Current Affairs – Notes

1 November 2026

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1 1 Nov – Tamil Nadu Day: Madras State reorganised on linguistic lines in 1956; CM Vijay had announced both 18 July and 1 Nov will be celebrated

Tamil Nadu

News

On 1 November 1956, when the States Reorganisation Act, 1956 came into force, 'Madras State' was reorganised as a State of Tamil-speaking areas – Malabar went to Kerala and the Kanyakumari areas were added. On 18 July 2026 CM C. Joseph Vijay announced that the government would celebrate both 18 July (the day in 1967 when Anna's Assembly resolution for the name 'Tamil Nadu' was passed) and 1 November (the day the State was formed). Accordingly, on 1 Nov 2026 the Tamil Development Department held the 'Tamil Nadu Day' function at the Government Museum, Egmore, Chennai, attended by ministers including Rajmohan.

Key facts

1 Nov 1956	States Reorganisation Act 1956 in force – linguistic Madras State
18 July 1967	Assembly unanimously passes CM C.N. Annadurai's resolution for the name 'Tamil Nadu'
14 Jan 1969	Madras State (Alteration of Name) Act, 1968 – name 'Tamil Nadu' takes effect
Earlier decisions	2019: 1 Nov as 'Tamil Nadu Day' (Edappadi K. Palaniswami govt); 2021: 18 July (M.K. Stalin govt)
2026 decision	Both 18 July and 1 Nov celebrated (CM Vijay, 18 July 2026)
2026 function	1 Nov – Government Museum, Egmore, Chennai (Tamil Development Dept)

Background

- History: Madras Province in 1947; 'Madras State' from 26 Jan 1950. After Potti Sriramulu died fasting (Dec 1952), Andhra State was separated on 1 Oct 1953 – the first State formed on a linguistic basis.
- Linguistic reorganisation: in 1948 the Dhar Commission (S.K. Dhar) and the JVP Committee (Nehru, Patel, Pattabhi Sitaramayya) did not favour immediate linguistic States. The States Reorganisation Commission set up in Dec 1953 (chairman Fazl Ali; members K.M. Panikkar, H.N. Kunzru) reported on 30 Sept 1955.
- Constitution: the States Reorganisation Act 1956 and the 7th Amendment created 14 States and 6 Union Territories. Forming new States or changing boundaries/names – Articles 3 and 4 (law of Parliament).
- Renaming struggle: Virudhunagar's Sankaralinganar fasted from 27 July 1956 for 12 demands including the name 'Tamil Nadu' and died in Madurai on 13 Oct 1956 after a fast begun on 27 July 1956.

Tamil Nadu link: in the 1956 border struggle led by Marshal A. Nesamony, Travancore's Agastheeswaram, Thovalai, Kalkulam and Vilavancode taluks (Kanyakumari district) and part of Shencottah taluk joined Tamil Nadu; Tiruttani joined in 1960 after the northern border struggle (Ma.Po.Si.).

2 Chennai's Sanmar Group Chairman Vijay Sankar named FICCI President-Elect for 2026–27

Tamil Nadu

News

On 29 Oct 2026 the National Executive Committee of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) named Vijay Sankar, Chairman of the Chennai-based Sanmar Group, as 'President-Elect' for 2026–27. Currently FICCI Senior Vice President, he will take over from President Anant Goenka after FICCI's Annual General Meeting and Annual Convention on 18–19 Nov in New Delhi.

Key facts

Position	FICCI President-Elect 2026–27; now Senior Vice President
Decision	FICCI National Executive Committee – 29 Oct 2026
Takes over	After AGM & Convention (18–19 Nov 2026, New Delhi) – succeeds Anant Goenka
Sanmar Group	Chennai – chemicals, specialty chemicals, engineering, steel foundries, shipping
Other role	Chairman, Chemplast Sanmar Ltd
FICCI	Founded 1927; HQ New Delhi (Federation House); centenary in 2027

Background

- History: FICCI was set up in 1927; Sir Purshottamdas Thakurdas and G.D. Birla were among its founders. Both Thakurdas and Birla signed the 1944 'Bombay Plan'.
- Economy: India's main industry chambers – FICCI (1927), ASSOCHAM (1920, set up by chambers from across India) and CII (Confederation of Indian Industry). They are non-government, not-for-profit bodies that voice industry views in policy-making.
- Science: in the chlor-alkali industry, electrolysis of brine gives caustic soda (NaOH), chlorine and hydrogen. Vinyl chloride monomer (VCM), made from ethylene and chlorine, is polymerised into PVC (polyvinyl chloride) – used in pipes and cable sheathing.

Tamil Nadu link: the Sanmar Group is headquartered in Chennai. Its company Chemplast Sanmar has chemical and PVC plants at Mettur (Salem district) on the Cauvery and at Cuddalore. Mettur Dam (Stanley Reservoir) was completed in 1934.

3 'Vetri Magalir Goat Rearing Scheme': ₹109.75 crore sanctioned – five goats/sheep each to 30,000 rural beneficiaries at 100% subsidy

Tamil Nadu

News

The Tamil Nadu Government issued an order giving administrative and financial sanction of ₹109.75 crore for the 'Vetri Magalir Goat Rearing Scheme', announced by Finance Minister N. Marie Wilson in the 2026–27 Revised Budget (Aug 2026) (reported 31 Oct 2026). About 30,000 eligible people in rural areas – destitute widows, deserted women, transgender women and men, and persons with disabilities – will each get five goats or sheep at 100% subsidy (free).

Key facts

Scheme	Vetri Magalir Goat Rearing Scheme – 2026–27
Allocation	₹109.75 crore (about ₹110 crore in the Budget announcement)
Beneficiaries	About 30,000 – rural destitute widows, deserted women, transgender persons, persons with disabilities
Benefit	5 goats or sheep each – 100% subsidy
Announced	2026–27 Revised Budget – Finance Minister N. Marie Wilson (Aug 2026)
Department	Animal Husbandry Department

Background

- Economy: goat rearing is a low-investment livelihood possible even on dry land; goats turn poor grazing into meat, which is why the goat is called the 'poor man's cow'.
- Research institutes: ICAR–Central Institute for Research on Goats (CIRG) – Makhdoom, Mathura (UP); Central Sheep and Wool Research Institute – Avikanagar (Rajasthan); National Bureau of Animal Genetic Resources (NBAGR) – Karnal.
- Science: Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR – 'goat plague') is a viral disease of goats and sheep; FAO and WOAH aim to eradicate it globally by 2030. Vaccination against livestock diseases is a key task of the Animal Husbandry Department.

Tamil Nadu link: Tamil Nadu's native goat breeds – Kanni Adu (Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi, Virudhunagar), Kodi Adu, Salem Black; sheep breed – Mecheri (Salem). A free milch cow and goat scheme for rural women was launched in 2011.

4 26 new special courts for POCSO cases – ₹46.59 crore; 4 more NDPS courts too: CM Vijay orders

Tamil Nadu

News

CM C. Joseph Vijay ordered 26 courts – 12 new special courts and 14 additional special courts – at ₹46.59 crore to try only cases under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012, and a G.O. was issued (reported 1 Nov 2026). Now 22 POCSO special courts function and 4 more will start soon; with these there will be 52 special courts for the 47 police districts. In addition, for drug (NDPS) cases, one special court each will come up in Kancheepuram, Tiruvallur and Vellore and one additional court in Chennai (11 exist now).

Key facts

POCSO courts	26 (12 new + 14 additional) – ₹46.59 crore; G.O. issued
Current status	22 working; 4 soon – total 52 (47 police districts)
NDPS courts	11 now; 4 new – Kancheepuram, Tiruvallur, Vellore, Chennai (additional)
POCSO Act	2012; 'child' – below 18 years; gender-neutral
Order	CM C. Joseph Vijay – reported 1 Nov 2026

Background

- Law: the POCSO Act has been in force since 14 Nov 2012. Under Section 28, the State Government, in consultation with the Chief Justice of the High Court, designates a Court of Session in each district

as a 'Special Court'. Trials should be completed, as far as possible, within one year (Section 35). The 2019 amendment allowed up to the death penalty for aggravated offences.
- Constitution: Article 15(3) – State may make special provisions for women and children; Article 39(f) – protecting children from exploitation (Directive Principle); Article 39A – free legal aid.
- Drug law: Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985. The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), set up under it in 1986, is the apex enforcement agency under the Union Home Ministry. The Centre's 'Fast Track Special Courts' (FTSC) scheme is for rape and POCSO cases.

Tamil Nadu link: Tamil Nadu Police's 'Kaaval Uthavi' app lets users send an SOS alert to the police in an emergency – useful for the safety of women and children. The new NDPS courts come up in Kancheepuram, Tiruvallur, Vellore and Chennai.

5 'Tamil Sangam' at the Secretariat headed by the CM; weekly traditional-dress day in govt offices: Minister Rajmohan

Tamil Nadu

News

At the 'Tamil Nadu Day' function at the Government Museum, Egmore, Chennai on 1 Nov 2026, Rajmohan, Minister for Tamil Development, School Education and Information & Publicity, announced on behalf of the Tamil Development Department: (1) on the CM's order a 'Tamil Sangam' will be set up at the Secretariat, merging the existing associations, with CM Vijay as its president; (2) a weekly 'traditional dress day' in government offices – wearing traditional dress such as veshti–shirt or saree; (3) the World Tamil Conference will again be started on Tamil soil and held in many parts of the world.

Key facts

Announced	1 Nov 2026 – Tamil Nadu Day function, Government Museum, Egmore, Chennai
Minister	Rajmohan – Tamil Development, School Education, Information & Publicity
Tamil Sangam	At the Secretariat; president – CM; existing associations merged
Traditional dress day	Veshti–shirt one day a week in govt offices
World Tamil Conference	To restart on Tamil soil and be held worldwide

Background

- History – Sangams: per the commentary on Iraiyanar Akapporul, the First Sangam was at Then Madurai, the Middle at Kapadapuram and the Last at Madurai. The 'Fourth Tamil Sangam' was started by Pandithurai Thevar, zamindar of Palavanatham, on 14 Sept 1901 at Sethupathi High School, Madurai; it ran the journal 'Senthamizh' and the 'Pandiyan Puthaga Salai' library.
- Literature: Tolkappiyam is the oldest extant Tamil grammar (three books – Ezhuthu, Sol, Porul). Nannool (by Pavanandi Munivar) is a later grammar. Tamil was declared India's first classical language in 2004.
- World Tamil Conferences: the 1st in 1966 – Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia); 2nd 1968 – Chennai; 5th 1981 – Madurai; 8th 1995 – Thanjavur. The 'World Classical Tamil Conference' was held at Coimbatore in 2010.
- Constitution: Article 345 – a State Legislature may adopt one or more languages as the State's official language; under it the Tamil Nadu Official Language Act, 1956 made Tamil the official

language. Article 343 – official language of the Union; Article 348 – language of the Supreme Court/High Courts.

Tamil Nadu link: the Tamil Nadu Secretariat functions at Fort St. George, Chennai. The Tamil Development Department handles implementation of Tamil as the official language, awards for Tamil scholars and Tamil development schemes. Tamil University, Thanjavur, was started in 1981.

