Current Affairs – Notes

25 October 2026

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1 Madurai Bench of Madras HC bars registration of documents on lands dedicated to Srirangam temple by an 1887 deed

Tamil Nadu

News

The Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court has restrained the Sub-Registrars of Srirangam, Tiruchirappalli Joint-III, Musiri and Kulithalai from registering any document relating to the lands listed in an 1887 deed (Document No. 1646 of 1887) that dedicated properties to the Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple, Srirangam (reported 18 Oct 2026). A Division Bench of Justices C.V. Karthikeyan and R. Sakthivel, hearing a petition by A. Sampathkumar, observed that the deed reflects an 'absolute dedication' of the scheduled lands to the temple. The petitioner alleged that some lands may have been transferred in breach of the endowment and sought their identification and verification against revenue and registration records, and legal action by the HR&CE Department. The case will be heard next on 5 Nov 2026.

Key facts

Court	Madurai Bench, Madras HC – Justices C.V. Karthikeyan & R. Sakthivel
Deed	Document No. 1646 of 1887 – absolute dedication to the temple
Restrained	Sub-Registrars of Srirangam, Trichy Joint-III, Musiri, Kulithalai
Petitioner	A. Sampathkumar; next hearing 5 Nov 2026
Madurai Bench	Functioning since 24 July 2004
Laws	TN HR&CE Act 1959; Registration Act 1908

Background

- Srirangam temple: on an island between the Kaveri and the Kollidam; Lord Ranganatha in reclining posture. Foremost of the 108 Vaishnava Divya Desams, praised by the Alvars. Seven prakaras and 21 gopurams; regarded as one of the largest functioning Hindu temples in the world.
- Rajagopuram: 13 tiers, about 236 ft, built through the efforts of the 44th Jeer of Ahobila Mutt (Azhagiasingar); consecrated in 1987. Ramanuja spent his later life at Srirangam; tradition holds that Kambar first presented his Ramayanam here.
- Legal background: Madras Hindu Religious Endowments Act 1926 (Justice Party government) → Tamil Nadu HR&CE Act 1959. Under Section 34, any sale, mortgage, exchange or lease beyond 5 years of a temple's immovable property is void unless sanctioned by the Commissioner.
- Constitution: Article 26 – religious denominations may own and acquire movable and immovable property and administer it in accordance with law. 'Registration of deeds and documents' is in the Concurrent List (List III, Entry 6); the Registration Act 1908 is a central law that States may amend.

Tamil Nadu link: Srirangam temple won the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Award of Merit for cultural heritage conservation in 2017 for its restoration – the first temple in Tamil Nadu to get it. Musiri is in Tiruchirappalli district and Kulithalai in Karur district.

2 Flood water gushes down Thalaiyar (Rat Tail) Falls, Tamil Nadu's highest waterfall

Tamil Nadu

News

After the north-east monsoon set in on 15 Oct 2026 (IMD), heavy rain in the Palani Hills has sent flood water gushing down Thalaiyar Falls in Dindigul district – Tamil Nadu's highest waterfall. Dropping about 297 m (975 ft), the falls can be seen from the Dum Dum Rock viewpoint on the Batlagundu–Kodaikanal ghat road; there is no road to the falls themselves.

Key facts

Falls	Thalaiyar Falls – 'Rat Tail Falls'
Height	About 297 m (975 ft) – highest in Tamil Nadu
Location	Palani Hills, Dindigul district (Western Ghats)
River	Manjalar – tributary of the Vaigai; Manjalar Dam downstream (Devadanapatti, Theni district)
Viewpoint	Dum Dum Rock – Batlagundu–Kodaikanal ghat road
Cause	North-east monsoon – set in 15 Oct 2026 (IMD)

Background

- Geography: the Palani Hills are an eastward spur of the Western Ghats; Kodaikanal here is called the 'Princess of Hill Stations'. Silver Cascade and Bear Shola falls are in the same area.
- River: water from Thalaiyar flows on as the Manjalar, a tributary of the Vaigai. Other Vaigai tributaries include the Suruliyar, Varahanadhi and Mullaiyar. The Vaigai flows past Madurai to the Ramanathapuram Big Tank.
- Climate: Tamil Nadu gets the bulk of its annual rain from the north-east monsoon (Oct–Dec); during the south-west monsoon it lies largely in the rain-shadow of the Western Ghats.

Tamil Nadu link: Courtallam – Chittar river, Tenkasi ('Spa of the South'); Hogenakkal – Kaveri, Dharmapuri; Suruli and Kumbakkarai – Theni; Agaya Gangai – Kolli Hills (Namakkal); Kiliyur – Yercaud (Salem); Catherine – Kotagiri (Nilgiris); Monkey Falls – Aliyar (Coimbatore).

3 Tenkasi Forest Division adds the Madras hedgehog to its 'Golden Jackal Ambassadors' conservation programme

Tamil Nadu

News

On 22 Oct 2026 the Tenkasi Forest Division proposed adding the Madras hedgehog – locally called 'mulleli' – to its 'Golden Jackal Ambassadors' programme launched in 2025. The programme trains students, volunteers and village youth as conservation ambassadors. Hedgehogs have been recorded around Alangulam, Sankarankovil, Sivagiri and Uthumalai; in a survey of 867 people in 38 villages, 53% reported seeing them during the monsoon. Habitat loss, road kills and hunting for supposed medicinal use are the main threats. Note: do not confuse it with the porcupine ('mullampanri'); the animal in this news is the hedgehog ('mulleli').

Key facts

Animal	Madras / bare-bellied hedgehog – Paraechinus nudiventris
IUCN status	Least Concern; very poorly studied
Range	Southern India only – most records from Tamil Nadu grasslands and scrub
Programme	Golden Jackal Ambassadors – Tenkasi Forest Division (2025)
Funding	₹1 crore for 4 lesser-known species (2025); ₹20.5 lakh for the hedgehog
Study	Theri forests (Thoothukudi) – AIWC, Vandalur

Background

- Science: the hedgehog is a nocturnal, insect-eating mammal (order Eulipotyphla) that rolls into a spiny ball when threatened. The porcupine is entirely different – it is a rodent.
- State funding: in Oct 2025 Tamil Nadu set aside ₹1 crore for four lesser-known endangered species – lion-tailed macaque (₹48.5 lakh), Madras hedgehog (₹20.5 lakh), hump-backed mahseer (₹17 lakh) and striped hyena (₹14 lakh). The ₹50-crore TN Endangered Species Conservation Fund is managed by AIWC, Vandalur.
- Other TN efforts: Project Nilgiri Tahr (2022); India's first Dugong Conservation Reserve – Palk Bay (2022); India's first slender loris sanctuary – Kadavur (Karur & Dindigul, 2022); Grizzled Giant Squirrel Sanctuary – Srivilliputhur.
- Law: Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 – the 2022 amendment simplified the schedules (Schedules I and II for animals).

Tamil Nadu link: most records of the Madras hedgehog come from Tamil Nadu – the grasslands of Tenkasi district and the Theri forests of Thoothukudi (studied by AIWC, Vandalur, since Jan 2026). Under the Madras Hedgehog Conservation Project (2025–26), a radio-tagged hedgehog gave birth in the Peikulam grassland in Oct 2026.

4 Voters too can file private criminal complaints over a candidate's false election affidavit – Supreme Court

Polity, Economy & Urban Affairs

News

On 16 Oct 2026 the Supreme Court held that any private person, including a voter, can file a criminal complaint before a magistrate under Section 125A of the Representation of the People Act 1951 against a candidate who gives false information or conceals information in the nomination affidavit (Rajkumar Madki v. Dr Shailendra Beldale). The Bench of Justices Dipankar Datta (author) and Sheel Nagu rejected the Karnataka High Court's view that only the Election Commission or a public servant could complain, holding that Section 125A is outside Section 195(1) CrPC. A 2020 ECI press note does not bind courts. On facts (an address allegation against a Bidar, Karnataka MLA), the quashing of the complaint was upheld on other grounds.

Key facts

Case	Rajkumar Madki v. Dr Shailendra Beldale – Crl. Appeal 3387 of 2026
Judgment	16 Oct 2026
Bench	Justices Dipankar Datta & Sheel Nagu
Section 125A	False/concealed info – up to 6 months' jail, fine or both (inserted 2002)
Key point	Sec 195(1) CrPC bar does not apply; magistrates can weed out frivolous complaints
Appeal from	Karnataka HC (7 Mar 2025) – Bidar MLA case

Background

- RP Act 1951: Section 33A – duty to disclose information including criminal antecedents; Section 125A – penalty for false information (both added in 2002). Candidates declare assets, liabilities, education and criminal cases in the 'Form 26' affidavit.
- Landmark rulings: Union of India v. ADR (2002) and PUCL v. Union of India (2003) – a voter's right to know a candidate's background is part of Article 19(1)(a). PUCL (2013) – NOTA. Lily Thomas (2013) – Section 8(4) of the RP Act struck down.
- Election disputes: an election result is challenged by an 'election petition' in the High Court (RPA Sections 80, 81 – within 45 days); Article 329(b). Superintendence, direction and control of elections – Election Commission of India (Article 324).

