# Current Affairs – Notes

## 22 October 2026

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# 1 Kashi Tamil Sangamam 5.0 to focus on Thirukkural – 28 Nov to 12 Dec 2026

Tamil Nadu

## News

The fifth edition of the Kashi Tamil Sangamam (KTS 5.0) will be held from 28 Nov to 12 Dec 2026 on the theme 'Thirukkural Payilvom – Thirukkural Abhyas Karen' (Let us learn Thirukkural). Union Education Minister Pralhad Joshi launched the registration portal on 22 Oct 2026. About 1,400 people from Tamil Nadu (7 groups of about 200) will make an 8-day trip to Varanasi, Prayagraj and Ayodhya. A Thirukkural student engagement programme will run in 1,000 higher education institutions across India.

## Key facts

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| **Theme** | 'Thirukkural Payilvom – Thirukkural Abhyas Karen' |
| **Dates / venues** | 28 Nov – 12 Dec 2026; Varanasi, Prayagraj, Ayodhya |
| **Organisers** | Ministry of Education (Dept of Higher Education); IIT Madras, Banaras Hindu University (BHU), Central Institute of Classical Tamil (CICT), UP Government |
| **Delegates** | About 1,400 in 7 categories – students, teachers, writers & media, agriculture, professionals & artisans, women, spiritual leaders |
| **Registration** | 22 Oct – 13 Nov 2026; kashitamil.iitm.ac.in |
| **Student programme** | One student from each of 1,000 colleges learns Thirukkural in own language; one-month internship, ₹10,000 stipend (implemented by CICT) |

## Background

- Earlier editions: KTS 1.0 – 2022 (one month; inaugurated by PM Modi in Varanasi on 19 Nov 2022); 2.0 – 2023; 3.0 – Feb 2025 ('Legacy of Sage Agastya'); 4.0 – from Dec 2025 ('Learn Tamil – Tamil Karkalam'). 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat' (EBSB) – announced in 2015 on Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's 140th birth anniversary; nodal ministry – Education.
- Thirukkural: by Thiruvalluvar; 1,330 couplets in 133 chapters; three sections – Aram (virtue), Porul (wealth/polity), Inbam/Kamam (love); also called 'Ulaga Podhumarai' and 'Muppal'; one of the Eighteen Minor Classics (Pathinenkilkanakku).
- Translations: first – Latin by Beschi (Veeramamunivar), 1730; first English (partial) – N.E. Kindersley, 1794; Drew and Lazarus prose (1840–1885); G.U. Pope – complete English verse translation, 1886.
- Kashi–Tamil links: in the 15th century the Pandya king Parakrama Pandya built the Kasi Viswanathar temple at Tenkasi; in the 17th century Kumaraguruparar renovated the Kedareswarar temple in Kashi and founded the Kumaraswamy Mutt on land given by Dara Shikoh.

**Tamil Nadu link:** Mahakavi Bharathiyar (Ettayapuram, Thoothukudi district) stayed in Varanasi after his father's death and learnt Sanskrit, Hindi and English; BHU has a 'Subramania Bharati Chair of Tamil Studies' (announced 2021). Kumaraguruparar was born at Srivaikuntam. A 133-ft Thiruvalluvar statue stands at Kanyakumari (1 Jan 2000).

## 2 Tuticorin International Container Terminal (TICT) at VOC Port, 100% electrified, declared a 'Green Terminal'

Tamil Nadu

### News

VOC Port said on 22 Oct 2026 that the Tuticorin International Container Terminal (TICT) at V.O. Chidambaranar Port, Thoothukudi, has been declared a 'Green Terminal' after 100% of its operational equipment was electrified. Union Shipping Secretary Vijay Kumar made the declaration while reviewing projects worth ₹18,000 crore; on 20 Oct he had flagged off 13 electric Internal Transfer Vehicles (E-ITVs). TICT is run by J M Baxi Ports & Logistics.

### Key facts

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| **Terminal** | TICT – operator J M Baxi Ports & Logistics; operations from Sep 2024 (PM's video address, 16 Sep 2024) |
| **Capacity** | 0.6 million TEU a year; 370 m quay, 14.2 m draught |
| **Electric kit** | 3 rail-mounted quay cranes (RMQC), 9 electric RTG cranes, electric reach stacker, 13 E-ITVs |
| **Declared** | 22 Oct 2026 – Union Shipping Secretary Vijay Kumar |
| **VOC Port** | Gulf of Mannar; 82 MTPA capacity; Chairman Sushanta Kumar Purohit; outer harbour project over ₹15,000 crore |

### Background

- VOC Port: declared a major port on 11 July 1974; 'Tuticorin Port Trust' renamed 'V.O. Chidambaranar Port Trust' in 2011; now a 'Port Authority' under the Major Port Authorities Act, 2021. Sheltered by Sri Lanka, it is relatively safe from cyclones.
- Green-port drive: 'Harit Sagar' Green Port Guidelines – 10 May 2023, Minister Sarbananda Sonowal; aims – cutting carbon emissions, 'zero waste discharge', green hydrogen/ammonia/methanol. VOC Port hosts India's first port-based green hydrogen pilot (10 $Nm^3$/hr, ₹3.87 crore, Sep 2025).
- Science: green hydrogen comes from electrolysis of water using renewable power; grey hydrogen from steam reforming of natural gas; blue hydrogen is the same plus carbon capture. TEU – twenty-foot equivalent unit (a 20-ft container).
- V.O. Chidambaram Pillai (1872–1936): born at Ottapidaram; 'Kappalottiya Thamizhan'; founded the Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company at Tuticorin in 1906 (ships S.S. Gallia, S.S. Lawoe) to challenge the British shipping monopoly; arrested in 1908; made to pull an oil press in Coimbatore jail.