6 Cyclone 'Murasu' (name from India) forms in Bay of Bengal; to cross Andhra coast – heavy rain likely

Weather, States, Archaeology & Infrastructure

News

On 1 Nov 2026 the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said a deep depression had intensified into Cyclonic Storm 'Murasu' over the south-west and adjoining west-central Bay of Bengal. At 5.30 pm on 1 Nov it lay about 420 km east-south-east of Chennai, moving west-north-west at 25 km/h. It is forecast to become a Severe Cyclonic Storm by early 2 Nov and to cross the south Andhra Pradesh coast between Nellore and Narsapur, near Ongole (Prakasam district), between 11.30 pm on 2 Nov and 4 am on 3 Nov, with winds of 100–110 km/h gusting to 120 km/h. A cyclone alert covers the Andhra coast and the adjoining north Tamil Nadu coast; north Tamil Nadu districts including Chennai are on heavy-rain alert and fishermen have been told not to venture into the sea. It is the second cyclone to threaten the Andhra coast within a week (the first, 'Arnab', crossed near Narsapur on 28 Oct).

Key facts

Name	Murasu – contributed by India; the traditional Tamil drum
Became cyclone	1 Nov 2026 – SW & adjoining west-central Bay of Bengal (from a deep depression)
Landfall (forecast)	Night of 2–3 Nov; between Nellore and Narsapur, near Ongole; as a severe cyclonic storm
Wind	100–110 km/h, gusting to 120 km/h
Tamil Nadu	Cyclone alert for north TN coast; heavy-rain alert for districts incl. Chennai; fishermen told not to go to sea
Previous cyclone	'Arnab' (from Bangladesh) – crossed near Narsapur on 28 Oct

Background

- Structure: the calm, often clear centre of a cyclone is the 'eye' – usually a few tens of kilometres across. The surrounding 'eye wall' has the strongest winds and heaviest rain; outside lie spiral rain bands. As the eye passes, a brief lull is followed by violent winds from the opposite direction.
- Storm surge: the cyclone's strong winds and low pressure pile sea water abnormally high and push it into low-lying coasts – a leading cause of cyclone deaths. It is worse along the Bay of Bengal's shallow, funnel-shaped coasts.
- Geography: Nellore city stands on the Penna (North Pennar) river, which rises in the Nandi Hills of Karnataka – Tamil Nadu's Thenpennai (South Pennar) also rises in the Nandi Hills. Ongole (Prakasam district) is home of the famous Ongole cattle breed. Narsapur is near the Vasishta Godavari branch of the Godavari delta.

- The north-east monsoon season (Oct–Dec) is also the Bay of Bengal's main cyclone season. Even when such storms cross Andhra Pradesh, their cloud bands bring heavy rain to north Tamil Nadu.

Tamil Nadu link: 'Murasu' is a Tamil name contributed by India. In Dec 2023, Cyclone 'Michaung' (name from Myanmar) crossed near Bapatla in Andhra Pradesh on 5 Dec, but earlier, on 3–4 Dec, it flooded Chennai – showing that storms crossing Andhra can still hit north Tamil Nadu. This time too, north Tamil Nadu districts including Chennai are on heavy-rain alert.

7 Kerala: bars told to strictly enforce the ban on liquor sale to under-23s and check age proof

Weather, States, Archaeology & Infrastructure

News

In Kerala, selling liquor to anyone under 23 is already banned under the Abkari Act (the age has been 23 since 2017). On 30 Oct 2026 Excise Minister M. Liju ordered bars to enforce this strictly and to serve liquor only after checking the Aadhaar card or other age proof of any customer who appears to be under 23; bars that violate the rule will face stringent action. The move follows the 11 Oct crash at Nedumbassery near Kochi, in which a car driven by a 19-year-old – reportedly drunk after visiting three bars – hit a scooter, killing three youngsters aged about 21; the Excise Department booked the three bars.

Key facts

Law	Kerala Abkari Act, 1077 (Kollam era) – Sections 15A, 15B (age-23 limit)
Age-limit history	18 → 21 (Feb 2013 ordinance) → 23 (Abkari (Amendment) Ordinance No. 38 of 2017, 21 Dec 2017)
30 Oct 2026 order	Excise Minister M. Liju – check Aadhaar/age proof whenever in doubt
Trigger	11 Oct 2026 – Nedumbassery (near Kochi) crash; 3 killed; 3 bars booked
Constitution	State List Entry 8 – intoxicating liquors; Entry 51 – excise on alcoholic liquor; Article 47 – prohibition (Directive Principle)

Background

- Constitution: Entry 8 of the State List (Seventh Schedule) – 'intoxicating liquors: production, manufacture, possession, transport, purchase and sale'. So each State sets its own minimum age (Kerala 23, Tamil Nadu 21). Alcoholic liquor for human consumption is outside GST; the excise on it (Entry 51) is a major State revenue.
- Directive Principle: Article 47 – besides raising nutrition, living standards and public health, the State shall endeavour to prohibit the consumption, except for medicinal purposes, of intoxicating drinks and drugs injurious to health. Prohibition, village panchayats (Art. 40), cottage industries (Art. 43) and cow-slaughter ban (Art. 48) are classed as 'Gandhian principles'.
- Dry States: Gujarat has had total prohibition since its formation in 1960 (continuing the Bombay Prohibition Act, 1949). Bihar – since April 2016; Nagaland – since 1989; Mizoram re-imposed prohibition in 2019.
- Legal gap: giving liquor to a child under 18 is punishable under Section 77 of the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015; but in Aug 2026 the Kerala Excise Department said it lacks power to prosecute under that Act.

Tamil Nadu link: the minimum age to buy/drink liquor in Tamil Nadu is 21. In May 2026 the State reaffirmed this limit, and CM Vijay ordered closure of 717 TASMAC shops within 500 m of places of worship, educational institutions and bus stands. History: C. Rajagopalachari's (Rajaji) Madras Presidency government first introduced prohibition in Salem district in 1937.

8 Mekedatu dam 'at a decisive stage', says Karnataka CM; lower riparian Tamil Nadu keeps opposing

Weather, States, Archaeology & Infrastructure

News

Karnataka CM D.K. Shivakumar said on 31 Oct 2026 that the Mekedatu balancing reservoir across the Cauvery had reached a 'decisive stage'. About 2,500 acres of alternative land have so far been identified to compensate for forest land to be submerged (a committee headed by the Mandya Deputy Commissioner); about 500 acres of farmers' land will be used, and land acquisition will begin soon. Noting that Karnataka must release about 177 TMC to Tamil Nadu each year, he said the reservoir would store about 66 TMC. Tamil Nadu continues to oppose it, saying it violates the Cauvery Tribunal award and Supreme Court orders and that Karnataka cannot build it without its consent.

Key facts

Site	Ontigondlu near Mekedatu ('goat's leap'); Cauvery–Arkavathi confluence; Kanakapura taluk, Bengaluru South district; about 4 km from the TN border
Project (2019 DPR)	67.16 TMC storage; 4.75 TMC drinking water for Bengaluru; 400 MW hydropower; about ₹9,000 crore
Submergence	About 5,000 ha – mostly forest land, including part of Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary
Supreme Court (13.11.2025)	TN's pleas 'premature'; DPR to be examined by CWC, CWMA, CWRC; TN may challenge any CWC approval
Shares (2018 verdict)	TN 404.25, Karnataka 284.75, Kerala 30, Puducherry 7 TMC; 177.25 TMC at Biligundlu

Background

- History: the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal (CWDT) was set up on 2 June 1990 under the Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956. Its final award (5 Feb 2007): 740 TMC in all – Tamil Nadu 419, Karnataka 270, Kerala 30, Puducherry 7, environment 10, inevitable escape to sea 4.
- Supreme Court (16 Feb 2018): Karnataka got 14.75 TMC more (for Bengaluru's drinking water and groundwater), cutting Tamil Nadu's share to 404.25 TMC; 177.25 TMC a year must be released at Biligundlu. To implement it, the Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA) and the Cauvery Water Regulation Committee (CWRC) were set up in June 2018 under the Cauvery Water Management Scheme, 2018.
- Constitution: Article 262 – Parliament may by law provide for adjudicating inter-State river water disputes and may bar any court, including the Supreme Court, from such disputes. Union List Entry 56 – regulation of inter-State rivers; State List Entry 17 – water.
- Geography: the Cauvery rises at Talakaveri in the Brahmagiri hills of Kodagu, Karnataka. After the KRS and Kabini (a tributary rising in Wayanad, Kerala) dams, it flows past Biligundlu, enters Tamil

Nadu at Hogenakkal in Dharmapuri district and reaches Mettur dam (Stanley Reservoir, 1934). At Mukkombu it splits into the Cauvery and Kollidam, and joins the Bay of Bengal at Poompuhar.

Tamil Nadu link: kuruvai and samba crops in the Cauvery delta (Thanjavur, Tiruvarur, Nagapattinam) depend on water released by Karnataka. Tamil Nadu argues that Mekedatu would block flows reaching it from Karnataka's uncontrolled catchment. In July 2026 the State said the Supreme Court has not allowed Karnataka any unilateral construction. Puducherry (Karaikal) also opposed the DPR.

9 12th-century Chola-era Nataraja and Sivakami bronzes unearthed in Nagapattinam excavation

Weather, States, Archaeology & Infrastructure

News

In the Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology's excavation at Nagapattinam, under way since 3 Aug, two bronze idols with their pedestals were found at a depth of about 1 metre: a four-armed Nataraja in the Ananda Tandava pose (110 cm high, 100 cm wide) and a two-armed Sivakami Amman in the tribhanga pose (82 cm, 23 cm). Based on body form, ornamentation and pedestal style, experts date them to the 12th century CE (later Chola period). Tamil Development Minister A. Rajmohan released the images on X on 30 Oct. They are reported to be the first such bronzes found in a scientific excavation by the State Archaeology Department. The idols were taken to Chennai for chemical conservation.

Key facts

Site	Nagapattinam – State Archaeology Dept excavation (from 3 Aug 2026); ~1 m deep
Nataraja	Ananda Tandava, four arms; 110 × 100 cm; with pedestal
Sivakami Amman	Tribhanga pose, two arms; 82 × 23 cm
Period	12th century CE – later Chola (preliminary estimate)
Announced by	Tamil Development Minister A. Rajmohan, 30 Oct 2026 (on X)
Next	Chemical conservation in Chennai; metallurgical analysis planned

Background

- Chola bronzes: metal sculpture, begun under the Pallavas, peaked under the Cholas (10th–12th c. CE). Sembiyan Mahadevi (queen of Gandaraditya) was a great patron. They were made as processional 'utsava murtis' for temple festivals. In the Nataraja icon the god dances on the dwarf 'Apasmara' (ignorance) within a ring of flames (prabha).
- Technique – lost-wax (cire perdue; Sanskrit 'madhuchchhishta vidhana'): a model is made of beeswax and resin, coated with alluvial clay and dried; heating melts the wax out, and molten metal is poured into the hollow mould. The mould is broken to remove the idol, so every piece is unique. Bronze is an alloy of copper and tin; 'Aimpon' (panchaloha) is a five-metal alloy.
- Swamimalai, near Kumbakonam in Thanjavur district, is still the centre of sthapatis who cast idols by the lost-wax method, using the Cauvery's fine alluvial clay. 'Swamimalai Bronze Icons' carry a Geographical Indication (GI) tag.
- Nagapattinam: a major Chola port for trade with South-East Asia. Under Rajaraja I, the Srivijaya (Sailendra) king Mara Vijayottungavarman built the 'Chudamani Vihara' Buddhist monastery here;

the 'Larger Leiden Plates' record Rajaraja's grant of Anaimangalam village to it. Many Buddhist bronzes found at Nagapattinam are in the Government Museum, Chennai.