Tamil Nadu link: the 2026 Tamil Nadu Assembly election (234 seats) was held in a single phase on 23 Apr 2026, with counting on 4 May. Every candidate filed a Form 26 affidavit – under this ruling, any voter can move a magistrate if such an affidavit is false.

5 PM Modi to open RBI's Tier IV Data Centre and Enterprise Computing & Cybersecurity Training Institute at Bhubaneswar

Polity, Economy & Urban Affairs

News

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to inaugurate, on 25 Oct 2026, the Reserve Bank of India's new greenfield Data Centre and its Enterprise Computing & Cybersecurity Training Institute, built for about ₹169 crore on an 18.55-acre campus at Info Valley-II, Khordha district, near Bhubaneswar, Odisha. The data centre holds Tier IV certification for its design and will serve as a critical backup to RBI's primary data centre at Kharghar, Navi Mumbai, supporting currency management, payment and settlement systems and regulatory data. The site was chosen for low seismic risk and distance from border zones.

Key facts

Facilities	Greenfield Data Centre + Enterprise Computing & Cybersecurity Training Institute
Site	Info Valley-II, Khordha district (near Bhubaneswar); 18.55 acres
Cost	About ₹169 crore
Foundation	22 Mar 2023 – then RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das
Rating	Tier IV (design certification) – fault tolerant
Role	Backup to the primary data centre at Kharghar, Navi Mumbai

Background

- Tier standard (Uptime Institute): Tier I – basic (~99.671%); Tier II – redundant components (~99.741%); Tier III – concurrently maintainable (~99.982%); Tier IV – fault tolerant, with multiple simultaneously active power/cooling paths (~99.995%, only about 26 minutes' downtime a year).
- Cyber-security bodies: CERT-In – under the Ministry of Electronics & IT (MeitY), operational since 2004; national incident-response agency under Section 70B of the IT Act 2000. NCIIPC protects critical information infrastructure (Section 70A).
- RBI technology bodies: Institute for Development and Research in Banking Technology (IDRBT) – Hyderabad, set up by RBI in 1996; RBI's IT subsidiary ReBIT – Mumbai. The RBI Governor and Deputy Governors are appointed by the Central Government (RBI Act, Section 8).

Tamil Nadu link: RBI's apex training college, the Reserve Bank Staff College, has functioned on Anna Salai (Teynampet), Chennai, since 3 July 1963 and also trains officers of foreign central banks. The new Bhubaneswar institute will specialise in technology and cyber-security training.

6 Jitendra Singh opens 'AATAL' air-pollution analysis laboratory for Delhi-NCR at IITM's Delhi branch

Polity, Economy & Urban Affairs

News

On 24 Oct 2026, Dr Jitendra Singh, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science & Technology and Earth Sciences, opened the 'Integrated Atmospheric Chemistry and Aerosol Toxicity Analysis Laboratory' (AATAL) at the Delhi branch of the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), New Delhi. The Ministry of Earth Sciences set it up under 'Mission Mausam' at about ₹80 crore. It analyses PM2.5, gases, metals and toxic elements to work out how much pollution comes from each source (source apportionment) – vehicles, industry, crop-residue burning, construction and road dust, and pollution carried in from nearby regions. Linked to IITM's 'AIRWISE' decision-support system, it will give evidence-based inputs to CAQM and other agencies.

Key facts

Opened	24 Oct 2026 – Dr Jitendra Singh
Place	IITM Delhi branch, New Delhi
Set up by	Ministry of Earth Sciences – Mission Mausam; about ₹80 crore
Task	Pollution composition, sources and their shares (source apportionment), health impact
Linked to	AIRWISE – 72-hour forecasts at 400 m resolution; supports GRAP and CAQM
Present	Dr T. Srinivasa Kumar (Secretary, MoES); Dr A. Suryachandra Rao (Director, IITM)

Background

- IITM (Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology) – Pune; an autonomous institute of the Ministry of Earth Sciences. 'SAFAR' (System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting And Research) was built to monitor air quality during the 2010 Delhi Commonwealth Games, and later extended to Pune, Mumbai and Ahmedabad.
- Mission Mausam – approved by the Union Cabinet in Sept 2024; ₹2,000 crore for the first two years. Implemented by IMD, IITM and the National Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting (NCMRWF); aim – a 'weather-ready and climate-smart Bharat'.
- Science: PM2.5 – particles 2.5 micrometres or less in diameter; they reach the air sacs (alveoli) of the lungs and can enter the blood. PM10 – up to 10 micrometres. The National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS, 2009, CPCB) set limits for 12 pollutants; PM2.5 limit – 40 µg/m³ (annual), 60 µg/m³ (24-hour). WHO's 2021 guideline (annual) is 5 µg/m³.
- Governance: the Commission for Air Quality Management in NCR (CAQM) is a statutory body under a 2021 Act; the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) is applied in winter. AATAL's measured 'which source, how much' evidence will help decide where curbs are needed.

Tamil Nadu link: four TN cities – Chennai, Madurai, Tiruchirappalli and Thoothukudi – are on the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) list of 'non-attainment cities'. The Manali industrial area of North Chennai is classed a 'Critically Polluted Area' under CPCB's Comprehensive Environmental Pollution Index (CEPI).

7 19th Urban Mobility India Conference and 2nd National Urban Conclave in Bhubaneswar – Bhubaneswar wins 'Best Green Transport Initiative' city award

Polity, Economy & Urban Affairs

News

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), through the Institute of Urban Transport (India) and with Odisha's support, held the 19th Urban Mobility India (UMI) Conference & Exhibition in Bhubaneswar on 23–24 Oct 2026. Theme: 'Urban Accessibility and Liveability in Digital Age'. At the valedictory on 24 Oct, Union Minister Manohar Lal gave the awards: 'City with Best Green Transport Initiative' – Bhubaneswar (CRUT); 'Best Non-Motorised Transport System' – Chennai (Greater Chennai Corporation); 'Best Passenger Services (Metro)' – Chennai Metro Rail Ltd and NCRTC. Odisha also hosted the 2nd National Urban Conclave alongside it in Bhubaneswar.

Key facts

Event	19th UMI, 23–24 Oct 2026, Bhubaneswar; about 1,500 delegates
Organiser	MoHUA via Institute of Urban Transport (India); Odisha support
Theme	Urban Accessibility and Liveability in Digital Age
Green award	Bhubaneswar – CRUT (Capital Region Urban Transport)
Chennai awards	Non-motorised transport – GCC; Metro passenger services – CMRL; financing commendation – MTC
Manohar Lal's 3-I	Integration, Inclusiveness, Intelligence; operational Metro 1,185 km in 26 cities

Background

- The National Urban Transport Policy (NUTP) 2006 – core idea: 'move people, not vehicles'; priority to public transport, walking–cycling facilities and integrated land-use–transport planning. The UMI conference is held annually in this spirit.
- Metro Rail Policy 2017 – new metro proposals must show socio-economic returns, PPP component, last-mile connectivity and Transit-Oriented Development (TOD); cities above 20 lakh population may plan a metro.
- PM-eBus Sewa (Aug 2023, MoHUA) – 10,000 e-buses on the Public–Private Partnership (PPP) model; Segment A – city bus services in 169 cities; Segment B – green mobility initiatives in 181 cities (bus priority, NCMC fare collection, charging). At UMI 2026 the Minister said 1,100 e-buses run in 28 cities.
- 25 June 2015 – the Smart Cities Mission, AMRUT (Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation) and PMAY-Urban were launched on the same day. AMRUT's priority is water supply, then sewerage; storm-water drains, green spaces and non-motorised transport are also covered.

Tamil Nadu link: Chennai won two main awards at UMI 2026 – Greater Chennai Corporation (Best Non-Motorised Transport System – footpaths, cycling facilities) and Chennai Metro Rail Ltd (Best Passenger Services, jointly with NCRTC); the Metropolitan Transport Corporation (MTC) got a commendation for 'most viable financing'. Citing the 20-lakh population threshold of the Metro Rail Policy 2017, the Centre returned the Coimbatore and Madurai metro DPRs in Nov 2025.

8 Agriculture Ministry notifies 16 new indigenous livestock and dog breeds, including Tamil Nadu's Kombai dog

Agriculture, Infrastructure & Governance

News

Through a gazette notification dated 16 Oct 2026, the Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE), Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, recognised 16 new indigenous breeds from 13 States and the UT of Jammu & Kashmir. ICAR had registered them in Aug 2026 on the recommendation of the 14th meeting of its Breed Registration Committee (BRC); ICAR-National Bureau of Animal Genetic Resources (NBAGR), Karnal, gave the accession numbers. The only dog breed is Tamil Nadu's Kombai (accession INDIA_DOG_1800_KOMBAI_19006). India's registered breeds now total 262 (258 indigenous + 4 synthetic).