**Tamil Nadu link:** Tamil Nadu has 3 major ports (Chennai, Kamarajar–Ennore, VOC–Thoothukudi) and 17 non-major ports. VOC Port is being developed as a green hydrogen hub and the nodal port for offshore wind energy.

## 3 NE monsoon: Blue Tiger, Dark Blue Tiger and Crow butterflies migrate from Eastern to Western Ghats

Environment

### News

With the onset of the North-East monsoon, lakhs of milkweed butterflies – Blue Tiger, Dark Blue Tiger, Common Crow and Double-branded Crow – are migrating from the Eastern Ghats across the Tamil Nadu plains towards the Western Ghats (reported 22 Oct 2026). Intense movement was seen on 17–18 Oct in Salem, Namakkal, Erode, Tiruppur and Coimbatore districts; counts in Coimbatore district ranged from 5 to 135 butterflies a minute, with 120 a minute on Kalapatty Main Road on 18 Oct. Hundreds are killed by road traffic.

### Key facts

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| **Direction** | Eastern Ghats → Western Ghats (NE monsoon, Oct–Dec); return in Apr–May (before the SW monsoon) |
| **Species** | Blue Tiger (Tirumala limniace), Dark Blue Tiger (T. septentrionis), Common Crow (Euploea core), Double-branded Crow (E. sylvester) |
| **Group** | Danainae – milkweed butterflies; family Nymphalidae |
| **Starting hills** | Yercaud (Shevaroys), Pachamalai, Kolli and Kalvarayan hills |
| **Monitoring** | The Nature and Butterfly Society (TNBS) – since 2013 |

### Background

- Migration cycle: in Apr–May they move from the Western Ghats to the Eastern Ghats and Coromandel coast; in Oct–Dec, with the NE monsoon, they return west and congregate in the Western Ghats for 3–4 months. Six of South India's 10 danaine species migrate; first scientific record – E.H. Aitken (1897).
- Science: they store alkaloids from milkweed-family (Asclepiadaceae) host plants, making them toxic to predators; males use them to make courtship pheromones. Harmless species copying their look is 'Batesian mimicry'.
- Geography: the Western Ghats – UNESCO World Heritage Site (2012) and a global biodiversity hotspot. The Eastern Ghats are discontinuous, lower hills. Weak rains mean weaker migration (as in 2023).

**Tamil Nadu link:** Tamil Nadu's State butterfly is the 'Tamil Maravan' (Tamil Yeoman, Cirrochroa thais), declared in 2019 – the 5th State to name a State butterfly; it is endemic to the Western Ghats. In Tamil Nadu the migration mainly starts from the Eastern Ghats hills of Yercaud, Pachamalai, Kolli and Kalvarayan.

## 4 Home Minister Amit Shah launches 43 Yamuna rejuvenation projects worth ₹8,941 crore in Delhi

Environment

### News

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on 22 Oct 2026, at Najafgarh, Delhi, launched 43 Delhi Jal Board projects worth ₹8,941.22 crore to rejuvenate the Yamuna – 10 inaugurated and foundation stones for 33. They include a 124 MGD (million gallons a day) sewage treatment plant at Okhla, upgrades of 8 STPs, 29 decentralised STPs in outer Delhi, a 1,034-km sewer network and a 477 MLD water treatment plant at Chandrawal. Shah pledged that the Yamuna in Delhi would be cleaned by May 2029. CM Rekha Gupta and Water Minister Parvesh Sahib Singh attended.

### Key facts

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| **Total** | 43 projects, ₹8,941.22 crore – 10 inaugurated + 33 foundation stones; Delhi Jal Board |
| **Okhla** | New 124 MGD sewage treatment plant (STP) – ₹1,161 crore; Delhi's biggest |
| **Upgrades** | 8 STPs: 78.2 → 140.8 MGD (₹1,041 crore) |
| **Outer Delhi** | 29 decentralised STPs/pumping stations – 358 unauthorised colonies, 113 villages, 36.29 lakh people; 1,034-km sewer network |
| **Water** | Chandrawal 477 MLD water treatment plant (replacing 1935 & 1955 plants); 4.5-km Mundka trunk drain |
| **Target** | Clean Yamuna in Delhi by May 2029 |

