Current Affairs – Notes

21 October 2026

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1 How are rain warnings issued? – IMD rainfall categories and colour-coded warnings explained

Environment

News

After the Northeast monsoon set in around mid-October, the Regional Meteorological Centre (RMC) Chennai issued an 'orange alert' (heavy to very heavy rain) for four districts – Chennai, Tiruchirappalli, Coimbatore and the Nilgiris – on 19 Oct 2026, and for Tirunelveli and Madurai on 20 Oct; heavy rain was forecast in 35 districts on 20 Oct. On 18 Oct the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said heavy to very heavy rain would continue over Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Karaikal till 21 Oct. How are such warnings decided? – district-wise, colour-coded warnings are issued on the basis of the expected rainfall in 24 hours (in mm), its likely impact, observations from satellites, radars and ground stations, and computer-model (NWP) forecasts.

Key facts

Rain in 24 h	Very light 0.1–2.4 mm; light 2.5–15.5; moderate 15.6–64.4; heavy 64.5–115.5; very heavy 115.6–204.4; extremely heavy ≥204.5 mm
Colour code	Green – no warning; Yellow – be aware; Orange – be prepared; Red – take action
Nowcast	Local forecast for the next 3 hours; updated frequently using radar data
Cyclone – 4 stages	Pre-cyclone watch (72 h ahead), Cyclone alert (48 h, yellow), Cyclone warning (24 h, orange), Post-landfall outlook (12 h, red)
Tools	Doppler weather radars (over 50 in 2026), INSAT-3D/3DR/3DS satellites, NWP models, Automatic Weather Stations (AWS), Automatic Rain Gauges (ARG)
IMD	Founded 1875; HQ New Delhi; under the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES, 2006)
RMC Chennai	Nungambakkam; RMC since 1 Apr 1945; southern States, Andaman & Nicobar, Lakshadweep, Puducherry

Background

- Measuring rain: a rain gauge measures rainfall in millimetres (mm); 1 cm = 10 mm. In India the 'rain day' runs from 08:30 IST to 08:30 IST the next day. The news phrases 'heavy rain above 7 cm', 'very heavy above 12 cm' and 'extremely heavy above 21 cm' are rounded forms of the mm ranges above. Spread is also stated: widespread (76–100% of stations), fairly widespread (51–75%), scattered (26–50%), isolated (up to 25%).
- Impact-based warning: the colour reflects the expected impact, not just the amount of rain. Yellow – stay informed; Orange – road/rail traffic and power may be disrupted, be prepared; Red – serious risk to life and property, the district administration must act at once (school holidays, evacuation). IMD gives 5-day district-level forecasts/warnings and 3-hour 'nowcasts'.
- Sci-tech: a Doppler Weather Radar (DWR) uses the Doppler effect to measure the movement of raindrops and wind speed/direction; DWRs rose from 14 in 2014 to 50 by April 2026; the 51st was opened at Sambalpur (Odisha) in Sept 2026. The geostationary satellites INSAT-3D (2013), INSAT-3DR (2016) and INSAT-3DS (2024) supply cloud and temperature data. Numerical Weather Prediction

(NWP) models run on supercomputers such as 'Pratyush' (IITM Pune) and 'Mihir' (NCMRWF Noida). 'Mission Mausam' (2024) is expanding the radar network further.

- Cyclone warnings: IMD's Regional Specialised Meteorological Centre (RSMC) New Delhi issues warnings for, and names, North Indian Ocean cyclones. Four stages: Pre-cyclone watch (72 h ahead), Cyclone alert (at least 48 h ahead, yellow), Cyclone warning (at least 24 h ahead, orange), Post-landfall outlook (at least 12 h before landfall, red).
- Geography: Northeast monsoon (Oct–Dec) – after the southwest monsoon withdraws, winds reverse and blow from the northeast; Bay of Bengal depressions and cyclones bring rain. Tamil Nadu's normal annual rainfall is 921.4 mm, of which the NE monsoon gives 442.8 mm (about 48%) and the SW monsoon only about 36%, because the State lies in the rain shadow of the Western Ghats. Normal onset is around 20 October.

Tamil Nadu link: RMC Chennai traces its roots to the 'Madras Observatory' – set up privately by William Petrie in 1786 and taken over by the East India Company in 1792. Today, from Nungambakkam, it issues district-wise rain warnings for Tamil Nadu and the southern States; the Chennai Doppler radar has worked since 2001–02. Since about half the State's annual rain comes from the NE monsoon, the Oct–Dec warnings are vital for Tamil Nadu.

2 Nationwide 'Green Diwali' campaign, 20 Oct – 8 Nov – launched by WWF-India's EIACP centre; appeal to avoid firecrackers

Environment

News

WWF-India's EIACP (Environmental Information, Awareness, Capacity Building and Livelihood Programme) Programme Centre–Resource Partner, supported by the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), launched a nationwide 'Green Diwali' campaign from 20 Oct to 8 Nov 2026 (Diwali falls on 8 Nov 2026). It urges people to avoid firecrackers, use diyas and energy-efficient lights, avoid single-use plastic, segregate waste and buy local products. Schools, colleges and resident welfare associations can take a 'Green Diwali Pledge'; the 130 cities under the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) get special focus. The campaign is aligned with Mission LiFE.

Key facts

Run by	WWF-India EIACP Programme Centre–Resource Partner; supported by MoEFCC
Period	20 Oct – 8 Nov 2026
Activities	Green Diwali Pledge; WWF Carbon Footprint Survey; reports with geo-tagged photos
Focus	130 NCAP cities
Mission LiFE	Lifestyle for Environment – 20 Oct 2022, Ekta Nagar (Kevadia, Gujarat)
EIACP	Formerly ENVIS (1983) – MoEFCC's environmental information network

Background

- Green crackers: developed by CSIR's National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (CSIR-NEERI, Nagpur). About 30% less pollution than conventional crackers; no barium nitrate. Types: SWAS (Safe Water Releaser – releases water vapour to suppress dust), STAR (Safe Thermite Cracker),

SAFAL (Safe Minimal Aluminium). Identified by a green logo and QR code; explosives safety is licensed by PESO (HQ Nagpur).

- Supreme Court: in Arjun Gopal v. Union of India (23 Oct 2018) it allowed only green/improved crackers, a 8–10 pm window on Diwali and banned online sales. In 2021 it censured makers who used banned barium salts. Courts treat clean air as part of Article 21 (right to life); Article 48A – protection of environment (DPSP); 51A(g) – fundamental duty.
- Air Quality Index (AQI): launched 2014; 6 categories – Good (0–50), Satisfactory (51–100), Moderately polluted (101–200), Poor (201–300), Very poor (301–400), Severe (401–500). 8 pollutants are counted: PM10, PM2.5, NO2, SO2, CO, O3, NH3 and lead (Pb) – carbon dioxide is not one. Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) – Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981.
- National Clean Air Programme (NCAP): launched by MoEFCC in Jan 2019; aims to cut PM10 levels in non-attainment cities by up to 40% (by 2025–26) over the 2017 base. WWF – international conservation body founded in 1961; HQ Gland (Switzerland).