Key facts

Gazette	16 Oct 2026 – DARE, Agriculture Ministry (UNI, 19 Oct)
Registration	ICAR – 14th BRC meeting; ICAR release 7 Aug 2026
16 breeds	Cattle 4, buffalo 1, goat 2, sheep 4; donkey, horse, pig, yak, dog – 1 each
Some breeds	Periyar cattle (Kerala), Koppal cattle (Karnataka), Kashmiri horse, Sikkimese yak, Nagal pig (Nagaland), Braj donkey (UP)
Kombai	Named after Kombai town, Theni district; guard and protection dog; also called 'Polygar dog'
Total	262 registered breeds (258 indigenous + 4 synthetic)

Background

- ICAR-NBAGR (National Bureau of Animal Genetic Resources) – Karnal, Haryana; the nodal agency for registering livestock and poultry breeds. It studies physical and genetic data and assigns accession numbers. The Breed Registration Committee is chaired by ICAR's Deputy Director General (Animal Science). The National Dairy Research Institute (NDRI) is also at Karnal.
- Dog breed registration: NBAGR's first three registered dog breeds were Tamil Nadu's Rajapalayam and Chippiparai and Karnataka's Mudhol Hound (reported Dec 2020). The Kombai is broad, short and muscular, red-brown with a black mask-like muzzle, and takes its 'Polygar dog' name from the Poligar chieftains who prized it.
- Rashtriya Gokul Mission – December 2014; scientific development and conservation of indigenous cattle and buffalo breeds; run by the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying. As most indigenous animals are held by small, marginal farmers and landless labourers, it also helps the rural poor.
- Law: in 2017 Tamil Nadu amended the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1960 for Jallikattu; a Supreme Court Constitution Bench upheld it in May 2023. Pulikulam and Kangayam bulls are widely used in Jallikattu.

Tamil Nadu link: TN's registered dog breeds – Rajapalayam (Virudhunagar), Chippiparai (Virudhunagar area) and now Kombai (Theni). TN's indigenous cattle breeds – Kangayam (Kongu region), Umblachery (Cauvery delta – Thanjavur, Tiruvarur, Nagapattinam), Bargur (Bargur hills, Erode district), Pulikulam (Sivaganga, Ramanathapuram area – Jallikattu bulls) and Alambadi (Dharmapuri–Krishnagiri area).

9 Odisha announces India's first dedicated Agri-PV (agrivoltaics) policy – 'One Field, Two Harvests'

Agriculture, Infrastructure & Governance

News

At the Ministerial Session of the 7th Agrivoltaics World Conference at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi (reported 22 Oct 2026), Odisha Deputy CM and Agriculture–Energy Minister Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo announced the 'Odisha Agri-PV Policy 2026', set to make Odisha the first State with a dedicated Agri-PV policy. Target – 1 GW by 2030. At least 90% of each project site must stay under cultivation; the land keeps its agricultural status and crop-insurance eligibility. Farmers/FPOs may own the systems or lease land to developers; 25-year power purchase agreements with GRIDCO. The policy was announced as finalised; formal notification is awaited.

Key facts

Announced	Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo, Odisha Deputy CM – 7th Agrivoltaics World Conference, Bharat Mandapam (reported 22 Oct 2026)
Motto	'One Field, Two Harvests' – farmer before the panels
Target	1 GW Agri-PV by 2030
Condition	At least 90% land under cultivation; farm-land status and crop insurance retained
Power purchase	GRIDCO – 25-year PPA, assured offtake, grid connectivity
Pilots	1 MW Agri-PV plant running; pilot with Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

Background

- Agrivoltaics (Agri-PV) – growing crops and generating solar power on the same land at the same time. Raised panels give shade, keep soil moisture and cut heat stress, easing the land-versus-energy conflict. Panels are mounted high enough for tractors to pass.
- PM-KUSUM (Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan) – approved 19 Feb 2019; Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE). Component A – grid-connected solar plants up to 2 MW (on barren or cultivable land); Component B – standalone solar pumps in off-grid areas (Centre 30% + State 30% + farmer 40%); Component C – solarising existing grid-connected pumps (feeder solarisation).
- Jawaharlal Nehru National Solar Mission (JNNSM) – January 2010; one of the eight missions of the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC, 2008). The International Solar Alliance (ISA) – launched by India and France at Paris in 2015; HQ Gurugram.
- Odisha background: the policy builds on the Odisha Renewable Energy Policy 2022 and the Feb 2026 investor conclave (₹67,000 crore, 6.8 GW of commitments). The State has mapped 47.7 lakh acres of fallow and 40.7 lakh acres of suitable cropland; incentives are linked to drip irrigation, solar pumps, cold storage and agro-processing.

Tamil Nadu link: the Tamil Nadu Energy Development Agency (TEDA), the State's renewable-energy nodal agency since 1984, was merged in 2024 – along with TANGEDCO's renewable-energy wing – into the newly formed Tamil Nadu Green Energy Corporation Ltd (TNGECL), a dedicated company for hydro, solar, wind and energy storage. (Tamil Nadu has no separate Agri-PV policy yet.)

10 Sidhi district gets rail link for the first time since Independence – Rewa–Churhat (65 km) and Satna–Devendranagar (53 km) sections opened

Agriculture, Infrastructure & Governance

News

On 24 Oct 2026, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw and Madhya Pradesh CM Dr Mohan Yadav, at events held at Churhat and Nagod stations, virtually opened two new sections – Rewa–Churhat (65 km) and Satna–Devendranagar (53 km), 118 km in all. With this, Sidhi district of Madhya Pradesh got rail connectivity for the first time since Independence. The Rewa–Churhat section has a 3.33-km tunnel through the hills. A new Devendranagar–Churhat MEMU passenger service was also flagged off. Both are parts of the Lalitpur–Singrauli new line project.

Key facts

Opened	24 Oct 2026 – Ashwini Vaishnaw, Mohan Yadav; events at Churhat & Nagod
Sections	Rewa–Churhat 65 km + Satna–Devendranagar 53 km = 118 km
Feature	3.33-km tunnel; several bridges
Project	Lalitpur–Singrauli new line – Panna, Satna, Rewa, Sidhi, Singrauli (Vindhya region)
Zone	West Central Railway – HQ Jabalpur
State allocation	Railway outlay for MP in 2026–27: ₹15,188 crore

Background

- Geography: Sidhi lies in eastern Madhya Pradesh (Rewa division); the Son river flows through it. Sanjay National Park (Sanjay–Dubri Tiger Reserve) is in Sidhi district. Neighbouring Singrauli, rich in coal mines and thermal power plants, is called India's 'energy capital'.
- Lalitpur–Singrauli / Mahoba–Khajuraho new line project – 541 km in all; from Lalitpur (UP) through Bundelkhand and the Vindhya region to Singrauli. The Mahoba–Khajuraho part was completed in 2008.
- Economy–administration: on the Acworth Committee's (1920–21) advice, the Railway Budget was separated from the General Budget by the 1924 'Separation Convention'; after the Bibek Debroy committee's recommendation it was merged back from 2017–18. PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan (Oct 2021) – integrated planning of rail, road and other infrastructure.
- West Central Railway (WCR) – HQ Jabalpur; Jabalpur, Bhopal and Kota divisions. Rewa and Satna fall in the Jabalpur division.

Tamil Nadu link: the Integral Coach Factory (ICF), Perambur, Chennai, began in 1955; India's first 'Vande Bharat' train (Train 18) was built here in 2018, and its first service ran New Delhi–Varanasi in Feb 2019. Southern Railway is headquartered in Chennai.

11 With 305 talukas declared drought-hit, Maharashtra launches 'Mission Murghas' to tackle fodder shortage

Agriculture, Infrastructure & Governance

News

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis announced on 14 Oct 2026 that 305 of Maharashtra's 358 talukas are drought-affected (265 at first, 40 more added after review). To prevent a fodder shortage for livestock, the State Animal Husbandry Department launched 'Mission Murghas' on 24 Oct 2026. In Marathi, 'murghas' (मुरघास) means silage – preserved green fodder. Farmers will get training and village-level demonstrations to cut, chop, press and store available green fodder airtight as silage; maize, jowar (sorghum) and Napier grass get priority. An additional ₹76.41 crore was sanctioned (₹66.41 crore District Annual Plan + ₹10 crore Vidarbha–Marathwada Dairy Development Project).