### Background

- Yamuna: rises from the Yamunotri glacier near Bandarpunch peak, Uttarkashi district, Uttarakhand; about 1,376 km long; flows through Uttarakhand, Himachal, Haryana, Delhi and UP to join the Ganga at Prayagraj (Triveni Sangam) – the Ganga's longest tributary.
- Tributaries: Tons – largest; Chambal – longest (about 960 km); west to east Chambal, Sind, Betwa, Ken; Hindon on the left bank. Delhi has the Wazirabad and Okhla barrages; the Agra Canal leaves the Okhla barrage.
- River-cleaning history: Ganga Action Plan – 14 Jan 1986 (Rajiv Gandhi); Yamuna Action Plan – Apr 1993 (under GAP-II, Japan's JICA-aided); National River Conservation Plan – 1995; Ganga declared National River – 2008; 'Namami Gange' – 2014, Union Ministry of Jal Shakti (National Mission for Clean Ganga – NMCG).
- Units: MGD – million gallons a day; MLD – million litres a day (1 MGD ≈ 4.5 MLD). In the 'Chalo Yamuna' clean-up (18 Oct), over 35,000 people removed 76,755 kg of waste from 70 sites.

**Tamil Nadu link:** the 'Chennai Rivers Restoration Trust' (CRRT – formerly the 'Adyar Poonga Trust') works to restore Chennai's Adyar and Cooum rivers; its first project, the Adyar Eco Park (Tholkappia Poonga), opened in 2011.

## 5 IIT Madras launches 'UDYOG' finishing school for biotechnology students

Education

### News

On 21 Oct 2026 IIT Madras Director V. Kamakoti inaugurated the 'IITM-Biofoundry Finishing School – UDYOG' (Upskilling and Development for Young Graduates). It is run by SynBioME, the IIT Madras–TICEL Biofoundry; the coordinator is Prof. Guhan Jayaraman of the Department of Biotechnology. Pre-final and final-year B.Tech / M.Tech / M.Sc students of biotechnology and allied streams from any institution in India can join. Three stages: about 3 months of online learning through CODE → evaluation → a 4-week hands-on programme at the IIT Madras Biofoundry → internship opportunities with industry partners. The first batch begins on 18 Jan 2027. Aim: bridge the gap between academics and industry and create a job-ready workforce for biomanufacturing.

### Key facts

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|---|---|
| **Name** | IITM-Biofoundry Finishing School – UDYOG (Upskilling and Development for Young Graduates) |
| **Launch** | 21 Oct 2026 – Director V. Kamakoti, IIT Madras campus, Chennai |
| **Run by** | SynBioME – IIT Madras–TICEL Biofoundry; online part via CODE (Centre for Outreach and Digital Education) |
| **Eligibility** | Pre-final / final-year B.Tech, M.Tech, M.Sc students of biotechnology and allied streams |
| **Structure** | ~3 months online + 4-week hands-on + industry internship opportunity |
| **First batch** | 18 Jan 2027; early-bird registration till 15 Dec 2026 |

### Background

- IIT Madras: started in 1959 with West German assistance (1959 Bonn agreement – equipment, German professors). IITs are Institutions of National Importance under the Institutes of Technology Act, 1961. NIRF 2025: No. 1 overall for the 7th year in a row. IIT Madras Research Park is India's first university-based research park.
- Biotech governance: Department of Biotechnology (DBT) – 1986, under the Union Ministry of Science & Technology. BIRAC (Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council) – a not-for-profit Section 8 PSU set up by DBT in 2012 to fund start-ups and industrial research.
- BioE3 Policy (Biotechnology for Economy, Environment and Employment) – Union Cabinet approval, Aug 2024. It promotes high-performance biomanufacturing through biomanufacturing hubs, biofoundries and Bio-AI hubs.
- Science: a 'biofoundry' uses synthetic biology and automated lab tools to design, build, test and scale up engineered microbes (design–build–test–learn cycle). Enzymes, vaccines, biofuels and bioplastics are biomanufactured products.

**Tamil Nadu link:** partner TICEL Bio Park at Taramani, Chennai, was promoted by the Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corporation (TIDCO) with technical collaboration from Cornell University (USA); CM J. Jayalalithaa inaugurated it on 10 Nov 2004.

## 6 Jaipur in National Geographic's 'Best of the World 2027' list; the city turns 300 in 2027

Art & Culture

### News

On 20 Oct 2026 National Geographic released its 'Best of the World 2027' list of 25 places to visit in 2027. It includes Jaipur ('Pink City'), the capital of Rajasthan. Reasons cited: the city, founded on 18 Nov 1727, marks its 300th year in 2027; the 20th edition of the Jaipur Literature Festival (14–18 Jan 2027, one of the world's largest literary festivals); and its palaces and crafts such as block printing, blue pottery and meenakari. The list also includes Vestland (Norway), Penang (Malaysia) and Luxor (Egypt); no other Indian destination is reported.

