# Current Affairs – Notes

## 16 October 2026

**Notes PDF**

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## 1 International Day for the Eradication of Poverty – 17 October 2026

Important Days

### News

The UN observes 17 October every year as the 'International Day for the Eradication of Poverty'. Theme for 2026–2028: 'United for Peace and Human Rights'; 2026 focus: 'Safe Homes for All'. Over 2.8 billion people face some form of housing inadequacy. The UN commemoration was held at UN Headquarters, New York, on 16 Oct 2026, highlighting the Doha Political Declaration of the World Social Summit and the right to an adequate standard of living.

### Key facts

| | |
|---|---|
| **Date** | 17 October (annual) |
| **UN declaration** | UNGA resolution 47/196 – 22 Dec 1992 |
| **Origin** | 17 Oct 1987 – Trocadéro, Paris; Joseph Wresinski (ATD Fourth World) |
| **Theme** | 2026–28: United for Peace and Human Rights; 2026 focus: Safe Homes for All |
| **SDG** | Goal 1 – End poverty in all its forms everywhere |
| **World Bank** | International poverty line $3.00/day (2021 PPP; June 2025) |

### Background

- History: on 17 Oct 1987 a gathering in Paris honoured victims of extreme poverty; a commemorative stone was unveiled with the words of Father Joseph Wresinski, founder of ATD Fourth World: 'Wherever men and women are condemned to live in extreme poverty, human rights are violated.'
- India – multidimensional poverty: NITI Aayog discussion paper (Jan 2024) – 24.82 crore people escaped multidimensional poverty between 2013-14 and 2022-23; the headcount fell from 29.17% to 11.28%. MPI – 3 dimensions (health, education, standard of living), 12 indicators.
- Economy: in June 2025 the World Bank raised the international extreme poverty line from $2.15 to $3.00 a day (2021 PPP). Constitution: Articles 38 and 39 (Directive Principles) – reducing inequalities of income.

**Tamil Nadu link:** per NITI Aayog's National MPI 2023, Tamil Nadu's headcount fell from 4.76% (2015-16) to 2.20% (2019-21), against the national 24.85% to 14.96%. Kerala is lowest (0.55%).

## 2 Centre approves India's accession to the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA) as a full Contracting Party

International Relations

### News

The Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying announced on 14 Oct 2026 that the Centre has approved India's accession to the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA). India, a Cooperating Non-Contracting Party (CNCP) since 2022, will become a full Contracting Party (formal deposit of accession is a separate step). Indian-flagged vessels can then carry out authorised fishing of non-migratory stocks such as squid, toothfish and alfonsino in the SIOFA area, and India can join scientific assessments, action against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and the High Seas Boarding and Inspection (HSBI) scheme.

### Key facts

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|---|---|
| **Agreement** | Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA) – a Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (RFMO) |
| **Signed / in force** | 7 July 2006, Rome (FAO) / 21 June 2012 |
| **Secretariat** | La Réunion island (France) |
| **Coverage** | Non-migratory high-seas stocks – toothfish, alfonsino, orange roughy, squid; not tuna-like highly migratory species |
| **India's status** | CNCP since 2022 → Oct 2026 approval: full Contracting Party |
| **Related body** | Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) – India a member (accepted 1995; agreement in force 1996) |

### Background

- International law: UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS, 1982) – territorial sea 12 nautical miles; Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) up to 200 nm. Beyond lie the 'high seas', where RFMOs regulate fisheries.
- IOTC: the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission set up in 1993 under FAO; HQ Victoria (Seychelles). Highly migratory tunas come under IOTC; non-migratory high-seas stocks under SIOFA.
- Economy: India is the world's 2nd largest producer of fish and of aquaculture. About 65% of the ocean is high seas, dominated by China, Taiwan, Japan, South Korea and Spain. India issued 'Guidelines for High Seas Fisheries' in Dec 2025. Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) – 2020.

**Tamil Nadu link:** a Centre–State scheme began in 2017 (G.O. 139, 14 July 2017) to cut trawlers in Palk Bay and shift fishers to deep-sea tuna long-liners – unit cost ₹80 lakh per vessel with ₹56 lakh subsidy. Wider high-seas access can benefit Tamil Nadu's fishers too.

## 3 J&K and Ladakh High Court bans fuel-powered motorboats and jet skis on Dal Lake to curb pollution

Environment

### News

A Division Bench of the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh – Chief Justice Dr Pushpendra Singh Bhati and Justice Rajesh Sekhri – on 14 Oct 2026 barred fuel-powered motorboats, including motorised shikaras and jet skis, from Dal Lake, Srinagar, until further orders; violation will be treated as contempt. Government boats for emergency services, law and order, disaster management and safety are exempt. The Court ordered an expert-backed comprehensive motorboat policy and asked authorities to explore solar/electric boats. Case: Mohammad Rafiq Mir & Ors v UT of J&K; next hearing 30 Oct.

### Key facts

| | |
|---|---|
| **Court** | High Court of J&K and Ladakh – CJ Pushpendra Singh Bhati, Justice Rajesh Sekhri |
| **Date** | 14 Oct 2026; next hearing 30 Oct |
| **Banned** | Fuel motorboats, motorised shikaras, jet skis |
| **Exempt** | Emergency, law-and-order, disaster and safety boats |
| **Enforcement** | Lakes Conservation & Management Authority (LCMA), Tourism Dept, Police |
| **Way out** | Solar / electric boats |

### Background

- Dal Lake: Srinagar; about 18 sq km; 'Jewel in the crown of Kashmir'; causeways divide it into Gagribal, Lokut Dal, Bod Dal and Nagin basins. Floating gardens are called 'Rad'; Rup Lank (Char Chinari) island lies in Lokut Dal. The Zabarwan range overlooks it; Shalimar Bagh (Jahangir) is on its shore.
- Geography: the largest lake of J&K is not Dal but Wular (one of India's largest freshwater lakes, Jhelum basin). Dal is fed mainly by the Telbal stream.
- Constitution: the right to a pollution-free environment is part of Article 21 (Subhash Kumar v State of Bihar, 1991). Public Trust Doctrine – lakes, rivers and forests belong to the public, the State is their trustee – adopted by the Supreme Court in M.C. Mehta v Kamal Nath (1996).
- Science: engine fuel and oil leaks, noise and sewage add to eutrophication – weeds multiply and dissolved oxygen falls.

**Tamil Nadu link:** no direct link. Tamil Nadu's hill-station lakes also face tourism pressure – Ooty Lake was created in 1824 by John Sullivan, Collector of Coimbatore; the star-shaped Kodaikanal Lake was created in 1863.

