



Weekly **Current Affairs**

18th to 24th October 2026

NATIONAL NEWS



India Ranks 84th in Henley Passport Index 2026



- India ranks 84th globally, sharing the position with Algeria and Mauritania.
- Singapore ranks first, with access to 193 destinations.
- Compared with the October 2025 ranking, India improved by one position, from 85th to 84th, although its destination-access score decreased from 57 to 55.

Asiatic Lions Return to Barda Wildlife Sanctuary After 144 Years



- Asiatic lions (*Panthera leo persica*) have returned to Barda Wildlife Sanctuary in Gujarat after approximately 144 years, marking an important development in wildlife conservation.
- The sanctuary is emerging as a second home for Asiatic lions beyond the Gir landscape, helping reduce the risks associated with concentrating the population in one geographical area.
- Barda is designated as Satellite Population 8 under Project Lion.

MoRTH Plans BS-VII Emission Standards Rollout from 2029 to 2035



- The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) proposed introducing Bharat Stage VII (BS-VII) emission standards through a phased rollout from April 2029 to April 2035.
- The proposed standards aim to reduce vehicular air pollution by tightening limits on harmful emissions from vehicles.
- The proposed framework may address pollutants such as nitrogen oxides (NO_x), hydrocarbons and particulate matter.

National Geographic Names Jaipur to Its Best of the World 2027 List



- National Geographic included Jaipur, the capital of Rajasthan, in its Best of the World 2027 list of travel destinations.
- Jaipur's historic attractions include Hawa Mahal and Jantar Mantar, an 18th-century astronomical observatory that is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- The city hosts the Jaipur Literature Festival, one of the world's largest literary festivals.

Centre to launch 'Khet Bachao Abhiyan-Rabi 2026' nationwide



- The Ministry of Agriculture, Farmers Welfare will launch nationwide 'Khet Bachao Abhiyan-Rabi 2026' from Karnal, Haryana, on 22 Oct, with the campaign running until 30 Nov 2026.
- It will promote balanced fertiliser use and other agricultural inputs based on soil testing.
- Its main objectives are to promote sustainable agriculture, improve soil health and encourage the judicious use of agricultural resources.

India Hosts 7th Agrivoltaics World Conference (AWC) in New Delhi



- The 7th AgriVoltaics World Conference 2026 commenced at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi.
- India hosted the conference for the first time, marking first edition held in the Global South.
- The conference was hosted by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), with support from Germany's Federal Ministry for the Environment, Climate Action, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMUV), and organised in partnership with Conexio-PSE.

IIT Madras Launches UDYOG Biotech Finishing School



- IIT Madras launched UDYOG (Upskilling and Development for Young Graduates), an industry-oriented finishing school for biotechnology and biomanufacturing.
- The programme is intended for pre-final-year and final-year B.Tech., M.Tech. and M.Sc. students in biotechnology and allied disciplines across India.
- The training programme will include three months of online learning, followed by selection for four weeks of hands-on training at the IIT Madras Biofoundry.

69th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference Held in Cape Town



- The conference was hosted by the Parliament of South Africa and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) South Africa Branch.
- The theme was "Strengthening International Law & Parliamentary Democracy in a Changing World Order: Commonwealth Leadership."
- The Indian parliamentary delegation was led by Harivansh, Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha.

India Ranks 3rd in Ipsos Quality of Care Perception Index 2026



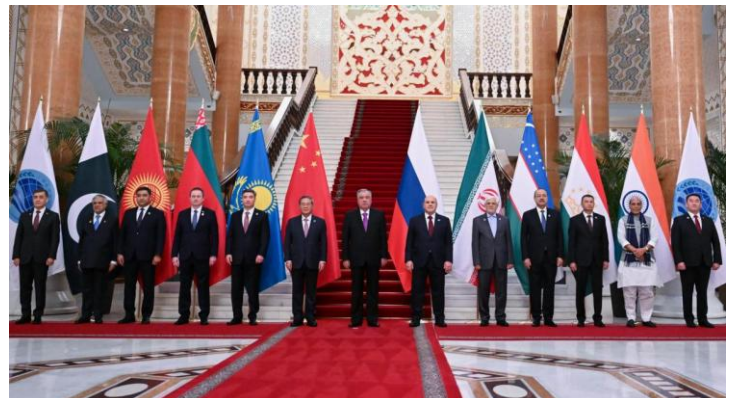
- India ranked 3rd globally in the Ipsos Quality of Care Perception Index 2026, behind Malaysia (1st) and Singapore (2nd).
- The leading health concerns were diabetes (40%), mental health (37%) and stress (33%).
- 68% of respondents in India rated healthcare quality positively.