Key facts

Mission	Mission Murghas (Marathi: silage) – 24 Oct 2026
Implemented by	Maharashtra Animal Husbandry Department
Drought	305 of 358 talukas (declared 14 Oct 2026; CM Fadnavis)
Fodder crops	Maize, jowar, Napier grass
'Magel Tyala Murghas'	₹3/kg subsidy on silage purchase in 19 Vidarbha–Marathwada districts (DBT)
Fodder gap	Green fodder 22.79%, dry fodder 21.43% short (1 Oct 2026 estimate)

Background

- Drought declaration: the State Government declares drought using the 'Manual for Drought Management' (2016; revised 2020) of the Union Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare. Three steps – rainfall deficit (first trigger), then impact indicators (area sown, vegetation index NDVI, soil moisture, water storage), and finally field verification.
- Relief funds: under the Disaster Management Act 2005, the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF – Sec 48) is used immediately; in severe drought, when it is insufficient, the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF – Sec 46) is released after a central team's visit and approval by a High-Level Committee chaired by the Union Home Minister. The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) is chaired by the Prime Minister.
- Science: silage is green fodder preserved by anaerobic fermentation by lactic acid bacteria; hay is fodder dried in the sun. Azolla is a floating water fern; the cyanobacterium Anabaena living inside it fixes atmospheric nitrogen – used as cattle feed and as a biofertiliser in paddy.
- Geography: Maharashtra's Marathwada lies in the rain-shadow of the Western Ghats on the Deccan Plateau and faces frequent drought. All 10 talukas of Latur district are drought-hit this time.

Tamil Nadu link: the Cumbu–Napier hybrid grasses CO (CN) 4 and CO (BN) 5, developed by Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU), Coimbatore, are grown across India as green fodder (CO (CN) 4 = CO 8 × FD 461). Veterinary education is led by the Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University (TANUVAS), Chennai.

12 MoRTH draft makes Advanced Emergency Braking System (AEBS) mandatory in all new car models from Oct 2030

Agriculture, Infrastructure & Governance

News

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) issued a draft notification on 19 Oct 2026 amending the Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989. The Advanced Emergency Braking System (AEBS) will be mandatory in M1 (passenger car) vehicles – for new models from 1 Oct 2030 and for all models in production from 1 Oct 2032. From 1 Oct 2028, M1 and N1 vehicles fitted with AEBS must conform to AIS-185. Public comments are invited within 30 days.

Key facts

Draft	19 Oct 2026 – MoRTH; amends Central Motor Vehicles Rules 1989
Timeline	New models: 1 Oct 2030; all models: 1 Oct 2032
Standard	AIS-185 (M1, N1 fitted with AEBS – from 1 Oct 2028)
Categories	M1 – passenger vehicle up to 8 seats besides driver; N1 – goods vehicle up to 3.5 t
Other ADAS	Emergency lane keeping, driver drowsiness warning – transport M1 vehicles from 1 Oct 2029
Trucks	Electronic Stability Control (ESC, AIS-162) – from 1 Oct 2027

Background

- What AEBS is: using radar/camera sensors it detects a vehicle or obstacle ahead and, if the driver fails to brake in time, brakes automatically to avoid a crash or reduce its impact. It belongs to the family of Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS).
- Law: Motor Vehicles Act 1988 (the Central Motor Vehicles Rules 1989 are made under it); the Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act 2019 – higher penalties, protection of Good Samaritans (Sec 134A), recall of defective vehicles, National Road Safety Board.
- Safety standards: Bharat NCAP (New Car Assessment Programme) – announced Aug 2023, in force from 1 Oct 2023; 1–5 star rating from crash tests for M1 vehicles up to 3.5 t (adult, child occupant protection, safety assist technologies). Emissions: India jumped from BS-IV directly to BS-VI (1 Apr 2020) – modelled on European 'Euro' norms.
- Road accidents (MoRTH 'Road Accidents in India 2023'): 4,80,583 accidents, 1,72,890 deaths; highest deaths – Uttar Pradesh.

Tamil Nadu link: Tamil Nadu recorded the most road accidents in India in 2023 – 67,213 (about 14% of the total), and also topped accidents on National Highways (MoRTH report). Chennai is called the 'Detroit of Asia' for automobile manufacturing, so new standards such as AEBS directly affect the Chennai–Sriperumbudur auto industry.

13 Singer Usha Mangeshkar named first recipient of Assam's 'Bharat Ratna Dr Bhupen Hazarika National Award'

Agriculture, Infrastructure & Governance

News

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announced in Guwahati on 23 Oct 2026 that the Assam Government's newly instituted 'Bharat Ratna Dr Bhupen Hazarika National (Rashtriya) Award' will go first to veteran singer Usha Mangeshkar. It carries ₹10 lakh cash and a citation and will be given once every three years. PM Narendra Modi will present it on 29 Nov at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, at the closing ceremony of Hazarika's year-long birth centenary.

Key facts

Award	Bharat Ratna Dr Bhupen Hazarika National Award – Govt of Assam
First recipient	Usha Mangeshkar (announced 23 Oct 2026)
Prize / cycle	₹10 lakh + citation; once in 3 years
Presentation	29 Nov 2026 – PM Modi, Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi
Hazarika	Born 8 Sept 1926, Sadiya (Assam); died 5 Nov 2011, Mumbai
Usha Mangeshkar	Born 15 Dec 1935, Indore; sister of Lata, Asha, Meena

Background

- Bhupen Hazarika: singer, composer and film-maker called 'Sudhakantha' (nectar-voiced) and the 'Bard of the Brahmaputra'. Awards: Padma Shri (1977), Sangeet Natak Akademi Award (1987), Dadasaheb Phalke Award (1992), Padma Bhushan (2001), Padma Vibhushan (2012, posthumous), Bharat Ratna (2019, posthumous). Chairman of the Sangeet Natak Akademi 1998–2003. Music for 'Rudaali' (1993); famous song 'Bistirno Parore'.
- Bharat Ratna 2019: former President Pranab Mukherjee, social worker Nanaji Deshmukh (posthumous) and Bhupen Hazarika (posthumous). For the Hazarika centenary the PM released a ₹100 commemorative coin and the biography 'Bharat Ratna Bhupen Hazarika'.
- Geography: Hazarika was born at Sadiya in Assam's Tinsukia district. The Dhola–Sadiya bridge over the Lohit river, named 'Bhupen Hazarika Setu' and opened on 26 May 2017, improves road access to Arunachal Pradesh.
- Usha Mangeshkar: has sung in Marathi, Hindi, Bengali, Assamese, Odia and other languages; known for 'Main To Aarti Utaroon' (Jai Santoshi Maa, 1975) and 'Mungda' (Inkaar, 1977). In 2022 she received the Asam Sahitya Sabha's 'Bhupen Hazarika International Solidarity Award' – a different body's award; the present one is the Assam Government's new national award.

Tamil Nadu link: the first musician to receive the Bharat Ratna was Madurai-born Carnatic vocalist M.S. Subbulakshmi (1998). Later musicians honoured were Ravi Shankar (1999), Lata Mangeshkar and Bismillah Khan (2001), Bhimsen Joshi (2008) and Bhupen Hazarika (2019).

14 Uttar Pradesh ranked first in implementing Mission Karmayogi; Rajasthan 2nd, Jammu & Kashmir 3rd

Agriculture, Infrastructure & Governance

News

At the Northern Regional Workshop ('Sadhana Shrinkhla') held in Lucknow on 23–24 Oct 2026 by the Capacity Building Commission (CBC) and the Dr Ram Manohar Lohia UP Academy of Administration and Management (RUPAM), on 23 Oct Uttar Pradesh was ranked first for effectively implementing Mission Karmayogi; Rajasthan was second and Jammu & Kashmir third. UP has about 19.23 lakh registered users on iGOT Karmayogi with over 99% active participation. UP's Home Department completed over one crore training courses and topped Category A. At the same event the CBC launched the 'Unnati Capability Index' and the 'National Curriculum Design Framework'.

Key facts

Ranking	1. Uttar Pradesh 2. Rajasthan 3. Jammu & Kashmir
Event	Northern Regional Workshop, Lucknow – CBC + RUPAM, 23–24 Oct 2026
UP data	~19.23 lakh iGOT users; 99%+ active; 350+ training institutes on 'Unnati'
Mission Karmayogi	National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building (NPCSCB) – Cabinet approval 2 Sept 2020
Structure	PM's Public HR Council (chaired by PM); Coordination Unit under Cabinet Secretary; CBC; Karmayogi Bharat (SPV)
Platform	iGOT Karmayogi – online learning platform

Background

- Mission Karmayogi: shift from 'rule-based' to 'role-based' HR management; a Framework of Roles, Activities and Competencies (FRACs) for posts; continuous building of behavioural, functional and domain competencies. Targets about 46 lakh Central Government employees; nodal department – Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT).
- Bodies: the Capacity Building Commission (CBC) harmonises training standards and supervises central training institutions. 'Karmayogi Bharat' – a 100% government-owned not-for-profit Special Purpose Vehicle under Section 8 of the Companies Act 2013; it runs the iGOT Karmayogi platform.
- Constitution: All India Services – Article 312; Parliament can create a new All India Service if the Rajya Sabha passes a resolution by two-thirds majority. At present IAS, IPS and IFoS (Indian Forest Service). Rajya Sabha resolution to legislate on a State List subject – Article 249.

