EXAMINATION REFORMS - REASONING, JUDGMENT AND FUTURE-READY SELECTION

- The first Public Service Commission in India was constituted on **1 October 1926** as an advisory body.
- Over the following decades, it evolved into an independent **constitutional body** responsible for conducting examinations and recruitment for various public services.
- The centenary celebrations, titled '**Manthan**', brought together public officials and experts to discuss the changing requirements of civil services, innovations in public administration and the institutional values underlying public service.
- The UPSC undertakes around **250 recruitment processes every year** across disciplines such as engineering, medicine, science, economics and defence.
- The Civil Services Examination is conducted annually for recruitment to services including the **IAS, IFS and IPS**.

Shift Towards Competency-Based Assessment

- A major theme highlighted by the UPSC Chairman Ajay Kumar is the need to assess capabilities that are difficult to reproduce through memorisation or coaching.
- The emphasis is on three interconnected abilities:
 - **Reasoning:** Ability to analyse information, identify relationships and reach logically supported conclusions.
 - **Spontaneous thinking:** Ability to respond appropriately to unfamiliar or unexpected situations.
 - **Judgment under ambiguity:** Ability to make reasoned decisions when information is incomplete or competing considerations are involved.
- The Chairman also emphasised three principles for the Commission's next phase: **trust, transparency and technology**.

Current Affairs - 02 October 2026

- At the same time, he stated that technological and examination-format changes should preserve the constitutional principles of **merit, fairness and equal opportunity**.

Future of Civil Services Recruitment

- The centenary discussions also focused on how the civil services must respond to changing governance requirements.
- Speakers highlighted the importance of **outcome-oriented administration**, reducing departmental silos, encouraging informed decision-making and preparing administrators for rapidly changing technological and social environments.
- Discussions also covered **artificial intelligence, data analytics and digital architectures** as tools for improving public-service delivery.
- Another issue raised was the need to widen recruitment from **Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities and aspirational districts**, thereby expanding the geographical diversity of the public-service talent pool.
- The examination system therefore faces a dual requirement: maintaining a rigorous and standardised selection process while ensuring that assessment methods remain relevant to the competencies required in contemporary governance.

Key Challenges in Examination Reform

- Reforming a large-scale competitive examination involves several considerations:
 - **Objectivity:** New assessment methods must retain measurable and comparable standards.
 - **Fairness:** Changes should not create advantages for candidates with access to specialised coaching or technology.
 - **Transparency:** Candidates should understand the broad principles and procedures governing evaluation.
 - **Examination security:** Greater digitisation requires strong safeguards for candidate data and examination infrastructure.
 - **Accessibility:** Technological reforms must remain accessible to candidates across different socioeconomic and geographical backgrounds.

Current Affairs - 02 October 2026

INDIA'S SEMICONDUCTOR AND AI STRATEGY - FROM MANUFACTURING TO TECHNOLOGICAL LEADERSHIP

- Technology is increasingly becoming the foundation of economic growth and national power.
- The **global AI revolution** has intensified competition in semiconductors, making technological **self-reliance a strategic necessity**.
- India's semiconductor and AI policies over the next few years will determine its position in the global technology value chain.

India's Semiconductor Initiatives - Progress and Limitations:

- The government has introduced several initiatives to strengthen domestic capabilities.
- For instance,
 - **India Semiconductor Mission (ISM):**
 - Promotes domestic semiconductor manufacturing and ecosystem development.
 - At SEMICON India 2026, the government reported 12 approved semiconductor manufacturing units, with committed investments of ₹1.64 lakh crore and five facilities in production.
 - **ISM 2.0** envisages an additional ₹1.275 lakh crore.
 - **Design Linked Incentive (DLI) Scheme:** Supports semiconductor design and indigenous intellectual property (IP).
 - **IndiaAI Mission:** Strengthens India's AI ecosystem and access to computing infrastructure.

- **Structural limitation:**

Nine of the 12 approved units focus on conventional Assembly, Testing, Marking and Packaging (ATMP) or Outsourced Semiconductor Assembly and Test (OSAT).

- Thus, investment commitments alone cannot establish technological leadership. India must move towards **higher-value segments** of the semiconductor industry.

Current Affairs - 02 October 2026

Way Forward:

- India's primary **challenge** is the shortage of capital and institutional support for taking indigenous chip designs from prototypes to commercial production.
- The following **measures** are essential -
 - **Expand the DLI Scheme:** Provide sustained financial support to domestic fabless semiconductor companies, including commercialisation and tape-out stages.
 - **Establish a Chip Design Commercialisation Fund:** Approx. ₹1,000 crore fund, modelled on the National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF), to support Indian chip startups.

Conclusion:

- The AI-driven semiconductor supercycle offers an opportunity to strengthen India's economic competitiveness and strategic autonomy.
- A focused national strategy is essential for India to become a significant player in the global technology ecosystem.

WHAT IS THE SCHOKARI SAND RACER?



A routine forest patrol in Gujarat's Kutch recently led to an unusual wildlife discovery: an elusive snake named Schokari Sand Racer that had not been conclusively recorded in the region for more than 150 years.

- The Schokari Sand Racer, also known as the **Afro-Asian sand snake**, is an **extremely fast diurnal snake** well adapted to **arid and desert environments**.
- Scientific Name: *Psammophis schokari*
- **Habitat and Distribution:**
 - It inhabits **desert regions with sparse vegetation**, especially sand deserts, wadis, and oasis margins.

Current Affairs - 02 October 2026

- Its distribution stretches from **North Africa (Libya, Egypt)** across the **Arabian Peninsula** and the **Near East** to **Pakistan**, including **southern Turkmenistan** and **northwestern India**.
- From India, it has been reported only from the deserts of **Rajasthan** and **Kutch** of **Gujarat**.
- **Conservation Status:**
 - IUCN Red List: **Least Concern**

SWYER SYNDROME



Swyer syndrome is a rare condition which is estimated to occur in about one in 80,000 people.

- It is a **rare difference of sex development**, medically known as 46, XY complete gonadal dysgenesis.
- It is a rare genetic condition where **individuals have one X and one Y chromosome** in each cell (typically associated with males) but develop female reproductive structures.
- It is **characterized by the failure of the sex glands** (i.e., testicles or ovaries) to develop.
- It **results from disruption of the genetic pathway** involved in testicular development during early embryonic development.
- This syndrome is one of many “**Disorders of Sex Development**”, or **DSDs**.
 - People with Swyer syndrome are **genetically male but phenotypically female**, meaning they have a female appearance and female external genitalia.
- **Treatment:**
 - There is currently **no treatment that** can change the 46, XY chromosome pattern or turn the streak gonads into functioning ovaries.
 - However, the effects of Swyer syndrome can be effectively managed through **hormone replacement therapy**.