Ladakh's First Medical College to Begin Operations in 2027



- Ladakh's first Government Medical College will begin operations in Leh from the academic year 2027–28.
- The college will be located at StipukPharka, Leh, Ladakh.
- The project aims to expand medical education opportunities and improve healthcare services in the Union Territory.

India to Host First SCO Civilisational Dialogue Forum



- The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) was established in 2001, and India became a full member in 2017.
- The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is headquartered in Beijing, China.
- The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) has 10 member countries: China (2001), Russia (2001), Kazakhstan (2001), Kyrgyzstan (2001), Tajikistan (2001), Uzbekistan (2001), India (2017), Pakistan (2017), Iran (2023) and Belarus (2024).

Shilp Samagam Mela 2026 Begins in Guwahati



- The 8-day Shilp Samagam Mela 2026 began on 21 October 2026 in Guwahati, Assam.
- The mela is organised by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Govt. of India.
- The mela promotes BHARAT-TULIP (Traditional Artisans' Upliftment Livelihood Programme), which supports marketing through physical outlets and e-commerce platforms.

India to Host 61st Legal Metrology Meeting



India to Host 61st International Legal Metrology Meeting in New Delhi

- India will host the 61st Meeting of the International Committee of Legal Metrology (CIML) for the first time in New Delhi.
- The meeting is organised by the Department of Consumer Affairs, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, in association with the International Organization of Legal Metrology (OIML).
- CIML is the principal decision-making body that guides the technical and administrative activities of OIML.

India ranks 100th out of 122 countries in Global Hunger Index



- The report is jointly published by Concern Worldwide, Welthungerhilfe and the Institute for International Law of Peace and Armed Conflict (IFHV).
- India ranked 100th out of 122 countries, with a GHI score of 24.1, placing it in the serious hunger category.
- India's four indicators were: undernourishment (9.8%), child stunting (29.3%), child wasting (19.0%) and under-five mortality (2.7%).

Telangana Celebrates Saddula Bathukamma Festival



- Saddula Bathukamma 2026 was celebrated as the grand finale of Telangana's nine-day floral festival.
- The Telangana government organised grand celebrations at Tank Bund, Hyderabad.
- Bathukamma is a nine-day floral festival celebrated primarily by women in Telangana during Navratri.

EPFO scheme offers up to ₹15,000 to first-time employees



- The Pradhan Mantri Viksit Bharat Rojgar Yojana (PM-VBRY) promotes first-time employment and supports additional job creation by offering incentives to both employees and employers.
- Employees earning up to ₹1 lakh per month receive a one-time incentive equal to one month's EPF wage capped at ₹15,000.
- The first instalment is paid after six months of service, while the second is paid after twelve months of continuous service and completion of a financial literacy programme.

AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS



Raji Doshi Wins 3M Young Scientist Challenge for Ocean Solution



- Raji Doshi, a 13-year-old Indian-American student from Farmington, Connecticut, USA, won the 2026 3M Young Scientist Challenge.
- She received a cash prize of US\$25,000 and the title of "America's Top Young Scientist."
- Her award-winning innovation is called ALKACORE, a natural algae-and-aragonite system designed to reduce ocean acidification.

Reema Nanavaty Receives Hillary Rodham Clinton Award



- Reema Nanavaty, an Indian social worker and Director of the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA), received the 2026 Hillary Rodham Clinton Award.
- The award ceremony was held at Gaston Hall, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C., USA.
- She was recognised for her contributions to women's economic empowerment, livelihood development, food security and access to renewable energy.

Mizoram Farmer Mari ZT Lalrithangi Receives FAO Honour



- Mari ZT Lalrithangi, a 35-year-old farmer from Sangau village in Lawngtlai district, Mizoram, was recognised under the FAO 100 Women Heroes in Agrifood Systems and Rural Development Initiative in 2026.
- The recognition was conferred by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) at its headquarters in Rome, Italy, on 15 October 2026, during the World Food Forum.
- She became the first woman from the Mizo community to receive this recognition.