Tamil Nadu link: the whole story is Tamil Nadu's – Nagapattinam was the Cholas' maritime trade hub, and the bronze-casting tradition lives on at Swamimalai. The Tamil Nadu Police Idol Wing works to recover smuggled Chola bronzes. Officials said the find gives new evidence on Chola-era metal-sculpture schools and maritime trade around Nagapattinam.

10 Digital Bharat Nidhi signs BharatNet pact with Tamil Nadu – 5 lakh+ rural home fibre connections

Weather, States, Archaeology & Infrastructure

News

A 'Utilisation Agreement' to use the BharatNet network for rural households in Tamil Nadu under the Amended BharatNet Programme (ABP), on a State-led model, was signed at Sanchar Bhawan, New Delhi, on 30 Oct 2026 by the Department of Telecommunications' Digital Bharat Nidhi (DBN), the Government of Tamil Nadu and Tamil Nadu FibreNet Corporation (TANFINET). DBN Administrator Shyamal Misra attended; Atul Anand, Additional Chief Secretary of Tamil Nadu's Artificial Intelligence, IT and Digital Services Department, joined by video. With central subsidy support, more than 5 lakh rural home fibre (FTTH) connections will be provided, and 4,767 villages will get on-demand connectivity.

Key facts

Agreement	30 Oct 2026 – Sanchar Bhawan, New Delhi; DBN + Govt of TN + TANFINET; State-led model
Benefit	5 lakh+ rural home fibre connections; on-demand connectivity to 4,767 villages; e-governance, online education, telemedicine, digital payments
ABP	Union Cabinet approval 4 Aug 2023 – upgrade BharatNet and extend it on demand to all gram panchayats and villages
DBN	Formerly the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF; from 1 Apr 2002); became DBN under the Telecommunications Act, 2023; attached office of DoT
DBN schemes	BharatNet, 4G Saturation, mobile services in LWE, border, Himalayan, island and NE areas

Background

- BharatNet history: launched in October 2011 as the 'National Optical Fibre Network' (NOFN) to give broadband to gram panchayats; renamed 'BharatNet' in 2015. Bharat Broadband Network Ltd (BBNL), the SPV created to implement it, was merged with BSNL in 2022.
- Law: the Telecommunications Act, 2023 repealed the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885, the Indian Wireless Telegraphy Act, 1933 and the Telegraph Wires (Unlawful Possession) Act, 1950. Under it USOF became 'Digital Bharat Nidhi', funded by the Universal Service Levy paid by telecom operators. The TRAI Act, 1997 remains in force.
- Science: optical fibre works on 'total internal reflection' – light in the high-refractive-index core strikes the lower-index cladding at more than the critical angle and is wholly reflected back inside. This lets huge volumes of data travel with very low loss. FTTH = Fibre To The Home.

Tamil Nadu link: BharatNet in Tamil Nadu is implemented by TANFINET, the State's special purpose vehicle, and this pact follows the State-led model. It will bring direct fibre to more than 5 lakh rural homes and last-mile connectivity to 4,767 villages. Tamil Nadu was represented by its 'Artificial Intelligence, IT and Digital Services Department'.

11 First driverless train for Mumbai Metro Lines 4 & 4A ready – unveiled by Alstom at Sri City

Weather, States, Archaeology & Infrastructure

News

French firm Alstom unveiled, at its Sri City plant in Andhra Pradesh on 14 Oct 2026, the first of 39 driverless 'Metropolis' trains for Mumbai Metro Line 4 (Wadala – Kasarvadavali, Thane) and Line 4A (Kasarvadavali – Gaimukh). Each train has 6 cars; design – Bengaluru; propulsion system – Coimbatore; bogies – Savli (Gujarat). Design speed 90 km/h, operating speed 80 km/h. It is the first Alstom train in India with bicycle racks. It will be dispatched by end-November and reach Mumbai in December 2026; passenger service only after testing and safety certification.

Key facts

Line 4	Wadala – Ghatkopar – Thane – Kasarvadavali; 32.32 km, 30 elevated stations ('Green Line')
Line 4A	Kasarvadavali – Gaimukh (about 2.7 km, 2 stations)
Trains	39 Alstom 'Metropolis' trains; 6 cars each; driverless running via CBTC signalling
Supply chain	Design – Bengaluru; build – Sri City (AP); propulsion – Coimbatore; bogies – Savli
Speed	Design 90 km/h; operating 80 km/h
Agency	Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA); Maharashtra marks 2027 as 'Metro Year' with a 70 km new-line target

Background

- Grades of Automation (IEC 62290): GoA0 – on-sight running; GoA1 – driver plus Automatic Train Protection (ATP); GoA2 – semi-automatic (STO), driver handles doors and departure; GoA3 – driverless (DTO), an attendant on board; GoA4 – fully unattended operation (UTO), no staff on board.
- CBTC (Communication-Based Train Control) – a 'moving block' signalling system that tracks each train by continuous radio link with the control centre, allowing shorter gaps between trains; it is the basis of driverless running.
- India's first driverless metro operation: Delhi Metro Magenta Line (Janakpuri West – Botanical Garden), launched by PM Narendra Modi on 28 Dec 2020. In Mumbai, BEML supplied driverless-capable cars for Lines 2A and 7 in 2021 (they run with drivers).
- Alstom – a French rolling-stock maker; its Indian plants include Sri City (Tirupati district, AP), Savli (near Vadodara, Gujarat) and Coimbatore.

Tamil Nadu link: the propulsion system of the Mumbai trains was made in Coimbatore. For Chennai Metro Phase II too, Alstom is building 36 three-car 'Metropolis' trains at Sri City, designed to GoA4 (unattended) standard; passenger service with these trains has begun on the opened Poonamallee-side section of Corridor 4 (Poonamallee Bypass – Lighthouse).

12 'Super' El Niño heat could cause about 55,000 additional deaths in India in Oct 2026 – Mar 2027: University of Chicago's Climate Impact Lab

Weather, States, Archaeology & Infrastructure

News

According to a revised projection released on 28–29 Oct 2026 by the new 'El Niño Heat Mortality Tracker' of the University of Chicago's Climate Impact Lab (USA), India could see about 55,000 heat-related deaths above a normal year in Oct 2026 – Mar 2027, most of them in March. Nigeria (about 56,000) is first, India second. Globally, about 8.57 lakh additional deaths are projected for June 2026 – March 2027. The September report's India estimate of 15,800 rose because March was added and August–September were warmer than forecast. These are model-based estimates, not confirmed death counts.

Key facts

By	Climate Impact Lab, University of Chicago – 'El Niño Heat Mortality Tracker' (monthly estimates for about 3,700 sub-national regions)
India	Oct 2026 – Mar 2027: about 55,000 additional deaths (Sept report: 15,800, Sept–Feb)
Other countries	Nigeria ~56,000; Indonesia ~29,000; Brazil ~19,000
World	June 2026 – Mar 2027: ~857,000 (Sept projection 451,000, to Feb)
Climate context	Copernicus: Aug 2026 – warmest August on record; Sept 2026 – second-warmest September (1.63°C above pre-industrial)
El Niño	Began June 2026; expected to peak around Dec 2026

Background

- Method: it uses the link between daily temperature and all-cause mortality, adjusted for local climate, vulnerability and adaptive capacity, to estimate deaths above a historical baseline. The Lab's co-founder is economist Michael Greenstone.
- Science: body temperature is regulated by the brain's hypothalamus; the body cools by evaporation of sweat. High humidity slows evaporation and raises the risk of heatstroke. Heat hits heart and kidney patients, the elderly and outdoor workers hardest.
- Policy: South Asia's first Heat Action Plan – Ahmedabad, 2013. IMD definition: heat-wave criteria apply only once the maximum temperature reaches at least 40°C in the plains or 30°C in hilly areas. Heat wave is not among the 12 nationally notified disasters; States may declare it a 'State-specific disaster' and use up to 10% of SDRF funds.
- The Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) is part of 'Copernicus', the European Union's Earth-observation programme; ECMWF runs it on behalf of the European Commission.

Tamil Nadu link: in 2024 the Tamil Nadu government declared heat wave a 'State-specific disaster', with ₹4 lakh relief to the families of heat victims. The Climate Impact Lab's September report (Sept 2026 – Feb 2027) projected about 1,640 additional deaths in Tamil Nadu.

13 71st Karnataka Rajyotsava (1 Nov): Rajyotsava Awards for 71 achievers

State Days, Railways, Awards, Culture & Trade

News

Karnataka Rajyotsava (Kannada Rajyotsava), marking the formation of the enlarged 'Mysore State' by uniting Kannada-speaking areas on 1 Nov 1956, is celebrated for the 71st time on 1 Nov 2026 (70 years of the State). On 1 Nov 1973, under CM D. Devaraj Urs, the State was renamed 'Karnataka'. Kannada and Culture Minister Shivaraj Tangadagi announced on 30 Oct 2026 that 71 persons were chosen for the Rajyotsava Award, the State's second-highest civilian honour – including former Advocate General B.V. Acharya, A.C. Bhandary of Akhila Bharata Tulu Okkoota, Yakshagana artiste Gopala Ganiga, writer Dr Indira Hegde and politician Kagodu Thimmappa. Each gets ₹5 lakh and a 25-gram gold medal, presented on 1 Nov. CM D.K. Shivakumar congratulated them.

Key facts

Day	1 Nov – enlarged Mysore State formed in 1956; 2026 – 71st Rajyotsava
Renaming	1 Nov 1973 – Mysore State (Alteration of Name) Act; CM D. Devaraj Urs
Awards 2026	71 achievers; ₹5 lakh + 25 g gold medal; announced 30 Oct by Minister Shivaraj Tangadagi
Award rank	Rajyotsava Award – 2nd-highest civilian honour; highest is 'Karnataka Ratna' (1992)
Merged in 1956	Belgaum, Bijapur, Dharwad, North Canara (Bombay State); Raichur, Gulbarga, Bidar (Hyderabad); South Canara and Kollegal taluk (Madras State); Coorg State
CM / Governor	First CM of the enlarged State – S. Nijalingappa; first Governor – Jayachamarajendra Wadiyar; capital – Bangalore

Background

- History: Aluru Venkata Rao, called 'Karnataka Kulapurohita', pioneered the 'Karnataka Ekikarana' (unification) movement. Bellary district had already moved from Madras State to Mysore in 1953 when Andhra State was formed. Maharaja Jayachamarajendra Wadiyar of Mysore was the enlarged State's first Governor (1956–64).
- Culture: the State song 'Jaya Bharata Jananiya Tanujate' was written by Kuvempu (K.V. Puttappa) and adopted on 6 Jan 2004. 'Karnataka Ratna' was instituted in 1992 under CM S. Bangarappa; its first recipients were Kuvempu and Dr Rajkumar.
- Arts among the 2026 awardees: Yakshagana – a dance-drama of coastal Karnataka, with the northern 'Badagutittu' and southern 'Tenkutittu' styles. Tulu – a Dravidian language of coastal Karnataka and Kerala's Kasaragod area; it is not in the Eighth Schedule.