Tamil Nadu link: Sivakasi in Virudhunagar district – the hub producing the bulk of India's firecrackers ('Kutty Japan'); a leading supplier of green crackers. Green rules and time limits affect the livelihood of lakhs of workers here. After the 2018 SC order, the Tamil Nadu Government fixed two one-hour slots on Deepavali – 6–7 am and 7–8 pm.

3 Ipsos Quality of Care Perception Index 2026 – India 3rd among 32 countries (joint with Singapore); Malaysia tops

Health

News

In the 'Quality of Care Perception Index' of the 'Ipsos Health Service Report 2026', released on 16 Oct 2026 by the Paris-based market-research firm Ipsos, India ranked 3rd among 32 countries, jointly with Singapore; Malaysia topped (72%) and Hungary was last (28%). 68% of Indians rated healthcare quality positively; 64% expressed trust; 73% found it easy to get a doctor's appointment – the highest of the 32 countries. But 42% named treatment cost as a major problem and 74% said many cannot afford good care. It is an online survey (13 Jul – 7 Aug 2026); the Indian sample is more urban and educated than the general population.

Key facts

Report	Ipsos Health Service Report 2026 – released 16 Oct 2026
Ranking	1. Malaysia (72%); 3. India & Singapore; last – Hungary (28%)
India – strengths	Easy doctor appointment 73% (highest of 32); pharmacy access 81%; quality good 68%; trust 64%
India – challenges	Cost of treatment 42%; many cannot afford 74%; long waits 62%
Optimism	54% in India expect improvement (global average 31%)
Method	32 countries, online (Global Advisor); 13 Jul – 7 Aug 2026
Ipsos	Founded 1975 by Didier Truchot; HQ Paris (France)

Background

- Global trend: across 32 countries, mental health is seen as the biggest health problem (average 48%; top since 2023), followed by cancer (40%), stress (32%) and obesity (25%).

- Constitution: 'Public health and sanitation; hospitals and dispensaries' – Entry 6, State List, Seventh Schedule. Article 47 – raising nutrition, the standard of living and improving public health is a primary duty of the State (DPSP). The SC has read the right to health into Article 21 (Paschim Banga Khet Mazdoor Samity, 1996).
- Central schemes: National Rural Health Mission (2005) + National Urban Health Mission (2013) = National Health Mission (NHM, 2013). Ayushman Bharat – Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY) was launched at Ranchi on 23 Sep 2018; ₹5 lakh cover per family per year; implemented by the National Health Authority (NHA). National Health Policy 2017.
- Economy: the key challenge shown is out-of-pocket expenditure on health. 70% said people often rely on over-the-counter medicines or home remedies without medical advice. Note: it is a perception survey, not a measure of health outcomes (life expectancy, infant mortality).

Tamil Nadu link: 'Makkalai Thedi Maruthuvam' (Healthcare at People's Doorstep) was launched on 5 Aug 2021 in Krishnagiri district – doorstep medicines for hypertension and diabetes and physiotherapy for those above 45; it has reached over 2 crore people. It won Tamil Nadu's Health Department the 2024 UN Inter-Agency Task Force (UNIATF) award on prevention and control of non-communicable diseases. The Chief Minister's Comprehensive Health Insurance Scheme also operates in the State.

4 Delhi CM Rekha Gupta opens 200-tonne-per-day cow-dung biogas plant at Goyla Dairy (19 Oct)

Environment

News

On 19 Oct 2026 (Monday), Delhi CM Rekha Gupta inaugurated a biogas plant at Goyla Dairy in the Najafgarh area of south-west Delhi. Built by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) at ₹16 crore, it handles 200 tonnes of cow dung a day, producing about 14,000 cubic metres of raw biogas and about 5.6 tonnes of compressed biogas (CBG) daily, which is piped to Indraprastha Gas Ltd (IGL); the leftover slurry is sold as organic manure. The main aim is to stop dung flowing through drains into the Yamuna. Three such plants have started in the past 18 months and six more are under construction.

Key facts

Opened	19 Oct 2026 – Delhi CM Rekha Gupta; Goyla Dairy, Najafgarh
Built by / cost	Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) / ₹16 crore
Capacity–output	200 t dung/day → ~14,000 m^3 biogas, ~5.6 t CBG/day (to IGL) + organic manure
Dung purchase	67 paise per kg paid to dairy owners
Delhi context	About 1,500 t dung daily; first plant – Nangli Sakrawati Dairy (Sep 2025)
Yamuna	Yamunotri glacier (Uttarakhand) – joins the Ganga at Prayagraj

Background

- Science: biogas forms when microbes break down organic waste without oxygen – 'anaerobic digestion'. It is about 45–75% methane, the rest mostly carbon dioxide. Removing CO2, moisture and hydrogen sulphide and compressing it gives CBG – similar to natural gas (CNG) and usable as vehicle fuel. Since methane is a potent greenhouse gas, turning dung into fuel instead of letting it rot in the open also helps the climate.

- Schemes: GOBARdhan (Galvanizing Organic Bio-Agro Resources Dhan) – launched 30 Apr 2018; nodal Department of Drinking Water & Sanitation (DDWS), Ministry of Jal Shakti; part of Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) Phase II. SATAT (Sustainable Alternative Towards Affordable Transportation) – launched by the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas on 1 Oct 2018; target of 5,000 CBG plants; oil companies buy the CBG. MNRE's National Bioenergy Programme also supports such plants.
- Environment–geography: the Yamuna is the longest tributary of the Ganga; it rises at Yamunotri and joins the Ganga at Prayagraj (Triveni Sangam). The Delhi stretch is its most polluted; dairy waste is one cause. ₹50 crore has been allotted for drainage in Delhi's dairy colonies.

Tamil Nadu link: a 100-tonne-per-day wet-waste biogas plant has run at Chetpet, Chennai, for the Greater Chennai Corporation since 2022. CM C. Joseph Vijay inspected it on 20 Jul 2026 and ordered the model to be extended to all 25 corporations; three more 100-tonne plants are being built at Sholinganallur and Koyambedu. In Aug 2025 the foundation was laid for a ₹69.2-crore, 250-tonne-per-day biogas plant at Vellalore, Coimbatore.

5 Vummidi Ethiraj (99), who crafted the Sengol given to Nehru in 1947 and installed in the new Parliament in 2023, passes away

Tamil Nadu

News

Vummidi Ethiraj, one of the craftsmen of the Sengol and patriarch of the family that owns Chennai's 125-year-old Vummidi Bangaru Jewellers, died in Chennai on Wednesday, 21 Oct 2026. Born on 25 Nov 1926, he was 99; he was 20 when the Sengol was made in 1947. PM Narendra Modi, Vice-President C.P. Radhakrishnan and Tamil Nadu Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar condoled his death. The PM recalled meeting him when the Sengol was installed in the new Parliament in 2023.