### Key facts

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| **List** | National Geographic 'Best of the World 2027' – 25 places; released 20 Oct 2026 |
| **Founder** | Sawai Jai Singh II (Kachwaha Rajput ruler of Amber) – 18 Nov 1727 |
| **Planner** | Vidyadhar Bhattacharya – grid plan based on Vastu / Shilpa Shastra |
| **Pink City** | Painted pink in 1876 by Maharaja Ram Singh II for the visit of the Prince of Wales (Albert Edward) |
| **UNESCO** | Walled City of Jaipur – 2019; Jantar Mantar – 2010; Amber Fort ('Hill Forts of Rajasthan') – 2013 |
| **JLF** | Jaipur Literature Festival – 20th edition, 14–18 Jan 2027 |

### Background

- History: Amber (Amer) was the old Kachwaha capital. Owing to water shortage and a growing population, Sawai Jai Singh II built the planned city of Jaipur on the plains in 1727. A keen astronomer, he built observatories at Delhi, Jaipur, Ujjain, Varanasi and Mathura.
- Planning: Bengali architect Vidyadhar Bhattacharya designed the city on Vastu and Shilpa Shastra principles with wide streets, grid blocks (chowkris) and bazaars – one of India's earliest planned cities. Landmarks: Hawa Mahal (1799, Sawai Pratap Singh), City Palace, Jal Mahal.
- UNESCO: the 'Walled City of Jaipur' became a World Heritage Site in 2019 (43rd session, Baku, Azerbaijan) – India's second World Heritage City after Ahmedabad. The forts of Amber, Chittorgarh, Kumbhalgarh, Ranthambore, Gagron and Jaisalmer form the 'Hill Forts of Rajasthan' (2013).

**Tamil Nadu link:** TN's UNESCO World Heritage sites – Group of Monuments at Mahabalipuram (1984); 'Great Living Chola Temples' – Brihadisvara, Thanjavur (1987), with Gangaikondacholapuram and Airavatesvara, Darasuram added in 2004; Nilgiri Mountain Railway ('Mountain Railways of India', 2005); Gingee Fort ('Maratha Military Landscapes', 2025).

## 7 President Murmu releases ₹200 commemorative coin in Raipur on the 200th birth anniversary of Sindhi spiritual leader Mata Hasi Devi Ji

History

### News

On 22 Oct 2026 President Droupadi Murmu released a ₹200 commemorative coin at 'Chhattisgarh Mandapam', Lok Bhavan, Raipur, marking the 200th birth anniversary of Mata Hasi Devi Ji (Mata Sahib Hasi Devi), a revered Sindhi spiritual leader and the 5th Peethadheesh (head) of the Shadani Darbar, Raipur. The coin is issued by the Union Ministry of Finance; one side carries her image and the other the Lion Capital of Ashoka with the denomination. Governor Ramen Deka and CM Vishnu Deo Sai attended; the present Peethadheesh, Sant Dr Yudhishthir Lal, gave the welcome address. Devotees and collectors can book the coin through Shadani Darbar units.

### Key facts

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| **Event** | 22 Oct 2026 – Chhattisgarh Mandapam, Lok Bhavan, Raipur |
| **Released by** | President Droupadi Murmu; Governor Ramen Deka, CM Vishnu Deo Sai present |
| **Honouring** | Mata Hasi Devi Ji – 5th Peethadheesh of Shadani Darbar; Sindhi spiritual leader; 200th birth anniversary |
| **Coin** | ₹200; issued by Union Finance Ministry; her image on one side, Ashoka Lion Capital on the other |
| **Shadani Darbar** | Founded in 1786 by Sant Shadaram Sahib (b. 1708, Lahore) at Hayat Pitafi, Sindh (now Pakistan) |

### Background

- Coinage authority: under the Coinage Act, 2011 only the Union Government designs and mints coins; coins up to ₹1,000 may be issued. RBI puts coins into circulation (RBI Act, 1934, Section 38). Banknotes are issued by RBI (Section 22), but the ₹1 note is issued by the Union Finance Ministry.
- Mints: India's four Government Mints – Mumbai, Kolkata, Hyderabad and Noida – are under the Security Printing and Minting Corporation of India Ltd (SPMCIL), a central PSU formed in 2006. Commemorative coins are mostly for collectors and do not enter circulation. A ₹200 coin was earlier issued for the 200th birth anniversary of Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati.
- Sindhi community: after Partition (1947) many Sindhi Hindus migrated from Sindh (now in Pakistan) to India. Sindhi was added to the Eighth Schedule by the 21st Constitutional Amendment (1967) – a Scheduled language that is not the official language of any State.
- Polity: the Lion Capital of Ashoka (Sarnath) on the coin has been India's State Emblem since 26 Jan 1950, with 'Satyameva Jayate' (Mundaka Upanishad) below. Chhattisgarh was carved out of Madhya Pradesh on 1 Nov 2000; capital Raipur.

**Tamil Nadu link:** Defence Minister Rajnath Singh released a ₹100 commemorative coin marking the birth centenary of former CM M. Karunanidhi in Chennai on 18 Aug 2024.

