Current Affairs – Notes

26 October 2026

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1 Bay of Bengal deep depression intensifies into Cyclone 'Arnab' (named by Bangladesh; means 'sea') – to cross Andhra coast on 28 Oct

Tamil Nadu, Weather & Space

News

On the morning of 26 Oct 2026 (Monday), the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said a deep depression had intensified into Cyclonic Storm 'Arnab', centred over the east-central and adjoining west-central Bay of Bengal. It moved west at about 15 km/h. It was forecast to become a severe cyclonic storm on the night of 26 Oct and a very severe cyclonic storm on 27 Oct, and to cross the Andhra Pradesh and Yanam coast between Bapatla and Visakhapatnam in the forenoon of 28 Oct, with winds of 115–125 km/h gusting to 140 km/h. Andhra Pradesh and Odisha were put on high alert, and evacuations began in vulnerable areas of Andhra Pradesh. Tamil Nadu faces no direct impact, but the Regional Meteorological Centre, Chennai, issued an orange alert for heavy to very heavy rain in Pudukottai, Sivaganga and Ramanathapuram districts on 26 Oct.

Key facts

Name	Arnab (IMD pronunciation 'Ornab') – contributed by Bangladesh; Bengali for 'sea'
Became cyclone	26 Oct 2026 – east-central & adjoining west-central Bay of Bengal
Forecast	Severe cyclonic storm (26 Oct night) → very severe cyclonic storm (27 Oct)
Landfall	28 Oct forenoon – between Bapatla and Visakhapatnam (near Yanam); 115–125 km/h, gusts 140
Tamil Nadu	No direct impact; 26 Oct – orange (heavy rain) alert for Pudukottai, Sivaganga, Ramanathapuram
Next name	Murasu – contributed by India

Background

- Naming: North Indian Ocean (Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea) cyclones have been named since 2004. The list is drawn up by the WMO/ESCAP Panel on Tropical Cyclones (set up in 1972). Its 13 members: Bangladesh, India, Iran, Maldives, Myanmar, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, UAE and Yemen. A new list of 169 names (13 countries × 13) was released in April 2020. Names are assigned by IMD's Regional Specialised Meteorological Centre (RSMC) New Delhi – one of the world's six RSMCs.
- IMD classification (maximum sustained wind): Depression 31–49 km/h; Deep Depression 50–61; Cyclonic Storm 62–88 (the stage at which a name is given); Severe Cyclonic Storm 89–117; Very Severe 118–166; Extremely Severe 167–221; Super Cyclonic Storm 222 and above.
- Science: a tropical cyclone needs sea-surface temperature above about 26.5°C, the Coriolis force, low vertical wind shear and a pre-existing disturbance. Its energy comes from latent heat released when water vapour condenses. The Coriolis force is zero at the Equator, so cyclones rarely form within about 5° of it. In the Northern Hemisphere cyclones rotate anticlockwise.
- Geography: the Bay of Bengal sees more cyclones than the Arabian Sea – because of warmer water and the remnants of systems moving west from the Pacific / South China Sea. Cyclone seasons: pre-monsoon (Apr–May) and post-monsoon (Oct–Dec).

Tamil Nadu link: in the 2020 list, the name after 'Arnab' is 'Murasu' – a Tamil word (the drum) contributed by India. Cyclones that hit Tamil Nadu: Thane – between Cuddalore and Puducherry, 30

Dec 2011; Vardah (named by Pakistan) – near Chennai, 12 Dec 2016; Gaja (very severe cyclonic storm) – between Nagapattinam and Vedaranyam, early 16 Nov 2018.

2 Palani Dhandayuthapani temple tops Tamil Nadu's 10 highest-earning temples with ₹233.50 crore (HR&CE list)

Tamil Nadu, Weather & Space

News

A list of Tamil Nadu's 10 highest-earning temples released by the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments (HR&CE) Department was reported on 24–26 Oct 2026. The Arulmigu Dhandayuthapani Swamy Temple at Palani, Dindigul district, tops it with an annual income of ₹233.50 crore. Next come Arunachaleswarar, Tiruvannamalai (₹139.06 crore); Subramanya Swamy, Tiruchendur (₹131.38 crore); Samayapuram Mariamman (₹111.09 crore); Subramanya Swamy, Tiruttani (₹74.98 crore); Meenakshi Sundareswarar, Madurai (₹73.72 crore); Ramanathaswamy, Rameswaram (₹64.33 crore); Ranganathaswamy, Srirangam (₹50.57 crore); Kallazhagar, Alagar Kovil (₹34.20 crore); and Bannari Amman, Sathyamangalam (₹29.16 crore). The ten together earned ₹941.99 crore. Hundi offerings, paid darshan, prasadam sales and rent are the main sources. (The reports do not name the financial year.)

Key facts

List	HR&CE Department – reported 24–26 Oct 2026
Top	Palani Dhandayuthapani temple (Dindigul) – ₹233.50 crore
2nd–4th	Tiruvannamalai (₹139.06 cr), Tiruchendur (₹131.38 cr), Samayapuram (₹111.09 cr)
5th–10th	Tiruttani, Madurai Meenakshi, Rameswaram, Srirangam, Kallazhagar, Bannari Amman
Total	10 temples – ₹941.99 crore
Use	Renovation, devotee facilities, annadhanam, cleanliness

Background

- Palani: the temple stands on Sivagiri hill (the other hill is Sakthigiri) at the foot of the Palani Hills, Dindigul district. It is the third of Murugan's six abodes (Arupadai Veedu). Nakkeerar's 'Thirumurugatrupadai' (Pathuppattu) refers to it as 'Thiruvavinankudi'.
- Presiding deity: by tradition, the Dandayuthapani idol (Murugan as an ascetic holding a staff) was made by Siddhar Bogar from 'navapashanam', an amalgam of nine herbs/minerals. Temple lore says a Chera king found the neglected idol and built the shrine.
- Festivals and tradition: Thaipusam, on the Pusam star day of the Tamil month Thai, is the main festival; Panguni Uthiram, Vaikasi Visakam and Soorasamharam are also important. The story of Idumban, who carried the two hills as a 'kavadi' at Sage Agastya's bidding, is held to be the origin of kavadi worship. The hill has steps, a winch (funicular) railway and a rope car. Palani Panchamirtham got a GI tag in 2019.
- Other temples in the list: Arunachaleswarar, Tiruvannamalai – the Pancha Bhoota Sthalam for fire (Agni), famous for the Karthigai Deepam. Tiruchendur and Tiruttani are two more of the six abodes. Rameswaram is one of the 12 Jyotirlingas.