Key facts

Name	Vummidi Ethiraj
Born–died	25 Nov 1926 – 21 Oct 2026, Chennai; aged 99
Firm	Vummidi Bangaru Chetty – Chennai jewellers (125 years)
Sengol	Gold-plated silver; about 5 ft long; Nandi on top
1947	Night of 14 Aug 1947 – Thiruvavaduthurai Adheenam handed it to Nehru; 'Kolaru Pathigam' was sung
2023	28 May 2023 – installed by PM Modi near the Lok Sabha Speaker's chair

Background

- History: when Mountbatten asked about a symbol for the transfer of power, C. Rajagopalachari (Rajaji) suggested the Chola tradition of a spiritual head handing a sceptre to a new king. At the request of the Thiruvavaduthurai Adheenam, the Sengol was made by Vummidi Bangaru Chetty jewellers of Madras. The Adheenam's envoys first handed it to Mountbatten, sanctified it with holy water and presented it to Nehru at his residence on the night of 14 Aug; Thirugnana Sambandar's 'Kolaru Pathigam' was sung by Oduvars.
- Museum: the Sengol was kept for decades with Nehru's other belongings in the Allahabad (Prayagraj) Museum (not Anand Bhavan), where it was listed as a 'golden stick'. It was installed in

the Lok Sabha at the inauguration of the new Parliament building on 28 May 2023.
- Literature: 'Sengonmai' (just rule) is chapter 55 of the Thirukkural, in the Arasiyal section of Porutpal (Kurals 541–550); the next chapter is 'Kodungonmai' (tyranny, 56). Kural 546 says it is not the spear but the king's unbending sceptre that brings victory.
- Debate: the 1947 event drew little attention at the time; in 2023 some questioned whether a monarchical symbol suits a parliamentary democracy.

Tamil Nadu link: the Thiruvavaduthurai Adheenam that presented the Sengol is a Saiva mutt in Mayiladuthurai district; it was made by Chennai jewellers. In 2023, Adheenams from Tamil Nadu handed the Sengol to the PM in New Delhi.

6 Nationwide financial inclusion saturation campaign from 21 Oct to 31 Dec – 2.70 lakh gram panchayats and urban local bodies

Economy

News

A nationwide campaign by the Department of Financial Services (DFS), Union Finance Ministry, to saturate financial inclusion schemes runs from 21 Oct 2026 to 31 Dec 2026. Camps will be held across about 2.70 lakh gram panchayats and urban local bodies. It covers opening Jan Dhan accounts, enrolment in PMJJBY, PMSBY and Atal Pension Yojana, Aadhaar seeding, re-KYC of accounts, updating nominations, awareness on digital frauds and on unclaimed financial assets ('Aapki Poonji, Aapka Adhikar'), Kisan Credit Cards for PM-Kisan beneficiaries, and crop insurance for the Rabi season. The Finance Ministry announced it on 19 Oct.

Key facts

Period	21 Oct – 31 Dec 2026
Run by	Department of Financial Services, Finance Ministry; through State Level Bankers' Committees
Coverage	About 2.70 lakh gram panchayats + urban local bodies
Schemes	PMJDY, PMJJBY, PMSBY, APY, KCC, PMFBY; re-KYC, nominations
Earlier drive	1 Jul – 30 Sep 2025 (same 2.70 lakh GPs/ULBs)
RBI FI-Index	March 2026: 70.0 (March 2025: 67.0)

Background

- Jan Suraksha schemes: PM Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) – 28 Aug 2014; a zero-balance account with RuPay card for every unbanked household. PMJJBY (₹436 a year, ₹2 lakh life cover, age 18–50), PMSBY (₹20 a year, ₹2 lakh accidental death/disability cover, age 18–70) and Atal Pension Yojana (join at 18–40, pension ₹1,000–5,000 a month from 60; administered by PFRDA) – all three launched on 9 May 2015 in Kolkata.
- History: 14 commercial banks were nationalised on 19 July 1969. On the advice of the D.R. Gadgil Study Group (Oct 1969) and the Nariman Committee (Nov 1969), RBI introduced the Lead Bank Scheme in Dec 1969 – one lead bank for each district. State Level Bankers' Committees (SLBCs) were set up in 1977.
- Economy: RBI's Financial Inclusion Index (FI-Index, since 2021) is on a 0–100 scale with three parts – Usage (45%), Access (35%) and Quality (20%). It rose to 70.0 in March 2026.

Tamil Nadu link: the convenor bank of Tamil Nadu's State Level Bankers' Committee (SLBC) is Chennai-headquartered Indian Overseas Bank (IOB); the 187th SLBC meeting in Chennai on 24 Sep 2026 reviewed financial inclusion schemes. This campaign too will be run in the districts through the SLBC.

7 European bee-eater recorded in Chennai for the first time – near the Adyar estuary

Environment

News

A juvenile European bee-eater (Merops apiaster), a migratory bird, was seen on 11 Oct 2026 at the 'Broken Bridge' near the Adyar estuary, Chennai – the species' first recorded appearance in Chennai. R.V. Ramanan and his son Shreyas Ramanan first noticed it among two Green bee-eaters; Bharath Ravikumar and Balakrishnan confirmed it from photographs. The record was accepted on the citizen-science platform eBird. A Eurasian wryneck was also recorded at the same spot on the same day.

Key facts

Bird	European bee-eater – Merops apiaster; juvenile
Place–date	Broken Bridge, Adyar estuary, Chennai – 11 Oct 2026
Taxonomy	Family Meropidae; order Coraciiformes (kingfisher order)
Diet	Flying insects – bees, wasps; rubs off the sting on a perch
Range	Breeds in Europe & western Asia; winters in TN around Coimbatore, Tiruppur, Salem
IUCN	Least Concern

Background

- Biology: bee-eaters have slender bodies, pointed wings and long, slightly curved bills, and catch prey in flight. They are not passerines – they belong to Coraciiformes with kingfishers and rollers. India's common species is the Green bee-eater (Merops orientalis). The wryneck belongs to the woodpecker family (Picidae).
- Migration: India lies on the Central Asian Flyway. The Convention on Migratory Species (CMS / Bonn Convention) was adopted in Bonn, Germany, in 1979 and came into force in 1983; it works under UNEP; India has been a party since 1983. CMS COP13 – Gandhinagar, Gujarat (Feb 2020).
- Ecology: an estuary is a partly enclosed coastal water body where river water mixes with sea water. The Ramsar Convention on wetlands was signed in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971. eBird is a citizen-science platform run by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, USA.

Tamil Nadu link: Vedanthangal in Chengalpattu district – protected by the British as early as 1798 and declared a sanctuary in 1936 – is India's oldest bird sanctuary and became a Ramsar site in 2022. Chennai's Pallikaranai Marsh also became a Ramsar site in 2022.