Tamil Nadu link: in the 1956 reorganisation, Kollegal taluk of Madras State's Coimbatore district was transferred to Mysore State (now in Chamarajanagar district). The Kaveri, Tamil Nadu's lifeline, rises at Talakaveri in Kodagu (Coorg), which merged with Mysore in 1956.

14 Kerala Piravi: 70 years of Kerala – CM V.D. Satheesan inaugurates 'Festival of Kerala 2026' in Thiruvananthapuram

State Days, Railways, Awards, Culture & Trade

News

On 1 Nov 1956 the Malayalam-speaking State of Kerala was formed by uniting Travancore-Cochin, the Malabar district of Madras State and the Kasaragod taluk of South Canara district. Marking 70 years, CM V.D. Satheesan inaugurates the State-level 'Festival of Kerala 2026' at Nishagandhi Auditorium, Thiruvananthapuram, on Kerala Piravi day, 1 Nov 2026. Events showcasing Kerala's arts, culture, tourism and investment potential are also planned in Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Chennai and Kolkata. Since August 2026 the State's official name is 'Keralam'.

Key facts

Formation	1 Nov 1956 – Travancore-Cochin + Malabar district + Kasaragod taluk
2026 event	70 years; 'Festival of Kerala 2026' – Nishagandhi Auditorium, Thiruvananthapuram; CM V.D. Satheesan
Travancore-Cochin	Merged 1 July 1949; Rajpramukh – Chithira Thirunal Balarama Varma; capital Thiruvananthapuram
First government	5 Apr 1957 – Communist government under E.M.S. Namboodiripad; dismissed under Article 356 in 1959
Name	Kerala (Alteration of Name) Act 2026 – passed by Parliament in Aug 2026; official name 'Keralam'
To Madras State	Thovalai, Agastheeswaram, Kalkulam, Vilavancode taluks (Kanyakumari district) and part of Shenkottai taluk

Background

- History: the 'Aikya Keralam' (United Kerala) movement sought to unite Malayalam-speaking areas. In 1949 the princely states of Travancore and Cochin merged as 'Thiru-Kochi'; Malabar was a district of Madras Presidency (later Madras State). The Laccadive and Minicoy islands were separated from Malabar and became a Union Territory in 1956.
- Polity: the 1957 government led by E.M.S. Namboodiripad was one of the world's first elected Communist governments; land reforms and the Education Bill were key. It was dismissed under Article 356 in July 1959.
- Culture: Malayalam got classical-language status in 2013. State animal – elephant; State bird – Great Hornbill; State flower – golden shower (kanikkonna).

Tamil Nadu link: in 1956 the Tamil-speaking Thovalai, Agastheeswaram, Kalkulam and Vilavancode taluks of Travancore-Cochin joined Madras State as Kanyakumari district; the Tamil area of Shenkottai taluk (Quilon district) joined Tirunelveli district (now in Tenkasi district, formed 2019). In turn, Madras State's Malabar district went to Kerala. Festival of Kerala 2026 events are also planned in Chennai.

15 India's first indigenous bullet train 'B-28' – co-designed by ICF and BEML; first body frame under testing: Ashwini Vaishnaw

State Days, Railways, Awards, Culture & Trade

News

In his blog 'How India is building its first bullet train' (24–25 Oct 2026), Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said the first body frame of the indigenous 'B-28' train – being designed for 280 km/h jointly by the Integral Coach Factory (ICF), Chennai, and BEML – is complete and under structural testing; track trials are expected by mid-2027. The next step is the 350 km/h 'B-35'. The Mumbai–Ahmedabad high-speed corridor (508 km) is designed for 350 km/h; the first service (Surat–Vapi) is planned for the last quarter of 2027. Note: no official statement says the design is fully 'ready' – the first frame is at the testing stage.

Key facts

Train	'B-28' – design speed 280 km/h; co-designed by ICF + BEML; BEML's 'Aditya' plant, Bengaluru (opened Apr 2026)
Contract	Oct 2024 – ICF awarded BEML ₹866.87 crore for 2 high-speed trainsets (₹27.86 crore per car)
Status	First body frame ready – structural testing; track trials mid-2027; next, the 350 km/h 'B-35'
MAHSR corridor	Mumbai – Ahmedabad, 508 km; 12 stations (only BKC underground); about 465 km on viaduct; 2×25 kV electrification; Japanese J-slab track
Implementer	National High Speed Rail Corporation Ltd (NHSRCL); Japan's Shinkansen technology, JICA loan
New corridors	Budget 2026–27: 7 high-speed corridors (about 4,000 km) – incl. Chennai–Bengaluru, Hyderabad–Chennai

Background

- Technology: high-speed trains run on standard gauge (1,435 mm), while Indian Railways' usual track is broad gauge (1,676 mm). Since a straight, dedicated alignment is needed, most of the line is on viaduct, built by the Full Span Launching Method that lifts 40 m, 970-tonne girders in one go.
- History: the world's first high-speed 'bullet' train – Japan's Tokaido Shinkansen, Tokyo – Osaka, 1 Oct 1964 (ahead of the Tokyo Olympics). The India–Japan MAHSR agreement was signed in Dec 2015; foundation stone 14 Sept 2017, Ahmedabad.
- BEML (Bharat Earth Movers Ltd) – a PSU under the Ministry of Defence, headquartered in Bengaluru; it makes metro and rail coaches, mining-construction equipment and defence vehicles.

Tamil Nadu link: the Integral Coach Factory (ICF), Perambur, Chennai, co-designs the B-28 and awarded BEML its contract. Of the 7 high-speed corridors announced in Budget 2026–27, two – Chennai–Bengaluru and Hyderabad–Chennai – touch Tamil Nadu.

16 Kendriya Grihmantri Dakshata Padak 2026 announced for 490 police and security personnel

State Days, Railways, Awards, Culture & Trade

News

On 31 Oct 2026 (Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's birth anniversary – National Unity Day) the Union Ministry of Home Affairs announced the 2026 list of the 'Kendriya Grihmantri Dakshata Padak' (Union Home Minister's Medal for Excellence). 490 personnel of States, Union Territories, Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) and Central Police Organisations (CPOs) were chosen: special operations – 358, investigation – 123, forensic science – 9. In special operations, the CRPF (114), the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC – 56), Punjab Police (37) and Delhi Police (36) led.

Key facts

Medal	Kendriya Grihmantri Dakshata Padak ('Dakshata' = skill / excellence)
Instituted	MHA notification, 1 Feb 2024
Announced	Every 31 Oct (Patel's birth anniversary)
2026 list	490 – special operations 358, investigation 123, forensic science 9
Leaders	CRPF 114; CBIC 56; Punjab 37; Delhi 36; Jharkhand 28 (special operations)
Earlier years	2024 – 463; 2025 – 1,466

Background

- Purpose: to recognise excellent work in special operations, investigation, intelligence and forensic science, promote high professional standards and boost morale. Police, security and intelligence organisations, the NSG, Assam Rifles and forensic scientists are eligible.
- Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) – seven under the MHA: Assam Rifles, BSF, CISF, CRPF, ITBP, NSG and SSB. The Railway Protection Force (RPF) is under the Ministry of Railways (RPF Act 1957) and is not a CAPF.
- CRPF history: raised on 27 July 1939 at Neemuch (Madhya Pradesh) as the 'Crown Representative's Police'; renamed the Central Reserve Police Force by the CRPF Act of 28 Dec 1949. It is India's largest CAPF.
- CBIC – under the Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance; handles customs, Central GST and anti-smuggling (renamed from CBEC in 2018). Forensics: the National Forensic Sciences University (NFSU) is at Gandhinagar (Gujarat), under the NFSU Act 2020.

Tamil Nadu link: Tamil Nadu is not in the published State-wise list for special operations. As per the published list, 3 personnel from Tamil Nadu figure – ASPs Madhu Kumari and V. Satish Kumar (investigation) and Deputy Director Rajshree Raghunath (forensic science). The Tamil Nadu Police was formally set up under the Madras District Police Act, 1859; Tamil Nadu's first All Women Police Station opened at Thousand Lights, Chennai, in 1992 (India's first was at Kozhikode in 1973).

17 President Murmu hoists the 'Dharma Dhwaja' at Ramkund, Nashik, to open the Nashik–Trimbakeshwar Simhastha Kumbh (31 Oct)

State Days, Railways, Awards, Culture & Trade

News

On Saturday, 31 Oct 2026, President Droupadi Murmu hoisted the 'Dharma Dhwaja' (sacred flag) on a 51-ft panchadhatu (five-metal) flagpole at Ramkund on the Godavari in Nashik, formally opening the Nashik–Trimbakeshwar Simhastha Kumbh Mela. Reports said it was the first time a woman hoisted the Kumbh flag. The same day, Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis hoisted the flag at Kushavarta Tirtha in Trimbakeshwar. Mahants of the 13 akhadas took part.

Key facts

Opening	31 Oct 2026 – Ramkund, Nashik (President); Kushavarta Tirtha, Trimbakeshwar (CM Fadnavis)
Flag	51-ft five-metal pole; flag shows lion, Sun, Moon and the Amrit Kalash
River	Godavari – rises at Brahmagiri near Trimbakeshwar
Amrit Snans	2 Aug 2027, 31 Aug 2027; last – 11 Sep (Nashik), 12 Sep 2027 (Trimbakeshwar)
Close	24 July 2028 – flag lowered (about 1 year 9 months)
UNESCO	Kumbh Mela – Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, 2017

Background

- Four Kumbh sites: Haridwar (Ganga), Prayagraj (Triveni Sangam of Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati), Ujjain (Shipra) and Nashik–Trimbakeshwar (Godavari). Each hosts it about once in 12 years; tradition holds that drops of amrit fell there during the Samudra Manthan.
- Why 'Simhastha': the Nashik and Ujjain Kumbhs are held when Jupiter (Brihaspati) is in Simha (Leo), hence the name 'Simhastha'.
- Trimbakeshwar is one of the 12 Jyotirlingas, in Nashik district, Maharashtra. Nashik's Panchavati is linked to the Ramayana; Ramkund is the sacred bathing ghat there.
- UNESCO: the Kumbh Mela was inscribed on the Representative List at the 12th session of the Intangible Heritage Committee at Jeju, South Korea, in 2017. The latest Maha Kumbh was at Prayagraj in 2025.

Tamil Nadu link: the Mahamaham, called the 'Kumbh of the South', is held once in 12 years at the Mahamaham tank (about 6.2 acres) in Kumbakonam, Thanjavur district – on Masi Magham when Jupiter is in Leo. Last held on 22 Feb 2016; next in 2028. 'Masi Magham' is held every year.

18 Guwahati airport approved as an export point for agarwood chips and oil – Assam holds 81% of India's agarwood resources

State Days, Railways, Awards, Culture & Trade

News

On 30 Oct 2026, the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), by Notification No. 46/2026-DGFT, allowed exports of agarwood oil, agarwood chips and allied products through Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport, Guwahati (amending Chapter 12, Schedule 2 of the ITC (HS) Export Policy 2022). Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal said on 31 Oct that this met Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma's request. Assam holds about 81% of India's agarwood resources.