Tamil Nadu link: all six abodes of Murugan are in Tamil Nadu – three of them (Palani, Tiruchendur, Tiruttani) are in this top-10 list. Four of the five Pancha Bhoota Sthalams are in Tamil Nadu: Ekambareswarar, Kanchipuram (earth), Jambukeswarar, Thiruvanaikaval (water), Tiruvannamalai (fire) and Chidambaram (space); Srikalahasti (air) is in Andhra Pradesh.

3 India will have four functional launch pads by 2029 – ISRO Chairman V. Narayanan

Tamil Nadu, Weather & Space

News

Speaking at a private university's graduation ceremony in Chennai on 24 Oct 2026 (Saturday), ISRO Chairman Dr V. Narayanan said India will have four functional launch pads by 2029. A dedicated launch complex for the Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV) is coming up on about 2,000 acres at Kulasekarapattinam, Thoothukudi district. Partnering with private firms is needed to meet the demand for thousands of satellites, but ISRO will not be privatised, he said. Gaganyaan's first uncrewed test flight will take place within two months, followed by two more uncrewed flights; about 8,000 ground tests are done and four astronaut-designates are in training. Chandrayaan-5, with Japan, will carry a 350-kg rover for 100 days of study. (He did not name the other three pads; official records show they are Sriharikota's First, Second and Third Launch Pads.)

Key facts

Statement	24 Oct 2026, Chennai – graduation ceremony – Dr V. Narayanan (ISRO Chairman since Jan 2025)
Existing pads	First Launch Pad (FLP, 1993 – PSLV, SSLV); Second Launch Pad (SLP, 2005 – GSLV, LVM3) – Sriharikota
Third Launch Pad	Union Cabinet, 16 Jan 2025; ₹3,984.86 crore; to be completed in 48 months; for NGLV
Fourth	Kulasekarapattinam (Thoothukudi) – SSLV launch complex; foundation Feb 2024
NGLV	Cabinet, 18 Sep 2024; ₹8,240 crore; up to 30 t to LEO; reusable first stage
Gaganyaan	First uncrewed flight (G1) – humanoid robot 'Vyommitra'

Background

- Sriharikota: a barrier island between Pulicat Lake and the Bay of Bengal in Tirupati district, Andhra Pradesh. The first rocket from here (an RH-125 sounding rocket) flew on 9 Oct 1971. It was renamed 'Satish Dhawan Space Centre – SHAR' on 5 Sep 2002. India's first rocket (Nike-Apache) was launched from Thumba, Keralam, on 21 Nov 1963.
- Science: the Earth spins from west to east, so a rocket launched eastward gains that rotational speed (about 0.46 km/s at the Equator). Launching from the east coast drops spent stages into the sea. From Kulasekarapattinam, polar-orbit launches can head straight south; from Sriharikota they must curve around Sri Lanka, wasting fuel.
- Next Generation Launch Vehicle (NGLV): about 3 times LVM3's payload at 1.5 times the cost; 3 development flights; target 96 months. Goals: Bharatiya Antariksh Station (2035) and an Indian landing on the Moon (2040). The Third Launch Pad will also be a standby for the Second Launch Pad.

- Chandrayaan-5 / LUPEX: a joint mission of ISRO and the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA); ISRO builds the lander, JAXA the rover; it will be launched on Japan's H3 rocket from Tanegashima to study water and other resources at the lunar south pole. Government approval came in March 2025.

Tamil Nadu link: the fourth pad is coming up at Kulasekarapattinam, Thoothukudi district – India's second spaceport. ISRO's rocket engines are tested at the ISRO Propulsion Complex (IPRC), Mahendragiri, Tirunelveli district. ISRO Chairman V. Narayanan hails from Kanyakumari district. Pulicat Lake, next to Sriharikota, straddles the Tamil Nadu–Andhra Pradesh border.

4 Ladakh declared India's first '100% organic' Union Territory; complete ban on chemical fertilisers

Environment, Rural Development & Economy

News

On 25 Oct 2026 (Sunday), at Leh, Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena declared Ladakh (Leh and Kargil) 'India's first 100% organic Union Territory'. In July 2026 a complete ban was imposed on the procurement, distribution, sale and use of chemical and synthetic fertilisers in farming; in March 2026 organic manure was supplied to villages before the sowing season. Apricot, sea buckthorn, buckwheat, barley and vegetables are the main crops. (Note: in Dec 2020 the whole of Lakshadweep was declared an organic agricultural area under PGS-India and called the 'first organic UT'; the 'first' here is the Ladakh administration's claim.)

Key facts

Declaration	25 Oct 2026, Leh – LG Vinai Kumar Saxena
Fertiliser ban	July 2026 – complete ban on procurement, distribution, sale and use of chemical/synthetic fertilisers
Crops	Apricot, sea buckthorn, buckwheat, barley, vegetables
Earlier UT	Lakshadweep – Dec 2020, PGS-India (PKVY)
First State	Sikkim – declared by the PM at Gangtok, 18 Jan 2016
Certification	PGS-India (Agriculture Ministry); NPOP (Commerce Ministry – APEDA)

Background

- Sikkim: by an Assembly resolution in 2003 (Pawan Chamling government) it decided to go organic; about 75,000 ha became certified organic. On 18 Jan 2016 PM Modi declared it India's first fully organic State at Gangtok.
- Lakshadweep: in Dec 2020 its entire land area (about 32 sq km) was declared an organic agricultural area under PGS-India through the Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY) – then called the 'first 100% organic UT'.
- Central schemes: PKVY (2015) – cluster-based organic farming with PGS certification and marketing support; Mission Organic Value Chain Development for North Eastern Region (MOVCDNER, 2015–16); National Mission on Natural Farming (Cabinet approval, Nov 2024).
- Certification: PGS-India (Participatory Guarantee System) – Agriculture Ministry; farmer groups assess one another; for the domestic market. NPOP (National Programme for Organic Production, 2001) – Commerce Ministry, run by APEDA; third-party certification; for exports. FSSAI's 'Jaivik Bharat' logo marks organic food.

Tamil Nadu link: the State released the 'Tamil Nadu Organic Farming Policy 2023' in March 2023 – promoting chemical-free farming, integrated organic farming systems, millets and farmer producer organisations. Tamil Nadu's organic-farming pioneer G. Nammalvar (born 6 Apr 1938, Elangadu, Thanjavur district; died 30 Dec 2013) founded 'Vanagam' at Karur and opposed the methane project in the Cauvery delta.