8 Centre's draft for Ladakh: a directly elected body, with the Lieutenant Governor keeping the final say on laws

Polity

News

A draft framework for Ladakh's governance prepared by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) was given to the Leh Apex Body (LAB) and Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) at a sub-committee meeting in Leh on 15 Oct 2026. It proposes a directly elected UT-level body, but, according to LAB and KDA, substantial powers stay concentrated with the Lieutenant Governor's administration – in effect, the LG keeps the final say. It is to be done in two stages: a constitutional amendment (a new Article 371-K), followed by a regulation under Article 240. As it has no legislature, LAB and KDA rejected it as an old 'NEFA'-type model. The next round of talks is on 22 Oct in New Delhi.

Key facts

Draft	MHA; sub-committee meeting in Leh, 15 Oct 2026; shared 16 Oct
Proposal	Directly elected UT body; substantial powers with LG administration
Route	Constitutional amendment (Art 371-K) → regulation under Art 240
Talks with	Leh Apex Body (LAB), Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA)
Demands	Legislature, statehood, Sixth Schedule, Art 371 safeguards
Next round	22 Oct 2026, New Delhi

Background

- Constitution: Part VIII (Arts 239–242) deals with UTs. Art 239 – UTs are administered by the President through an administrator. Art 240 – the President may make regulations for the 'peace, progress and good government' of certain UTs, with the force of an Act of Parliament (A&N Islands, Lakshadweep, DNH–Daman & Diu, Puducherry). In June 2025, regulations on reservation and official languages for Ladakh were issued under Art 240.
- Ladakh basics: under the J&K Reorganisation Act, 2019, it became a UT without a legislature on 31 Oct 2019 (after Art 370 was revoked). Autonomous Hill Development Councils (LAHDC) – Leh 1995, Kargil 2003; 30 members each (26 elected, 4 nominated). June 2025 regulations – total reservation in government jobs up to 85% (EWS 10% separate); official languages English, Hindi, Urdu, Bhoti, Purgi; one-third of LAHDC seats for women.
- Background: LAB/KDA demands – statehood, the Sixth Schedule (Art 244(2); tribal areas of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, Mizoram), a separate public service commission, and separate Lok Sabha seats for Leh and Kargil. After the Sept 2025 violence in Leh, climate activist Sonam Wangchuk was detained under the National Security Act; the order was revoked in March 2026. LAB/KDA say a 22 May 2026 meeting agreed on a 'UT with a legislature'; on 9 Sept 2026 the MHA floated a new Art 371(K).

Tamil Nadu link: neighbouring UT Puducherry has a legislature under Art 239A (14th Amendment, 1962); while that legislature functions, the President cannot make regulations for it under Art 240. Delhi has Art 239AA (69th Amendment, 1991). Ladakh has no legislature.

9 Ladakh Bench of the J&K and Ladakh High Court opens at Melongthang, Leh – India's highest HC bench; 4 initiatives incl. 'Green Wall', e-Filing

Judiciary

News

Chief Justice of India Surya Kant inaugurated the Ladakh Bench of the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh at the High Court complex, Melongthang, Leh, on 18 Oct 2026. At about 3,500 m above sea level, it is the highest-altitude High Court bench in India. Four initiatives were launched: (1) the Green Wall, (2) an e-Filing portal for the Ladakh Bench, (3) a Document Management System (DMS) and (4) the High Court's online recruitment portal. A Division Bench of Chief Justice Pushpendra Singh Bhati and Justice Sanjay Parihar hears the first cases; 75 pending cases from Ladakh were transferred to it.

Key facts

Inauguration	18 Oct 2026 – CJI Surya Kant
Place	HC complex, Melongthang, Leh (~3,500 m altitude)
High Court	Common HC of J&K and Ladakh; Chief Justice: Pushpendra Singh Bhati
4 initiatives	Green Wall, e-Filing portal, Document Management System, online recruitment portal
First bench	CJ Bhati + Justice Sanjay Parihar; 75 pending cases transferred
Benefit	Leh and Kargil litigants need not travel to Srinagar/Jammu

Background

- The J&K High Court was set up in 1928 under Maharaja Hari Singh. Under the J&K Reorganisation Act, 2019 it has functioned since 31 Oct 2019 as the common High Court for the two UTs of J&K and Ladakh; principal seats – Srinagar and Jammu.
- Constitution: Art 214 – a High Court for each State; Art 231 – Parliament may by law set up a common High Court for two or more States (and a Union Territory); Art 226 – writ jurisdiction of High Courts; Art 241 – High Courts for Union Territories.
- Art 217: High Court judges are appointed by the President after consulting the CJI, the Governor and the Chief Justice of that High Court; retirement age 62. Common HC examples: Gauhati (Assam, Nagaland, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh), Punjab & Haryana (+ Chandigarh).
- Technology: e-Filing, document management and video hearings are part of the e-Courts drive towards paperless courts. The CJI said the Supreme Court would list all Ladakh matters on a single day once adequate video-conferencing is available.

Tamil Nadu link: The Madras High Court was set up by Letters Patent under the Indian High Courts Act, 1861 on 15 Aug 1862 – one of the three Chartered High Courts with Calcutta and Bombay. Its Madurai Bench has functioned since 24 July 2004. The Madras HC's jurisdiction also covers the UT of Puducherry.

10 UDAN regional air connectivity scheme completes 10 years (launched 21 Oct 2016)

Economy

News

The regional connectivity scheme 'Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik' (UDAN – let the common citizen of the country fly), launched on 21 Oct 2016, completed 10 years on 21 Oct 2026. The first UDAN flight flew Shimla–Delhi on 27 Apr 2017. As of July 2026, 679 routes and 95 airports/heliports/water aerodromes had been connected, with over 3.58 lakh flights carrying more than 1.68 crore passengers. The Union Cabinet approved 'Modified UDAN' (₹28,840 crore), extending it to 2035–36, on 25 Mar 2026.

Key facts

Launch	21 Oct 2016; under the National Civil Aviation Policy (NCAP) 2016
Ministry / implementer	Ministry of Civil Aviation / Airports Authority of India (AAI)
First flight	27 Apr 2017 – Shimla–Delhi
Support	Viability Gap Funding (VGF) from the Regional Connectivity Fund; Centre–State 80:20 (NE/hill 90:10)
Achievement (July 2026)	679 routes; 95 airports/heliports/water aerodromes; 1.68 crore+ passengers
Modified UDAN	Cabinet 25.3.2026; ₹28,840 crore; 2026–27 to 2035–36; 100 airports, 200 helipads

Background

- UDAN rounds: 1.0 (2017) – 128 routes to 70 airports; 2.0 (2018) – helipads for the first time; 3.0 (2019) – tourism routes, seaplanes; 4.0 (2020) – hill, North-East and island areas; 5.5 – special bids for seaplanes and helicopters.
- Economy: airlines must offer half the seats at capped fares; VGF compensates them. States provide land, power, security etc. UDAN won the PM's Award for Excellence in Public Administration (Innovation), 2020.
- Related: Krishi UDAN – air transport of farm produce (58 airports); 'UDAN Yatri Cafe' – low-cost eateries at airports (Kolkata, Chennai). Modified UDAN – HAL Dhruv helicopters for Pawan Hans and HAL Dornier aircraft for Alliance Air.
- Airports Authority of India (AAI) – statutory body under the AAI Act, 1994; HQ New Delhi. Aviation safety regulator – DGCA.