Key facts

Notification	No. 46/2026-DGFT, 30 Oct 2026
New export point	Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport, Guwahati
Already allowed	Mumbai, Nhava Sheva, Kolkata, Cochin, Delhi, Chennai, Tuticorin, Amritsar, Calicut, Thiruvananthapuram, Kandla, Mundra
Condition	CITES export permit required for CITES-listed species
Assam	About 81% of national resource; about 12 crore trees; 50,000+ farmers and workers
Recent exports	May 2026 – first legal chips consignment to Saudi Arabia and UAE; Oct 2026 – 123 kg (Golaghat) to Dubai

Background

- Agarwood (agar / oud): a fragrant wood formed when the heartwood of Aquilaria trees is infected by a fungus (mould) and the tree secretes resin, turning it dark and dense. In natural forests only about 7 in 100 trees form it. Used in incense, perfume (oud oil) and medicine.
- Conservation: the main species, Aquilaria malaccensis (family Thymelaeaceae), is IUCN 'Critically Endangered'; in CITES Appendix II since 1995; all Aquilaria species were added to Appendix II in 2004. CITES is the 1973 Washington convention.
- Assam: ancient Kamarupa is known for 'Sanchipat' manuscripts written on agarwood bark. Golaghat district's agarwood products are under 'One District One Product' (ODOP). Farmers in Manipur, Nagaland and Tripura also benefit.
- Airport name: Gopinath Bordoloi (1890–1950) – Assam's first Chief Minister after Independence (Premier from 1946); helped keep Assam from going to East Pakistan at Partition; Bharat Ratna 1999 (posthumous).

Tamil Nadu link: Chennai and Tuticorin in Tamil Nadu are among the 12 points already allowed for agarwood oil and chips exports. In Tamil, agarwood is called 'agil' ('agirpugai' – agarwood smoke).

19 PI Industries unveils Pioxaniliprole, India's first indigenously discovered insecticide molecule; DGFT sets up sub-committee to improve use of RELIEF export scheme

Science, Sports, Defence & International

News

(1) PI Industries unveiled the insecticide molecule 'Pioxaniliprole' on 29 Oct 2026 (New Delhi); its farmer product is 'Pioxazon' (20% SC). The Central Insecticides Board & Registration Committee (CIB&RC) registered it at its 476th meeting (Sep 2026), recognising it as 'the first insecticide active ingredient discovered in India'. (2) On 30 Oct 2026 (Trade Notice 33/2026-27) the DGFT set up a six-member sub-committee to improve fund use and uptake of the RELIEF scheme for exporters hit by West Asian shipping disruptions.

Key facts

Molecule	Pioxaniliprole – PI Industries; over a decade of research; product 'Pioxazon' (20% SC)
Registration	CIB&RC 476th meeting (Sept 2026) – Section 9(3), Insecticides Act 1968
Target pests	Rice yellow stem borer; Bengal gram pod borer; fall armyworm and others
RELIEF	Resilience & Logistics Intervention for Export Facilitation – ₹497 crore; Notification 65/2025-26, 19 Mar 2026
Sub-committee	Co-chaired by two Addl DGFTs (Logistics and EPM divisions); members from Dept of Commerce, ECGC, Dept of Financial Services
Extension	RELIEF Component II (95% risk cover) – till 31 Mar 2027 (Notification 37/2026-27, 30 Sep 2026)

Background

- Pesticide regulation: registration, manufacture and sale of pesticides in India come under the Insecticides Act 1968; the registering body is the CIB&RC (Agriculture Ministry, Faridabad). India had mostly made molecules discovered abroad; Pioxaniliprole was discovered at home and tested in multi-location field trials with State Agricultural Universities.
- Fall armyworm (Spodoptera frugiperda): an invasive pest from the Americas, first reported in India in Karnataka in 2018; it attacks maize most. The yellow stem borer (Scirpophaga incertulas) is a major pest of rice.
- RELIEF: a time-bound scheme for exporters hit by the West Asia crisis (Strait of Hormuz disruption), run through ECGC. Three components: (I) retrospective protection – up to 100% extra risk cover for shipments of 14 Feb–15 Mar 2026; (II) prospective cover – up to 95%; (III) reimbursement of up to 50% of extra freight and insurance costs (max ₹50 lakh) for MSMEs not insured with ECGC.
- Export Promotion Mission (EPM): approved by the Union Cabinet in Nov 2025; ₹25,060 crore for 2025–26 to 2030–31; sub-schemes 'Niryat Protsahan' (financial support) and 'Niryat Disha' (non-financial support). ECGC – 1957, headquartered in Mumbai, under the Commerce Ministry.

Tamil Nadu link: no direct Tamil Nadu link was reported for either news point. Rice is Tamil Nadu's main crop, so yellow stem borer control matters to the State's farmers; Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU) was set up at Coimbatore in 1971. For exports, Chennai and Tuticorin (V.O. Chidambaranar) ports are the State's main gateways.

20 National Science Seminar 2026: Soumyashree Thanapati of Odisha Adarsha Vidyalaya, Jharmunda (Odisha) wins first place

Science, Sports, Defence & International

News

In the 'National Science Seminar 2026' held by the National Council of Science Museums (NCSM – Union Ministry of Culture) at the National Science Centre, New Delhi, Soumyashree Thanapati, a Class X student of Odisha Adarsha Vidyalaya (OAV), Jharmunda, Loisingha block, Balangir district, Odisha, won first place (reported 31 Oct 2026). Theme: 'Indian Energy Basket 2047: Prospects and Challenges'. It is the first win by an Odisha student at this seminar in 13 years.

Key facts

Winner	Soumyashree Thanapati – Class X, OAV Jharmunda, Balangir district, Odisha
Organiser	NCSM (Ministry of Culture) – National Science Centre, New Delhi
Theme	Indian Energy Basket 2047: Prospects and Challenges
Eligibility	Classes VIII–X; school → block → district → State → national
National round	Only one winner from each State/UT
Significance	Odisha's first win in 13 years

Background

- NCSM: an autonomous society registered on 4 April 1978; HQ Kolkata; under the Union Ministry of Culture. Its first science museum was the Birla Industrial & Technological Museum (BITM), Kolkata (2 May 1959, originally under CSIR). The National Science Centre, New Delhi, opened on 9 January 1992.
- The Visvesvaraya Industrial & Technological Museum (VITM), Bengaluru, heads NCSM's South zone; it is named after Sir M. Visvesvaraya, whose birthday (15 Sept) is celebrated as 'Engineers' Day' in India; he received the Bharat Ratna in 1955.
- Aim of the seminar: to build a spirit of scientific enquiry and analytical thinking in young students. Held every year with State Education and S&T departments. The 2024 theme was 'Artificial Intelligence: Potentials & Concerns' (Nehru Science Centre, Mumbai, 26 Nov 2024).
- Economy/Science: an 'energy basket' is a country's mix of energy sources – coal, oil, natural gas, nuclear, hydro, solar, wind. 2047 marks the centenary of India's independence ('Viksit Bharat @2047'). India's targets: 500 GW non-fossil capacity by 2030; net zero by 2070 (COP26, Glasgow).

Tamil Nadu link: the only NCSM-owned unit in Tamil Nadu is the District Science Centre, Tirunelveli (functioning since 1987, near the Thamirabarani river), under VITM Bengaluru's South zone. Tamil Nadu students also reach this seminar through district and State rounds.

21 Sports Ministry nominates Rahul Dravid and Saina Nehwal to the Organising Committee of the 2030 Ahmedabad Commonwealth Games

Science, Sports, Defence & International

News

The Union Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports has nominated cricketer Rahul Dravid and shuttler Saina Nehwal as 'athlete representatives' on the Organising Committee (OC) of the 2030 Commonwealth Games in Ahmedabad (PTI, 30 Oct 2026). The OC is yet to be formed; it will have 12–15 members (chairman, vice-chairman, CEO and Commonwealth Sport representatives) and is expected to be headed by Gujarat Deputy CM Harsh Sanghavi.

Key facts

Event	2030 Commonwealth Games – Ahmedabad (Gujarat); centenary edition; expected in Oct 2030
Nomination	Rahul Dravid, Saina Nehwal – athlete representatives; Union Sports Ministry
OC structure	12–15 members; to be a not-for-profit company – Melbourne 2006 model
Other names	Harsh Sanghavi (expected chair); Lt Gen Harpal Singh (CGA India); IOA also represented
Finance	Operating cost ₹3,000–5,000 crore (est.); Ministry has committed ₹2,000 crore grant-in-aid
Sports	India plans 15–17 disciplines; Glasgow 2026 had only 10

Background

- History: the first Games were held in 1930 at Hamilton, Canada, as the 'British Empire Games' – so 2030 is the centenary edition. Ahmedabad was confirmed as host at the Commonwealth Sport General Assembly in Glasgow on 26 Nov 2025. India earlier hosted the 2010 Games in Delhi.
- Governance: the Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF) was renamed 'Commonwealth Sport' in March 2025; HQ London. The Delhi 2010 OC (headed by Suresh Kalmadi) was registered as a society and faced corruption allegations; the CAG later recommended the company model.
- People: Saina Nehwal (born in Hisar, Haryana) – bronze at London 2012, India's first Olympic medal in badminton. Rahul Dravid – known as 'The Wall'; India won the 2024 ICC T20 World Cup (Barbados, beating South Africa) with him as head coach.

Tamil Nadu link: Chennai (then Madras) hosted the 1995 South Asian Federation (SAF) Games. At the 2022 Birmingham Commonwealth Games, Chennai's table-tennis star Achanta Sharath Kamal won the men's singles gold.

22 First BIMSTEC Maritime Security Exercise at Sri Vijaya Puram (Andamans), 30 Oct – 3 Nov 2026; all 7 member nations take part

Science, Sports, Defence & International

News

India is hosting the first 'BIMSTEC Maritime Security Exercise' from 30 Oct to 3 Nov 2026 at Sri Vijaya Puram (formerly Port Blair), Andaman & Nicobar Islands, through the Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC). Navies and maritime agencies of all 7 members – Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand – take part. Theme: 'Translating Vision to Action – Shared Seas, Shared Security and Shared Prosperity'. It has a harbour phase and a sea phase.

Key facts

Name	Inaugural BIMSTEC Maritime Security Exercise – hosted by India
Dates / venue	30 Oct – 3 Nov 2026; Sri Vijaya Puram, Andaman & Nicobar
Conducted by	Andaman & Nicobar Command (ANC) – India's first integrated tri-service command (2001)
Theme	Translating Vision to Action – Shared Seas, Shared Security and Shared Prosperity
Phases	Harbour phase (professional exchanges, joint planning); sea phase
Aims	Interoperability, maritime domain awareness (MDA), coordination, sharing best practices

Background

- BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation): 1997 Bangkok Declaration; Secretariat Dhaka; Charter in force from 20 May 2024. 7 members – 5 South Asian + 2 South-East Asian (Myanmar, Thailand). Nepal and Bhutan are landlocked.
- The exercise builds on the outcomes of the 6th BIMSTEC Summit (Bangkok, April 2025), themed 'BIMSTEC: Prosperous, Resilient and Open' ('PRO BIMSTEC'), which adopted the 'Bangkok Vision 2030'.
- Defence: the Andaman & Nicobar Command, set up in 2001, is India's first integrated tri-service command; its roles include maritime surveillance, HADR and search-and-rescue. Port Blair was renamed 'Sri Vijaya Puram' in Sept 2024.
- Geography: the Bay of Bengal is a key sea lane linking South and South-East Asia – vital for trade, connectivity and energy security. The 'Ten Degree Channel' separates the Andaman group from the Nicobar group; India's only active volcano is on Barren Island in the Andaman Sea; Narcondam Island is a dormant volcano.

