Smriti Mandhana named UNICEF India Celebrity Advocate

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News

Indian women's cricket captain Smriti Mandhana was named UNICEF India 'Celebrity Advocate' on 11 Oct 2026, the International Day of the Girl Child. She will champion equal chances for girls to learn, play and thrive, adolescent girls' health and girls' participation in sport. UNICEF India Representative Cynthia McCaffrey called investing in girls' rights 'a nation's smartest investment'.

Key facts

Role	UNICEF India Celebrity Advocate – 11 Oct 2026
Focus	Girls' education, health and sport; empowering adolescent girls
Mandhana	Born in Mumbai in 1996; grew up in Sangli, Maharashtra; captain in all formats since 6 Oct 2026
Honours	Arjuna Award (2019); ICC Women's Cricketer of the Year (2018, 2021)
Other UNICEF India faces	Sachin Tendulkar (Regional Ambassador), Kareena Kapoor Khan, Ayushmann Khurrana (National Ambassadors), Keerthy Suresh (Celebrity Advocate)

Background

- UNICEF: the UN Children's Fund, set up on 11 Dec 1946, headquartered in New York; it won the 1965 Nobel Peace Prize.

- India has 253 million adolescents – a fifth of its population and 21% of the world's adolescents.
- Cricket: India's women won their first ICC Women's ODI World Cup in 2025, with Mandhana in the team. She holds the fastest ODI century by an Indian woman (50 balls, 2025).

Tamil Nadu link: Chennai-born actor Keerthy Suresh is also a UNICEF India Celebrity Advocate. Chennai's M.A. Chidambaram Stadium, Chepauk (1916), is one of India's oldest cricket grounds.

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