Tamil Nadu link: Under UDAN, Salem airport resumed operations on 25 Mar 2018 with TruJet's Chennai–Salem service. Funds were also sanctioned under UDAN to develop Neyveli, Vellore, Thanjavur and Ramanathapuram airports. A 'UDAN Yatri Cafe' has opened at Chennai airport.

11 Indian Navy to host 'Swavlamban 2026' (5th edition) seminar in New Delhi on 26–27 Oct

Defence

News

'Swavlamban' (self-reliance), the Indian Navy's flagship innovation and indigenisation seminar, holds its 5th edition on 26–27 Oct 2026 at the Manekshaw Centre, New Delhi. Aim: turning indigenous innovations into operational naval capability. Focus areas: maritime surveillance, counter-UAS, AI, quantum technologies and NBCD. The 'Swavlamban 5.0' document, a Compendium on Technology Imperatives and the 'NAUSETU' interface standards will be released. The Vice Chief of the Naval Staff held the curtain-raiser press conference on 19 Oct.

Key facts

Edition / dates	5th; 26–27 Oct 2026
Venue	Manekshaw Centre, New Delhi
Organiser	Indian Navy – Naval Innovation and Indigenisation Organisation (NIIO)
Releases	Swavlamban 5.0 document; Compendium on Technology Imperatives; NAUSETU interface standards
iDEX (Navy)	4,000+ proposals; ~150 MSMEs/start-ups; ₹1,900 crore+ contracts
First edition	18–19 July 2022 – PM's address; 'SPRINT' challenges unveiled

Background

- NIIO – launched by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh in August 2020. Three tiers: Naval Technology Acceleration Council (N-TAC), a working group under it, and the Technology Development Acceleration Cell (TDAC).
- SPRINT (2022) – 'Supporting Pole-Vaulting in R&D through iDEX, NIIO and TDAC'; target of inducting at least 75 indigenous technologies into the Navy as part of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav.
- iDEX (Innovations for Defence Excellence) – launched by the PM in April 2018; funded and managed by the Defence Innovation Organisation (DIO), a not-for-profit Section 8 company (Companies Act 2013) founded by HAL and BEL.
- Aatmanirbhar Bharat – self-reliance in defence production. Two Defence Industrial Corridors: Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

Tamil Nadu link: the Tamil Nadu Defence Industrial Corridor was inaugurated by then Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman at Tiruchirappalli on 20 Jan 2019. Its 5 nodes: Chennai, Hosur, Salem, Coimbatore, Tiruchirappalli. DefExpo 2018 was held at Thiruvidanthai, Kancheepuram district.

12 India–New Zealand FTA in force from 20 Oct 2026; 100% duty-free access for Indian goods on all 8,284 tariff lines

Economy

News

The India–New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (FTA) entered into force on 20 Oct 2026. Talks began in March 2025 and concluded in December 2025; Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal and NZ Trade Minister Todd McClay signed it in New Delhi on 27 Apr 2026. Indian goods get 100% duty-free access on all 8,284 of New Zealand's tariff lines from day one. India has opened about 70% of its tariff lines (~95% of NZ's current exports); dairy, sugar, edible oils, onions, chickpeas etc. are excluded. New Zealand committed to US$20 billion of investment in India over 15 years.

Key facts

In force	20 Oct 2026; ratification exchanged 21 Sept 2026, Wellington
Signed	27 Apr 2026, New Delhi – Piyush Goyal, Todd McClay
For India	100% duty-free on 8,284 tariff lines; NZ's earlier peak tariff 10% (textiles & clothing, engineering, leather, footwear)
Excluded	Dairy, sugar, edible oils, onions, chickpeas, peas, corn, almonds
Services / mobility	118 service sectors (incl. Ayurveda, Yoga); up to 4 years' post-study work for STEM graduates
Target	Bilateral trade NZ$7 bn by 2030; US$20 bn investment (15 yrs)

Background

- Terms: FTA – tariffs removed on most goods; CEPA (Comprehensive Economic Partnership) – goods, services, investment, IPR; CECA – narrower cooperation than CEPA; PTA – concessions on only some goods.
- India's recent pacts: Mauritius CECPA (2021 – first with an African country), UAE CEPA (1 May 2022), Australia ECTA (29 Dec 2022), EFTA TEPA (1 Oct 2025), Oman CEPA (1 June 2026), UK CETA (15 July 2026).
- RCEP – 10 ASEAN nations + China, Japan, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand; India walked out in November 2019. So this is India's first bilateral trade pact with New Zealand.
- Tariff line – a product category based on the Harmonized System (HS) code, developed by the World Customs Organization (WCO, Brussels) – 6 digits internationally; India uses the 8-digit ITC-HS. Geography: New Zealand – capital Wellington, largest city Auckland; two main islands, North and South.

Tamil Nadu link: the pact gives duty-free access to textiles and apparel; Tiruppur, India's knitwear capital, and auto-component exporters can gain (no State-specific estimate has been published yet).

13 Coal Controller's Organisation (CCO) wins SKOCH Gold Award 2026 for 'SUVIKALP' mine-repurposing tool (26 Sept)

Awards

News

The Coal Controller's Organisation (CCO) under the Ministry of Coal received the SKOCH Gold Award 2026 on 26 Sept 2026 for its 'SUVIKALP – Mine Repurposing Tool' (category: Digital Operational Efficiency – Data Driven Decision Making). SUVIKALP is an in-house digital tool developed by the CCO that ranks options for reusing mined-out land on technical, environmental, social and economic criteria. Its component PRISM (Post-Mining Repurposing Implementation Strategy Model) provides project concepts and case studies.

Key facts

Award	SKOCH Gold Award 2026 – 26 Sept 2026
SUVIKALP	Digital tool ranking reuse options for closed-mine land; PRISM model; 'SUVIKALP Samvaad' – 12 webinars
CCO	Subordinate office of the Ministry of Coal; head office – 1, Council House Street, Kolkata
Field offices	Dhanbad, Ranchi, Bilaspur, Nagpur, Sambalpur, Kothagudem (+ Delhi office)
Functions	Statistical authority for coal & lignite; checks coal grade/size; hears objections under the Coal Bearing Areas Act 1957
SKOCH	Independent (non-government) award given since 2003

Background

- Coal nationalisation: coking coal mines in 1971–72; non-coking mines under the Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Act, 1973. Coal India Ltd was formed in November 1975; HQ Kolkata.
- Coal ranks (falling carbon): anthracite > bituminous > sub-bituminous > lignite (brown coal) > peat. Most Indian coal is Gondwana (Damodar, Mahanadi, Godavari valleys); Tertiary coal – North-Eastern States.
- Environment: mine-closure plans and financial assurance make restoration a mandatory part of mining; closed-mine land can be reused for solar parks, reservoirs, afforestation, tourism, etc.