Tamil Nadu link: Tamil Nadu's east coast on the Bay of Bengal is called the 'Coromandel Coast' – a name derived from 'Cholamandalam'. In Chola times, sea trade and naval expeditions crossed the Bay of Bengal from this coast to South-East Asia.

23 World Wrestling Championships, Astana: Manisha Bhanwala (Haryana) wins 59 kg gold – first Indian woman world champion

Science, Sports, Defence & International

News

At the 2026 World Wrestling Championships at Barys Arena, Astana, Kazakhstan (24 Oct – 1 Nov), Manisha Bhanwala (29) of Haryana won the women's freestyle 59 kg final on 30 Oct 2026, beating Abigail Nette (USA) 8–6 after trailing early. She is the first Indian woman to become senior world wrestling champion; it is India's second world title – the first was Sushil Kumar's (2010). Neelam Sirohi (50 kg) and Kajal Dhochak (76 kg) won silver at the same event.

Key facts

Winner	Manisha Bhanwala – born 10 Feb 1997, Haryana
Category / result	Women's freestyle 59 kg; beat Abigail Nette (USA) 8–6 in the final; 30 Oct 2026
Venue / dates	Barys Arena, Astana (Kazakhstan); 24 Oct – 1 Nov 2026; originally Manama (Bahrain) – moved due to geopolitical situation
History	First Indian woman world champion; India's only earlier world champion – Sushil Kumar (2010, Moscow, 66 kg)
Other Indian medals	Neelam Sirohi (50 kg) – silver; Kajal Dhochak (76 kg) – silver; Tanu Sharma (72 kg) – bronze
Earlier	2025 Asian Championships (Amman) – 62 kg gold

Background

- Indian women at the World Championships (notable medals): first medal – Alka Tomar (2006, Guangzhou, 59 kg bronze); Geeta and Babita Phogat (2012, bronze); Vinesh Phogat (2019, 2022 bronze); Anshu Malik (2021, Oslo – silver; first Indian woman in a world final); Antim Panghal (2023 bronze). In 2026 Manisha won the first gold.
- Men: Sushil Kumar won 66 kg freestyle gold at Moscow 2010 – India's only world champion until 2026. The sport is governed by United World Wrestling (UWW; HQ Switzerland). Three styles – men's freestyle, Greco-Roman and women's freestyle; 10 weight classes each.
- Geography: Kazakhstan is the world's largest landlocked country and borders the Caspian Sea, the world's largest inland water body, in the west; capital Astana (renamed 'Nur-Sultan' in 2019, back to Astana in 2022). Sputnik-1 (1957) and Yuri Gagarin (1961) were launched from its Baikonur Cosmodrome, now leased by Russia.

Tamil Nadu link: Silambam, Tamil Nadu's traditional martial art, is played with a long bamboo staff. Like wrestling, it builds strength and self-defence skill, and is still practised at village festivals and training schools across Tamil Nadu.

24 INS Tarkash reaches Port Louis, Mauritius – to take part in the 192nd 'Aapravasi Diwas' on 2 November

Science, Sports, Defence & International

News

Indian Navy stealth frigate INS Tarkash reached Port Louis, capital of Mauritius, on 30 Oct 2026 during its operational deployment to the southern Indian Ocean Region. It will take part in the 192nd 'Aapravasi Diwas' on 2 Nov (marking the 1834 arrival of Indian indentured labourers). Plans include joint training with the Mauritius Coast Guard, cultural exchanges and community outreach.

Key facts

Ship	INS Tarkash (F50) – stealth frigate; built at Yantar shipyard, Kaliningrad (Russia); commissioned Nov 2012
Arrival	30 Oct 2026, Port Louis – operational deployment to southern IOR
Occasion	192nd Aapravasi Diwas – 2 Nov 2026 (public holiday in Mauritius)
Commemorates	2 Nov 1834 – 36 Indian indentured labourers arrived on the ship 'Atlas'
Activities	Joint Coast Guard training, cultural exchanges, community outreach
Aapravasi Ghat	Port Louis immigration depot (from 1849); almost half a million passed through; UNESCO World Heritage Site – 2006

Background

- History: after the British Empire abolished slavery in most colonies in 1834, Indians were taken to sugar plantations under the 'indenture' ('girmit') system, with Mauritius as its first major site. 'Aapravasi' means 'immigrant' in Hindi. People of Indian descent are now the majority in Mauritius.
- Aapravasi Ghat: the Port Louis immigration depot used from 1849 to the 1920s – the British government's first site for processing indentured labour; almost half a million people passed through it. It became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2006.
- India–Mauritius: the airstrip and jetty built with Indian help on Agaléga island were inaugurated by both Prime Ministers on 29 Feb 2024. PM Modi was chief guest at Mauritius's National Day (12 March) in 2025, where the 'MAHASAGAR' vision was announced. India's 'Pravasi Bharatiya Divas' is on 9 January – the day Gandhi returned from South Africa in 1915.
- Defence: INS Tarkash is a Talwar-class stealth frigate carrying BrahMos supersonic missiles; it can operate one helicopter. Earlier in Oct 2026 it took part in the IBSAMAR IX exercise at Simon's Town, South Africa.

Tamil Nadu link: Tamils formed a significant part of the indentured workers who went to Mauritius, and a strong Tamil community lives there today. The Tamil festival 'Thaipoosam Cavadee' is a public holiday in Mauritius; 2 November, 'Arrival of Indentured Labourers', is also a public holiday.

25 Mass protests across several European countries against rising living costs and poor public services

Science, Sports, Defence & International

News

In October 2026 large protests broke out in several European countries against rising living costs, rents, low wages and under-funded education and public services, peaking over the weekend of 17–18 October. In France more than 550,000 people marched nationwide on 17 Oct (Interior Ministry count) against the 2027 budget's €54 billion package of spending cuts and tax measures, a freeze on civil-servant pay and fuel prices; violence hit several cities and Limoges town hall was burnt; President Macron announced talks with students, teachers and unions. Portugal (Lisbon, Porto) – housing crisis; Italy (Milan, Turin, Bologna) – clashes, and on 20 Oct the Meloni government approved a decree with tougher penalties; Belgium (Brussels, Liège) – education costs; Albania (Tirana) – student-led protests since 13 Oct demanding PM Edi Rama's resignation; Greece (Athens, 21 Oct) – about 10,000 students and teachers marched for school funding.

Key facts

Peak days	Weekend of 17–18 Oct 2026; France's main protest day was Sat 17 Oct
France	550,000+ marchers (17 Oct); about 1,800 arrests that day (Interior Minister) – about 2,400 over the unrest (media reports); about 1,500 shops damaged (retail federation)
Italy	20 Oct decree – up to 5 years' jail for violent group protest; 500 troops in Milan till end-2026
Portugal	Lisbon, Porto protest camps cleared on 20 Oct; 55 arrested
Albania	Tirana – student protests from 13 Oct over education costs and corruption; earlier protests against a luxury resort plan on the southern coast
Prices	EU food prices up 34% between Aug 2021 and Aug 2026 (Eurostat)

Background

- This is not one coordinated Europe-wide movement; each country has its own triggers (Euronews). Common threads: rising food, housing and energy costs, youth job anxiety and under-funded education. France's 'Yellow Vest' (Gilets jaunes) movement began in 2018 against a fuel-tax rise; its activists joined this time too.
- European Union (EU): formally created on 1 Nov 1993 when the Maastricht Treaty (signed 7 Feb 1992) came into force; 27 member States; main institutions in Brussels. European Central Bank (ECB) – 1998, headquartered in Frankfurt (Germany); sets monetary policy for the euro area. The EU statistical office, Eurostat, is in Luxembourg.
- Albania is not an EU member – a candidate country since 2014; currency 'lek'. PM Rama says joining the EU by 2030 is the goal. France, Italy, Belgium, Portugal and Greece are members of both the EU and the euro area.
- Economy: inflation caused by rising input costs (fuel, wages, raw materials) is 'cost-push inflation'; that caused by excess demand is 'demand-pull inflation'. Even when inflation slows, the price level stays high, so household purchasing power falls. In India the Consumer Price Index (CPI) is released by the National Statistics Office (NSO, MoSPI).

Tamil Nadu link: the Public Distribution System (PDS) is a key shield against rising prices. Even after the Centre introduced the 'Targeted PDS' (TPDS) in 1997, Tamil Nadu has continued a 'universal PDS' covering all ration-card holders; since 1 June 2011 free rice is given to all rice-card holders.

26 India–Bangladesh Ganga Waters Treaty (1996, Farakka) expires on 12 Dec 2026 – Bangladesh seeks a new pact

Science, Sports, Defence & International

News

The 30-year 'Ganga Waters Treaty', signed by India and Bangladesh on 12 Dec 1996 to share the Ganga's dry-season flow at the Farakka Barrage, expires on 12 Dec 2026. On 8 Oct 2026 Bangladesh Water Resources Minister Shahiduddin Chowdhury Anee said Dhaka wants a new treaty before expiry, with a 'guarantee clause' (assured minimum share) like the one in the 1977 agreement. Bangladesh sent its request for talks on 8 June 2026. MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal has said all river talks take place within the Joint Rivers Commission (JRC) and that technical-level discussions are under way. Bihar's ruling JD(U) and Deputy CM (Aug 2026) oppose renewal in its present form, blaming the Farakka Barrage for floods and siltation.

Key facts

Treaty	12 Dec 1996 – PMs H.D. Deve Gowda (India) and Sheikh Hasina (Bangladesh); 30 years
Lean season	1 Jan – 31 May; 10-day periods; based on 1949–88 flow data
Formula	Below 70,000 cusecs – equal shares; above 75,000 – India 40,000, rest to Bangladesh; 35,000 cusecs guaranteed alternately 11 Mar – 10 May
Farakka	Murshidabad district, West Bengal; operational 1975; diverts water into the Hooghly for Kolkata port
Rivers	The two countries share 54 rivers; only the Ganga has a long-term treaty
Bangladesh	PM Tarique Rahman (since Feb 2026)

Background

- History: a 5-year agreement on Farakka water was signed on 5 Nov 1977 (Ziaur Rahman era in Bangladesh); it had a 'guarantee clause' that Bangladesh's share would not fall below 80% of the schedule in low flow; a 1982 MoU removed it. The 1996 treaty has no guarantee or arbitration clause – only immediate consultations if flow falls below 50,000 cusecs (Article II(iii)).
- Geography: the Ganga rises as the Bhagirathi at the Gangotri glacier (Gaumukh), Uttarakhand, and joins the Alaknanda at Devprayag. Below Farakka it splits – one branch flows as the Bhagirathi–Hooghly in West Bengal; the main stream enters Bangladesh as the 'Padma', joins the Jamuna (Brahmaputra) near Goalundo and then the Meghna before reaching the Bay of Bengal.
- Constitution: Article 253 empowers Parliament to make laws on any subject, including State List subjects, to implement international treaties. Water – State List Entry 17; regulation of inter-State rivers – Union List Entry 56. Article 51(c) – respect for treaty obligations (Directive Principle). Water disputes – Article 262 and the Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956.
- Relations: the India–Bangladesh Joint Rivers Commission (JRC) was set up in 1972. The Teesta water-sharing pact has been pending since 2011. Sheikh Hasina was ousted in August 2024 and came to

India; after an interim government led by Muhammad Yunus, Tarique Rahman became PM in Feb 2026.