Sangeet Natak Akademi Selects 106 Artists for Yuva Puraskar 2024 - 25



- The Sangeet Natak Akademi, India's National Academy of Music, Dance and Drama, selected 106 young artists for the Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar for 2024 and 2025.
- The award ceremony was scheduled for 19 October 2026 at Meghdoot Complex, Rabindra Bhavan, New Delhi.
- Each award carries ₹25,000 in prize money, a Tamrapatra and an Angavastram.

Devadas Chimakode Selected for Karnataka Janapada Award



- Devadas Chimakode, a senior folk artist from Chimakod village in Bidar district, Karnataka, was selected for the Karnataka Janapada Academy Annual Honorary Award 2026.
- The annual honorary award carries a cash prize of ₹25,000 and a citation/plaque.
- The award recognises his long-standing contribution to preserving and promoting Karnataka's folk traditions.

SBI wins world's best consumer bank award



- According to Global Finance magazine, State Bank of India (SBI) was named the World's Best Consumer Bank 2026.
- SBI received this recognition for 2nd consecutive year, having also won the award in 2025.
- The award ceremony was scheduled for in Bangkok, Thailand, during the IMF–World Bank Annual Meetings.

NEW APPOINTMENTS



SCL Das Appointed FSIB Chairman



- The Central Government appointed Subhas Chandra Lal Das (SCL Das) as the part-time Chairperson of the Financial Services Institutions Bureau (FSIB).
- He succeeds Bhanu Pratap Sharma, whose extended tenure as FSIB Chairperson ended on 30 June 2026.
- FSIB was established on 1 July 2022, replacing the Banks Board Bureau (BBB).

Sudhakar Dalela Appointed as India's Next Ambassador to Nepal



- The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) appointed Sudhakar Dalela as the next Ambassador of India to Nepal.
- He will succeed Naveen Srivastava, who has served as India's Ambassador to Nepal since June 2022.
- He is a 1993-batch Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer.

Sudha Yadav Takes Oath as Karnataka Governor



- Sudha Yadav was sworn in as the new Governor of Karnataka at a ceremony held at Lok Bhavan in Bengaluru.
- Sudha Yadav replaced Thaawarchand Gehlot as the Governor of Karnataka.
- Ms. Yadav will be the second woman to serve as Karnataka Governor, after V.S. Ramadevi, who held the post from 1999 to 2002.
- Karnataka High Court Chief Justice Vibhu Bakhru administered the oath of office and secrecy.

BANKING NEWS



Pakistan to Chair IMF and World Bank Boards in 2027



- Ahad Khan Cheema, Pakistan's Federal Minister for Economic Affairs, will serve as chair.
- The announcement was made during the 2026 IMF–World Bank Annual Meetings in Bangkok, Thailand.
- The headquarters of both the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank Group are located in Washington, D.C., United States.

ICICI Life Insurance Unveils New Brand Identity 'Har Kal Aasaan'



- ICICI Life Insurance Limited, formerly known as ICICI Prudential Life Insurance Company Limited, unveiled its new brand identity and tagline, "Har Kal Aasaan,"
- The rebranding marks the company's 25 years of operations in the Indian life insurance market.
- Srinivas Balasubramanian, Chief of Marketing, Digital & Bancassurance, ICICI Life Insurance Limited, highlighted the company's focus on simplifying financial planning.

RBI Approves Emirates NBD Branch Merger with RBL Bank



- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) approved the amalgamation of the Indian branches of Emirates NBD Bank P.J.S.C. with RBL Bank Limited.
- The merger covers three branches located in Mumbai (Maharashtra), Chennai (Tamil Nadu) and Gurugram (Haryana). The amalgamation was sanctioned under Section 44A(4) of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949.
- Emirates NBD completed its acquisition of a 60% stake in RBL Bank in June 2026 through an investment of approximately US\$2.75 billion (₹26,000 crore).

Bank of Baroda Launches 'BoB Ke Sang Tyohaar Ki Umang'



- Bank of Baroda launched its festive campaign 'BoB Ke Sang Tyohaar Ki Umang – Shubh Bhi, Labh Bhi'.
- Bank of Baroda is offering home loans at interest rates starting from 7.40% per annum with a processing fee waiver, and car loans starting from 7.85% per annum, subject to applicable terms and conditions.
- Eligible women borrowers can receive an additional home-loan interest concession of 0.05% points, while specified eligible customer categories can receive 0.10 percentage points.