## 4 SEWA Director Reema Nanavaty receives the 2026 Hillary Rodham Clinton Award

Awards

### News

Reema Nanavaty, Director of the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA), received the 'Hillary Rodham Clinton Award' of the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security (GIWPS) on 15 Oct 2026 at Gaston Hall, Georgetown University, Washington; Hillary Clinton presented it. It honours her work for the economic empowerment, livelihoods and resilience of informal women workers. 2026 theme: 'Women's Economic Empowerment: A Key for Peace and Security'. Tory Burch and Muhammad Yunus were the other 2026 awardees.

### Key facts

| | |
|---|---|
| **Award** | Hillary Rodham Clinton Award 2026 – GIWPS, Georgetown University |
| **Date/venue** | 15 Oct 2026 – Gaston Hall, Washington |
| **Theme** | Women's Economic Empowerment: A Key for Peace and Security |
| **Co-awardees** | Tory Burch (Tory Burch Foundation); Muhammad Yunus (Grameen Bank founder) |
| **Reema Nanavaty** | Born 1964, Ahmedabad; joined SEWA in 1985; Padma Shri 2013 |
| **SEWA** | 1972, Ahmedabad – founder Ela Bhatt |

### Background

- Reema Nanavaty: postgraduate in microbiology. She led SEWA's food security programme (one million households), the 'Hariyali' green energy and livelihoods initiative, and Gujarat earthquake rehabilitation. When FAO's Jacques Diouf Award (2013) was given to SEWA, she received it on the organisation's behalf.
- SEWA: a trade union of informal women workers founded in 1972 in Ahmedabad by Ela Bhatt (1933–2022). Ela Bhatt – Ramon Magsaysay Award (1977), Padma Shri (1985), Padma Bhushan (1986).
- Economy: most Indian women workers are in the informal sector; self-help groups (SHGs), microcredit and cooperatives drive their empowerment – SDG 5 (gender equality).
- GIWPS: research institute on women, peace and security. The 2025 awards honoured 'Women Safeguarding Democracy'.

**Tamil Nadu link:** Tamil Nadu pioneered the women's SHG movement – the SHG approach began in 1989 in Dharmapuri district with IFAD support; after its success, 'Mahalir Thittam' was extended to all districts with State funding from 1997-98. It is implemented by the Tamil Nadu Corporation for Development of Women (TNCDW, 1983).

## 5 FAO's SOFO 2026 – India first in area under active forest restoration (9.8 Mha); China second (7.9 Mha)

Environment

### News

FAO Director-General QU Dongyu launched 'The State of the World's Forests 2026' (SOFO 2026) on 28 Sep 2026 at the opening of the 28th session of the Committee on Forestry (COFO 28) at FAO headquarters, Rome. Its title: 'Restoring forests and landscapes: The way forward for a sustainable future'. Using Global Forest Resources Assessment 2025 (FRA 2025) data, India ranks first in the world in forest area under active restoration with 9.8 million ha, ahead of China (7.9 Mha) and Ethiopia (5.0 Mha). Note: by the measure in India's 7th National Report to the CBD (18.9 Mha under forest and landscape restoration), India is second after China.

### Key facts

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|---|---|
| **Report** | State of the World's Forests (SOFO) 2026 – FAO; biennial |
| **Launch** | 28 Sep 2026 – COFO 28, FAO HQ, Rome |
| **Focus** | Forest and Landscape Restoration (FLR) |
| **Ranking** | India 9.8 Mha (1), China 7.9 (2), Ethiopia 5.0 (3) |
| **Global** | Forests 4.14 bn ha (32% of land); degraded land 1.56 bn ha (incl. 460 Mha forest) |
| **Economics** | Up to $30 return per $1 invested in restoration |

### Background

- FRA 2025 (Oct 2025): India is 9th in the world in forest area (72.74 Mha, about 2% of the world's forests) and 3rd in annual net forest gain. Since 1990, 489 Mha of forest has been cleared.
- India State of Forest Report (ISFR) 2023 – Forest Survey of India (FSI), Dehradun; 18th biennial report: forest 7,15,343 sq km (21.76%) + tree cover 1,12,014 sq km (3.41%) = 25.17%. National Forest Policy 1988 goal – 33% of land under forest/tree cover.
- Global targets: under the Bonn Challenge India pledged to restore 26 Mha of degraded land by 2030 (UNCCD COP14, 2019, Greater Noida). Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework Target 2 – 30% of degraded ecosystems under effective restoration by 2030.
- Constitution: the 42nd Amendment (1976) moved 'Forests' from the State List to the Concurrent List and added Article 48A (State's duty) and Article 51A(g) (citizens' duty).

**Tamil Nadu link:** per ISFR 2023, Tamil Nadu's green cover is 24.47% (forest 20.34% + tree cover 4.13%). The 'Green Tamil Nadu Mission' (launched 24 Sep 2022) aims to raise green cover from 23.69% to 33% in 10 years.

## 6 Henley Passport Index (Oct 2026) – India 84th; visa-free access to 55 destinations

Indices & Reports

### News

In the Henley Passport Index released in October 2026 by London-based Henley & Partners, the Indian passport ranks 84th (tied with Algeria and Mauritania). Indians can reach 55 destinations without a prior visa (visa-free / visa-on-arrival). That is one place up from 85th in Oct 2025, though destinations fell from 57 to 55. India's 2026 positions: January 80, February 75, May 78, July 81, October 84. Singapore is first with 193 destinations; Japan, South Korea and the UAE (188) are second; the USA is 10th (180).

### Key facts

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|---|---|
| **Publisher** | Henley & Partners (London); Oct 2026 edition; updated quarterly |
| **Data** | International Air Transport Association (IATA) – Timatic database; 199 passports, 227 destinations |
| **India** | 84th (tied with Algeria, Mauritania); 55 destinations |
| **Top** | Singapore – 193; Japan, South Korea, UAE – 188; Sweden – 187 |
| **Others** | USA 10th (180); UK 6th (184); Afghanistan last in the earlier 2026 editions |

### Background

- History: Christian Kaelin started it in 2005 as the 'Henley & Partners Visa Restrictions Index'; it was renamed the 'Henley Passport Index' in January 2018. It uses IATA's Timatic data plus the firm's own research.
- Polity / law: Indian passports are issued under the Passports Act, 1967; the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) is responsible. In Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India (1978), the Supreme Court held that the right to travel abroad is part of personal liberty under Article 21.
- Sci-tech: Passport Seva Programme 2.0 (PSP V2.0) went live on 26 May 2025 across 37 Passport Offices, 93 Passport Seva Kendras and 450 Post Office PSKs; GPSP V2.0 for missions abroad followed on 28 Oct 2025. The e-passport carries an RFID chip and antenna storing biometric data to ICAO standards.