Tamil Nadu link: Tamil Nadu's key inter-State river issue is the Cauvery. The Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal (1990) gave its final award on 5 Feb 2007; under the Supreme Court verdict of 16 Feb 2018, Karnataka must release 177.25 TMC ft a year to Tamil Nadu, measured at Biligundlu; the Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA) and Cauvery Water Regulation Committee (CWRC) were set up in 2018 to implement it.

27 Russia test-fires 'Bulava' intercontinental missile from a submerged submarine in the Sea of Okhotsk

Science, Sports, Defence & International

News

Russia's Defence Ministry announced on 28 Oct 2026 that the Pacific Fleet's Borei-A (Project 955A) nuclear-powered ballistic-missile submarine K-553 'Generalissimus Suvorov' fired a 'Bulava' intercontinental missile from a submerged position in the Sea of Okhotsk. The warheads reached the 'Chizha' test range in Arkhangelsk Region (Arctic) at the expected time. The ministry called it part of the routine 'combat training plan'. In 2022 the same submarine fired from the White Sea to the 'Kura' range in Kamchatka; this time the direction was reversed – from the Far East to the north of European Russia.

Key facts

Missile	Bulava (RSM-56 / R-30) – three-stage solid-fuel SLBM; carries multiple independently targetable warheads (MIRV)
Range	About 8,300 km (CSIS estimate)
Developer	Moscow Institute of Thermal Technology (also made Topol-M, Yars); first launch 2005; formally in service May 2024
Submarine	K-553 Generalissimus Suvorov – Sevmash yard (Severodvinsk); commissioned 29 Dec 2022; based at Vilyuchinsk, Kamchatka (since Oct 2023)
Load	Each Borei-class submarine carries 16 Bulava missiles
Path	Sea of Okhotsk → Chizha test range, Arkhangelsk Region

Background

- Nuclear triad: the ability to deliver nuclear weapons from land (missiles), air (bombers) and sea (submarine missiles). A submerged SSBN is the most survivable leg, giving 'second-strike' capability even after an enemy first strike. SSBN – nuclear-powered ballistic-missile submarine; SSN – nuclear-powered attack submarine; SSK – diesel-electric submarine.
- India: SSBNs are built at the Ship Building Centre (SBC), Visakhapatnam, under the Advanced Technology Vessel (ATV) programme. INS Arihant – launched July 2009, commissioned 2016; its first deterrence patrol in Nov 2018 completed India's nuclear triad. INS Arighaat – Aug 2024; the third SSBN, INS Aridhaman – April 2026.
- Indian submarine-launched missiles (DRDO): K-15 'Sagarika' (about 750 km), K-4 (about 3,500 km; tested from INS Arighaat in Nov 2024); the longer-range K-5 is under development. Agni-V is a land-based intercontinental missile.

- Geography: the Sea of Okhotsk is a marginal sea of the Pacific, enclosed by the Kamchatka peninsula, the Kuril Islands, Sakhalin and Japan's Hokkaido. The White Sea is an inlet of the Barents Sea; Arkhangelsk and Severodvinsk lie on it.

Tamil Nadu link: the land-based prototype of the pressurised water reactor (PWR) that powers INS Arihant is at Kalpakkam, Chengalpattu district. The Navy's Very Low Frequency (VLF) station 'INS Kattabomman', which communicates with submerged submarines, is at Vijayanarayanam, Tirunelveli district.

28 Google's Project Suncatcher satellite sends back its first AI response from space

Science, Sports, Defence & International

News

Google senior director Travis Beals announced on 30 Oct 2026 that the Project Suncatcher prototype satellite – launched on 1 Oct 2026 on SpaceX's 'Transporter-18' rideshare – has sent back its first AI response from orbit. To a prompt uplinked during a ground-station pass, the open 'Gemma 4' AI model running on a data-centre-class Google TPU aboard the satellite replied with a haiku ('Blue marble below / Data streams in silent grace / Starlight feeds my core'), received as the satellite flew over Svalbard, Norway. The satellite was built with Planet (Planet Labs) and carries four TPUs.

Key facts

Project	Project Suncatcher – Google research moonshot for solar-powered AI compute in space (announced Nov 2025)
Launch	1 Oct 2026 – SpaceX Transporter-18 rideshare; partner: Planet (Planet Labs PBC)
Hardware	4 TPUs; due to power and heat limits only one TPU runs at a time, in short sessions; up to about 1 kW of power
AI model	Gemma 4 – Google's open-weight model family
First reply	Announced 30 Oct 2026; a haiku – received over Svalbard (Norway)
Next	Two linked satellites planned for 2027

Background

- Why space? AI data centres need huge power and cooling water. In space sunlight is nearly continuous, and Google says solar panels in a 'dawn–dusk sun-synchronous orbit' can be several times more productive than on Earth. The goal is clusters of satellites, each with dozens of TPUs, linked by lasers to form a 'space data centre'. The present prototype uses batteries in a standard (not sun-synchronous) orbit.
- Science: TPU – Tensor Processing Unit; a special chip (ASIC) designed by Google for machine learning. Sun-synchronous orbit – a near-polar orbit in which a satellite passes over each place at the same local solar time – ideal for Earth-observation satellites.
- Heat challenge: in the vacuum of space there is no air, so no convection; heat can leave only by radiation. That is why the prototype runs one TPU for only minutes at a time. The first aim is to test whether TPUs survive space radiation and thermal extremes.

Tamil Nadu link: no direct link. Related facts: Sundar Pichai, CEO of Google and Alphabet, was born in Madurai and grew up in Chennai. India's second spaceport (for SSLV) is coming up at Kulasekarapattinam, Thoothukudi district.

29 New dwarf-planet candidate '2026 ED138' found beyond Pluto – spotted in data from Chile's Vera C. Rubin Observatory

Science, Sports, Defence & International

News

An icy object beyond Pluto, '2026 ED138', was announced on 27 Oct 2026 as a new dwarf-planet candidate (NOIRLab/Rubin statement; also presented at a scientific meeting in Spokane, USA). Matthew Holman of the Center for Astrophysics | Harvard & Smithsonian (CfA) spotted it on 13 Oct using search software he built with Kevin Napier; Mario Jurić (University of Washington) confirmed further detections. The Vera C. Rubin Observatory on Cerro Pachón, Chile, recorded it 30 times on 20 nights between 4 March and 11 July 2026. Its diameter is estimated at about 600–1,500 km; it is now about 46 astronomical units (AU) from the Sun. If confirmed, it would be the sixth IAU-recognised dwarf planet.

Key facts

Designation	2026 ED138 – dwarf-planet candidate (not yet confirmed)
Discoverer	Matthew Holman (CfA, Harvard & Smithsonian); software with Kevin Napier; confirmed by Mario Jurić
Telescope	Vera C. Rubin Observatory (Simonyi Survey Telescope), Cerro Pachón, Chile; archival images – DECam on the Blanco 4-m telescope (from 2016)
Size, distance	Diameter ~600–1,500 km; ~46 AU from Sun (Pluto average ~40 AU)
Orbit	Tilted ~25° to the plane of the Solar System – a trans-Neptunian object (TNO)
Dates	Spotted 13 Oct; announced 27 Oct 2026

Background

- IAU definition (2006, Prague General Assembly): a planet must (1) orbit the Sun, (2) be nearly round under its own gravity, and (3) have cleared the neighbourhood around its orbit. A body that fails the third test and is not a satellite is a 'dwarf planet'. Pluto was thus reclassified as a dwarf planet in 2006.
- The five IAU-recognised dwarf planets: Ceres (in the asteroid belt between Mars and Jupiter), Pluto, Eris, Haumea and Makemake (beyond Neptune). Pluto was discovered in 1930 by Clyde Tombaugh; its largest moon is Charon. NASA's New Horizons made the first flyby of Pluto in July 2015.
- Kuiper Belt: a ring of icy bodies beyond Neptune's orbit, about 30–50 AU from the Sun; source of short-period comets. Beyond lie the scattered disc and, far away, the Oort Cloud (source of long-period comets). 1 AU = mean Earth–Sun distance (~150 million km).
- Sci-tech: the Rubin Observatory is a joint project of the US National Science Foundation (NSF) and Department of Energy (DOE), with the world's largest 3.2-gigapixel digital camera. Its 'Legacy Survey of Space and Time' (LSST) will image the southern sky repeatedly for 10 years. It is named after astronomer Vera Rubin, whose work gave evidence for dark matter.

Tamil Nadu link: there is no direct Tamil Nadu link to this discovery. But Tamil Nadu hosts key Indian observatories of the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) – the Kodaikanal Solar Observatory (Dindigul district, 1899) and the Vainu Bappu Observatory at Kavalur in the Javadhu Hills (Tirupattur district).

30 Over-4.1-billion-year-old Martian meteorite 'Teghaza 001' reveals Mars' ancient water history

Science, Sports, Defence & International

News

A team led by Yang Liu of NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) published a study of the Martian meteorite 'Teghaza 001' in the journal Science on 29 Oct 2026. The roughly 800-gram rock was found in the Sahara in 2022 and is named after the Teghaza salt plain in Mali. Martian subsurface water altered the rock about 4.1 billion years ago, so it formed even earlier – one of the oldest Martian meteorites known. Its oxygen isotopes, texture and chemistry point to a dynamic water cycle on early Mars. A companion study in Science Advances (June 2026), using the hydrogen–deuterium ratio, showed that Mars was already losing its early atmosphere and water to space by 4.1 billion years ago.

Key facts

Meteorite	Teghaza 001 – ~800 g; Sahara, 2022; named after Teghaza salt plain, Mali
Age	Altered by water ~4.1 billion years ago; formed earlier
Study	Science (JPL release 29 Oct 2026) – lead author Yang Liu (NASA JPL); co-authors Lee Saper (NASA Ames), François Tissot (Caltech)
Method	Uranium–lead dating of zircon (~4.11 billion years); a less precise rubidium–strontium analysis gave ~4.24 billion years
Water study	Science Advances, June 2026 – H/D ratio: early atmospheric loss
Type	Gabbro (coarse-grained igneous rock); unusually heavy oxygen isotopes

Background

- Science: deuterium ('heavy hydrogen') is a hydrogen isotope with one proton and one neutron. Lighter hydrogen escapes to space more easily, so the remaining water becomes enriched in deuterium – a tool to measure a planet's water loss. Once the magnetic field faded, the solar wind stripped the atmosphere.
- Mars: fourth planet from the Sun; called the 'Red Planet' due to iron oxide on its surface; Olympus Mons is the tallest volcano in the Solar System; two moons, Phobos and Deimos. NASA's Perseverance rover is collecting samples in Jezero crater, an ancient lake bed.
- Martian meteorites: rocks blasted off Mars by impacts that later fell on Earth; most are young 'shergottites'. Famous ones include 'Black Beauty' (NWA 7034) and ALH84001, which sparked a 1996 debate on possible life traces; ALH84001 is similar in age to Teghaza 001.
- Geography: the Sahara is the world's largest hot desert; Teghaza in northern Mali was a major rock-salt mining centre of medieval trans-Saharan trade.

Tamil Nadu link: the Programme Director of India's Mars Orbiter Mission (Mangalyaan – launched 5 Nov 2013; entered Mars orbit 24 Sep 2014) was Mylswamy Annadurai of Kodhavadi, Coimbatore district. Also, 'melanterite', a mineral that helps explain wet phases on Mars, was found at Neyveli.

