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

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News

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

Key facts

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

Background

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

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

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