**Tamil Nadu link:** Tamil Nadu has four Regional Passport Offices (RPOs) – Chennai, Madurai, Tiruchirappalli and Coimbatore. Passport strength matters directly to the many Tamils who travel to the Gulf, Singapore and Malaysia for work and travel.

## 7 UNDP Human Development Report 2025 – India 130th of 193; HDI value 0.685

Indices & Reports

### News

UNDP released the Human Development Report 2025, titled 'A matter of choice: People and possibilities in the age of AI', on 6 May 2025. India is 130th of 193 countries (133rd for 2022); its HDI rose from 0.676 to 0.685 (2023 data) – 'medium human development'. Life expectancy reached 72 years, the highest since the index began. Iceland is first (0.972); South Sudan is last (193rd).

### Key facts

| | |
|---|---|
| **Release** | 6 May 2025; UNDP; title – 'A matter of choice: People and possibilities in the age of AI' |
| **India** | 130/193; HDI 0.685 (2023); medium human development |
| **India's indicators** | Life expectancy 72; expected schooling ≈13 yrs; mean schooling 6.9 yrs; GNI per capita $9,047 (2021 PPP) |
| **Inequality** | Inequality cuts India's HDI by 30.7%; Gender Inequality Index 102/193 |
| **Top / bottom** | Iceland (0.972), Norway, Switzerland / South Sudan (193) |
| **Neighbours** | Bangladesh 130 (tied with India), Nepal 145, Pakistan 168 |

### Background

- History: UNDP published the first Human Development Report in 1990. The HDI was devised by Pakistani economist Mahbub ul Haq, working with Indian economist Amartya Sen (1998 Economics Nobel). Sen's 'capability approach' is its theoretical basis.
- Three HDI dimensions: (1) a long and healthy life – life expectancy at birth; (2) knowledge – mean and expected years of schooling; (3) a decent standard of living – GNI per capita (PPP). Groups: very high (≥0.800), high (0.700–0.799), medium (0.550–0.699), low (<0.550).
- AI findings: India has the highest self-reported AI skill penetration in the report; 20% of Indian AI researchers now stay in India (almost none in 2019). India's HDI has risen by over 53% since 1990.

**Tamil Nadu link:** the Tamil Nadu State Planning Commission brought out the 'Tamil Nadu Human Development Report' in 2003 (it is also listed on UNDP's HDR site). In the 2017 Tamil Nadu Human Development Report, Kanniyakumari district ranked first in HDI and Ariyalur last.

## 8 World Happiness Report 2026 – India 116th of 147; Finland tops for the 9th year in a row

Indices & Reports

### News

The World Happiness Report 2026 was released on 20 March 2026, the International Day of Happiness, by Oxford University's Wellbeing Research Centre with Gallup and the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (UN SDSN). India is 116th of 147 countries (118th in 2025). Finland is first for the 9th year running; Iceland is 2nd, Denmark 3rd, Costa Rica 4th. Afghanistan is last (147th). This year's special theme: Happiness and Social Media (its effect on young people's well-being).

### Key facts

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|---|---|
| **Release** | 20 Mar 2026; Oxford Wellbeing Research Centre + Gallup + UN SDSN |
| **India** | 116/147 (118th in 2025) |
| **Top** | Finland (9th straight year); Iceland 2, Denmark 3, Costa Rica 4 |
| **Bottom** | Afghanistan (147), Sierra Leone (146), Malawi (145) |
| **Neighbours** | China 65, Nepal 99, Pakistan 104, Bangladesh 127, Sri Lanka 134 |
| **Others** | USA 23rd; theme – Happiness and Social Media |

### Background

- Method: in the Gallup World Poll people rate their lives on a 0–10 'Cantril Ladder'; a three-year average is used. Six explaining factors: GDP per capita, social support, healthy life expectancy, freedom to make life choices, generosity and perceptions of corruption.
- History: the first World Happiness Report came out in 2012. The UN General Assembly declared 20 March as the International Day of Happiness in June 2012 (resolution 66/281); it has been observed since 2013. Bhutan led the initiative.
- Bhutan's 'Gross National Happiness' (GNH): a concept put forward in the 1970s by the Fourth King, Jigme Singye Wangchuck – measuring people's well-being rather than GDP alone; 4 pillars and 9 domains.

**Tamil Nadu link:** the report ranks only countries; there is no State-wise data. For comparison: Madhya Pradesh was the first Indian State to set up a 'Department of Happiness' (2016).

## 9 Global Peace Index 2026 – India 127th of 163 countries; Iceland most peaceful, Russia least

Indices & Reports

### News

The Sydney-headquartered Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP) released the 20th Global Peace Index (GPI 2026) in June 2026, covering 163 countries and territories (99.7% of the world's population). India is 127th with a score of 2.409 – down 12 places from 115th in 2025. Iceland (1.161) remains the most peaceful country; Russia (163rd) is ranked least peaceful for the second year in a row. The USA is 134th. Global peacefulness has declined for the 12th year in a row.

### Key facts

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|---|---|
| **Publisher** | Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP), Sydney; June 2026; 20th edition |
| **Method** | 3 domains, 23 indicators; lower score = more peaceful |
| **India** | 127/163 (score 2.409); 115th in 2025 |
| **Top 5** | Iceland, New Zealand, Switzerland, Slovenia, Ireland |
| **Bottom 5** | Russia (163), Sudan (162), DR Congo (161), Ukraine (160), Israel (159) |
| **Neighbours** | Bhutan 16, Sri Lanka 67, Nepal 111, Bangladesh 117, China 118, Myanmar 151, Pakistan 152, Afghanistan 157 |

### Background

- The GPI's three domains: (1) Societal Safety & Security – crime, political instability, terrorism; (2) Ongoing Domestic & International Conflict; (3) Militarisation – military spending, arms imports and exports, etc. 23 indicators in all.
- History: the GPI has been published every year since 2007; the IEP was founded by Australian entrepreneur Steve Killelea. Iceland has been first every year since 2008 – it has no standing army and low crime.
- Reasons cited for India's fall: border tensions with neighbours, domestic incidents such as the April 2025 Pahalgam terror attack, higher militarisation and arms imports. In South Asia, Bhutan (16th) is the most peaceful, Sri Lanka (67th) second.

**Tamil Nadu link:** the GPI ranks only countries; there is no State-level data. A Tamil Nadu fact related to its 'militarisation' domain: one of India's two Defence Industrial Corridors announced in 2018 is in Tamil Nadu – with five nodes at Chennai, Hosur, Salem, Coimbatore and Tiruchirappalli (the other is in Uttar Pradesh).

