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## Current Affairs - 29 October 2025

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### INDIA'S DIASPORA DIPLOMACY: BALANCING PRIDE AND RESTRAINT ABROAD

In recent weeks, the Indian diaspora has drawn global attention for religious and cultural displays that, in some cases, have crossed local norms in developed countries.

Incidents such as Ganapati idol immersion in public water bodies and Deepavali fireworks in residential areas have sparked controversy. In Edmonton, Canada, fireworks set two houses on fire, leading police to warn, "Light up your home, not your neighbour's roof."

#### **Cultural Assertion and the Evolution of India's Diaspora Policy**

- A growing section of the Indian diaspora is displaying **assertive cultural nationalism**, promoting practices like Deepavali firecrackers abroad as symbols of community pride and identity.
- Simultaneously, some groups are urging the diaspora to advocate India's political positions, especially in the United States.
- Historically, however, Jawaharlal Nehru maintained a clear distinction between India and its overseas communities. While the freedom movement had global links, Nehru insisted that post-Independence India stay out of PIO politics.
- He urged persons of Indian origin (PIOs) to remain loyal to their adopted countries, avoiding any perception of Indian interference in foreign domestic affairs.
- **From Territorial to Cultural Nationalism**
  - In the early decades after Independence, India's foreign policy and diaspora engagement were guided by **territorial nationalism, not cultural identity**.
  - Issues like **discrimination and racism** were framed as universal human rights concerns, reflecting India's commitment to global justice rather than ethnic solidarity.
- **Rise of Global Cultural Nationalism**
  - From the 1990s onward, the increasing Indian migration created a global network of cultural nationalists.



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- This trend gained strong momentum after Narendra Modi became Prime Minister in 2014, marked by large-scale diaspora rallies abroad, particularly in the United States.
- **Growing Western Sensitivity to Foreign Influence**
  - At the same time, Western nations — notably the U.S., Canada, Australia, and parts of Europe — became increasingly wary of foreign interference in domestic politics.
  - Allegations of **Chinese and Russian influence sharpened this sensitivity**, even as Israel’s lobbying began facing bipartisan criticism in the U.S.
  - Although foreign influence operations are legal in the U.S. if transparently registered, the state-backed mobilisation of the Indian diaspora has drawn quiet scrutiny.
- **India’s Position in the Changing Landscape**
  - Historically seen as a benign and diverse immigrant community, Indian Americans now face growing attention as India’s outreach to its diaspora becomes more overtly strategic.
  - While India has avoided the hostility directed at Russia or China, there are increasing signs of Western unease over efforts to align diaspora networks with New Delhi’s political and cultural agenda.

### Navigating Nationalist Tensions Abroad

- As Western nations experience heightened nationalism, diaspora communities face pressure to demonstrate loyalty to host countries.
  - For Indians abroad, expectations to promote India’s interests must be balanced with these realities.
  - In an era of **rising protectionism and political suspicion**, “multi-alignment” diplomacy — being loyal to both India and the host nation — is increasingly difficult.
  - Ultimately, nationalist fervour is not unique to India, and diaspora members must operate within the nationalist sensitivities of their adopted countries.
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### WHAT IS SJ-100?



- It is a new generation short-haul jet aircraft of Russian origin.

- Earlier called the Sukhoi Superjet 100, it originally was designed by the now-merged Russian aircraft company Sukhoi Civil Aircraft.
  - It is a **twin-engine, narrow-body aircraft**.
  - The aircraft is primarily used for **commercial purposes**.
  - As on date, over 200 SJ-100 aircraft have been manufactured.
  - The aircraft are being **operated by more than 16 airlines across the world**, nine of them being from Russia.
  - It is capable of accommodating 103 seats and has a flight range of 3,530 kilometres.
  - The aircraft has been touted as having low operating costs for airlines.
  - It can **operate at extreme weather conditions**, from -55 degrees Celsius to +45 degrees Celsius.
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### CLOUD SEEDING



- It is a weather-modification technique used to **modify suitable clouds**.