5 Shivraj Singh Chouhan launches upgraded NMMS (2.0) app for attendance under the VB-G RAM G job scheme

Environment, Rural Development & Economy

News

Union Rural Development Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on 23 Oct 2026 in New Delhi launched an upgraded version of the National Mobile Monitoring System (NMMS) app, which records the attendance of workers under the 'Viksit Bharat – Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin)' (VB-G RAM G). Its aim is to stop fake attendance. Built with technical support from IIT Madras, it offers AI-based face verification, liveness detection, device-level security, anti-cloning and anti-tampering safeguards, AI photo de-duplication and offline attendance for sites without network. An exception mechanism covers elderly workers, persons with disabilities and those with mobile-device problems.

Key facts

Launch	23 Oct 2026, New Delhi – Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan (Rural Development + Agriculture & Farmers Welfare)
Tech support	IIT Madras and other agencies
New features	AI face verification, liveness detection, offline attendance, AI photo de-duplication
Face authentication	Since March 2026; about 40 crore person-days recorded through it
Progress (since 1 July)	About 46 crore person-days; 3.65 crore workers; 2.41 lakh gram panchayats
Funds 2026–27	Central allocation ₹95,692 crore; over ₹1.51 lakh crore with States' share

Background

- History: the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) was enacted in September 2005 and launched on 2 Feb 2006 at Bandlapalli, Anantapur district, Andhra Pradesh, in 200 districts; 'Mahatma Gandhi' was added to its name in 2009 (MGNREGA). It guaranteed 100 days of work a year; Section 17 provides for social audit by the Gram Sabha.
- New law: VB-G RAM G Act 2025 – Presidential assent December 2025; replaces MGNREGA with 125 days of guaranteed work a year; Centre–State funding 60:40 (90:10 for NE and Himalayan States); a pause of up to 60 days in peak farm season; weekly wages. Rolled out nationwide from 1 July 2026 (launched from Andhra Pradesh).
- NMMS: introduced by the Ministry of Rural Development in 2021 – real-time attendance at worksites with time-stamped, geo-tagged photographs; made universal for all works from 1 Jan 2023.
- Constitution: the right to work is a Directive Principle (Article 41). Wages are not triggered by attendance alone – they are calculated from work measured by engineers and logged in electronic measurement books, and paid by Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT).

Tamil Nadu link: IIT Madras, Chennai, gave technical support for the app. Tamil Nadu is also one of the nine States that record 100% of attendance through the system (the others: Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Odisha, Telangana, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand).

6 India's rice export value up 13% (Apr–Sep 2026): global demand keeps rising

Environment, Rural Development & Economy

News

As per government data, the value of India's rice exports rose 13% to ₹54,937.71 crore in the first six months (April–September) of the current fiscal 2026–27 (rupee value, not volume). Indian Rice Exporters Federation (IREF) Vice-President Dev Garg cited this on the sidelines of the Bharat International Rice Conference (BIRC 2026), held at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, on 23–25 Oct 2026. Global demand is rising as El Niño may cut output elsewhere; Indian rice is at least 10% cheaper than competitors (Thailand, Myanmar). Rice currently faces no export duty, minimum export price or restriction.

Key facts

Export value	Apr–Sep 2026: ₹54,937.71 crore (+13%); full 2025–26 ≈ ₹1,12,000 crore
Apr–Aug 2026	Basmati ₹22,864 crore (+11.6%); non-basmati ₹22,874 crore (+14.2%)
World share	World's largest rice producer and exporter; ≈40% of world rice trade (IREF)
Volume	≈22 million tonnes exported last year; ≈24 million tonnes projected this year (USDA)
Basmati market	Over 74% of basmati exports go to the Middle East
Output, stocks	2025–26 output 154 million tonnes+; govt stocks 38 MT (October buffer norm 10.25 MT)

Background

- Policy: the ban on non-basmati white rice exports imposed in July 2023 was lifted in Sept 2024 and its minimum export price dropped in Oct 2024; the basmati minimum price was also scrapped in Sept 2024. Exports have recovered since.
- Geography: rice is a Kharif crop needing temperatures above 25°C, rainfall above 100 cm and water-retaining alluvial/clayey soil; in low-rainfall Punjab and Haryana it grows with irrigation.
- Basmati GI: on APEDA's application, the Intellectual Property Appellate Board (IPAB) ordered registration in Feb 2016. The GI area covers Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi, Uttarakhand, western Uttar Pradesh and parts of Jammu & Kashmir; Madhya Pradesh is not included.
- Science & institutions: International Rice Research Institute (IRRI, 1960) – Los Baños, Philippines; its South Asia Regional Centre – Varanasi. India's ICAR-National Rice Research Institute (NRRI) – Cuttack, Odisha.

Tamil Nadu link: 'Thooyamalli rice', a traditional paddy variety for which the Tamil Nadu State Agricultural Marketing Board (TNSAMB) applied, has received the Geographical Indication (GI) tag (reported Dec 2025) – an aromatic samba-season variety of 135–140 days; the name ('pure' + 'jasmine') refers to its fragrance. With the five products tagged in that batch, Tamil Nadu's GI count rose to 74. The Cauvery delta (Thanjavur) is the 'rice bowl of Tamil Nadu'.

7 Uttarakhand youth Ravi Tamta's electric 'flying car' HAPIDA SKYNeX – test flight succeeds

Environment, Rural Development & Economy

News

Ravi Tamta of Kaflikhan village near Jageshwar Dham, Almora district, Uttarakhand – self-taught over about 13 years through the internet, with no engineering degree – built 'HAPIDA SKYNeX', a single-seat electric flying vehicle, through his firm Hapida Sky Private Limited. Based on scaled-up multirotor drone technology, it is a battery-powered electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) prototype. In August 2026 it flew for nearly a minute at an Army helipad in Almora; it was back in the news in October 2026 (The Better India – 21 Oct; Channel IAM – 25 Oct). The goal is to cut a 40 km, 90-minute road trip to 10–15 minutes. It is an early prototype that needs further testing.

Key facts

Builder	Ravi Tamta (BA graduate, self-taught) – Kaflikhan, Almora, Uttarakhand
Vehicle	HAPIDA SKYNeX – single-seat, battery-electric eVTOL; multiple motors/propellers, transparent canopy
Test	August 2026 – Army helipad, Almora; airborne for about a minute
Firm	Hapida Sky Private Limited
Other inventions	Phone-charging shoes, smart walking stick for the visually impaired, bamboo-splitting machine
Status	Early prototype; further testing needed

Background

- eVTOL: an electrically powered aircraft that takes off and lands vertically without a runway. Being developed worldwide for urban 'air taxi' (Advanced Air Mobility) services – zero exhaust emissions and low noise.
- Regulation: civil aviation safety and certification in India is handled by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) – under the Ministry of Civil Aviation, HQ New Delhi. Drones are governed by the 'Drone Rules 2021' (25 Aug 2021) – five classes: nano (up to 250 g), micro, small, medium, large; permissions via the 'Digital Sky' platform.
- Science: a multirotor's propellers push air downward and the reaction pushes the vehicle up – Newton's third law. Bernoulli's principle explains wing lift arising from the pressure difference above and below a wing.
- Other Indian efforts: 'The ePlane Company' (2019; founder Prof. Satya Chakravarthy), incubated at IIT Madras – received DGCA Design Organisation Approval (DOA) in 2023.