## 10 Global Innovation Index 2026 – India 38th of 139 economies; first among lower-middle-income economies

Indices & Reports

### News

The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) released the 19th Global Innovation Index (GII 2026) in Geneva on 29 Sept 2026. India is 38th of 139 economies (also 38th in 2025); 1st among 36 lower-middle-income economies; 1st of 11 in Central and Southern Asia (followed by Kazakhstan 73, Bhutan 74). It is 49th in innovation inputs and 25th in outputs. Switzerland is 1st for the 16th year running; Sweden 2nd, the USA 3rd. In the top-100 cluster ranking released earlier on 8 Sept 2026: Bengaluru 25, Delhi 27, Mumbai 43, Chennai 79.

### Key facts

| | |
|---|---|
| **Release** | 29 Sept 2026, Geneva – WIPO; 19th edition |
| **Top ranks** | 1 Switzerland, 2 Sweden, 3 USA, 4 Rep. of Korea, 5 Singapore, 6 UK; China 10 |
| **India** | 38/139; inputs 49, outputs 25; an 'innovation overperformer' for 16 years |
| **India – strengths** | 1st in ICT services exports; 4th in late-stage venture capital deals |
| **Clusters** | World No. 1 – Shenzhen–Hong Kong–Guangzhou; India: Bengaluru 25, Delhi 27, Mumbai 43, Chennai 79 |
| **Framework** | About 80 indicators; 5 input pillars + 2 output pillars |

### Background

- The GII was first published in 2007 and is now published by WIPO – a UN specialised agency headquartered in Geneva (Switzerland), set up by the 1967 Convention; India joined in 1975.
- Framework: innovation inputs – institutions, human capital & research, infrastructure, market sophistication, business sophistication; innovation outputs – knowledge & technology outputs, creative outputs. Overall score = average of the two. 2026 focus – deep-science entrepreneurship ('Powering entrepreneurs at the frontier of science').
- India's trend: 40th in 2022 and 2023, 39th in 2024, 38th in 2025 and 2026. WIPO notes India is still weak in researcher numbers and scientific articles. Among the top 100 clusters, China has 25 and the USA 20.

**Tamil Nadu link:** Chennai is 79th among WIPO's top 100 innovation clusters – up 5 places from 2025; one of India's 4 clusters. In NIRF 2025, IIT Madras was No. 1 overall for the 7th consecutive year.

## 11 Global Hunger Index 2026 – India 100th of 122 countries; 'Serious' category

Indices & Reports

### News

The 2026 Global Hunger Index (GHI) was released in Oct 2026 (launch event 14 Oct, Berlin) with the theme 'No Security Without Food Security'. Of 136 countries assessed, 122 were ranked. India is 100th (tied with Ethiopia) with a score of 24.1 – 'Serious'; it was 102nd of 123 in 2025. Sri Lanka 53, Nepal 72, Bangladesh 84, Pakistan 106, Afghanistan 108. Last is Somalia (122, score 47.0). The world score is 18.1 ('Moderate').

### Key facts

| | |
|---|---|
| **Publishers** | Welthungerhilfe (Germany), IFHV (Ruhr University Bochum, Germany), Helvetas (Switzerland) |
| **India** | 100/122; score 24.1 (2018: 25.8; 2000: 38.1); 'Serious' |
| **India indicators** | Undernourishment 9.8%; child stunting 29.3%; child wasting 19.0% (highest in South Asia) |
| **4 indicators** | Undernourishment (1/3), under-5 mortality (1/3), stunting (1/6), wasting (1/6) |
| **Severity scale** | ≤9.9 low; 10–19.9 moderate; 20–34.9 serious; 35–49.9 alarming; ≥50 extremely alarming |
| **Neighbours** | Sri Lanka 53, Nepal 72, Bangladesh 84, Pakistan 106, Afghanistan 108; China – in the group of 24 countries scoring below 5 (ranks 1–24) |

### Background

- The GHI is a peer-reviewed annual report scoring countries on a 0–100 scale – lower is better. The 24 countries scoring below 5 are not ranked individually (jointly 1–24). In 2026, 8 countries are 'alarming': Somalia, DR Congo, Chad, Madagascar, and provisionally Burundi, Sudan, South Sudan and Yemen.
- Terms: stunting – low height for age (chronic undernutrition); wasting – low weight for height (acute undernutrition). Both are measured for children under 5.
- Government of India's stand: in earlier years (2022, 2023) the Ministry of Women and Child Development rejected the GHI as an 'erroneous measure of hunger', arguing that 3 of its 4 indicators relate to children's health and do not represent the whole population. India's schemes: POSHAN Abhiyaan (2018), PM-POSHAN, PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (free foodgrains to over 80 crore people), National Food Security Act 2013.

**Tamil Nadu link:** Tamil Nadu pioneered school meal schemes – free midday meals under Kamaraj (1956); MGR's 'Nutritious Noon Meal Scheme' (1 July 1982); the 'Chief Minister's Breakfast Scheme' launched at Madurai on 15 Sept 2022.

## 12 New terminal at Leh's Kushok Bakula Rimpochee Airport – India's first with geothermal heating; opened by PM

Infrastructure

### News

On 15 Oct 2026 Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually inaugurated the new passenger terminal of Kushok Bakula Rimpochee Airport, Leh – one of 5 projects worth about ₹3,350 crore. Built for about ₹640 crore over 23,800 sq m, it is the country's first terminal with a geothermal heating and cooling system; it also uses solar power. It is designed to handle 35 lakh passengers a year. The project was executed by the Airports Authority of India (AAI).

### Key facts

| | |
|---|---|
| **Inauguration** | 15 Oct 2026 – PM Modi (virtually) |
| **Cost / Area** | About ₹640 crore; 23,800 sq m |
| **Capacity** | 35 lakh passengers a year; up to 54 flights a day |
| **Geothermal system** | 457 boreholes (110–120 m deep each) – heating, cooling, hot water; rooftop solar PV |
| **Airport** | Elevation 3,256 m – India's highest commercial airport; IATA code IXL; owned by IAF, run by AAI |
| **Other projects** | Nimmu–Padum–Darcha road (298 km, BRO, via Shinkun La); Hanu 9 MW hydro project; Petroglyph park at Sindhu Ghat |

### Background

- Science: geothermal energy is heat from the Earth's interior. Shallow ground stays at a nearly constant temperature all year; ground-source heat pumps draw heat in during winter and push it out in summer to condition buildings.
- Geothermal in India: the Geological Survey of India (GSI) has mapped 381 hot springs; theoretical potential is about 10.6 GW. Key sites – Puga valley (Ladakh), Tattapani (Chhattisgarh), Manikaran (Himachal Pradesh). The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) notified the first 'National Policy on Geothermal Energy' in Sept 2025.
- Puga project: in Puga valley, eastern Ladakh (about 14,000 ft), the ONGC Energy Centre has drilled geothermal wells; the next phase is a 1 MW pilot power plant. It lies on the Indus suture zone.
- Name: the airport is named after the 19th Kushok Bakula Rimpochee, a Buddhist monk. The PM laid the foundation stone of the new terminal in Feb 2019.