Tamil Nadu link: Tamil Nadu's Administrative Training Institute (ATI) for State officials is the 'Anna Administrative Staff College', Chennai – set up in 1979 as the 'Madras Institute of Management', renamed 'Anna Institute of Management' in 1980, upgraded to State ATI in 1999, and given its present name in 2021 (G.O. No. 110, 7.10.2021). Foundation training for Assistants and Junior Assistants is held at the Civil Services Training Institute, Bhavanisagar, Erode district (1974). Tamil Nadu's position in this ranking has not been published.

15 France to host the 8th AgriVoltaics World Conference in 2027

Science, Environment & Health

News

The 7th AgriVoltaics World Conference, hosted by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, on 21–23 Oct 2026 (theme 'Powering the Global South'), concluded on 23 Oct. At the closing ceremony, hosting of the 8th edition in 2027 was formally handed over to France; the city and dates are yet to be announced. The Indo-German Cooperation on Agrivoltaics project (Germany's International Climate Initiative – IKI) supported the conference.

Key facts

8th edition	2027 – France (city, dates not yet announced)
7th edition	21–23 Oct 2026 – Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi; MNRE
Theme (2026)	Powering the Global South
First edition	14–16 Oct 2020 – Perpignan, France (online due to COVID); INRAE + Fraunhofer ISE, Germany
Support	Indo-German Cooperation on Agrivoltaics (IKI); ISA DG Ashish Khanna at closing

Background

- History: the conference series began in 2020 at Perpignan, France (online), organised by the French agricultural research institute INRAE and Germany's Fraunhofer Institute for Solar Energy Systems (ISE). The 2027 edition thus returns to France.
- Science: generation of voltage/current when light falls on a material is the 'photovoltaic effect' – discovered in 1839 by French physicist Edmond Becquerel. Einstein won the 1921 Nobel Prize for explaining the photoelectric effect.
- France – climate: the Paris Agreement was adopted on 12 Dec 2015 at the 21st Conference of Parties of the UNFCCC (COP21, Paris) and entered into force on 4 Nov 2016; it aims to keep warming well below 2°C, preferably 1.5°C; countries submit Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).
- French settlements in India: Puducherry, Karaikal, Mahe and Yanam – de facto transfer to India on 1 Nov 1954; treaty of 28 May 1956; de jure cession with exchange of ratifications on 16 Aug 1962.

Tamil Nadu link: Puducherry and Karaikal are French-linked enclaves surrounded by Tamil Nadu. Auroville, the international township mostly in Viluppuram district (partly in Puducherry), was founded on 28 Feb 1968 by French-born Mirra Alfassa ('The Mother'); Auroville Foundation Act 1988. Tharangambadi (Tranquebar, Mayiladuthurai district) was a Danish – not French – settlement.

16 World's largest battery-electric ship 'China Zorrilla' begins Argentina–Uruguay passenger service

Science, Environment & Health

News

Built by Incat Tasmania at Hobart, Australia, the world's largest battery-electric ship 'China Zorrilla' (Incat Hull 096) began commercial passenger service for Buquebus across the Río de la Plata (River Plate) estuary between Buenos Aires (Argentina) and Colonia del Sacramento (Uruguay) – about 55–60 km, roughly 90 minutes. The official launch ceremony was held in Buenos Aires on 21 Oct 2026. It is 130 m long and 32 m wide, with over 40 MWh of lithium-ion batteries weighing more than 250 tonnes, and carries 2,100 passengers and 225 vehicles.

Key facts

Ship	China Zorrilla (Incat Hull 096) – named after Uruguayan actress 'China' Zorrilla (1922–2014)
Builder / operator	Incat Tasmania, Hobart (Australia) / Buquebus
Battery	Over 40 MWh, 250+ tonnes; Corvus Energy lithium-ion system
Propulsion	8 electric motors driving Wärtsilä waterjets; speed 25 knots
Size / capacity	130 m × 32 m; 2,100 passengers, 225 vehicles; 2,300 m² duty-free shop
Timeline	Floated out 2 May 2025 (Hobart); reached Uruguay on heavy-lift ship 'Black Marlin' in Sep 2026; launch ceremony 21 Oct 2026

Background

- Science: the 2019 Nobel Prize in Chemistry went to John B. Goodenough (USA), M. Stanley Whittingham (UK–USA) and Akira Yoshino (Japan) for developing the lithium-ion battery. During charging, lithium ions move from the cathode to the graphite anode.
- Geography: the Río de la Plata is the wide estuary formed by the Paraná and Uruguay rivers flowing into the Atlantic; it forms the Argentina–Uruguay boundary. Uruguay's grid relies largely on wind and hydropower, so the ferry runs almost carbon-free.
- International: the International Maritime Organization (IMO) is a UN specialised agency headquartered in London; it administers the MARPOL convention on ship pollution. Incat is also building three 129 m battery-electric ferries for Denmark's Molslinjen.
- India: Kochi Water Metro, India's first water metro, was launched by the PM on 25 Apr 2023 with electric-hybrid boats built by Cochin Shipyard (CSL). India's first indigenous hydrogen fuel-cell passenger vessel (built by CSL, owned by IWAI, 50 passengers, LT-PEM fuel cell) began commercial service on the Ganga at Varanasi on 11 Dec 2025.

Tamil Nadu link: under the Union Ports Ministry's Green Tug Transition Programme (50 green tugs by 2030), V.O. Chidambaranar Port, Thoothukudi, ordered a fully electric 60-tonne bollard-pull tug in Dec 2025 (₹385.76 crore; Knowledge Marine & Engineering Works; delivery within 2 years).

17 Bharat Biotech, Gavi and UNICEF agree to cut price of 'Mosqivac' (RTS,S/AS01) malaria vaccine by about 40%

Science, Environment & Health

News

Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech announced on 23 Oct 2026 an agreement with Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, and UNICEF to cut the price of RTS,S/AS01 – the world's first malaria vaccine, which it makes under the name 'Mosqivac' (GSK's brand is 'Mosquirix') – by about 40%, to €5.50 per dose. The price applies from early 2027, saving about US$50 million in 2027–29 and helping protect about one million more children. UNICEF executes the deal and Gavi backs it financially.

Key facts

Announcement	23 Oct 2026 – Bharat Biotech (Hyderabad), Gavi, UNICEF
Vaccine	RTS,S/AS01 – 'Mosqivac' (Bharat Biotech); 'Mosquirix' (GSK); developed by GSK, PATH and partners
New price	€5.50 per dose (about 40% lower) – from early 2027
Benefit	~US$50 million saved in 2027–29; up to 1 million more children
Use	In routine immunisation in 25 African countries; UNICEF has delivered 74 million+ doses
Tech transfer	GSK–Bharat Biotech deal (2021); full production with Bharat Biotech by 2028; GSK keeps supplying the AS01 adjuvant

Background

- Science: malaria is caused by the single-celled parasite Plasmodium (falciparum, vivax, malariae, ovale, knowlesi) and spread by the bite of the female Anopheles mosquito. Both RTS,S and R21 target the circumsporozoite protein of the deadliest species, Plasmodium falciparum. Urban malaria is spread by Anopheles stephensi.
- History: in 1880 Alphonse Laveran found the malaria parasite in human blood (Nobel 1907). Sir Ronald Ross found it in the mosquito's gut at Secunderabad on 20 Aug 1897 – hence World Mosquito Day on 20 Aug; Ross won the 1902 Nobel in Medicine. World Malaria Day is 25 April.
- Vaccines: WHO recommended RTS,S in Oct 2021 (piloted in Ghana, Kenya and Malawi from 2019); the second vaccine, R21/Matrix-M (University of Oxford – Serum Institute of India, Pune), was recommended in Oct 2023. Globally, 2024 saw about 282 million malaria cases and 610,000 deaths, mostly in Africa.
- India: the National Framework for Malaria Elimination (NFME) 2016–2030 targets elimination by 2030; States are grouped as Category 0 (prevention of re-establishment), 1 (elimination phase – API<1), 2 (pre-elimination) and 3 (intensified control). It is run by the National Center for Vector Borne Diseases Control (NCVBDC). Bharat Biotech also makes Covaxin (with ICMR-NIV) and Rotavac.

Tamil Nadu link: in NCVBDC's malaria monthly monitoring report (Oct 2025), Tamil Nadu is listed among 'Category 1' (elimination phase – Annual Parasite Incidence below 1) States. In cities like Chennai, Anopheles stephensi breeding in construction sites and overhead tanks spreads urban malaria.