Tamil Nadu link: IIT Madras-incubated 'The ePlane Company' unveiled the full-scale prototype (PT-01) of 'e200X', a compact passenger eVTOL air taxi, in July 2026 – a pilot plus 200 kg payload (2 passengers or cargo), about 110 km range. It was built at a 60,000 sq ft facility on IIT Madras's Discovery Campus at Thaiyur (Chengalpattu district); certified flight trials are targeted for mid-2027.

8 'International Year of Millets 2023' drew a very positive global response – PM Modi in the 139th 'Mann Ki Baat'

Environment, Rural Development & Economy

News

In the 139th 'Mann Ki Baat', broadcast on Sunday 25 Oct 2026, PM Narendra Modi recalled that India's call to mark 2023 as the 'International Year of Millets' received a very positive global response, and said millets ('Shree Anna') are deeply rooted in Indian culture. Examples of the millet revival in the Northeast: two women friends in Khanduli village, West Jaintia Hills, Meghalaya, making millet cookies, cakes and baby food; farmer Chekjing Sangma of Sadolpara village, West Garo Hills; and Kezoma village, Kohima district, Nagaland – cultivation resumed in 2024 and its first millet festival held in 2025. He also recalled the programme's 12-year journey.

Key facts

Episode	Mann Ki Baat – 139th episode; 25 Oct 2026 (Sunday); All India Radio
Millet message	Global response to IYM 2023; revival in the Northeast – Khanduli, Sadolpara (Meghalaya), Kezoma (Nagaland)
Other topics	Vocal for Local during Diwali–Chhath, khadi, e-Sanjeevani (≈50 crore tele-consultations), IIT Madras brain research, organ donation, tributes to Sardar Patel and Narinder Singh Kapany (fibre-optics pioneer)
IYM 2023	UNGA resolution – 3 March 2021; proposed by India; backed by over 70 countries
Shree Anna	Union Budget 2023–24: millets named 'Shree Anna'; ICAR-Indian Institute of Millets Research (IIMR), Hyderabad – 'Global Centre of Excellence'

Background

- Mann Ki Baat: the PM's monthly radio address; first broadcast on 3 Oct 2014 (Vijayadashami) on All India Radio (Akashvani); usually on the last Sunday of the month at 11 a.m.
- International Year of Millets: FAO endorsed India's proposal in 2018; the UN General Assembly declared 2023 the International Year of Millets on 3 March 2021. India observed 2018 as the 'National Year of Millets'.
- Agri-science: millets – pearl millet (bajra/kambu), sorghum (jowar/cholam), finger millet (ragi), foxtail, little, kodo, proso and barnyard millets. Drought-tolerant, low-water 'climate-resilient' crops rich in fibre, iron and calcium. Wheat, barley and oats are not millets. Rajasthan leads in pearl millet output.
- Institution: ICAR-Indian Institute of Millets Research (IIMR) – Hyderabad, Telangana; named a 'Global Centre of Excellence' in Budget 2023–24.

Tamil Nadu link: the five-year 'Tamil Nadu Millet Mission' was announced in the State's Agriculture Budget (2023–24) presented on 21 March 2023 (estimated cost ₹82 crore; Centre–State funding). Namakkal, Tiruppur, Coimbatore, Erode and Pudukkottai were added as millet zones. Sangam literature mentions thinai and varagu.

9 Indian photographer Sitaram Raul wins 'Behaviour: Invertebrates' category at Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2026

Awards, Aviation, Industry & Sports

News

Sitaram Raul, a photographer from Badlapur, Maharashtra, won the 'Behaviour: Invertebrates' category of the 62nd Wildlife Photographer of the Year (WPY) competition run by the Natural History Museum (NHM), London. Results were announced in London on 13 Oct 2026. His image 'Shifting Sand' shows a Buthacus scorpion burrowing into a sand dune at sunrise to escape the heat, near Sam village in Rajasthan's Thar Desert – timed so that the dug-out sand hangs in the air. The competition drew more than 65,000 entries from 121 countries.

Key facts

Winner	Sitaram Raul – Badlapur (Maharashtra); wildlife and macro photographer
Category / image	Behaviour: Invertebrates – 'Shifting Sand' (Buthacus scorpion)
Location	Near Sam village, Thar Desert, Rajasthan
Announced	13 Oct 2026, London; exhibition from 16 Oct 2026 at NHM
Overall winner	Federico Veronesi (Italy) – 'The Aftermath'
Earlier honour	2025 – 'Highly Commended', Urban Wildlife (fruit bats, Maharashtra)

Background

- Science: scorpions are arthropods of the class Arachnida (like spiders, ticks and mites) – four pairs (8) of legs, pincer-like pedipalps and a venomous sting at the tail tip. They give birth to live young. Under ultraviolet (UV) light they glow blue-green because of chemicals such as beta-carboline in the cuticle. There are over 2,500 described species.
- Medicine: the sting of the Indian red scorpion (Hottentotta tamulus) can be fatal. Dr Himmatrao Bawaskar of Maharashtra's Konkan region showed that the drug prazosin sharply cuts scorpion-sting deaths (The Lancet, 1986); he received the Padma Shri in 2022.
- Geography: the Thar (Great Indian Desert) lies mostly in Rajasthan and extends into Gujarat, Haryana, Punjab and Pakistan. The Sam sand dunes are in Jaisalmer district. The Desert National Park (Jaisalmer–Barmer) is a key home of the Critically Endangered Great Indian Bustard.
- Competition: WPY has run since 1965 and is organised by the Natural History Museum, London; it is often called the 'Oscars of wildlife photography'.

Tamil Nadu link: the award has no direct Tamil Nadu link. But Tamil Nadu has its own small 'desert' – the red 'Theri' sand dunes near Tiruchendur, Thoothukudi district. They are red because iron-rich minerals such as ilmenite, magnetite and garnet were oxidised; south-west monsoon winds are thought to have carried the sand from the Nanguneri area of Tirunelveli district.