**Tamil Nadu link:** Tamil Nadu has no geothermal airport project. Related fact – PM Modi inaugurated the new integrated terminal (over ₹1,100 crore) of Tiruchirappalli International Airport on 2 Jan 2024.

## 13 Ladakh notifies Sankoo as its eighth district – carved out of Kargil district

Governance

### News

On 16 Oct 2026 the Revenue Department of the UT of Ladakh issued notification S.O. 284 creating 'Sankoo' district, approved by Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena. Four tehsils of Kargil district – Sankoo, GM Pore, TSG and Taisuru – form the new district, with headquarters at Sankoo. The notification was issued under Section 5 of the J&K Land Revenue Act, 1996. Five new districts notified on 27 Apr 2026 had taken Ladakh to 7 districts; with Sankoo it now has 8.

### Key facts

| | |
|---|---|
| **Notification** | S.O. 284, 16 Oct 2026 – Ladakh Revenue Dept; approved by LG Vinai Kumar Saxena |
| **Parent district** | Kargil – 4 tehsils: Sankoo, GM Pore, TSG, Taisuru |
| **Location** | Suru valley; about 42 km south of Kargil town |
| **Original districts** | Leh, Kargil (Ladakh district split in 1979) |
| **Apr 2026 districts** | From Leh: Nubra (Diskit), Sham (Khaltse), Changthang (Nyoma); from Kargil: Zanskar (Padum), Drass |
| **Total** | 8 districts |

### Background

- History: the Union Home Ministry announced five new districts on 26 Aug 2024; they were notified in the gazette on 27 Apr 2026. Residents of Sankoo and Shakar-Chiktan protested at the time, demanding districts of their own.
- Polity: under the J&K Reorganisation Act 2019, Ladakh became a Union Territory without a legislature on 31 Oct 2019, headed by a Lieutenant Governor. Vinai Kumar Saxena took oath as the 4th LG on 13 Mar 2026, succeeding Kavinder Gupta. Leh (1995) and Kargil (2003) have Autonomous Hill Development Councils (LAHDC).
- Sixth Schedule demand: the Leh Apex Body and the Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) seek statehood and Sixth Schedule safeguards. The Sixth Schedule – Articles 244(2) and 275(1) – provides autonomous district councils for tribal areas of 4 States: Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram.
- Geography: the Suru is a tributary of the Indus, flowing south to north past Kargil. At Sankoo the Lingber Lungpa stream joins the Suru. NH-301 (Kargil–Pensi La–Padum) runs through the area.

**Tamil Nadu link:** there is no direct Tamil Nadu link. For comparison – Tamil Nadu has 38 districts; Mayiladuthurai (2020), carved out of Nagapattinam, is the 38th. Five districts – Kallakurichi, Tenkasi, Chengalpattu, Tirupathur and Ranipet – were created in 2019.

## 14 Gujarat expands 'Shramik Annapurna' meal scheme – 101 new centres in 28 districts; full meal for ₹5

Welfare Schemes

### News

On 16 Oct 2026 Gujarat CM Bhupendra Patel launched 101 new meal centres in 28 districts under the 'Shramik Annapurna Yojana' for construction workers, and served meals at Chanakyapuri, Ahmedabad. Construction workers and their families get a meal of rotis, vegetables, dal, rice, pickle and jaggery for ₹5 per person, with a sweet once a week. Daily meals will rise from about 35,000 to about 45,000. Over 5 crore meals have been served so far; sites with 50+ workers also get doorstep delivery (about 27 lakh meals). Media reports put the total number of centres variously at 372 and 394.

### Key facts

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|---|---|
| **Date** | 16 Oct 2026 – CM Bhupendra Patel (Chanakyapuri, Ahmedabad) |
| **Expansion** | 101 new centres in 28 districts |
| **Price** | ₹5 per person (₹10 at launch in 2017) |
| **Beneficiaries** | Construction workers & families; ~45,000 meals/day (earlier 35,000+) |
| **Implementer** | Gujarat Building & Other Construction Workers Welfare Board; Labour, Skill Development & Employment Dept |
| **Record** | 5 crore+ meals so far; ~27 lakh delivered at sites |

### Background

- Building and Other Construction Workers (BOCW) Act 1996 + Welfare Cess Act 1996: a cess of 1–2% of construction cost; a welfare board in every State. These are now subsumed in the new Labour Codes (in force from 21 Nov 2025).
- e-Shram portal – launched by the Union Labour Ministry on 26 Aug 2021; national database of unorganised workers.
- Constitution: Arts. 39(e), 41, 43 (Directive Principles) – workers' welfare, living wage; Art. 47 – duty of the State to raise the level of nutrition. 'Welfare of labour' is in the Concurrent List.

**Tamil Nadu link:** the pioneer of subsidised meals, 'Amma Unavagam', was launched in Chennai in 2013 by CM J. Jayalalithaa (idli at ₹1). The 'Chief Minister's Breakfast Scheme' for primary school children was launched in Madurai on 15 Sep 2022. Tamil Nadu also has a Construction Workers Welfare Board.

## 15 HAL-built ALH MK-III helicopter (CG 875) inducted into 831 Squadron at Coast Guard Air Station Ratnagiri

Defence

### News

On 13 Oct 2026 the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) inducted the indigenous Advanced Light Helicopter ALH MK-III (CG 875), built by Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL), into 831 Squadron at Coast Guard Air Station Ratnagiri, Maharashtra. The station's Commanding Officer received it with a water cannon salute. It is the first of five ALH MK-IIIs allotted to 831 Squadron. It has advanced radar, an Electro-Optical Pod, an Automatic Identification System (AIS) and a 12.7 mm heavy machine gun. It will boost surveillance and search-and-rescue over Region (West), including the Maharashtra coast.