18 Lionel Messi receives 2026 Princess of Asturias Award for Sports – presented by Princess Leonor in Oviedo

Sports

News

Argentine footballer Lionel Messi received the 2026 Princess of Asturias Award for Sports from Princess Leonor at the Teatro Campoamor, Oviedo, Spain, on 23 Oct 2026. A jury chaired by Paralympic swimmer Teresa Perales announced the award on 3 June 2026, citing his sporting career, his charity work for disadvantaged children's education and health, his humility and team spirit. Messi is the first footballer to win it on his own.

Key facts

Ceremony	23 Oct 2026 – Teatro Campoamor, Oviedo (Asturias, Spain)
Announced	3 June 2026 – jury chaired by Teresa Perales
Award	Joan Miró sculpture, diploma, insignia, €50,000
Earlier football winners	Brazil national team (2002); Spain national team (2010); Iker Casillas & Xavi (jointly, 2012)
Messi	Born 24 June 1987, Rosario; 8 Ballon d'Or (record; last in 2023); captained Argentina to the 2022 World Cup; Inter Miami
Other 2026 laureates	Patti Smith (Arts), Studio Ghibli (Communication & Humanities)

Background

- History: the Prince of Asturias Foundation was set up on 24 Sep 1980; the first awards ceremony was in 1981. In 2014, when Felipe VI became King and his daughter Leonor became heir (Princess of Asturias), they were renamed the Princess of Asturias Awards.
- Eight categories: Arts, Communication & Humanities, Social Sciences, Concord, International Cooperation, Literature, Sports, and Technical & Scientific Research. Indian economist Amartya Sen won the Social Sciences award in 2021.
- Football: in the FIFA World Cup 2026 final (USA, Canada, Mexico – first 48-team edition) at MetLife Stadium, New Jersey, on 19 July 2026, Spain beat Argentina 1–0 after extra time – Spain's second title (first in 2010). FIFA is headquartered in Zurich, Switzerland.
- Ballon d'Or: started in 1956 by the French magazine France Football; organised with UEFA since 2024. Messi holds the record with 8 wins.

Tamil Nadu link: there is no direct Tamil Nadu link to Messi's award. Related fact: Chennaiyin FC has won the Indian Super League (ISL) football title twice – 2015 and 2017–18.

19 Trichy-origin English girl Bodhana Sivanandan becomes youngest female International Master in chess history

Sports

News

Bodhana Sivanandan (born 7 March 2015) of Harrow, London, England, whose family hails from Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu, completed the requirements for the International Master (IM) title on 23 Oct 2026 at the age of 11 years, 7 months and 16 days. She earned her third and final IM norm at the 30th European Club Cup for Women in Budva, Montenegro (5.5/7) and crossed the required 2400 live-rating mark. She broke the 38-year-old record set by Hungary's Judit Polgar in 1988 to become the youngest female IM in chess history (FIDE will formally confirm the title).

Key facts

Record	Youngest female IM in chess history – 11 years 7 months 16 days
Venue / date	30th European Club Cup for Women, Budva (Montenegro) – 23 Oct 2026
Record broken	Judit Polgar (Hungary), 1988
Background	Born 7 March 2015, London; family roots in Tiruchirappalli
Other records	Played for England at the 2024 Budapest Olympiad; youngest girl to beat a GM; youngest Women's British Champion (Aug 2026); completed WGM requirements at the Samarkand Olympiad (Sep 2026)
IM rule	3 IM norms + 2400 FIDE rating (GM 2500; WGM 2300; WIM 2200)

Background

- FIDE (International Chess Federation) was founded in Paris on 20 July 1924 – hence 20 July is International Chess Day (UN, 2019). HQ: Lausanne (Switzerland); motto 'Gens una sumus' (We are one family); recognised by the IOC in 1999.
- FIDE leadership: after Arkady Dvorkovich temporarily stepped aside in July 2026 following EU sanctions, Viswanathan Anand became interim president. At the FIDE General Assembly in Samarkand (Uzbekistan) on 26–27 Sep 2026, Timur Turlov was elected President and Anand Deputy President.
- FIDE titles (descending): Grandmaster (GM), International Master (IM), FIDE Master (FM), Candidate Master (CM); women-only titles are WGM, WIM, WFM and WCM. GM and IM are open to both men and women.
- Indian women's chess: S. Vijayalakshmi of Chennai became India's first woman IM and first WGM (2001). Koneru Humpy became India's first woman Grandmaster in 2002.

Tamil Nadu link: Bodhana's family hails from Tiruchirappalli. Chennai's Viswanathan Anand (India's first GM, 1988) is now FIDE Deputy President (Sep 2026). Chennai's S. Vijayalakshmi was India's first woman IM.

20 India wins record 114 medals (30 gold) at 2026 Asian Para Games – 4th in medal table

Sports

News

At the 5th Asian Para Games in Aichi–Nagoya, Japan (18–24 Oct 2026), India won 30 gold, 35 silver and 49 bronze – 114 medals in all – to finish 4th in the medal table, its best ever. It surpassed India's previous best at Hangzhou 2022 (held in 2023). India won 9 golds on 23 Oct alone. Para-athletics gave the most medals – 65 (22 gold). China (over 400 medals), Japan (186) and Uzbekistan (145) took the top three places.

Key facts

Event	5th Asian Para Games – Aichi–Nagoya, Japan; 18–24 Oct 2026
India	30 G, 35 S, 49 B = 114; 4th place; 168 athletes, 11 sports
Top	China (400+ medals); Japan 2nd, Uzbekistan 3rd
Growth	Para-swimming 1 → 11 medals; para-table tennis 2 → 7 bronze

Background

- Paralympic Committee of India (PCI): founded in 1992 as the Physically Handicapped Sports Federation of India; HQ New Delhi; affiliated to the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) and the Asian Paralympic Committee (APC). Two-time Paralympic javelin champion Devendra Jhajharia was elected its president unopposed in March 2024.
- Trailblazers: Deepa Malik won silver in shot put (F53) at Rio 2016 – the first Indian woman to win a Paralympic medal; she later headed the PCI. Sumit Antil (Haryana) won javelin F64 gold at both Tokyo 2020 and Paris 2024.
- Sheetal Devi (Jammu & Kashmir) – an armless para-archer who draws the bow with her feet; bronze in the mixed team event at Paris 2024. 'T64' is the track class for below-knee limb loss/prosthesis.

Tamil Nadu link: Tamil Nadu's para-shuttlers won medals at Aichi–Nagoya – Thulasimathi Murugesan (women's doubles SL3–SU5 gold with Manasi Joshi; silver in singles SU5 and mixed doubles), Nithya Sre Sivan (women's singles SH6 silver), Manisha Ramadass (women's singles SU5 bronze) and Sivarajan Solaimalai (men's doubles SH6 silver, with Krishna Nagar). Tamil Nadu created a separate department for persons with disabilities in 1992, renamed it the Department for the Welfare of Differently Abled Persons in 2010, and the Chief Minister holds this department.

21 Pankaj Advani wins his 29th world title – the WBL World Billiards Championship in England

Sports

News

Bengaluru cueist Pankaj Advani (41) beat England's Robert Hall 1906–1206 in the final of the WBL World Billiards Championship (22 Oct 2026) at Landywood Snooker Club, Great Wyrley, near Birmingham, England. Trailing by more than 300 points in the five-hour final, he came back with a 587 break – the highest of the championship. It is his 29th world title (21 billiards + 8 snooker) and his first win in this event since 2014. He beat Sourav Kothari in the quarter-final and David Causier in the semi-final. India's Shruthi L retained the women's title.

Key facts

Event	WBL (World Billiards Ltd) World Billiards Championship 2026 – Landywood Snooker Club, Great Wyrley (near Birmingham), England
Final	22 Oct 2026 – beat Robert Hall (England) 1906–1206; top break 587
Tally	29 world titles = 21 billiards + 8 snooker
WBL	International body for English billiards, founded 2011; a subsidiary of WPBSA
Awards	Arjuna (2004), Khel Ratna (2006), Padma Shri (2009), Padma Bhushan (2018)
Next	IBSF World Snooker Championship, Indore, November – bid for 30th title

Background

- Pankaj Advani: born in Pune in 1985 and raised in Bengaluru (Karnataka). His first world title was the 2003 IBSF World Snooker Championship. In Nov 2024 at Doha (Qatar) he also beat Robert Hall in the IBSF World Billiards (150-up format) final.

- Bodies: IBSF (International Billiards & Snooker Federation) runs amateur world events; WPBSA governs the professional game, with WBL under it for English billiards. In India the national body is BSFI (Billiards and Snooker Federation of India).
- Billiards vs snooker: English billiards uses only three balls (two cue balls + one red). Snooker uses 22 balls – 15 reds (1 point each), 6 colours (yellow 2, green 3, brown 4, blue 5, pink 6, black 7) and one white cue ball.
- Indian history: Wilson Jones won the World Amateur Billiards title at Kolkata in 1958, becoming the first Indian world champion in any sport. Michael Ferreira and Geet Sethi are other world billiards champions.