10 Kerala approves India's first cooperative-sector airline ('Co-Keralam', headquartered in Kochi)

Awards, Aviation, Industry & Sports

News

On 25 Oct 2026 at Kozhikode, at the silver jubilee of the Calicut City Service Cooperative Society, Kerala CM V.D. Satheesan announced State approval for the 'Kerala Civil Aviation Development Cooperative Society' (HQ: Nedumbassery, Kochi) to start flight services – India's first airline in the cooperative sector, tentatively named 'Co-Keralam'. C.N. Vijayakrishnan, chairman of MVR Cancer Centre, leads the project. About 200 cooperative societies will invest ₹2 crore each (about ₹400 crore) as equity, on the Cochin International Airport (CIAL) model, with the CM as chairman and the Cooperation Minister as vice-chairman. It plans two leased 72-seat aircraft at first (later 4, then 6), with routes from Kochi to Kozhikode, Kannur, Mangaluru, Bengaluru, Chennai, Coimbatore and Madurai. Services have not yet begun.

Key facts

Announced	25 Oct 2026, Kozhikode – CM V.D. Satheesan
Body	Kerala Civil Aviation Development Cooperative Society; Nedumbassery, Kochi
Lead	C.N. Vijayakrishnan (MVR Cancer Centre)
Capital	~200 cooperatives × ₹2 crore ≈ ₹400 crore; CIAL model
Fleet	2 leased 72-seaters → 4 → 6
Routes	Kochi to Kozhikode, Kannur, Mangaluru, Bengaluru, Chennai, Coimbatore, Madurai
Note	Distinct from the private 'Air Kerala' (Gulf-backed)

Background

- Constitution: the 97th Amendment Act 2011 added 'co-operative societies' to Article 19(1)(c), making their formation a fundamental right; added Article 43B (promotion of cooperatives) to the Directive Principles; and inserted Part IXB (Articles 243ZH–243ZT). In July 2021 the Supreme Court (Union of India v. Rajendra N. Shah) held that, since 'co-operative societies' is in the State List (Entry 32), Part IXB – passed without ratification by half the State legislatures (Art. 368(2)) – cannot apply to State cooperatives; it survives for multi-State cooperatives (Union List Entry 44).
- Administration: the Union Ministry of Cooperation was created on 6 July 2021; first minister Amit Shah; motto 'Sahakar se Samriddhi' (prosperity through cooperation). The Multi-State Co-operative Societies Act 2002 was amended in 2023. The UN declared 2025 the International Year of Cooperatives (theme: 'Cooperatives Build a Better World'). Amul, Anand (Gujarat), is India's best-known dairy cooperative.
- Aviation: Cochin International Airport (CIAL, Nedumbassery) was India's first airport built under public-private partnership (PPP) (1999); in 2015 it became the world's first fully solar-powered airport and in 2018 won the UN 'Champions of the Earth' award. The aviation regulator is the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) under the Ministry of Civil Aviation; a new airline needs a DGCA Air Operator Certificate (AOC).
- History: India's cooperative movement began with the Co-operative Credit Societies Act 1904 (Lord Curzon's time); the 1912 Co-operative Societies Act allowed non-credit societies too.

Tamil Nadu link: India's first cooperative society – the 'No. 1 Tirur Primary Agricultural Cooperative Credit Society' – was started for farmers at Tirur, Tiruvallur district, on 22 August 1904; its old building is being restored and a museum on cooperative history is planned. Chennai, Coimbatore and Madurai are also on Co-Keralam's planned routes.

11 PM Modi inaugurates Arvind Ltd's ₹150-crore garment manufacturing unit in Varanasi

Awards, Aviation, Industry & Sports

News

On 25 Oct 2026 PM Narendra Modi inaugurated Ahmedabad-based Arvind Ltd's ₹150-crore garment manufacturing unit at Khochwan village, Mirzamurad, near NH-19, in his Varanasi Lok Sabha constituency. It is Arvind's first large manufacturing plant in the Purvanchal region and will make sportswear, innerwear and other garments for brands such as Jockey, U.S. Polo Assn. and Arrow. Over 300 local women have already been recruited and are being trained; the unit aims to employ about 1,000 women, and a second phase is planned. UP Governor Anandiben Patel and CM Yogi Adityanath attended.

Key facts

Inauguration	25 Oct 2026 – PM Modi; Khochwan, Mirzamurad, Varanasi (UP)
Company	Arvind Ltd – 1931, Ahmedabad (Lalbhai family); India's largest denim maker
Investment	₹150 crore (phase 1); phase 2 planned
Products	Sportswear, innerwear, other garments – Jockey, U.S. Polo Assn., Arrow
Jobs	300+ women in training; ~1,000 women targeted

Background

- Company history: Arvind Mills was founded in Ahmedabad in 1931 by Kasturbhai Lalbhai and his brothers. In the 1980s it introduced denim to the Indian market; it is now India's largest denim producer.
- Schemes: PM MITRA (PM Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel parks) – Union Ministry of Textiles; announced in Budget 2021–22; ₹4,445 crore; 7 sites chosen in March 2023: Tamil Nadu (Virudhunagar), Telangana (Warangal), Gujarat (Navsari), Karnataka (Kalaburagi), Madhya Pradesh (Dhar), Uttar Pradesh (Lucknow) and Maharashtra (Amravati). '5F' vision – Farm to Fibre to Factory to Fashion to Foreign; run in PPP mode through a State–Centre SPV.
- PLI (Production Linked Incentive) for textiles – ₹10,683 crore (Sept 2021) for man-made fibre (MMF) apparel and fabrics and technical textiles.
- Culture: Varanasi's 'Banarasi' sarees are brocades woven in Katan silk with gold/silver 'zari' thread, famous since Mughal times; 'Banaras Brocades and Sarees' received a GI tag in 2009. National Handloom Day – 7 August (the day the Swadeshi Movement began in 1905).

Tamil Nadu link: one of India's 7 PM MITRA parks is coming up on 1,052 acres of SIPCOT land at E. Kumaralingapuram, Virudhunagar district; Tamil Nadu was the first State to sign the agreement and launch its park (March 2023, Chennai). Also, the first National Handloom Day was launched by PM Modi on 7 August 2015 at the Centenary Hall, University of Madras, Chennai.

12 Ahmedabad to host the 2029 World Weightlifting Championships – a first for India

Awards, Aviation, Industry & Sports

News

After an Executive Board meeting of the International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) in Ningbo, China, Ahmedabad (Gujarat) was named on 25 Oct 2026 as host of the 2029 senior World Weightlifting Championships – the first time India will stage the senior Worlds. The same meeting gave the 2030 Worlds to Moscow (Russia), the 2028 World Youth Championships to Prishtina (Kosovo) and the 2028 World Junior Championships to Caracas (Venezuela). The 2026 Worlds are being held in Ningbo from 27 Oct. Ahmedabad will also host the 2030 Commonwealth Games.