### Key facts

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|---|---|
| **Date / place** | 13 Oct 2026 – Coast Guard Air Station Ratnagiri (Maharashtra) |
| **Helicopter** | ALH MK-III (maritime) – CG 875; built by HAL, Bengaluru |
| **Squadron** | 831 Squadron (CG) – first of 5 allotted |
| **Equipment** | Radar, EO Pod, AIS, 12.7 mm heavy machine gun |
| **Contract** | Mar 2024 – ₹8,073 crore with HAL: 34 ALH (ICG 9, Army 25); Mar 2026 – 6 more for ICG (₹2,901 crore) |
| **Earlier delivery** | 10 Apr 2026 – 4 ALH MK-III (MR) – to Kochi and Porbandar squadrons |

### Background

- Indian Coast Guard: set up as an interim body on 1 Feb 1977; made a formal armed force by the Coast Guard Act, 1978. Under the Ministry of Defence; HQ New Delhi; motto 'Vayam Rakshamah' (We Protect).
- ALH 'Dhruv': a twin-engine multi-role helicopter designed and built by HAL. MK-III has a glass cockpit and night capability; roles – maritime surveillance, search and rescue, casualty evacuation, coastal security and anti-piracy.
- ICG regions: West (Mumbai), East (Chennai), North-East (Kolkata), North-West (Gandhinagar), Andaman & Nicobar (Port Blair). Ratnagiri is in Region (West), on the Konkan coast.

**Tamil Nadu link:** the Coast Guard Region (East) HQ is in Chennai. 840 Squadron (ALH MK-III) was commissioned at Coast Guard Air Station Chennai on 30 Nov 2022 – for surveillance of the Tamil Nadu and Andhra coasts.

## 16 Clean hydrogen: India ranks 3rd in the world in cumulative contracted volumes – BNEF 'India Transition Factbook 2026'

Energy

### News

According to BloombergNEF's 'India Transition Factbook 2026' (commissioned by Bloomberg Philanthropies; 13 Oct 2026), India ranks third in the world in cumulative contracted clean hydrogen volumes. In the first four months of 2026, Indian firms signed binding contracts to supply 0.3 million tonnes a year of clean hydrogen – more than firms in any other country (including green ammonia exports). Three major binding agreements to export over 1 million tonnes a year of green ammonia were also signed. Union New and Renewable Energy Minister Pralhad Joshi highlighted this on 16 Oct.

### Key facts

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|---|---|
| **Report** | BNEF 'India Transition Factbook 2026' (13 Oct 2026) |
| **India** | 3rd globally in cumulative contracted clean hydrogen |
| **2026 (Jan–Apr)** | Binding deals for 0.3 Mt/yr – highest of any country |
| **Exports** | 3 major green ammonia export deals – 1 Mt+/yr |
| **Reason** | Among the world's cheapest green ammonia – cheap clean power, subsidies, competitive auctions |
| **Minister** | Pralhad Joshi – Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) |

### Background

- National Green Hydrogen Mission: Union Cabinet approval 4 Jan 2023; outlay ₹19,744 crore; target – 5 million tonnes (MMT) a year of green hydrogen by 2030. Nodal ministry – MNRE.
- SIGHT (Strategic Interventions for Green Hydrogen Transition) – ₹17,490 crore: incentives for electrolyser manufacturing and green hydrogen production.
- Science: hydrogen – atomic number 1, the lightest element. Grey hydrogen – from natural gas (steam methane reforming); blue – the same with carbon capture; green – by electrolysis of water using renewable power.
- Green hydrogen hubs: in Oct 2025 MNRE recognised three major ports as 'Green Hydrogen Hubs' – Deendayal (Kandla, Gujarat), Paradip (Odisha) and V.O. Chidambaranar (Thoothukudi, Tamil Nadu).

**Tamil Nadu link:** V.O. Chidambaranar Port, Thoothukudi, is one of India's three 'Green Hydrogen Hubs' – a key east-coast base for green hydrogen/ammonia production and export.

## 17 Dr Sudha Yadav sworn in as Governor of Karnataka – the State's second woman Governor

Polity

### News

Dr Sudha Yadav was sworn in as Governor of Karnataka on Friday, 16 Oct 2026, at Lok Bhavan (formerly Raj Bhavan), Bengaluru. Karnataka High Court Chief Justice Vibhu Bakhru administered the oaths of office and secrecy. Chief Secretary Shalini Rajneesh read out the warrant of appointment. CM D.K. Shivakumar, Deputy CM G. Parameshwara and outgoing Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot attended. President Droupadi Murmu appointed her on 12 Oct. She is Karnataka's second woman Governor after V.S. Ramadevi.

### Key facts

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|---|---|
| **Sworn in** | 16 Oct 2026 – Lok Bhavan, Bengaluru |
| **Oath by** | Karnataka HC Chief Justice Vibhu Bakhru |
| **Predecessor** | Thaawarchand Gehlot (since 11 July 2021) |
| **Background** | BJP, Haryana; Mahendragarh MP 1999–2004; PhD Chemistry (Roorkee) |
| **Party roles** | BJP OBC Morcha in-charge; Parliamentary Board member (Aug 2022) |
| **Personal** | Husband, BSF Deputy Commandant Sukhbir Singh Yadav, killed in 1999 Kargil war |

### Background

- Constitution: Art. 153 – a Governor for each State; 155 – appointed by the President by warrant under hand and seal; 156 – term 5 years (during the pleasure of the President); 157 – citizen of India, 35 years of age.
- Art. 158 – conditions of office (cannot be an MP/MLA); 159 – oath administered by the High Court Chief Justice (or senior-most judge in absence); 161 – pardoning power.
- Karnataka: formed as 'Mysore State' on 1 Nov 1956, renamed 'Karnataka' on 1 Nov 1973; capital Bengaluru. Raj Bhavans are now called 'Lok Bhavan'.
- In the 1999 Lok Sabha election she defeated Congress's Rao Inderjit Singh in Mahendragarh (Haryana). She was also a member of the National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) – given constitutional status under Art. 338B by the 102nd Amendment (2018).

**Tamil Nadu link:** in the same reshuffle on 12 Oct 2026, Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar (Kerala Governor, holding additional charge of TN since March 2026) was appointed Governor of Tamil Nadu. The previous Governor, R.N. Ravi, had been moved to West Bengal. India's first woman Supreme Court judge, M. Fathima Beevi, served as Governor of Tamil Nadu.

## 18 MoD signs ₹4,106-crore contracts – 'Varunastra' anti-submarine torpedoes for Navy, GSAT-7C satellite for IAF

Defence

### News

On 15 Oct 2026 in New Delhi, the Ministry of Defence signed two contracts worth about ₹4,106 crore in all. (1) 'Varunastra' Heavy Weight Torpedoes for the Indian Navy – ₹1,543 crore – with Bharat Dynamics Ltd (BDL), Hyderabad. It is an indigenous ship-launched anti-submarine torpedo that can engage enemy submarines at long range, developed by DRDO's Naval Science and Technological Laboratory (NSTL). (2) A dedicated communication satellite, GSAT-7C, for the Indian Air Force – ₹2,563 crore – with NewSpace India Ltd (NSIL), Bengaluru.