## 8 33rd Singapore–India Maritime Bilateral Exercise 'SIMBEX-2026' begins at Visakhapatnam (21–26 Oct)

Defence

### News

The 33rd edition of the Singapore–India Maritime Bilateral Exercise, 'SIMBEX-2026', is being held at Visakhapatnam from 21 to 26 Oct 2026. Republic of Singapore Navy ship RSS Supreme arrived on 21 Oct; the opening ceremony was held the same day. INS Nilgiri and INS Kamorta represent the Indian Navy. Harbour phase (21–23 Oct) – subject-matter expert exchanges, cross-deck visits, sports and planning conferences; sea phase (24–26 Oct, Bay of Bengal) – anti-submarine, anti-surface and anti-air warfare drills. Aim: interoperability and peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific.

### Key facts

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| **Edition** | 33rd; 21–26 Oct 2026; Visakhapatnam (Eastern Naval Command) |
| **Ships** | Singapore – RSS Supreme (Formidable-class frigate); India – INS Nilgiri (Project 17A), INS Kamorta (Project 28) |
| **Phases** | Harbour 21–23 Oct; Sea 24–26 Oct (Bay of Bengal) |
| **Origin** | 1994 – as 'Exercise Lion King' |
| **Other exercises** | SITMEX – Singapore–India–Thailand trilateral maritime exercise (since 2019); 'Bold Kurukshetra' – army |

### Background

- History: begun in 1994 as 'Lion King', an anti-submarine exercise, SIMBEX is one of the Indian Navy's longest-running bilateral naval exercises, held both in Indian waters and in the Singapore / South China Sea region. Its silver jubilee (25th edition) in 2018 was held at Port Blair and Visakhapatnam.
- Relations: Singapore is a key partner in India's 'Act East' policy (2014). Ties were elevated to a 'Comprehensive Strategic Partnership' during PM Modi's visit in Sept 2024. Singapore is a founding member of ASEAN (1967).
- Geography / history: Singapore is a city-state at the southern tip of the Malay Peninsula, at the southern entrance of the Strait of Malacca. Stamford Raffles set up a British trading post in 1819; it joined Malaysia in 1963 and became independent on 9 Aug 1965. Visakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh) is HQ of the Eastern Naval Command.

**Tamil Nadu link:** Tamil is one of Singapore's four official languages, with English, Malay and Mandarin; most people of Indian origin there are Tamils. Chennai and Singapore have close sea, air and trade links.

## 9 ISRO to launch NVS-03, the 12th NavIC satellite, on GSLV Mk II from Sriharikota on 30 Oct

Science & Space

### News

According to ISRO's announcement on 22 Oct 2026, NVS-03 – the 12th satellite of the Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS / NavIC) and the third of the second-generation NVS series – will be launched on 30 Oct 2026 by a GSLV Mk II from Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota. Mass 2,232 kg; life 12 years; it carries an indigenous Rubidium atomic clock developed by the Space Applications Centre (SAC), Ahmedabad. It was earlier targeted for 15–20 Oct. With ageing satellites and clock failures, only three satellites now provide service (standalone positioning needs at least four), so NVS-03 aims to restore NavIC.

### Key facts

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| **Satellite** | NVS-03 – 12th NavIC satellite (counting failed IRNSS-1H and NVS-02); 3rd of NVS series; 2,232 kg; 12-year life |
| **Launch** | 30 Oct 2026 – GSLV Mk II, Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota (Andhra Pradesh) |
| **Signals** | L1, L5 and S bands; indigenous Rubidium atomic clock (SAC, Ahmedabad) |
| **NavIC** | 7-satellite design (3 geostationary + 4 geosynchronous); India + ~1,500 km beyond its borders |
| **NVS-02** | 29 Jan 2025 – GSLV-F15 (100th launch from Sriharikota); orbit-raising failed due to a pyro-valve problem |
| **ISRO chief** | Dr V. Narayanan (since Jan 2025; Kanyakumari district) |

### Background

- History: IRNSS-1A – 1 July 2013, PSLV-C22. In 2016 PM Modi named it 'NavIC' (Navigation with Indian Constellation). IRNSS-1H (2017) failed as its heat shield did not separate. Failures of imported Rubidium clocks created the need for replacements. NVS-01 (29 May 2023, GSLV-F12) carried the first indigenous atomic clock.
- Science: satellite navigation fixes position from the time differences of signals from several satellites – so highly precise atomic clocks are essential. NavIC offers a Standard Positioning Service (SPS) for civilians and a Restricted Service (RS) for authorised users. The NVS series adds the L1 band to L5 and S – helping use in common devices such as phones.
- Global systems: GPS – USA; GLONASS – Russia; Galileo – European Union; BeiDou – China (global); QZSS – Japan and NavIC – India (regional). GSLV Mk II is a three-stage rocket with solid, liquid and indigenous cryogenic stages.

**Tamil Nadu link:** GSLV's cryogenic and liquid engines are tested at the ISRO Propulsion Complex (IPRC), Mahendragiri, Tirunelveli district. ISRO Chairman Dr V. Narayanan hails from Kanyakumari district. ISRO's second spaceport, for small rockets (SSLV), is coming up at Kulasekarapattinam, Thoothukudi district.