Key facts

Decision	IWF Executive Board, Ningbo (China); announced 25 Oct 2026
Event	2029 senior World Weightlifting Championships – Ahmedabad, Gujarat
Significance	First senior Weightlifting Worlds in India
Other awards	2030 – Moscow; 2028 Youth – Prishtina; 2028 Junior – Caracas
2026 Worlds	Ningbo, China (from 27 Oct)
Ahmedabad	2030 Commonwealth Games; India's proposed 2036 Olympic city

Background

- Sport: weightlifting has two lifts – the snatch (bar overhead in one movement) and the clean and jerk (to the shoulders, then overhead); the total of the best of each decides the result. Powerlifting (squat, bench press, deadlift) is a different sport. Women's weightlifting entered the Olympics at Sydney 2000.
- Indian stars: Karnam Malleswari (Andhra Pradesh) – bronze at Sydney 2000 (69 kg), the first Indian woman to win an Olympic medal. Mirabai Chanu (Manipur) – 2017 world champion; silver at Tokyo 2020 (49 kg).
- Body: the International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) – HQ Lausanne, Switzerland (earlier Budapest). Ahmedabad lies on the Sabarmati; the 2026 Asian Weightlifting Championships were held in nearby Gandhinagar.

Tamil Nadu link: Sathuvachari near Vellore is called 'the cradle of Tamil Nadu weightlifting'. Sathish Kumar Sivalingam, who grew up there, won Commonwealth Games gold in the men's 77 kg twice – Glasgow 2014 and Gold Coast 2018; an Arjuna awardee, he is the fourth from Sathuvachari to receive it.

13 Major Abhilasha Barak gets the '2025 UN Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award' for her service with UNIFIL, Lebanon

International

News

UN Secretary-General António Guterres presented the '2025 UN Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award' to Major Abhilasha Barak of the Indian Army on 5 June 2026 at UN Headquarters, New York, at the ceremony for the International Day of UN Peacekeepers. She serves with the Indian Battalion of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in south Lebanon as Female Engagement Team Commander and Gender Focal Point. In six months she ran 539 gender-focused field activities, reaching more than 5,000 women and girls. She is the third Indian to win the award. The award was announced in May 2026; PM Narendra Modi congratulated her on 7 June.

Key facts

Award	2025 UN Military Gender Advocate of the Year – 5 June 2026, New York; presented by António Guterres
Role	Female Engagement Team Commander & Gender Focal Point – Indian Battalion, UNIFIL (south Lebanon); since June 2025
Work	539 field activities in 6 months (highest in the mission); 5,000+ women and girls; 75 Lebanese women got Indian ITEC scholarships
Profile	Rohtak (Haryana); Delhi Technological University (2016); OTA Chennai (2017); Army Air Defence (2018); May 2022 – Army's first woman combat aviator
Award history	Started 2016 by the Office of Military Affairs, UN Dept of Peace Operations; based on UNSC Resolution 1325 (2000)
Earlier Indians	Maj Suman Gawani (2019, South Sudan – UNMISS); Maj Radhika Sen (2023, DR Congo – MONUSCO)

Background

- UNIFIL: set up on 19 March 1978 by UN Security Council Resolutions 425 and 426 to confirm Israel's withdrawal from south Lebanon; HQ at Naqoura. Its mandate was expanded by Resolution 1701 after the 2006 war. Resolution 2790 (28 Aug 2025) gave a final extension to 31 Dec 2026, with withdrawal from 1 Jan 2027. As of 23 Sep 2026 it had 7,565 troops from 46 countries; India 633 (fifth).
- India and UN peacekeeping: began with an army field hospital sent to Korea in 1950. In 2007 it sent the first all-women Formed Police Unit (FPU) to Liberia. International Day of UN Peacekeepers – 29 May (start of UNTSO, 1948).
- Geography: Lebanon lies on the eastern Mediterranean coast; capital Beirut. Syria to the north and east, Israel to the south. The UN-drawn 'Blue Line' (2000) separates Israel and Lebanon. Its flag carries a cedar tree.
- Defence / polity: in the Babita Puniya case (17 Feb 2020) the Supreme Court ordered Permanent Commission for women Army officers. The Army Aviation Corps was formed on 1 Nov 1986; Abhilasha trained at the Combat Army Aviation Training School (CATS), Nashik.

Tamil Nadu link: Abhilasha Barak was born at the Military Hospital, Wellington (Nilgiris), while her father (a retired colonel) was attending the Defence Services Staff College (DSSC) there. In 2017 she

trained at the Officers Training Academy (OTA, 1963), Alandur, Chennai.

14 Student movement's 'Student List' wins Serbia's snap parliamentary election; Aleksandar Vučić concedes defeat

International

News

In Serbia's snap parliamentary election on 25 Oct 2026, the 'Student List – Students Win', born out of the student protests, won. The same night Aleksandar Vučić, leader of the ruling Serbian Progressive Party (SNS), conceded defeat. By the sample count he cited, the Student List got about 2.2 million votes and 135–140 of the 250 seats; SNS about 1.7 million votes and about 105 seats. Turnout was close to 70%. Dr Ilija Srdanović, a physician and professor at the Novi Sad Faculty of Medicine, headed the list. Vučić, President since 2017, resigned on 27 Sep 2026 to run for Prime Minister; Speaker Ana Brnabić is acting President. Final results and the formation of the new government are still pending.

Key facts

Election	25 Oct 2026 – snap parliamentary election; National Assembly – 250 seats, 3% threshold
Winner	'Student List – Students Win' (registered 15 Sep 2026); lead candidate Dr Ilija Srdanović
Projection	Student List ~2.2 m votes, 135–140 seats; SNS ~1.7 m, ~105 seats (as stated by Vučić)
Vučić	PM 2014–17; President 2017–2026; resigned 27 Sep 2026; acting President Ana Brnabić
Origin	1 Nov 2024 – Novi Sad railway-station canopy collapse, 16 killed; protests against corruption
Serbia	Capital Belgrade; currency Serbian dinar; EU candidate since 2012

Background

- History: after World War I the 'Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes' was formed in 1918 – later Yugoslavia. After World War II it became a socialist federation under Josip Broz Tito. Yugoslavia broke up in 1991–92; when Montenegro left in 2006, Serbia became a separate state. Kosovo declared independence in 2008 – neither Serbia nor India recognises it.
- Non-Aligned Movement (NAM): first summit 1–6 Sep 1961 at Belgrade (then Yugoslavia) – 25 countries. Founders: Nehru (India), Tito (Yugoslavia), Nasser (Egypt), Sukarno (Indonesia), Nkrumah (Ghana). Its base was the 1955 Bandung Asian–African Conference. It has 120 members today.
- Geography: Serbia is a landlocked Balkan country. Belgrade stands where the Sava joins the Danube. The Danube rises in Germany's Black Forest and enters the Black Sea; it is Europe's second-longest river after the Volga. Novi Sad, on the Danube, is the capital of the autonomous province of Vojvodina.
- Polity: Serbia is a parliamentary republic. The President is directly elected for 5 years, at most two terms. The National Assembly is unicameral with 250 members chosen by proportional representation. SNS was founded in 2008 by Vučić and Tomislav Nikolić and has ruled since 2012.