Tamil Nadu link: Snooker grew among British Army officers in India in the 1870s (Jabalpur); Neville Chamberlain, who devised and popularised it, finalised its first set of rules at Ootacamund (Ooty), Nilgiris district, in 1882 – so Ooty is celebrated as the place where snooker's rules were born.

22 Kerala plans statewide child vulnerability mapping

International, Personalities & Important Days

News

After the suspected malnutrition death of a two-year-old at Karthikappally, Alappuzha district (18 Oct 2026), following a meeting convened by Kerala's Women and Child Development Minister Bindhu Krishna on 23 Oct, the department decided on statewide 'child vulnerability mapping' to identify children whose health, education or safety is at risk. District Women and Child Development Officers, with the Local Self-Government, Health and Police departments, will ensure their safety and rehabilitation; social investigation reports will reach Child Welfare Committees (CWCs) within a set time; every child in a care institution will get an individual care plan; and protection will continue even if parents do not cooperate.

Key facts

Decision	23 Oct 2026 – Kerala Women & Child Development Dept (Minister Bindhu Krishna)
Trigger	18 Oct – suspected malnutrition death of a two-year-old, Karthikappally, Alappuzha
Aim	Early identification of children at risk in health, education, safety
Follow-up	Anganwadi workers, ICDS supervisors, counsellors track nutrition & growth
Commission	Kerala State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (KeSCPCR) took suo motu case
Legal basis	Juvenile Justice (Care & Protection of Children) Act 2015 – Sec 27: a CWC for every district

Background

- Constitution: Article 39(f) – children to be given opportunities to develop in a healthy manner, in freedom and dignity, and protected against exploitation (Directive Principle). Art 21A – free and compulsory education for 6–14; Art 24 – no employment of children below 14 in factories; Art 45 – early childhood care and education up to 6 years.
- Laws & bodies: The National Commission (NCPCR) was set up on 5 March 2007 under the Commissions for Protection of Child Rights Act 2005 (Ministry of Women and Child Development,

HQ New Delhi). It monitors the RTE Act 2009, POCSO Act 2012 and JJ Act 2015. Under POCSO, everyone below 18 is a 'child'.

- Schemes: 'Mission Vatsalya' (from 2021–22) – the Centre's umbrella child-protection scheme; the child helpline 1098 runs under it and is integrated with emergency number 112 (ERSS). Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) provides supplementary nutrition and growth monitoring through anganwadi centres.

Tamil Nadu link: The Tamil Nadu State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (TNSCPCR) was constituted by G.O. (Ms) No. 45 dated 28.03.2012 (Social Welfare & Nutritious Meal Programme Dept). For child nutrition, the 'Chief Minister's Breakfast Scheme' was launched on 15.09.2022 at Adhimoolam Corporation Primary School, Madurai. The 'Oottachathai Uruthi Sei' scheme, which identifies and treats malnourished children, was launched on 21 May 2022 in the Nilgiris district; its second phase was launched at Ariyalur in November 2024.

23 US Department of Energy adds helium to its Critical Material List

International, Personalities & Important Days

News

The US Department of Energy (DOE) added helium to its 'DOE Critical Material List' under Section 7002 of the Energy Act of 2020. The notice was signed on 21 Oct 2026 and released on 23 Oct. Helium has no substitute in semiconductor (chip) manufacturing, leak-testing of natural-gas pipelines and quantum computing, and is vital in medical and scientific uses. DOE said rising chip demand for AI and data centres has raised supply risk. It builds on the 2023 DOE Critical Materials List.

Key facts

Notice	Signed 21 Oct 2026; released 23 Oct – DOE Office of Critical Minerals & Energy Innovation
Law	US Energy Act of 2020, Sec 7002 – high supply-risk + essential energy function
Helium	Atomic no. 2; noble gas (Group 18); second-lightest element; lowest boiling point of all elements
Discovery	18 Aug 1868 – Janssen saw a yellow spectral line during a solar eclipse at Guntur (AP); Lockyer named a new element; Ramsay isolated it on Earth in 1895
Source	By-product of natural gas; top two producers – USA, Qatar
India	Fully import-dependent for helium; over half from Qatar

Background

- Science: Helium is a colourless, odourless, non-flammable, inert noble gas. It is the second most abundant element in the universe after hydrogen, but being light it escapes Earth's atmosphere. It forms underground by alpha decay of uranium and thorium and collects with natural gas. Its name comes from the Greek 'helios' (Sun).
- Uses: liquid helium cools the superconducting magnets of MRI machines; semiconductor making; optical-fibre production; pressurising rocket fuel tanks; 'heliox' mixtures for deep-sea diving; balloons.

- India's critical minerals: the Ministry of Mines released a list of 30 critical minerals in 2023 (lithium, cobalt, rare earth elements etc.). The 'National Critical Mineral Mission' (NCMM) was approved by the Union Cabinet in January 2025 (₹34,300 crore over 7 years). KABIL (Khanij Bidesh India Ltd), a joint venture of NALCO, HCL and MECL under the Ministry of Mines, acquires mineral assets abroad – e.g. lithium exploration in Catamarca, Argentina.

Tamil Nadu link: At Manavalakurichi (near Colachel), Kanyakumari district, the mineral separation plant of IREL (Indian Rare Earths Ltd, under the Department of Atomic Energy) separates ilmenite, zircon, rutile, monazite and sillimanite from beach sand. Monazite is a key source of thorium and rare earth elements. Also, the Kodaikanal Solar Observatory (working since 1899) is renowned for solar spectrum studies.

24 International Criminal Court and its officials win the European Parliament's 2026 Sakharov Prize

International, Personalities & Important Days

News

European Parliament President Roberta Metsola announced at Strasbourg on 22 Oct 2026 that the 2026 'Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought' goes to the International Criminal Court (ICC) and its officials, recognising its work to uphold international law and justice. The other finalists were Tanzanian opposition leader Tundu Lissu and Iranian sisters Taraneh and Romina Rahimi. The award ceremony will be held at Strasbourg on 16 Dec 2026. The award comes as the US has imposed sanctions on ICC officials. (The prize is given by the European Parliament, an institution of the EU.)

Key facts

Announced	22 Oct 2026 – EP President Roberta Metsola, Strasbourg
Finalists	ICC; Tundu Lissu (Tanzania); Taraneh & Romina Rahimi (Iran)
Ceremony	16 Dec 2026 – Strasbourg; prize money €50,000
Sakharov Prize	Since 1988; named after Soviet physicist and rights activist Andrei Sakharov; first – Nelson Mandela & Anatoly Marchenko
ICC	Rome Statute (1998), working since 2002; The Hague (Netherlands); genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, aggression
India	India is not a party to the Rome Statute; no Indian has won the Sakharov Prize

Background

- ICC vs ICJ: The International Criminal Court (ICC) is a permanent court that tries individuals; it is not a UN organ; the Rome Statute was adopted on 17 July 1998 and entered into force on 1 July 2002. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) is the UN's principal judicial organ, set up under the UN Charter (1945); it settles disputes between States; 15 judges. Both sit in The Hague.
- India's position: India has not signed the Rome Statute; the USA, China and Russia are also not parties. Indian judges at the ICJ include Nagendra Singh (President, 1985–88) and Dalveer Bhandari.
- Sakharov Prize: set up by the European Parliament in December 1988; Andrei Sakharov – nuclear physicist who worked on the Soviet hydrogen bomb, later a human-rights campaigner; Nobel Peace

Prize 1975. From South Asia, Taslima Nasrin (Bangladesh, 1994) and Malala Yousafzai (Pakistan, 2013) have won it. 2025 – Andrzej Poczobut (Belarus) and Mzia Amaglobeli (Georgia).

Tamil Nadu link: Navanethem (Navi) Pillay, winner of the 2026 Nobel Peace Prize (announced 9 Oct), is of Tamil origin – born in Durban, South Africa, in 1941 into a Tamil family that had settled there. She served as an ICC judge (2003–2008), President of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, and UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (2008–2014). CM C. Joseph Vijay congratulated her. In Tamil Nadu, the 'Tamil Nadu State Human Rights Commission' (HQ Chennai) is set up under Section 21 of the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993.

25 Eminent painter and former Rajya Sabha member Jogen Chowdhury (87) passes away in Kolkata

International, Personalities & Important Days

News

Eminent Indian painter and former Rajya Sabha member Jogen Chowdhury died on the morning of Sunday, 25 Oct 2026, at Ruby General Hospital, Kolkata; he was 87. He had been under treatment for blood cancer for about 14 months and was admitted on 16 Oct with an infection. He was known for satirical paintings of politics and society and for blending Indian tradition with modern art.