## 10 France confirms the world's first human case of Shamonda virus – patient in Lyon died

Health

### News

France's health and agriculture ministries confirmed on 22 Oct 2026 the first human case of Shamonda virus, until now considered to affect only livestock. A severely immunocompromised patient at the Hospices Civils de Lyon died in early October; brain complications were 'very likely linked' to the infection. The person was probably infected by a Culicoides biting midge in eastern France. Authorities said no risk to the general public has been identified; France has notified WHO and ECDC.

### Key facts

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| **Confirmed** | 22 Oct 2026 – French health & agriculture ministries; Lyon (Hospices Civils de Lyon) |
| **Patient** | Severely immunocompromised; died in early October |
| **Vector** | Culicoides biting midges |
| **Classification** | Genus Orthobunyavirus, Simbu serogroup – related to Schmallenberg virus |
| **In cattle** | Fever, lethargy, diarrhoea, milk drop; abortion and birth defects in calves |
| **Spread** | First found in Nigeria, mid-1960s; Africa, Japan; first in Western Europe in summer 2026 (France, Germany, Switzerland etc.) |

### Background

- Zoonoses: diseases passing from animals to humans – rabies, Nipah, bird flu, Kyasanur Forest Disease (monkey fever), leptospirosis. Most emerging infections are of animal origin.
- One Health: the approach that human, animal and environmental health are interlinked. A livestock virus reaching a human shows why animal and human disease surveillance must be joined up.
- Science: Shamonda and Schmallenberg (found in Germany in 2011) are both RNA viruses of genus Orthobunyavirus (family Peribunyaviridae), Simbu serogroup. The same Culicoides midges spread bluetongue. Experts link warming temperatures to the northward spread of these midges.
- India: the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC, Delhi) tracks outbreaks through the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP). France – Western Europe, capital Paris; Lyon lies where the Rhône and Saône rivers meet.

**Tamil Nadu link:** Tamil Nadu was the first State in India to enact a Public Health Act (1939); its Directorate of Public Health and Preventive Medicine was formed in 1923. Studies at sheep farms in Tamil Nadu have recorded Culicoides imicola and other bluetongue-spreading midge species.

## 11 Inaugural Commonwealth Kabaddi Championship 2026 begins in Ahmedabad on 23 October (till 31 October)

Sports

### News

The inaugural 'Commonwealth Kabaddi Championship 2026' is being held at the Veer Savarkar Sports Complex, Ahmedabad (Gujarat), from 23 to 31 October, hosted by the Amateur Kabaddi Federation of India (AKFI). First announced for 21–31 October, the start was moved to 23 October. 13 men's and 10 women's teams take part (Pakistan withdrew). Semi-finals are on 30 October and the finals on 31 October.

### Key facts

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|---|---|
| **Dates** | 23–31 Oct 2026 (originally to start 21 Oct) |
| **Venue** | Veer Savarkar Sports Complex, Ahmedabad, Gujarat |
| **Host** | Amateur Kabaddi Federation of India (AKFI) |
| **Men's teams (13)** | Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, England, India, Kenya, Malaysia, Nigeria, Scotland, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Uganda |
| **Women's teams (10)** | Bangladesh, England, India, Kenya, Malaysia, Nigeria, Scotland, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Uganda |
| **Telecast** | Star Sports; JioStar app |

### Background

- Kabaddi is a traditional Indian sport; it became a medal sport for the first time at the 1990 Beijing Asian Games, where India's men won the gold.
- Bodies: the Amateur Kabaddi Federation of India (AKFI) governs the sport in India; the Pro Kabaddi League (PKL) began in 2014. Kabaddi has never been an official Commonwealth Games medal sport, and was not at Glasgow 2026 either.
- 2030 Commonwealth Games: Ahmedabad was confirmed as host at the Commonwealth Sport General Assembly in Glasgow on 26 Nov 2025 – the centenary Games, back in India after Delhi 2010. The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) has proposed adding kabaddi for 2030. The first Games were the 1930 British Empire Games at Hamilton, Canada.
- Geography: Ahmedabad, Gujarat's largest city, stands on the Sabarmati river; Gandhi's Sabarmati Ashram is here (the Dandi March began from it in 1930).

**Tamil Nadu link:** Kabaddi is the state game of Tamil Nadu. In Tamil it is also called 'Sadugudu'; the word 'kabaddi' is believed to come from the Tamil 'kai-pidi' (holding hands).

## 12 Nationwide 'Khet Bachao Abhiyan – Rabi 2026' (Save the Fields campaign) launched today from Karnal, Haryana

Agriculture

### News

Union Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan launched the nationwide 'Khet Bachao Abhiyan – Rabi 2026' (Save the Fields campaign) at Karnal, Haryana, on 22 Oct 2026; it runs till 30 Nov (about 40 days). Aims: balanced fertiliser use based on soil testing, crop diversification (oilseeds, pulses, horticulture), water conservation, natural farming, crop-residue management, and awareness of PMFBY crop insurance and Kisan Credit Cards. It targets about 1 crore participants through 4,150 teams of KVKs and ATMA. Speaking at Karnal, the Minister urged farmers to stop burning stubble.