### Key facts

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|---|---|
| **Date / place** | 15 Oct 2026, New Delhi – in presence of A. Anbarasu, Addl. Secretary & DG (Acquisition) |
| **Total value** | About ₹4,106 crore (2 contracts) |
| **Varunastra** | ₹1,543 crore – BDL, Hyderabad – for Navy; ship-launched anti-submarine heavyweight torpedo |
| **Developer** | NSTL (DRDO), Visakhapatnam; handed to Navy 29 June 2016 |
| **GSAT-7C** | ₹2,563 crore – NSIL, Bengaluru – secure communication for IAF |
| **GSAT-7C approval** | DAC – 23 Nov 2021 (AoN); to link software-defined radios (SDRs) |

### Background

- Varunastra means the weapon of Varuna (sea god). It runs on electric (silver oxide–zinc battery) propulsion; speed over 40 knots. Then Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar handed it to the Navy on 29 June 2016.
- Defence procurement: the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) is chaired by the Defence Minister and grants Acceptance of Necessity (AoN). Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP) 2020 gives top priority to 'Buy (Indian-IDDM)' (Indigenously Designed, Developed and Manufactured).
- Companies: BDL – Defence Ministry PSU, Hyderabad; makes missiles and torpedoes. NSIL – ISRO's commercial arm under the Department of Space (2019), Bengaluru.
- Military satellites: GSAT-7 'Rukmini' (2013) – for the Navy; GSAT-7A (2018, GSLV-F11) – for the IAF. GSAT-7C continues the series.

**Tamil Nadu link:** the 'Tamil Nadu Defence Industrial Corridor' has 5 nodes – Chennai, Hosur, Salem, Coimbatore and Tiruchirappalli. The Navy's anti-submarine P-8I aircraft are based at INS Rajali, Arakkonam.

## 19 Chandigarh's Sukhna wetland and UP's Sauj Jheel (Mainpuri) take India's Ramsar sites from 101 to 103; Tamil Nadu (20) tops

Environment

### News

On 15 Oct 2026 Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav announced that Chandigarh's Sukhna wetland (Ramsar site no. 2602) and Sauj Jheel near Kishni, Mainpuri district, Uttar Pradesh (no. 2603) had been designated Ramsar sites, taking India's tally from 101 to 103. Sukhna is Chandigarh's first Ramsar site; Sauj Jheel takes UP's count to 14. Tamil Nadu leads with 20 sites, and UP is second with 14.

### Key facts

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|---|---|
| **Announced** | 15 Oct 2026 – Union Minister Bhupender Yadav; India 101 → 103 |
| **Sukhna** | Chandigarh; Shivalik foothills; man-made lake formed in 1958 by damming the Sukhna Choe; Chandigarh's first Ramsar site |
| **Sauj Jheel** | Kishni, Mainpuri district, UP; shallow Gangetic-floodplain lake; 30,000+ waterbirds; Sarus crane, Greater spotted eagle (Vulnerable) |
| **Species (Sukhna)** | Common pochard (Vulnerable), Pallas's fish eagle and black pond turtle (both Endangered); Central Asian Flyway |
| **State count** | Tamil Nadu 20 (first); Uttar Pradesh 14 (second) |
| **Mainpuri** | Now two Ramsar sites, with Saman Bird Sanctuary (2019) |

### Background

- Ramsar Convention: signed on 2 Feb 1971 at Ramsar, Iran; in force from 1975. 2 Feb is World Wetlands Day. India joined on 1 Feb 1982; its first sites were Chilika Lake (Odisha) and Keoladeo National Park (Rajasthan), 1981.
- Montreux Record: a list of Ramsar sites at risk of ecological change; from India, Keoladeo and Loktak (Manipur) are on it; Chilika was removed in 2002. Ramsar COP15 – July 2025, Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe.
- UP's 2026 additions: Patna Bird Sanctuary (Etah), Shekha Jheel (Aligarh – 99th) and Jai Prakash Narayan Bird Sanctuary / Surha Tal (Ballia – 100th, June 2026). The 101st was Glaw Lake (Arunachal Pradesh, Aug 2026). India has the most Ramsar sites in Asia and is third in the world (after the UK and Mexico).
- History: Sukhna Lake was created in 1958 by Chandigarh's planner Le Corbusier and chief engineer P.L. Varma. Its catchment has been notified as the Sukhna Wildlife Sanctuary.

**Tamil Nadu link:** with 20 Ramsar sites Tamil Nadu leads the country. Its first was Point Calimere (Kodiakkarai) Wildlife and Bird Sanctuary, 2002. In Jan 2025 the Sakkarakottai and Therthangal bird sanctuaries of Ramanathapuram district were added, making 20. Vedanthangal (Chengalpattu) and the Gulf of Mannar Marine Biosphere Reserve are also Ramsar sites.

## 20 Cotton Revival Mission in Tamil Nadu – ₹26.21 crore sanctioned for 2026–27; Minister R. Vinoth urges farmers to benefit

Agriculture

### News

In a statement on 16 Oct 2026, Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Minister R. Vinoth said ₹26.21 crore has been sanctioned for 2026–27 for the 'Cotton Revival Mission' – a five-year scheme jointly funded by the Centre and the State – and ₹10.48 crore released as the first instalment. Close planting, high-density planting and extra-long-staple (ELS) cotton are prioritised; farmers in 22 districts can apply at block agricultural extension centres. The mission was announced in the 2026–27 Agriculture Budget (6 Aug 2026).