Tamil Nadu link: lignite at Neyveli was discovered in 1934 while a well was being dug on T.M. Jambulingam Mudaliar's land. NLC India, under the Ministry of Coal, was formed in 1956; HQ Neyveli (Cuddalore district). Its first thermal power unit was synchronised in May 1962.

14 DCGI approves cancer drug toripalimab (Zytorvi) – second use, for oesophageal cancer

Health

News

The Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) has approved Dr. Reddy's Laboratories' 'Zytorvi' (toripalimab) as first-line treatment, with the chemotherapy drugs cisplatin and paclitaxel, for adults with unresectable advanced, recurrent or metastatic oesophageal squamous cell carcinoma (ESCC) (the company announced it on 21 Oct 2026). This is the drug's second indication in India; the first – nasopharyngeal carcinoma – was launched in Nov 2024. Note: the drug was first approved back in 2024; this is approval for a new disease.

Key facts

Drug	Toripalimab (brand Zytorvi) – anti-PD-1 monoclonal antibody; immunotherapy
Developer / rights	Shanghai Junshi Biosciences (China); Dr. Reddy's (Hyderabad) holds rights in 21 countries incl. India under a 2023 deal
New indication	Oesophageal squamous cell carcinoma (ESCC) – with cisplatin + paclitaxel; no PD-L1 test required
Trial	JUPITER-06 (Phase 3): 42% lower risk of progression or death; median survival 17.7 months (chemo alone 12.9)
First indication	Nasopharyngeal carcinoma (NPC) – launched Nov 2024; first immuno-oncology drug approved in India for NPC
Burden	ESCC is about 80% of oesophageal cancers in India; 4th leading cause of cancer death (company data)

Background

- Regulation: the DCGI heads the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO), under the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), Union Health Ministry. Legal basis – Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940; New Drugs and Clinical Trials Rules, 2019. CDSCO HQ – New Delhi.
- Science: PD-1 is an 'immune checkpoint' brake on T-cells. Cancer cells switch it on via PD-L1 to escape the immune system. Toripalimab blocks PD-1 so T-cells can attack the tumour. Monoclonal antibody names end in '-mab' (e.g., nivolumab, pembrolizumab).
- Nobel Prize 2018 (Physiology or Medicine): James P. Allison (USA – CTLA-4) and Tasuku Honjo (Japan – PD-1), for cancer therapy by inhibition of negative immune regulation.
- Diseases: nasopharyngeal carcinoma (NPC) is linked to the Epstein–Barr virus (EBV); in India it is commonest in the North-East (Kohima, Nagaland). Tobacco and alcohol are major risk factors for oesophageal cancer.

Tamil Nadu link: CDSCO's South Zone office is in Chennai (other zonal offices include Ghaziabad – North, Kolkata – East, Mumbai – West). On 31 Aug 2024 TN Health Minister Ma. Subramanian announced that cancer screening would be made mandatory for all above 18; the State recorded about 82,000 cancer cases in 2023.

15 'Tree surgery' to save over 500 girdled trees in Chhattisgarh's Udanti–Sitanadi Tiger Reserve

Environment

News

In the Karka village area of Chhattisgarh's Udanti–Sitanadi Tiger Reserve (USTR), the Forest Department is launching 'tree surgery' to save over 500 trees damaged by girdling (removal of a ring of bark) by encroachers (reports of 18–21 Oct 2026). A DGPS drone survey (22 Sep – 10 Oct) found about 2,500 girdled trees (sal, bija, tendu). The main method is 'bridge grafting'. 'Tree Doctor' Vijay Nishanth (Project Vruksha Foundation) will visit to assess the trees and train staff. Note: this is not road widening; it is damage from encroachment inside the reserve.

Key facts

Place	Karka, Udanti–Sitanadi Tiger Reserve – Gariaband & Dhamtari districts, Chhattisgarh
Damage	500+ trees freshly girdled; about 2,500 in all; encroachment 22 ha (2016) → 102.47 ha (2026)
Species	Sal, bija, tendu
Method	Bridge grafting – a healthy twig joined across the wound to restore food flow; at present cow-dung–soil paste wrapped in gunny
People	Varun Kumar Jain – USTR Deputy Director; Vijay Nishanth – 'Tree Doctor'
Earlier try	Bridge grafting in 2022 – only about 10% success

Background

- Reserve: formed by merging Udanti and Sitanadi wildlife sanctuaries, notified as a tiger reserve in 2009; area 1,842.54 sq km (core 851.09). It is a key habitat of the endangered Asiatic wild buffalo – Chhattisgarh's State animal. Other Chhattisgarh tiger reserves include Indravati (Bijapur) and Achanakmar.
- Science: girdling cuts the phloem just beneath the bark; food made in the leaves can no longer reach the roots, so the roots starve and the tree slowly dies. The xylem carries water upward.
- Geography: the Pairi river rises in Udanti sanctuary and the Sondur in Sitanadi; they meet the Mahanadi near Rajim (Gariaband). The Mahanadi rises in the Sihawa hills of Dhamtari district. Chhattisgarh was carved out of Madhya Pradesh on 1 Nov 2000.
- Tree-protection movements: Chipko (1973, Uttarakhand – Gaura Devi, Sunderlal Bahuguna); Appiko (1983, Karnataka – Uttara Kannada, Panduranga Hegde) – the 'Chipko of the South'.

Tamil Nadu link: Tamil Nadu's State tree is the palmyra palm (Borassus flabellifer). Tree felling in hill areas is regulated by the Tamil Nadu Hill Areas (Preservation of Trees) Act, 1955.

16 Ladakh's first Government Medical College (Leh) to become operational in the 2027–28 academic year

Health

News

Ladakh LG Vinai Kumar Saxena announced on 20 Oct 2026 that Ladakh's first Government Medical College, at Leh, will be operational from the 2027–28 academic year. The Union Health Ministry granted a one-time relaxation of the rule that 80% of infrastructure must be complete before staff are recruited (ministry letter of 13 Oct 2026; the Department of Expenditure, Finance Ministry, agreed subject to conditions); the LG thanked Health Minister J.P. Nadda for it. Recruitment against the 103 regular posts already sanctioned (27 Nov 2024) will be phased. The permanent campus is being built at Spituk Pharka.