### Key facts

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| **Launch** | 22 Oct 2026, Karnal (Haryana) – Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan |
| **Period** | 22 Oct – 30 Nov 2026 |
| **Ministry** | Union Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare |
| **Partners** | State agri depts, KVKs, ICAR institutes, agri universities, ATMA; 4,150 teams; ~1 crore target |
| **Earlier phase** | Kharif-season drive – 1 June 2026, Raisen district (Madhya Pradesh) |
| **Focus** | Soil health, balanced fertiliser, crop diversification, residue management, natural farming |

### Background

- Seasons: Kharif – sown in June–July with the south-west monsoon (rice, cotton, maize); Rabi – sown October–December, harvested April–June (wheat, mustard, gram, barley); Zaid – summer crops (watermelon, cucumber). Winter rain from Western Disturbances helps rabi crops.
- ICAR: set up on 16 July 1929 as the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research on the recommendation of the Royal Commission on Agriculture (chaired by Linlithgow); HQ New Delhi; works under the Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE).
- Karnal hosts ICAR's National Dairy Research Institute (NDRI), Indian Institute of Wheat and Barley Research and Central Soil Salinity Research Institute. Paddy-stubble burning in Punjab–Haryana in Oct–Nov is a major cause of Delhi's air pollution.
- Soil Health Card scheme: launched on 19 Feb 2015 at Suratgarh, Rajasthan – gives farmers soil-test-based fertiliser advice, aiming to check overuse of fertilisers.

**Tamil Nadu link:** unlike North India's rabi–kharif pattern, Tamil Nadu's paddy seasons are Kuruvai (sown June–July), Samba (August; long-duration crop relying on the north-east monsoon), Thaladi (Sept–Oct), Navarai (Dec–Jan) and Sornavari (Apr–May) (TNAU Agritech).

## 13 Powerful El Niño could trigger major economic shocks worldwide – UN (WMO, OCHA) warns

International

### News

WMO Secretary-General Celeste Saulo and UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Tom Fletcher issued a joint warning in Geneva on 21 Oct 2026. WMO's Global Seasonal Climate Update says tropical Pacific sea-surface temperatures could be up to 3.8°C above average in Nov 2026 – Jan 2027, beating the 2015–16 record of 2.6°C. Saulo said it is 'off the monitoring charts that we have used for the past four decades'. Fletcher called the El Niño a 'wrecking ball' that could bring economic shocks for the global economy, conflict and displacement. The UN released $50 million from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) for 11 countries.

### Key facts

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| **Warning** | 21 Oct 2026, Geneva – WMO + UN humanitarian office (OCHA) |
| **Forecast** | Pacific SST up to 3.8°C above average (Nov–Jan); peak around Dec 2026 |
| **Previous record** | 2015–16 El Niño – 2.6°C |
| **El Niño threshold** | Eastern tropical Pacific 0.5°C above average |
| **Aid** | CERF – $50 million for 11 countries (incl. Chad, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan, El Salvador) |
| **Impacts** | SE Asia – rain deficit, wildfires; East Africa – heavy rain; Latin America, Asia–Pacific – heat, drought, floods; ~50 million people at risk of hunger |

### Background

- Science: El Niño is abnormal warming of the central–eastern equatorial Pacific surface; La Niña is the opposite (cooling). Together with the 'Southern Oscillation' – a see-saw in air pressure – they form ENSO. Events recur every 2–7 years and last 9–12 months. The 'Niño 3.4' region (5°N–5°S, 170°W–120°W) is used for monitoring.
- Name: Peruvian fishermen called the warm current that appeared around Christmas 'El Niño' (Spanish for 'the boy' / 'the Christ child'). Warm water suppresses the upwelling of cold, nutrient-rich water, hurting Peru's anchovy fishery.
- Walker circulation: normally, easterly trade winds over the Pacific push warm water towards Indonesia–Australia. In El Niño they weaken and the Walker circulation shifts east. The Southern Oscillation (Tahiti–Darwin pressure difference) was identified by Sir Gilbert Walker, Director General of the IMD.
- Indian monsoon: El Niño usually weakens the southwest monsoon (June–Sept), causing drought and food inflation; La Niña usually strengthens it. The Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) is the temperature difference between the western and eastern Indian Ocean; a positive IOD can partly offset El Niño's adverse effect.
- Economy: droughts and floods can hit prices of rice, sugar, cotton, cocoa, coffee and maize, hydropower output, insurance and financial markets. The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) is a UN specialised agency headquartered in Geneva; World Meteorological Day is 23 March.

**Tamil Nadu link:** Tamil Nadu gets most of its annual rain from the northeast monsoon (Oct–Dec). IMD studies show a tendency for normal or above-normal northeast monsoon rain over south-east

peninsular India (Tamil Nadu) in El Niño years – the 2015 Chennai floods in a strong El Niño year are an example. It is a tendency, not a fixed rule.