- To artificially induce rain, clouds are usually injected with salts like **silver iodide, potassium iodide, or sodium chloride**, which is the 'seed'.
  - These salts are expected to provide additional nuclei around which more cloud droplets can form.
  - They are dispersed into the cloud either using aircraft or through generators on the ground.
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### Meteorological requirements for Cloud Seeding

- **Sufficient moisture:** The target clouds must **contain an adequate amount of water vapour** and liquid water to be condensed into precipitation.
- **Cloud characteristics:** Clouds targeted for seeding must have **sufficient vertical thickness**.
  - For example, some cloud-seeding projects require clouds to be at least 1 kilometre thick.
- **Favourable winds:** Wind direction must transport **the seeding material toward the intended area** and wind speed must not be so high that it prevents clouds from growing tall or blows the seeding agents away from the target zone.
- **Vertical air currents:** Clouds with strong **vertical updrafts are considered ideal** because they help disperse the seeding agents and promote cloud development.

### REHABILITATION COUNCIL OF INDIA



- It is a **statutory body** established by an Act of Parliament.
- **Background:** It was set up as a **registered society in 1986**. In

September 1992, the RCI Act was enacted by Parliament and it became a **Statutory Body on 22 June 1993**.

- **Mandate:** To regulate and monitor **services given to persons with disabilities**, to standardise syllabi and to **maintain a Central Rehabilitation Register** of all qualified professionals and personnel working in the field of Rehabilitation and Special Education.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment
- **Objectives of Rehabilitation Council of India:**
  - To regulate the **training policies and programmes** in the field of rehabilitation of **persons with disabilities**



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- To bring **about standardization of training courses** for professionals dealing with persons with disabilities
  - To maintain **Central Rehabilitation Register** for registration of professionals/ personnel
  - The Council also **prescribes minimum standards** of education and training for 16 categories of professionals and personnel allocated to RCI.
  - To **recognize the national institutes** and apex institutions on disability as manpower development centres.
  - The Council also prescribes minimum standards of education and training for **16 categories of professionals** and personnel allocated to RCI.
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### NATIONAL SEEDS CORPORATION



- It was **established in 1963** to undertake production of **foundation and certified seeds**.
- It is under the administrative control of the Department of Agriculture & Farmer's Welfare, **Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer's Welfare**.
- It is a **Schedule 'B' – Mini Ratna Category-I Company**, fully owned by the Government of India.
- **Functions of National Seeds Corporation**
  - It has been playing a pivotal role in producing and supplying quality seeds to farmers across the country.
  - It plays a key role in the implementation of various schemes of the Govt. of India like **“National Mission on Oil Seed and Oil Palm (NMOOP)”**, **“National Food Security Mission (NFSM)”** and **“Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH)**.



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- It provides **technical support to the seed producing agencies** including State Seed Corporations by imparting training of personnel engaged in the production of seeds in those organizations.
- It is the **nodal agency** for the implementation of the Central Sector Scheme to create **infrastructure facilities** for establishment of **processing plants and storage godowns** in different states in the private sectors.
- The **SAARC seed bank** maintained by NSC with the grant in aid of the Govt. of India holds a larger quantity of seeds of different crops & varieties.

### NITI AAYOG REPORT HIGHLIGHTS RISING ROLE OF INDIA'S SERVICE SECTOR

- India's **service sector** has emerged as the **core pillar of its economic transformation**, shaping the country's journey from an agrarian economy to a knowledge and innovation-driven one.
- Encompassing a wide range of industries, including **information technology, financial services, communications, education, healthcare, transport, tourism, and retail**, the sector not only drives GDP but also represents India's global competitiveness.
- The sector's contribution to **India's Gross Value Added (GVA)** has steadily risen over the years, while its employment potential has expanded across both traditional and modern sub-sectors.
- India is today the **7<sup>th</sup> largest exporter of services in the world**, with a share of over **4% in global services exports**.

#### Key Highlights and Insights from the NITI Aayog Reports

- **Employment Growth and Rising Share in Workforce**
  - According to the **latest twin reports released by NITI Aayog**, "India's Services Sector: Insights from Employment Trends and State-Level Dynamics" and "India's Services Sector: Insights from GVA Trends and State-Level Dynamics", between **2017-18 and 2023-24**, India's service sector added nearly **40 million**



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**new jobs**, raising its employment share from **26.9% in 2011-12 to 29.7% in 2023-24**.