Key facts

College	Government Medical College, Leh – Ladakh's first
Start	2027–28 academic year
Announced	20 Oct 2026 – LG Vinai Kumar Saxena
Relaxation / posts	One-time relaxation of the 80% infrastructure rule (Union Health Ministry); 103 regular posts (sanctioned 2024)
Campus	Spituk Pharka (under construction); temporary arrangement till then
Scheme	Centrally Sponsored Scheme for new medical colleges attached to district/referral hospitals – Phase III (approved 2019)

Background

- Regulation: the National Medical Commission Act, 2019 dissolved the Medical Council of India (MCI, since 1934); the National Medical Commission (NMC) has functioned since 25 Sep 2020, with 4 autonomous boards (UG, PG, assessment & rating, ethics & registration).
- Admission: MBBS and other medical courses use the all-India NEET-UG, conducted by the National Testing Agency (NTA, since 2019).
- Traditional medicine: Ladakh's 'Sowa-Rigpa' (Amchi) is a Himalayan traditional system; the Union Cabinet approved a National Institute of Sowa-Rigpa at Leh in Nov 2019 (₹47.25 crore) – an autonomous body under the Ministry of AYUSH.
- High-altitude medicine: Leh is at about 3,500 m; lower air pressure causes hypoxia and can lead to acute mountain sickness (AMS) – training local doctors is a key aim of the college.

Tamil Nadu link: Madras Medical College was founded in 1835 – among the oldest medical colleges in India and Asia; it is affiliated to the Tamil Nadu Dr. M.G.R. Medical University. Its alumna Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy was nominated to the Madras Legislative Council in 1926, becoming British India's first woman legislator.

17 Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan launches the upgraded Agri Welfare Portal

Agriculture

News

Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Shivraj Singh Chouhan launched the upgraded 'Agri Welfare Portal' in New Delhi on 19 Oct 2026. It is a 'single-window gateway' that lets farmers access schemes, subsidies, rules and digital services on their mobile phones without visiting offices – integrating PM-KISAN, AgriStack and the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana. A nationwide training drive through Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) will help farmers use it.

Key facts

Launch	19 Oct 2026 – Shivraj Singh Chouhan, New Delhi; NIC officials attended
Integrates	PM-KISAN, AgriStack, PM Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY)
Features	Eligibility check, online application, DBT, weather, seed & fertiliser stock, market prices
Access	Works on basic smartphones and weak internet; screen-reader support for persons with disabilities
Connects	FPOs, PACS, scientists, researchers, start-ups
Training	Nationwide training through KVKs

Background

- Schemes: PM-KISAN – 24 Feb 2019, Gorakhpur (UP); ₹6,000 a year in three DBT instalments. Digital Agriculture Mission – Cabinet approval Sep 2024; its core is 'AgriStack' (farmers' registry, crop-sown registry, geo-referenced village maps). PMFBY – 2016.
- Credit, soil: Kisan Credit Card (KCC) – Aug 1998; NABARD prepared the model scheme on the R.V. Gupta Committee's advice; extended to fisheries and animal husbandry in 2019. Soil Health Card scheme – 19 Feb 2015, Suratgarh (Rajasthan).
- Set-up: the Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare is under the Union Agriculture Ministry; it was renamed from the 'Department of Agriculture and Cooperation' in 2015. Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) are district-level farm science centres under ICAR.

Tamil Nadu link: India's first Krishi Vigyan Kendra was started in 1974 at Puducherry under Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore (Mohan Singh Mehta Committee). In 2018 the Tamil Nadu government launched the bilingual 'Uzhavan' mobile app for farmers (subsidies, crop insurance, machinery booking, seed & fertiliser stock, weather).

18 5th edition of India–Australia joint military exercise 'AUSTRAHIND 2026' begins in Thiruvananthapuram

Defence

News

The 5th edition of the India–Australia joint military exercise 'AUSTRAHIND 2026' began on 19 Oct 2026 at the Foreign Training Node, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, and runs till 1 Nov. India has about 120 troops, including the Garhwal Rifles; Australia about 120 from 13 Brigade. Theme: 'Joint Sub-Conventional Operations in Island and Coastal Environment under Chapter VII of the UN Mandate'. A New Zealand observer delegation is taking part for the first time.

Key facts

Edition / dates	5th; 19 Oct – 1 Nov 2026
Venue	Foreign Training Node, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala
Troops	India – about 120 (Garhwal Rifles + other arms); Australia – about 120 (13 Brigade)
Theme	Joint sub-conventional operations in island & coastal settings under UN Charter Chapter VII
Drills	Surveillance & reconnaissance, protection of vital installations, HADR
Previous	4th – Irwin Barracks, Perth (Australia), 13–26 Oct 2025; NZ observers this time (first)

Background

- UN Charter: Chapter VI – pacific settlement of disputes; Chapter VII (Articles 39–51) – action with respect to threats to the peace, breaches of the peace and acts of aggression – the Security Council can impose sanctions and authorise force.
- Other India–Australia exercises: AUSINDEX – navy (bilateral, since 2015); Pitch Black – multinational air exercise hosted by the Royal Australian Air Force at Darwin; Malabar – navies of India, US, Japan and Australia (Australia back since 2020).
- Ties: QUAD – India, US, Japan, Australia; revived in 2017. India–Australia 'Comprehensive Strategic Partnership' – 2020. Garhwal Rifles Regimental Centre – Lansdowne (Uttarakhand).

Tamil Nadu link: Thiruvananthapuram, the venue, was the capital of the old Travancore State. Its Thovalai, Agastheeswaram, Kalkulam and Vilavancode taluks joined Madras State on 1 Nov 1956 (States Reorganisation Act, 1956) to form Kanyakumari district; Marshal A. Nesamony of the Travancore Tamil Nadu Congress led that struggle. (No report says the Madras Regiment is taking part in this exercise.)

19 Beijing may become a 'super-aged society' by 2035 – one in three residents aged 60 or above

International

News

According to the official Beijing Daily (18 Oct 2026), by 2035 more than one-third (over 33%) of Beijing's population will be aged 60 or above, making the city a 'super-aged society'. At the end of 2025 Beijing had 5.288 million permanent residents aged 60+ (24.3%). The city will add 30,000 home-based elderly-care beds over the next three years and has raised the basic pension.

Key facts

Source	Beijing Daily (18 Oct 2026); quoted by Global Times, Reuters
Beijing 60+	End-2025: 5.288 million (24.3%) → 2035: over 33%
China 60+	End-2025: 323.38 million (23%); population falling since 2022
China's yardstick (60+)	Ageing ≥10%, aged ≥20%, super-aged ≥30%
International yardstick (65+)	Ageing >7%, aged >14%, super-aged >20%
Japan	65+ share 29.6% (Sept 2026) – highest among major nations

Background

- China's population policy: the one-child policy (from 1980) was dropped at the end of 2015; a universal two-child policy from 1 Jan 2016; a three-child policy announced in May 2021. Fertility is about 1.0–1.2 against the replacement level of 2.1.
- Retirement age raised: approved by China's NPC Standing Committee in Sept 2024; phased over 15 years from 1 Jan 2025 – men 60→63, women 50→55 / 55→58.
- Geography/administration: Beijing – China's capital; a municipality directly under the central government, like Shanghai, Tianjin and Chongqing.
- India: 'India Ageing Report 2023' (UNFPA + International Institute for Population Sciences, IIPS, Mumbai) – 60+ share 10.5% in 2022 → 20.8% in 2050 (347 million). LASI (Longitudinal Ageing Study in India) Wave 1 was conducted by IIPS in 2017–18. Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007 – Maintenance Tribunals. International Day of Older Persons – 1 Oct (UNGA resolution, 1990).