## 14 India and Poland agree to deepen defence, space and nuclear energy cooperation – Polish PM Donald Tusk visits India

International Relations

### News

Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk paid an official visit to India on 21–23 Oct 2026. On 22 Oct he held talks with PM Narendra Modi at Hyderabad House, New Delhi. 'Today we have agreed to deepen ties in defence, space and nuclear energy,' Modi said. A 'Defence Industry Dialogue' for co-development and co-production will be set up; the two aim to double bilateral trade by 2030 using the India–EU Free Trade Agreement; a new partnership in critical minerals. Finance and Economy Minister Andrzej Domański and about 100 business representatives accompanied him; a business forum is scheduled in Bengaluru on 23 Oct.

### Key facts

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| **Visit** | 21–23 Oct 2026; talks 22 Oct, Hyderabad House, New Delhi; business forums – New Delhi, Bengaluru |
| **Significance** | Tusk's last visit as PM was in 2010 – first in 16 years |
| **Defence** | Defence Industry Dialogue; 8th Joint Working Group on Defence – Warsaw, Sept 2026; classified-information agreement soon |
| **Trade** | US$6.36 billion in 2025 (Indian exports 4.83 billion); target to double by 2030 |
| **Other areas** | Critical minerals, semiconductors, battery recycling; National Archives pact finalised |
| **Poland** | Capital Warsaw (on the Vistula); currency złoty; NATO 1999; EU 2004; GDP crossed US$1 trillion |

### Background

- History: India–Poland diplomatic ties began in 1954. PM Modi's visit on 21–22 Aug 2024 (the first by an Indian PM in 45 years, after Morarji Desai in 1979) raised ties to a 'Strategic Partnership'; an Action Plan for 2024–28 was adopted.
- 'Good Maharaja': in World War II, Jam Saheb Digvijaysinhji of Nawanagar (today's Jamnagar, Gujarat) sheltered hundreds of Polish children rescued from Soviet camps at Balachadi in 1942. Warsaw has a 'Good Maharaja Square' in his honour. The Valivade camp near Kolhapur was the largest Polish refugee settlement in India.
- Geography–politics: Poland is a Central European country with about a 530-km border with Ukraine. During 'Operation Ganga' (2022) it helped Indian students leave Ukraine safely.
- Economy: Indian investment in Poland exceeds US$3 billion; about 10,000 Poles work for Indian IT firms. Poland is to get €43.7 billion in loans from the EU's SAFE defence-procurement fund.

**Tamil Nadu link:** the visit made no direct announcement for Tamil Nadu. But the State matters in two of the agreed sectors: nuclear energy – Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant in Tirunelveli district (Russian cooperation, VVER reactors) is India's largest; space – ISRO's second launch port (for small launch vehicles) is being built at Kulasekarapattinam, Thoothukudi district.

## 15 International Snow Leopard Day 2026 – 23 October

Important Days

### News

International Snow Leopard Day is observed every year on 23 October. It marks 23 Oct 2013, when 12 range countries adopted the 'Bishkek Declaration' in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, and launched the Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Program (GSLEP). On 12 Dec 2024 the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution officially proclaiming 23 October the 'International Day of the Snow Leopard'; 61 countries, including India, co-sponsored it. India's first scientific count, SPAI (2019–23), reported 718 snow leopards on 30 Jan 2024.

### Key facts

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| **Day** | 23 Oct – Bishkek Declaration, 2013; UNGA recognition 12 Dec 2024 |
| **Scientific name** | Panthera uncia; 'ghost of the mountains' |
| **Status** | IUCN – Vulnerable; CITES Appendix I; Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 – Schedule I |
| **India (SPAI)** | 718 – Ladakh 477, Uttarakhand 124, Himachal 51, Arunachal 36, Sikkim 21, J&K 9 |
| **12 range countries** | India, Nepal, Bhutan, China, Mongolia, Russia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan |
| **State animal** | Ladakh (2021), Himachal Pradesh |

### Background

- Biology–geography: the snow leopard is a solitary cat of the high mountains of Central and South Asia (about 3,000–5,500 m); it cannot roar. Its main prey are blue sheep (bharal), Himalayan ibex and marmots. It is an 'indicator species' of high-mountain ecosystem health.
- Indian conservation: Project Snow Leopard – 2009; the GEF–UNDP 'SECURE Himalaya' project (Ladakh, Himachal, Uttarakhand, Sikkim); listed among 21 critically endangered species for recovery. Hemis National Park, Ladakh, is called the 'snow leopard capital of the world'.
- SPAI survey: the Wildlife Institute of India (WII, Dehradun) was national coordinator, with NCF (Mysuru) and WWF-India as partners. Camera traps at 1,971 sites; about 70% of the habitat lies outside protected areas. A dedicated Snow Leopard Cell at WII and a count every fourth year were recommended.

**Tamil Nadu link:** Tamil Nadu has no snow leopards, but its counterpart in mountain-species conservation is the State animal, the Nilgiri tahr. CM M.K. Stalin launched the ₹25 crore 'Project Nilgiri Tahr' on 12 Oct 2023; 7 October, the birthday of Dr E.R.C. Davidar, who did a pioneering tahr study in 1975, is 'Nilgiri Tahr Day'. Mukurthi National Park in the Nilgiris was created to protect the tahr.

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