Key facts

Born	1939 – Daharpara, Faridpur district (now Bangladesh); moved to Calcutta with his family during Partition
Education	Govt College of Art & Craft, Calcutta (1955–60); Paris – École des Beaux-Arts, Atelier 17 (1965)
Career	Handloom Board designer (Calcutta, later Madras); curator of the Rashtrapati Bhavan art collection (from 1972, 15 years)
Santiniketan	Professor of painting at Kala Bhavana, Visva-Bharati from 1987; later principal and professor emeritus
Rajya Sabha	Elected from West Bengal on a Trinamool Congress ticket – 3 Apr 2014 to 2 Apr 2020
Awards	Kalidas Samman (2001, Madhya Pradesh), Banga Bibhushan (2012, West Bengal), Zainul Samman (2016, Dhaka University)

Background

- Art bodies: Lalit Kala Akademi (National Academy of Fine Arts) – set up on 5 Aug 1954; HQ Rabindra Bhavan, New Delhi; an autonomous body funded by the Union Ministry of Culture. It has held the 'Triennale India' international exhibition since 1968.
- History: Rabindranath Tagore started Kala Bhavana at Santiniketan in 1919 – today the fine-arts faculty of Visva-Bharati (a central university). Nandalal Bose was its famous principal. Jogen Chowdhury served here as professor and principal.
- Polity: Rajya Sabha representatives of a State are elected by the elected MLAs of that State by proportional representation through the single transferable vote (Art 80(4)). Jogen Chowdhury was elected this way – not a nominated member.
- Award: Kalidas Samman – a national-level arts award given by the Government of Madhya Pradesh in music, theatre, dance and plastic arts (painting–sculpture). Jogen Chowdhury received it in 2001.

Tamil Nadu link: From 1968 Jogen Chowdhury worked as a textile designer with the Handloom Board in Madras (Chennai), leaving in 1972 to become curator at Rashtrapati Bhavan. In the same period the 'Madras Art Movement' grew in Chennai – K.C.S. Paniker, former principal of the Madras School of Arts, founded the Cholamandal Artists' Village at Injambakkam, Chennai, in 1966; it brought modernism to South Indian art.

26 Physicist Ashoke Sen becomes the first Indian physicist to receive the Oskar Klein Medal (2026)

International, Personalities & Important Days

News

String theorist Ashoke Sen received the 2026 Oskar Klein Medal in Stockholm on 22 Oct 2026 – the first Indian physicist to receive it. It recognises his pioneering contributions to string theory, black hole entropy and string field theory. The same day he delivered the Oskar Klein Memorial Lecture, 'Gravity from Strings and Strings from Gravity', at Stockholm University's AlbaNova Centre.

Key facts

Medal	Oskar Klein Medal – instituted 1988; annual
Awarded by	Stockholm University + Nobel Committee for Physics of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences
Past recipients	Chen-Ning Yang, Steven Weinberg, Hans Bethe (Nobel laureates)
Present post	ICTS-Infosys Madhava Chair Professor, International Centre for Theoretical Sciences (ICTS-TIFR), Bengaluru
Research	S-duality, precise counting of black hole entropy, string field theory
Other awards	S.S. Bhatnagar Prize (1994), Padma Shri (2001), Breakthrough Prize in Fundamental Physics (2012), Padma Bhushan (2013), Dirac Medal (2014); FRS (1998)

Background

- Oskar Klein (1894–1977): Swedish theoretical physicist; the 'Kaluza–Klein theory' (extra dimensions) and the 'Klein–Gordon equation' bear his name. His extra-dimension idea is one of the foundations of later string theory.
- Science: string theory treats elementary particles not as points but as tiny vibrating 'strings'; it attempts to unite gravity with quantum mechanics. Sen's S-duality work played a key role in the 'second superstring revolution' of the 1990s.
- Science awards: the Centre introduced the 'Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar' (first awards announced in 2024) in four categories – Vigyan Ratna, Vigyan Shri, Vigyan Yuva–Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar (up to 45 years) and Vigyan Team.
- Indian Physics Nobels: C.V. Raman – 1930 (Raman effect; discovered 28 Feb 1928 – National Science Day); Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar – 1983 (structure and evolution of stars; 'Chandrasekhar limit' – the maximum mass of a white dwarf, about 1.4 solar masses). Chandrasekhar was the son of Raman's elder brother.

Tamil Nadu link: both Indians who won the Physics Nobel came from a Tamil family. C.V. Raman was born in Tiruchirappalli (Thiruvanaikaval) and graduated (B.A., 1904) from Presidency College, Madras,

with gold medals in physics and English. His nephew S. Chandrasekhar (born Lahore, 1910) studied at the same Presidency College. Ashoke Sen himself has no direct Tamil Nadu link.

27 International Artist's Day – 25 October (birth anniversary of Pablo Picasso)

International, Personalities & Important Days

News

International Artist's Day is observed every year on 25 October; in 2026 it falls on a Sunday. Canadian artist Chris MacClure started the day in 2004 to honour the contribution of painters, sculptors and other artists. Pablo Picasso was born on this day (25 Oct 1881) in Málaga, Spain. It is not a UN-declared day – it is observed worldwide by art bodies.

Key facts

Date	25 October – every year (since 2004)
Founder	Chris MacClure, Canadian artist
Picasso	Born 25 Oct 1881, Málaga (Spain); died 1973, France
Cubism	Art movement developed by Picasso with Georges Braque
Guernica	1937 – protest painting on the bombing of the Basque town of Guernica in the Spanish Civil War; now in the Reina Sofía Museum, Madrid

Background

- Picasso: one of the most influential painters of the 20th century. After his 'Blue Period' and 'Rose Period' he developed 'Cubism' with Georges Braque – breaking objects into geometric shapes seen from several angles at once. 'Les Demoiselles d'Avignon' (1907) was the pioneering work.
- History: in 1937, during the Spanish Civil War, aircraft of Germany's 'Condor Legion' bombed the Basque town of Guernica. Picasso's 'Guernica', painted in protest, became a world symbol against war.
- Indian painters: Raja Ravi Varma (1848–1906) – born at Kilimanoor in the princely State of Travancore; painted Indian mythological scenes in the European oil technique and spread them to the people through his printing press. Amrita Sher-Gil (1913–1941) – a pioneer of modern Indian painting; her works are declared 'National Art Treasures'.

Tamil Nadu link: 'Thanjavur painting' – a distinctive style with gold foil, raised gesso relief and inlaid glass beads/stones; influenced by Nayak and Vijayanagara traditions; it flourished under the patronage of the Maratha rulers of Thanjavur. It holds a Geographical Indication (GI, application no. 47).

28 International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week (18–24 Oct 2026) – theme 'From Detection to Prevention'

International, Personalities & Important Days

News

The 14th International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week was observed from 18 to 24 Oct 2026 with the theme 'From Detection to Prevention'. The message: lead poisoning is often hidden and comes from many sources, so it must first be identified and then proven preventive actions applied. It is driven by the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint, led by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP); governments were urged to enact and enforce laws eliminating lead paint.

Key facts

Week	18–24 Oct 2026 – 14th edition
Theme	'From Detection to Prevention'
Driven by	Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint – led by WHO + UNEP
Deaths	More than 3.5 million deaths worldwide in 2023 attributed to lead exposure (mainly cardiovascular) – WHO
Lead-paint laws	Only 48% of countries had legally binding controls as of Jan 2024
Safe level	No level of lead exposure is known to be safe (WHO)

Background

- Science: lead – symbol Pb (Latin 'plumbum'), atomic number 82. A cumulative toxicant affecting many organs – brain, kidneys, blood, heart. It permanently harms children's brain development and lowers IQ; it blocks haem synthesis, causing anaemia; it also raises blood pressure.
- Sources: mining, smelting, recycling (especially used lead-acid batteries), paint, solder, ceramic glazes, toys, and some traditional cosmetics and medicines (WHO).
- Petrol: tetraethyl lead (TEL) was added to petrol as an anti-knock agent. India phased it down from 1994 and switched fully to unleaded petrol nationwide in 2000. With Algeria, the last country, stopping in July 2021, UNEP declared the leaded-petrol era over in August 2021.
- Indian law: under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change notified the 'Regulation on Lead Contents in Household and Decorative Paints Rules, 2016' – lead above 90 ppm banned (in force from Nov 2017). Used batteries are covered by the 'Battery Waste Management Rules, 2022' – extended producer responsibility (EPR).

Tamil Nadu link: Pure Earth assessed a used lead-acid battery (ULAB) smelter at Rangapuram near Vellore in 2012. Later, in a Vellore project with the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board and VIT as partners (preliminary assessment Sept 2018), the highest lead levels were found in the yard of a school/day-care centre attended by about 50 children under 5 near a ULAB smelter – a direct example of the theme 'From Detection to Prevention'.

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