Tamil Nadu link: As per the Sample Registration System (SRS) Statistical Report 2023, Kerala (15.1%) leads in the share of people aged 60+, Tamil Nadu (14%) is second and Himachal Pradesh (13.2%) third; national average 9.7%.

20 World Osteoporosis Day 2026 – 20 Oct; theme: 'Build, Protect and Strengthen Your Bones for Life'

Important Days

News

World Osteoporosis Day was observed on 20 Oct 2026. The 2026 campaign theme of the organiser, the International Osteoporosis Foundation (IOF, Nyon, Switzerland), is 'Build, Protect and Strengthen Your Bones for Life'. Its three messages: build strong bones early (nutrition, exercise); protect through risk checks, bone-density testing and fall prevention; strengthen through timely treatment after a fracture. Worldwide, 1 in 3 women and 1 in 5 men over 50 will suffer a fragility fracture.

Key facts

Date	20 October (annual)
Origin	20 Oct 1996 – UK National Osteoporosis Society (European Commission support); run by IOF since 1997
Organiser	International Osteoporosis Foundation (IOF) – Nyon, Switzerland
2026 theme	Build, Protect and Strengthen Your Bones for Life
Burden	Over 500 million people worldwide; up to 80% of fracture patients go undiagnosed/untreated
Test	DEXA scan – bone mineral density (BMD); T-score of −2.5 or lower = osteoporosis (WHO)

Background

- Science: 'Osteoporosis' is Greek for 'porous bone'. Bone density and quality fall, so even minor falls break the hip, spine or wrist. It progresses without symptoms – hence the 'silent disease'.
- Bone mineral is calcium phosphate (hydroxyapatite). Vitamin D is needed to absorb calcium; it is made in the skin under UV-B sunlight – the 'sunshine vitamin'. Deficiency: rickets in children, osteomalacia (bone softening) in adults.
- Risk factors: age, low oestrogen in post-menopausal women, smoking, alcohol, inactivity, long-term steroids. Prevention: calcium- and protein-rich diet, weight-bearing exercise, sunlight, fall prevention.

Tamil Nadu link: No dedicated State osteoporosis scheme could be verified. However, a State Government press release (5 July 2023) states that calcium-rich ragi (finger millet) is supplied at 2 kg per family card through ration shops in the Nilgiris and Dharmapuri districts.

21 Police Commemoration Day 2026 – 21 Oct; Amit Shah leads homage at the National Police Memorial, Delhi

Important Days

News

Police Commemoration Day, honouring police personnel who died on duty, is observed across India on 21 Oct 2026. Union Home Minister Amit Shah leads the ceremony at the National Police Memorial, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi, with a joint parade of the CAPFs and Delhi Police; he also flags off an anti-drug motorcycle rally. From 22 to 30 Oct police forces nationwide hold rallies and blood-donation camps. This year's number of police martyrs had not been released at the time of writing.

Key facts

Date	21 October (annual)
Origin	21 Oct 1959 – Hot Springs, Ladakh: 10 CRPF personnel killed in an ambush by Chinese troops
National Memorial	Chanakyapuri, New Delhi – dedicated to the nation by PM Narendra Modi on 21 Oct 2018
Memorial features	30-ft granite monolith central sculpture, Wall of Valour, museum
2026 event	Led by Amit Shah; CAPF–Delhi Police joint parade; anti-drug motorcycle rally
Constitution	'Police' – Seventh Schedule, State List (Entry 2); 'Public order' – Entry 1

Background

- History: until autumn 1959 the India–Tibet border was guarded by the police. A CRPF patrol led by Karam Singh, searching for three missing men, was ambushed by Chinese troops at Hot Springs; 10 were killed and others taken prisoner. Since then 21 Oct is observed as Police Commemoration Day.
- Polity: Article 246 – three lists of the Seventh Schedule. Police and public order are in the State List, so law and order is a State responsibility. The Central Armed Police Forces (CRPF, BSF, CISF, ITBP, SSB) are under the Union Home Ministry.
- Institutions: Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D) – 28 Aug 1970, Union Home Ministry. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Police Academy – Hyderabad (IPS training). India's first all-women police station – Kozhikode, Kerala (1973).

Tamil Nadu link: Tamil Nadu Police (Madras Police) was formed in 1859 under the Madras District Police Act; HQ – Kamarajar Salai, Mylapore, Chennai (Marina). Women were first inducted in 1973. The State's first All Women Police Station was opened at Thousand Lights, Chennai, in 1992 by then CM J. Jayalalithaa; in 2003 Tamil Nadu formed India's first women commando unit.

22 Global Iodine Deficiency Disorders Prevention Day 2026 – 21 Oct; importance of iodised salt

Important Days

News

Global Iodine Deficiency Disorders (IDD) Prevention Day is observed on 21 Oct 2026. It stresses adequate dietary iodine and the daily use of iodised salt. In India, the National Iodine Deficiency Disorders Control Programme (NIDDCP) implements Universal Salt Iodisation of all edible salt. No official theme has been announced for 2026.

Key facts

Date	21 October (annual)
National programme	National Goitre Control Programme (1962) → expanded and renamed NIDDCP in 1992
Salt standard (FSSAI)	Iodine – 30 ppm at manufacture, at least 15 ppm at consumer level
Ban	FSS (Prohibition & Restriction on Sales) Regulations 2011, Reg 2.3.12 – non-iodised salt banned for direct human consumption
Iodising chemical	Potassium iodate
Monitoring	Salt Commissioner's Organisation (Jaipur) – iodised salt output & quality; national reference lab – NCDC, Delhi

Background

- Science: iodine is an essential part of the thyroid hormones thyroxine (T4) and triiodothyronine (T3), which regulate metabolism and brain development. Deficiency → enlarged thyroid (goitre) – usually the earliest sign.
- Effects of deficiency in pregnancy: miscarriage, stillbirth; severe deficiency causes 'cretinism' in the child (intellectual disability, deaf-mutism, stunting); even mild deficiency lowers children's IQ.
- Sources: iodised salt, sea fish, prawns and other seafood, seaweed (kelp), milk, eggs. Soils of hills and flood plains are iodine-poor – the Himalayan foothills were historically the 'goitre belt'.
- Economy: Gujarat produces about 85% of India's salt (2021–22) – first; Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu about 6% each (Indian Minerals Yearbook 2022). Iodised salt output was about 7.86 million tonnes in 2020–21.

Tamil Nadu link: Thoothukudi district leads Tamil Nadu's salt production; there are also salt pans at Vedaranyam and Marakkanam. History: a team led by C. Rajagopalachari (Rajaji) set out from Tiruchirappalli on 13 April 1930 and broke the salt law at Vedaranyam on 30 April – the Vedaranyam Salt Satyagraha.

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