- This means almost one in three Indian workers is now engaged in the services economy.
- The sector's ability to absorb labour displaced from agriculture and low-productivity industry makes it a crucial driver of inclusive growth.
- **Contribution to GDP and Economic Stability**
  - The services sector's contribution to India's **Gross Value Added (GVA)** increased from **49% in 2011-12 to 55% in 2023-24**, outpacing the secondary and primary sectors.
  - It also recorded a **Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR)** of about **7%**, showing consistent resilience even during economic downturns.
- **Linkages with Income, Exports, and Digitalisation**
  - The correlation between a state's **service sector strength and its per capita income** is strong; states with higher service contributions, like Karnataka and Telangana, record higher incomes.
  - At the macro level, India's services sector has become the **largest recipient of FDI** and a key contributor to **foreign exchange earnings**.

### Policy Priorities for the Road Ahead

- NITI Aayog stresses that service-led growth must be **inclusive, sustainable, and regionally balanced**.
- Key policy priorities include:
  - Expanding **digital and physical infrastructure** across smaller cities.
  - Establishing **skill hubs** for emerging areas such as fintech, AI, and healthcare.
  - Promoting **MSME integration** into service supply chains.
  - Strengthening **data and institutional capacity** for evidence-based policymaking.
  - Encouraging **green and sustainable services** to align with India's climate goals.



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### MATH IS NOT A TOOL FOR CULTURAL NATIONALISM

- The controversy surrounding the University Grants Commission's (UGC) draft **undergraduate mathematics curriculum** under the National Education Policy (NEP) has ignited a crucial debate about the intersection of **education, nationalism, and scientific inquiry**.
- While the proposal aims to integrate **traditional Indian mathematical knowledge** into the modern curriculum, it has faced strong opposition from over **900 Indian mathematicians**, who argue that it is **pedagogically flawed** and **ideologically driven**.
- The draft curriculum has been criticised for its **limited coverage of core subjects, neglect of applied mathematics**, and **poorly designed electives**.
- More significantly, the inclusion of subjects such as **Kala Ganpana** (traditional Indian time calculation), **Bharatiya Bijganit** (Indian algebra), and **Shulba Sutra** (ancient altar geometry) has raised fears that the curriculum prioritises **symbolic cultural revival over academic rigour**.
- Opponents believe such content **undermines the universal and scientific nature of mathematics**, transforming it into a tool of **ideological assertion** rather than **intellectual development**.

### The Debate on Cultural Pride vs. Intellectual Integrity

- Supporters of the NEP, notably **Manjul Bhargava**, the **2014 Fields Medal winner**, argue that **India's mathematical heritage deserves rightful recognition**.
- Bhargava maintains that acknowledging ancient contributions does not equate to **glorifying one civilisation over another**, but rather to **restoring balance to a Eurocentric narrative**.
- This effort to reclaim cultural pride is understandable and historically justified.
- Yet, an overemphasis on nationalism in mathematics **risks replicating the very colonial mindset it seeks to resist**.



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- To portray mathematics as an exclusively **Indic creation** is to **commit the same error of cultural monopolisation** once made by colonial scholars.
- **Mathematical truths transcend geography and culture**, the proposition that  $2 + 2 = 4$  is neither Western nor Indian; it is simply **true**. When nationalism infiltrates a discipline built on **logic and universality**, it **dilutes both its objectivity and global relevance**.

### The Universal Character of Mathematics

- Mathematics draws strength from its **universality and cumulative evolution**.
- From **Babylonian number systems** to **Greek geometry**, from **Indian algebra** to **Arabic numerals**, its history is a story of **cross-cultural collaboration** rather than isolated civilisational achievements.
- To confine its teaching within a **Vedic or Indic framework** is both **historically inaccurate** and **pedagogically unsound**.
- Moreover, most mathematics instructors **lack formal training in Indology** and may struggle to interpret ancient texts by **Aryabhata, Brahmagupta, or Bhaskara** with academic neutrality.
- Without such preparation, there is a risk of **ideological bias**, where students absorb **mythologised history** instead of **scientific reasoning**.
- A modern curriculum must therefore **balance cultural appreciation with analytical depth**, ensuring that historical context complements, not replaces, technical competence.

### Conclusion

- The debate over the UGC's mathematics curriculum reveals a fundamental tension between **cultural recognition and intellectual integrity**.
  - Acknowledging **India's mathematical heritage** is essential, but embedding it within a **nationalist framework** threatens to **undermine the universal, collaborative nature of knowledge**. **Mathematics belongs to humanity**, not to any single civilisation.
  - Education should empower students to **think critically and globally**, nurturing pride in heritage without **sacrificing scientific objectivity**. Only through such balance can India's educational reforms truly strengthen both **national identity** and **intellectual freedom**.
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