# International Day of the Girl Child 2026 (11 October)

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## News

11 October is the International Day of the Girl Child. The 2026 theme (UN, UNICEF) is 'End child marriage and invest in girls' rights'. UNICEF says about one in five girls worldwide is married before 18, and over 12 million girls are married as children every year.

## Key facts

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| **Date** | 11 Oct – International Day of the Girl Child |
| **2026 theme** | End child marriage and invest in girls' rights |
| **Resolution** | UNGA resolution 66/170 – 19 Dec 2011; first observed 2012 |
| **India** | National Girl Child Day – 24 Jan (since 2008) |

## Background

- Indian law: the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act 2006 – 18 for women, 21 for men; earlier the 'Sarda Act' (1929). POCSO Act 2012.
- 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' – 22 Jan 2015, Panipat (Haryana); the 'Sukanya Samriddhi' savings scheme began the same day.
- Globally, girls aged 15–19 are twice as likely as boys to be out of education, employment or training (UNICEF). Child marriage is highest in sub-Saharan Africa.

**Tamil Nadu link:** the 'Cradle Baby Scheme' began at Salem in 1992 to stop female infanticide; the 'Chief Minister's Girl Child Protection Scheme' came the same year. The 'Pudhumai Penn' scheme (5 Sept 2022) gives ₹1,000 a month to girls from government schools who go on to higher education.


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