Tamil Nadu link: there is no direct Tamil Nadu link to this news. A parallel: after the 1965 anti-Hindi agitation, the DMK won 137 seats in the 1967 Madras State election and C.N. Annadurai became Chief

Minister on 6 March 1967. At Virudhunagar, DMK student leader P. Seenivasan defeated K. Kamaraj by 1,285 votes.

15 Lula wins Brazil's presidency for a fourth time, defeating Flávio Bolsonaro in the runoff

International

News

In the runoff of Brazil's presidential election on 25 Oct 2026, President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (80) of the Workers' Party (PT) defeated Senator Flávio Bolsonaro of the Liberal Party (PL), son of former President Jair Bolsonaro. Lula won about 51.8% of the vote, a margin of about 4.4 million votes. In the 4 Oct first round Flávio had 47.03% and Lula 45.16%; as no one crossed 50%, a runoff was held. This is Lula's fourth, non-consecutive term. Flávio refused to accept the result and seeks to annul it, citing the extension of voting hours. The new term begins on 5 Jan 2027.

Key facts

Runoff	25 Oct 2026 – Lula ~51.8%, Flávio ~48.2%; margin ~4.4 m votes
First round	4 Oct 2026 – Flávio 47.03%, Lula 45.16%
Lula	Born 1945, Pernambuco; former metalworkers' union leader; co-founder of PT (1980); President 2003–2010, 2023–2026
Opponent	Senator Flávio Bolsonaro (PL) – son of Jair Bolsonaro (President 2019–22)
Inauguration	5 Jan 2027 – moved from 1 Jan by Constitutional Amendment 111 (2021)
Election body	Superior Electoral Court (TSE); compulsory voting for most adults

Background

- History: Brazil was a Portuguese colony; independence on 7 Sep 1822; official language Portuguese. It is South America's largest country. Under President Juscelino Kubitschek the capital moved from Rio de Janeiro to the newly built Brasília on 21 April 1960 – city plan by Lúcio Costa, buildings by Oscar Niemeyer.
- Geography / environment: the Amazon rises in the Andes of Peru and enters the Atlantic; it is the world's largest river by discharge. The Amazon is the world's largest tropical rainforest. The UN climate conference COP30 was held at Belém (Pará State), 10–21 Nov 2025.
- Groupings: BRICS – Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa and others; 17th summit 6–7 July 2025, Rio de Janeiro. G20 summit Nov 2024, Rio (presidency received from India). IBSA (India–Brazil–South Africa, 2003); G4 (India, Brazil, Germany, Japan – bid for permanent UNSC seats).
- India–Brazil: strategic partnership since 2006. On his 8 July 2025 visit to Brasília, PM Modi received Brazil's highest honour, the 'Grand Collar of the National Order of the Southern Cross'. Economy: Brazil is the world's largest producer of coffee and sugarcane.

Tamil Nadu link: there is no direct Tamil Nadu link to this election. Related fact: Brazil is the world's largest coffee producer. In India, Karnataka (~72%), Kerala (~20%) and Tamil Nadu (~5%, mostly Arabica) lead – Coffee Board data (2015–16). Tamil Nadu's coffee areas: Nilgiris, Shevaroy Hills (Yercaud, Salem), Palani Hills (Dindigul), Anamalai (Coimbatore).

16 Vigilance Awareness Week 2026 (26 Oct – 1 Nov) – theme 'Probity for Prosperity'

Important Days

News

By Circular No. 05/09/26 dated 18 Sep 2026, the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) announced that Vigilance Awareness Week 2026 will be observed from 26 Oct to 1 Nov. Theme: 'Probity for Prosperity' (Hindi: 'सत्यनिष्ठा से समृद्धि'). The week opens with public servants taking the Integrity Pledge at 11 am on 26 Oct; citizens can take the e-pledge on the CVC website. It is preceded by a three-month 'preventive vigilance campaign' from 17 Aug to 16 Nov 2026. The week is observed every year in the week that includes 31 Oct, the birthday of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

Key facts

Dates	26 Oct – 1 Nov 2026
Theme	'Probity for Prosperity' (सत्यनिष्ठा से समृद्धि)
Organiser	Central Vigilance Commission (CVC), New Delhi – Circular 05/09/26 (18.09.2026)
Preceding campaign	17 Aug – 16 Nov 2026: pending complaints/cases, capacity building, digital initiatives, contract management
Earlier themes	2024 – 'Culture of Integrity for Nation's Prosperity'; 2025 – 'Vigilance: Our Shared Responsibility'
Why this week?	31 Oct – birthday of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

Background

- History of the CVC: it was set up by a government resolution in February 1964 on the recommendation of the Committee on Prevention of Corruption (Santhanam Committee, 1962–64). In 'Vineet Narain v. Union of India' (1997) the Supreme Court directed that the CVC be given statutory status; after a 1998 Ordinance it became a statutory body under the Central Vigilance Commission Act, 2003.
- Structure (polity): a Central Vigilance Commissioner + up to two Vigilance Commissioners, appointed by the President on the recommendation of a committee of the Prime Minister, the Union Home Minister and the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha. Term: 4 years or up to age 65. The CVC is a statutory, not a constitutional, body; it submits its annual report to the President.
- Anti-corruption laws: the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 – its 2018 amendment made bribe-giving an offence and added prior approval (Section 17A) for inquiry against a public servant. The Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013 – Lokpal at the Centre and Lokayuktas in the States. The first Administrative Reforms Commission (1966, Morarji Desai) first recommended Lokpal and Lokayukta.
- Economic angle: corruption raises the cost of public procurement, erodes investor confidence and stops welfare benefits from reaching the right people – which is why the 2026 theme links 'probity' with 'prosperity'. Digital tools such as e-procurement and Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) are instruments of preventive vigilance.