31 World Cities Day (31 Oct) 2026 theme: 'Regenerating the City: Adequate Housing for All'

Important Days

News

World Cities Day was observed on 31 Oct 2026, closing UN-Habitat's 'Urban October' campaign. The 2026 theme: 'Regenerating the City: Adequate Housing for All'. The global observance is being held in Fuzhou, capital of China's Fujian province, at the Fuzhou Strait International Conference and Exhibition Center from 31 Oct to 2 Nov; the fourth cycle of the Global Award for Sustainable Development in Cities (Shanghai Award) is presented there. According to UN-Habitat, up to 3.4 billion people face some form of inadequate housing, and over 1.1 billion live in informal settlements and slums.

Key facts

Date	31 October (annual)
2026 theme	'Regenerating the City: Adequate Housing for All'
Global host	Fuzhou, Fujian province, China – 31 Oct – 2 Nov 2026
General theme	'Better City, Better Life'
Origin	UNGA resolution A/RES/68/239 (27 Dec 2013); first observed 2014, Shanghai
Urban October	From World Habitat Day (first Monday of Oct – 5 Oct in 2026) to World Cities Day (31 Oct)
Previous year	2025 – 'People-centred smart cities', Bogotá (Colombia)

Background

- UN system: UN-Habitat (UN Human Settlements Programme) was set up in 1978, headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya. Sustainable Development Goal 11 (SDG 11) – 'inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities'. The 'New Urban Agenda' was adopted at Habitat III in Quito in 2016. The general theme 'Better City, Better Life' comes from the Shanghai World Expo 2010.
- Indian schemes: the Smart Cities Mission, AMRUT (water supply, sewerage) and Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Urban (PMAY-U) were launched on 25 June 2015; nodal ministry – Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA). 100 smart cities were selected through a competition; the mission was extended to 31 March 2025.
- Constitution: the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 gave constitutional status to urban local bodies – Part IX-A (Articles 243P–243ZG), 12th Schedule (18 subjects). The 'right to adequate housing' is in Article 25 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).
- Geography: Fuzhou is the capital of Fujian province on China's south-east coast facing the Taiwan Strait, on the Min River. Shanghai (2014, 2022) and Guangzhou (2017) are other Chinese cities that have hosted the global observance.

Tamil Nadu link: as per Census 2011, Tamil Nadu's urbanisation is 48.45% – the most urbanised among the large States. Eleven Tamil Nadu cities were selected under the Smart Cities Mission: Chennai, Coimbatore, Madurai, Tiruchirappalli, Salem, Vellore, Thanjavur, Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi, Tiruppur and Erode.

32 International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists – 2 November

Important Days

News

The International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists (IDEI) is observed on 2 Nov 2026. UNESCO's 2026 global campaign theme is 'Threats Evolve. Impunity Endures.' – highlighting evolving threats (including drone strikes) in conflict and non-conflict settings. Per UNESCO, 189 journalists were killed in 2024–2025; about 67% in conflict zones; 50 were killed by drones across 6 war zones. The impunity rate rose to 86% – the first increase since UNESCO began measuring in 2012. At a global event at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris on 2 Nov, the Director-General's 2026 Report is launched.

Key facts

Date	2 November (annual; first observed 2014)
Origin	UNGA resolution A/RES/68/163 – 18 Dec 2013
Commemorates	French journalists Ghislaine Dupont and Claude Verlon, killed in Mali on 2 Nov 2013
2026 campaign	'Threats Evolve. Impunity Endures.' – UNESCO
Data	2024–25: 189 killed; ~67% in conflict zones; 50 by drones; impunity 86%
UN Plan	UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity – 2012

Background

- Constitution: press freedom is not separately mentioned in the Indian Constitution; the Supreme Court read it into Article 19(1)(a) (freedom of speech and expression) (Romesh Thappar case, 1950). Article 19(2) permits 'reasonable restrictions' on grounds such as sovereignty, security, public order, contempt of court and defamation.
- Press Council of India (PCI): set up on 4 July 1966 under the 1965 Act on the recommendation of the First Press Commission (1954, Justice G.S. Rajadhyaksha); dissolved during the Emergency (1976) and re-established under the Press Council Act, 1978. It is a statutory, quasi-judicial body; its chairperson is by convention a retired Supreme Court judge. The Press and Registration of Periodicals Act, 2023 replaced the Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867.
- International: UNESCO (1945, HQ Paris) is the UN agency promoting press freedom; it condemns and tracks every journalist killing. World Press Freedom Day is 3 May (UNESCO/Guillermo Cano Prize). The 'World Press Freedom Index' is published by Paris-based Reporters Without Borders (RSF).

Tamil Nadu link: the first newspaper of Madras was the 'Madras Courier', started by Richard Johnston on 12 Oct 1785; it was also the official outlet for government notifications. 'The Hindu' was founded in Madras in 1878; Mahakavi Bharathiyar worked at G. Subramania Iyer's 'Swadesamitran' (1882).

33 GSLV-F18 successfully launches NVS-03 navigation satellite – a boost to restoring NavIC

Science, Sports, Defence & International

News

ISRO's GSLV-F18 lifted off from the Second Launch Pad of Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota, at 11:51 pm IST on 30 October 2026 and successfully placed the NVS-03 navigation satellite in the intended Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit (GTO). It was the 20th flight of the GSLV. NVS-03, the third satellite of the next-generation NVS series, carries an indigenous atomic clock along with procured atomic clocks and adds the L1 signal to the existing L5 and S-band signals. The first orbit-raising burn was carried out on 31 October; ISRO Chairman V. Narayanan was reported as saying that NavIC now has the minimum number of satellites needed to restore its services.

Key facts

Launch	30 Oct 2026, 11:51 pm IST – Second Launch Pad, Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota (Andhra Pradesh)
Rocket	GSLV-F18 – 20th flight of GSLV; about 50 m tall, about 420 t at lift-off; 3 stages (S139 + 4 L40H strap-ons, GL40HT, cryogenic CUS15)
Satellite	NVS-03 – 3rd of the next-generation NVS series; payload about 2,250 kg
Orbit	GTO (planned 170 km × 37,023 km, inclination 20.75°); to be raised to geosynchronous orbit (GSO)
Signals	New L1 + L5 + S-band; indigenous atomic clock + procured atomic clocks
Coverage	Indian landmass and about 1,500 km beyond its boundary
NavIC status	As of July 2026 only 3 satellites (IRNSS-1B, IRNSS-1I, NVS-01) were working; at least 4 are needed for standalone positioning

Background – NavIC and GSLV

- NavIC (IRNSS – Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System): approved in 2006; first satellite IRNSS-1A launched on 1 July 2013 by PSLV-C22. Design – 7 satellites: 3 geostationary (32.5°E, 83°E, 131.5°E) + 4 inclined geosynchronous (55°E, 111.75°E).
- Atomic-clock problem: all three rubidium atomic clocks of IRNSS-1A failed in 2016. Its replacement IRNSS-1H did not reach orbit on 31 Aug 2017 because the heat shield of PSLV-C39 failed to separate.
- NVS-01: launched on 29 May 2023 by GSLV-F12 – the first NavIC satellite with an indigenous atomic clock (replaced IRNSS-1G).
- NVS-02: launched on 29 Jan 2025 by GSLV-F15 – ISRO's 100th launch from Sriharikota. Its oxidiser valves did not open, so it could not be raised to its orbit. With NVS-03, the NavIC series has 12 satellites (IRNSS-1A to 1I = 9, plus NVS-01, 02, 03).
- GSLV (Mk II): a three-stage rocket whose third stage is an indigenous cryogenic stage (liquid hydrogen + liquid oxygen); can carry about 2,250 kg to GTO. Heavier satellites go on LVM3.
- Navigation systems of the world: GPS (USA), GLONASS (Russia), Galileo (European Union), BeiDou (China) – global; NavIC (India), QZSS (Japan) – regional.

Tamil Nadu link: GSLV's cryogenic engine (CE-7.5) is tested at the ISRO Propulsion Complex (IPRC), Mahendragiri, Tirunelveli district; GSLV's second stage (GS2) and L40 strap-on stages are also integrated there. (The launch site, Sriharikota, is in Andhra Pradesh.)

34 Air Chief Marshal Ashutosh Dixit takes charge as the 29th Chief of the Air Staff (31 Oct 2026)

Science, Sports, Defence & International

News

Air Chief Marshal Ashutosh Dixit took charge as the 29th Chief of the Air Staff (CAS) of the Indian Air Force in New Delhi on 31 October 2026. He succeeded Air Chief Marshal A.P. (Amar Preet) Singh, who retired after more than four decades of service; the Union Government had announced the appointment on 6 October. Commissioned into the fighter stream in December 1986, he was serving as Vice Chief of the Air Staff (VCAS) and earlier, during Operation Sindoor, as Chief of Integrated Defence Staff (CISC). He takes over at a time when the IAF has 29 fighter squadrons against a sanctioned 42.

Key facts

New chief	Air Chief Marshal Ashutosh Dixit – 29th CAS; 31 Oct 2026, New Delhi
Predecessor	Air Chief Marshal A.P. Singh – 28th CAS (30 Sep 2024 – 31 Oct 2026)
Commissioned	Fighter stream, 6 Dec 1986; alumnus of the National Defence Academy (NDA); born 9 Dec 1966, Lucknow
Flying	Over 3,500 hours on 20+ aircraft types (Mirage-2000, MiG variants, Jaguar, Kiran, IL-78, Hawk, Tejas); Experimental Test Pilot and Qualified Flying Instructor
Earlier posts	VCAS (from July 2026); CISC (HQ Integrated Defence Staff); AOC-in-C, Central Air Command; Deputy Chief of the Air Staff (DCAS)
Awards	PVSM, AVSM, VM, VSM
Tenure	3 years or age 62, whichever is earlier; up to 31 Dec 2028

Background – Indian Air Force

- The Indian Air Force was formed on 8 October 1932 (observed as Air Force Day). The prefix 'Royal' was added in 1945 and dropped on 26 Jan 1950. Motto: 'Nabha Sparsham Deeptam' (Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 11).
- First chief after Independence: Air Marshal Sir Thomas Elmhirst; first Indian chief: Air Marshal Subroto Mukerjee (1 Apr 1954). Arjan Singh, who led the IAF in the 1965 war, is the only 'Marshal of the Indian Air Force' (five-star rank, 2002).
- The President is the Supreme Commander of the armed forces. Service chiefs are selected by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC).
- Commands: 5 operational – Western (New Delhi), Eastern (Shillong), Central (Prayagraj), Southern (Thiruvananthapuram), South Western (Gandhinagar); 2 functional – Training (Bengaluru), Maintenance (Nagpur).
- Recent chiefs: 26th R.K.S. Bhadauria (2019–21), 27th V.R. Chaudhari (2021–24), 28th A.P. Singh (2024–26), 29th Ashutosh Dixit (from 2026).
- Challenges: only 29 of the sanctioned 42 fighter squadrons; delays in Tejas Mk1A deliveries; fifth-generation AMCA and Tejas Mk2 still years away; theaterisation (integrated tri-service commands).

Tamil Nadu link: Dixit helped complete the IOC and FOC (initial and final operational clearance) work for the Tejas fighter. Both Tejas squadrons – No. 45 'Flying Daggers' (from 2018) and No. 18 'Flying

Bullets' (from 27 May 2020, with FOC Tejas) – operate from Air Force Station Sulur, near Coimbatore.

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