### Key facts

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|---|---|
| **Funds** | ₹26.21 crore for 2026–27; first instalment ₹10.48 crore; 5-year scheme (Centre–State) |
| **Minister** | R. Vinoth – Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare |
| **Present status** | About 1.27 lakh ha; about 2.50 lakh bales |
| **Demo subsidy (per ha)** | Close planting ₹14,000; high-density ₹18,500; ELS cotton ₹9,500; integrated crop management ₹7,500 |
| **Other help** | Seed subsidy; 100% subsidy on liquid biofertilisers, biocontrol agents, micronutrients, TNAU growth promoter; drone spraying; training |
| **Districts** | 22 – incl. Ariyalur, Coimbatore, Cuddalore, Dharmapuri, Dindigul, Perambalur, Ramanathapuram, Salem, Theni, Virudhunagar |

### Background

- Geography: cotton is a Kharif crop (Gossypium); black soil (regur) suits it best; it needs high temperature, light rain or irrigation, about 210 frost-free days and bright sunshine. One bale = 170 kg of lint.
- Science: Bt cotton carries a gene from the bacterium Bacillus thuringiensis and resists bollworms; approved for commercial cultivation in India in 2002 – the only GM crop approved for commercial cultivation in India.
- Central scheme: 'Mission for Cotton Productivity' – announced in the Union Budget 2025–26; approved by the Union Cabinet in May 2026; ₹5,659 crore for 2026–27 to 2030–31; ELS cotton, high-density planting and the 'Kasturi Cotton Bharat' brand.
- Economy: Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) – 1970, Ministry of Textiles; it buys cotton at the minimum support price (MSP). ICAR-Central Institute for Cotton Research (CICR) – Nagpur; its regional station is at Coimbatore.

**Tamil Nadu link:** Coimbatore is the 'Manchester of South India' for its spinning mills; Tiruppur is the knitwear export hub. Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU) and the CICR regional station are both in Coimbatore. As much of the cotton for the State's textile industry comes from other States, the mission aims to raise local output.

## 21 Neyveli and Tiruchi badlands are Mars-analogue sites – University of Kerala scientists

Science

### News

A team led by Dr Sajin Kumar K.S. (DST-FIST Project Coordinator), Department of Geology, University of Kerala (Thiruvananthapuram), has identified Martian-analogue sites at Neyveli and the Tiruchirappalli badlands in Tamil Nadu and in Chile's Atacama Desert. Hydrous sulphate minerals – 'melanterite' (iron sulphate) formed from marcasite in the Neyveli lignite beds, and 'gypsum' at Tiruchi and Atacama – were confirmed with a laser Raman spectrometer. The work appeared as two papers in the 'Journal of Geophysical Research: Planets'; the Department of Science and Technology (DST) announced it on 16 Oct 2026.

### Key facts

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|---|---|
| **Institution** | University of Kerala, Dept of Geology; led by Dr Sajin Kumar K.S.; funded by DST-FIST |
| **Neyveli (Cuddalore dist.)** | Melanterite ($FeSO_4 \cdot 7H_2O$) – formed within 23 days from marcasite ($FeS_2$) in lignite exposed to air; first record in Peninsular India |
| **Tiruchi badlands** | Gypsum ($CaSO_4 \cdot 2H_2O$) – semi-arid terrain; gypsum also at Atacama, Chile |
| **Significance** | Melanterite – short-lived wet, acidic conditions on Mars; gypsum – past water, may preserve biosignatures |
| **Tool / journal** | Laser Raman spectrometer; Journal of Geophysical Research: Planets (2 papers) |

### Background

- An analogue site is a place on Earth whose geology, chemistry or environment resembles another planet. ISRO's space analogue mission 'HOPE' (Himalayan Outpost for Planetary Exploration) was held in Ladakh's Tso Kar valley on 1–10 Aug 2025; India's first analog space mission had been held earlier at Leh in Nov 2024.
- Mangalyaan (Mars Orbiter Mission): launched on 5 Nov 2013 from Sriharikota by PSLV-C25; entered Mars orbit on 24 Sep 2014 – India was the first nation to succeed at the first attempt and the first in Asia.
- Science: Mars is the 'Red Planet' because of iron oxide on its surface; its moons are Phobos and Deimos; Olympus Mons is the tallest volcano in the Solar System. Sulphate minerals need water to form, so on Mars they are evidence of past water.
- Economy: Neyveli is India's key lignite mining centre; NLC India Ltd (a central PSU) runs mines and thermal power stations here.

**Tamil Nadu link:** anorthosite soil (similar to lunar soil) from Sithampoondi and Kunnamalai in Namakkal district has been supplied to ISRO since 2012 and used to test the Chandrayaan-2 lander and Chandrayaan-3's soft landing (with Periyar University, Salem). Now Neyveli and Tiruchi make Tamil Nadu a field for Mars studies too.

## 22 CM Vijay opens 'Periyar Arivulagam' library and science centre in Coimbatore

Tamil Nadu

### News

On 16 Oct 2026 CM C. Joseph Vijay opened 'Periyar Arivulagam', a library and science centre built for about ₹300 crore at Gandhipuram, Coimbatore (Nanjappa Road, near the town bus stand). Built by the Public Works Department on 7 acres of Prison Department land, the ground-plus-seven-floor building covers 1.98 lakh sq ft. It has over one lakh books, a digital library, a planetarium, a science centre, a STEM lab, a separate floor for persons with disabilities, a competitive-exam training centre and a start-up incubation centre.

### Key facts

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|---|---|
| **Opened** | 16 Oct 2026 – CM C. Joseph Vijay |
| **Site** | Gandhipuram, Coimbatore – Prison Department land, 7 acres |
| **Cost** | About ₹300 crore (building ₹245 cr; books ₹50 cr; e-books/IT ₹5 cr) |
| **Building** | 1.98 lakh sq ft; ground + 7 floors; Public Works Department |
| **Features** | 1 lakh+ books, planetarium, STEM lab, auditorium, Periyar statue |
| **Foundation** | Nov 2024 – then CM M.K. Stalin |

### Background

- Periyar E.V. Ramasamy: born 17 Sep 1879 at Erode; died 24 Dec 1973 at Vellore. In 1925 he left the Congress and started the Self-Respect Movement; the same year (2 May 1925) he launched the journal 'Kudi Arasu'.
- Vaikom Satyagraha (1924–25): a struggle in Travancore (today's Kerala) for the right of oppressed castes to use the roads around the Vaikom temple; Periyar joined, was jailed, and is hailed as 'Vaikom Veerar'. The renovated Periyar memorial at Vaikom was opened on 12 Dec 2024.
- Polity: President of the Justice Party in 1938; at the 1944 Salem conference the Justice Party was renamed 'Dravidar Kazhagam'. The title 'Periyar' was conferred at a women's conference in Madras in 1938. Since 2021 Tamil Nadu observes 17 Sep as 'Social Justice Day'.
- Tamil Nadu's big libraries: Anna Centenary Library, Kotturpuram, Chennai (15 Sep 2010); Kalaignar Centenary Library, Madurai (15 July 2023); now Periyar Arivulagam, Coimbatore (2026).

**Tamil Nadu link:** it follows Chennai (Anna) and Madurai (Kalaignar) as the big knowledge hub for the western region. The same day, 89 completed works worth ₹408.25 crore were opened in Coimbatore and welfare aid of ₹34.72 crore was given to 9,343 beneficiaries.

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