Tamil Nadu link: K. Santhanam (1895–1980), who headed the Santhanam Committee, was born in Madras; he was a freedom fighter, the first editor of 'The Indian Express', a Constituent Assembly member from Madras and Chairman of the Second Finance Commission (1956). Tamil Nadu set up its

State Vigilance Commission and the Directorate of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption (DVAC; HQ Alandur, Chennai) in 1964. The State Lokayukta was created under the Tamil Nadu Lokayukta Act, 2018.

17 Infantry Day 2026 (27 Oct) – 80th observance; honours 1 Sikh's 1947 air-landing at Srinagar

Important Days

News

The Indian Army observes 'Infantry Day' (Shaurya Diwas) every year on 27 Oct. On 27 Oct 1947 the 1st Battalion of the Sikh Regiment (1 SIKH) was flown from Palam airfield, Delhi, in Dakota aircraft and air-landed at Srinagar airfield, where it beat back tribal raiders backed by the Pakistan Army – the first military operation of independent India. Since the 79th Infantry Day was observed in 2025, 2026 marks the 80th. The Infantry is the Indian Army's largest fighting arm ('Queen of the Battle').

Key facts

Day	27 Oct – Infantry Day / Shaurya Diwas; 2026 – 80th
1947 event	1 SIKH – Palam (Delhi) → Srinagar airfield, 27 Oct 1947
Commander	Lt Col Dewan Ranjit Rai – killed on 27 Oct 1947 itself; first Maha Vir Chakra (posthumous)
Instrument of Accession	26 Oct 1947 – signed by Maharaja Hari Singh; accepted by Mountbatten on 27 Oct
Invasion	Pakistan's 'Operation Gulmarg' – Oct 1947 (via Muzaffarabad)
Training	Infantry School – Mhow (Dr. Ambedkar Nagar), Madhya Pradesh

Background

- History: in October 1947 Pakistan sent tribal lashkars into Jammu & Kashmir under the code name 'Operation Gulmarg'; they advanced through Muzaffarabad and Baramulla towards Srinagar. On 26 Oct 1947 Maharaja Hari Singh signed the Instrument of Accession to India; Governor-General Mountbatten accepted it on 27 Oct, the day Indian troops landed at Srinagar.
- Heroes: 1 SIKH's commanding officer Lt Col Dewan Ranjit Rai (born 1913, Gujranwala) was killed in action on the Baramulla–Srinagar road on 27 Oct 1947 itself; he was the first recipient of the Maha Vir Chakra (posthumous). Major Somnath Sharma (4th Bn, Kumaon Regiment), killed at the Battle of Badgam on 3 Nov 1947, was the first recipient of the Param Vir Chakra.
- Polity: the Instrument of Accession ceded three subjects – defence, external affairs and communications – to India; Article 370 later gave special status. Article 370 was rendered inoperative in Aug 2019, and two Union Territories, J&K and Ladakh, came into being on 31 Oct 2019.
- Training: the Infantry School is at Mhow in Indore district, Madhya Pradesh; its Commando Wing is at Belgaum, Karnataka. Mhow, the birthplace of Dr B.R. Ambedkar, was renamed 'Dr. Ambedkar Nagar' in 2003.

Tamil Nadu link: Major Mukund Varadarajan, who grew up in Tambaram, Chennai (Rajput Regiment; 44th Rashtriya Rifles) – an infantry officer – was killed fighting terrorists in Shopian, Kashmir, on 25 Apr 2014 and was awarded the Ashoka Chakra, India's highest peacetime gallantry award (posthumously).

He was commissioned from the Officers Training Academy (OTA), Chennai, in 2006. His life was filmed as the Tamil movie 'Amaran' (2024).

18 World Day for Audiovisual Heritage 2026 (27 Oct) – theme 'Your Window to the World'

Important Days

News

UNESCO observes the 'World Day for Audiovisual Heritage' every year on 27 Oct. The 2026 theme is 'Your Window to the World', highlighting the role of audiovisual records in connecting and understanding societies. Film and sound archives worldwide hold events together with the Coordinating Council of Audiovisual Archives Associations (CCAAA). The Day aims to raise awareness that film reels, audio tapes and radio–TV recordings are at risk of being lost, and that urgent measures are needed to preserve them.

Key facts

Date	27 October (annual)
2026 theme	'Your Window to the World'
Proclaimed	UNESCO General Conference, 2005
Commemorates	1980 'Recommendation for the Safeguarding and Preservation of Moving Images' (21st General Conference)
Coordination	UNESCO + CCAAA
Indian archive	NFAI (Pune, 1964) – part of NFDC since 2022

Background

- UNESCO: its 21st General Conference (1980) adopted the 'Recommendation for the Safeguarding and Preservation of Moving Images'; to mark it, the 2005 General Conference proclaimed 27 Oct as this Day. UNESCO launched the 'Memory of the World' programme in 1992 to protect documentary heritage.
- India in the Memory of the World Register: 1997 – the I.A.S. Tamil Medical Manuscript Collection (Institute of Asian Studies, Chennai; India's first entry); 2005 – Shaiva manuscripts in Pondicherry; 2007 – Rigveda manuscripts (Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune); 2017 – Gilgit manuscripts; 2025 – Bhagavad Gita and Bharata's Natyashastra, taking India's total to 14.
- Indian film heritage: the first full-length Indian feature film was 'Raja Harishchandra' (1913, Dadasaheb Phalke); the first talkie was 'Alam Ara' (14 March 1931, Ardeshir Irani; Majestic Cinema, Bombay) – no print of it survives today, a stark reminder of why audiovisual preservation matters. The National Film Archive of India (NFAI, Pune, 1964) was merged into the NFDC in March 2022 along with Films Division, the Directorate of Film Festivals and the Children's Film Society; the National Film Heritage Mission (NFHM – digitisation and restoration) is now run by the NFDC.
- Science angle: old nitrate film is highly inflammable; acetate film suffers chemical decay called 'vinegar syndrome'; magnetic tapes also degrade over time. Cool, humidity-controlled storage and digitisation are therefore essential.

Tamil Nadu link: the first silent film made in South India was 'Keechaka Vadham' (1917–18), directed by R. Nataraja Mudaliar and produced by his India Film Company (1917), Madras. The first Tamil talkie,

'Kalidas', directed by H.M. Reddy, was released on 31 Oct 1931 – the same year as 'Alam Ara'. In 1897 M. Edwards held Madras's first film screenings at the Victoria Public Hall. And India's very first Memory of the World entry (1997) is the Tamil medical palm-leaf manuscript collection of the Institute of Asian Studies, Chennai – covering Siddha, Ayurveda, Unani, agriculture and animal husbandry.

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