CBDT introduces Form 173A for tax exemption claims on govt. securities



- The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) introduced Form 173A under the Income-tax (Seventh Amendment) Rules, 2026.
- Form 173A is required to claim specified tax exemptions on interest income and capital gains from government securities.
- The specified exemptions cover eligible foreign institutional investors, Bank for International Settlements (BIS), to statutory conditions.

Canara HSBC Life Launches Dollar-Based ULIP for NRIs



- Canara HSBC Life Insurance launched the Global Wealth Plan (UIN: 2026L002V01) for Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) through GIFT City and Policybazaar.
- It provides investment access to global equities, precious metals such as gold and silver, and debt funds.
- The plan offers three variants: Wealth, Wealth Plus and Wealth Forever.

SPORTS



Punam Raut Retires from International Cricket Across All Formats



- Indian women's cricket team batter Punam Raut announced her retirement from all formats of international cricket.
- She represented India in 4 Test matches, 73 One-Day Internationals (ODIs) and 35 Twenty20 Internationals (T20Is).
- Across all international formats, she scored 3,282 runs, including four centuries.

India Beat Zimbabwe by 4 Wickets in First T20I



- The Indian women's cricket team defeated Zimbabwe by four wickets in the first T20 International of the three-match series in Raipur, Chhattisgarh.
- Zimbabwe scored 114 runs for five wickets in 20 overs after being asked to bat first.
- India successfully chased the target of 115 runs, scoring 115/6 in 15.4 overs.

Manasi Joshi and Thulasimathi Secure Para-Badminton Medal



- Indian para-badminton players Manasi Joshi and Thulasimathi Murugesan assured India of a medal at the 2026 Asian Para Games in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan.
- They defeated China's Yuemei Liu and Tongtong Li by 21–10, 21–17 to secure a top-two finish in Group A.
- The pair had previously won a silver medal at 2023 Asian Para Games in Hangzhou, China.

United States to Host Inaugural Women's Club World Cup



- FIFA announced that the United States will host the inaugural FIFA Women's Club World Cup in 2028.
- The tournament will feature 19 women's club teams representing all six continental football confederations.
- Seven clubs have already qualified, including Arsenal Women, FC Barcelona Femení, Gotham FC and SC Corinthians.

Sheetal Devi & Toman Kumar Win Asian Para Games Archery Gold



- Indian para-archers Sheetal Devi and Toman Kumar won the gold medal in the compound mixed team event at the Asian Para Games 2026 in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan.
- The Indian pair defeated Indonesia's Teodora Audi Ayudia Ferelly and Ken Swagumilang by 151–148 in the final.
- Sheetal Devi also won gold in the women's individual compound event, defeating Singapore's Alim Nur Syahidah by 142–138.

Ayush Verma Wins Asian Para Games 2026 Shot Put F53 Gold



- Indian para-athlete Ayush Verma won gold in the men's shot put F53 event at the Asian Para Games 2026, held in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan.
- He secured gold with a best throw of 8.16 metres on his fifth attempt.
- Alireza Hemami of Iran won silver with 8.09 metres, while MakhambetSerikkaliyev of Kazakhstan won bronze with 6.81 metres.

Women's U19 T20 World Cup 2027 Start Jan 21 in Bangladesh & Nepal



- The ICC International Cricket Council (ICC) announced the schedule for the ICC Under-19 Women's T20 World Cup 2027, to be jointly hosted by Bangladesh and Nepal from 21 January to 6 February 2027.
- This will be the third edition of the tournament, first held in 2023.
- A total of 16 teams will compete in 41 matches across four venues.

Amruta Pujari Wins Silver at U-23 World Wrestling Championships



- Amruta Pujari won the silver medal in the women's 72 kg category at the 2026 U-23 World Wrestling Championships held in Las Vegas, USA.
- Amruta Pujari is a wrestler from Maharashtra's Kolhapur district and was 22 years old at the time of the championship.
- In May 2026, she had also won bronze at the U-23 Asian Wrestling Championships in Da Nang, Vietnam.

French Open Super 750 Badminton tournament to begin in Paris



- The Yonex French Open 2026, a BWF World Tour Super 750 tournament, is being held from 20 to 25 October 2026 in Paris, France.
- India's PV Sindhu, Lakshya Sen and men's doubles pair Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty are among the participating players.
- The event features five disciplines: men's singles, women's singles, men's doubles, women's doubles and mixed doubles.

Arshi Gupta Becomes Youngest Rotax MAX Mini Champion



- Arshi Gupta, a 10-year-old karting racer from Faridabad, Haryana, became the world's youngest driver to win the Rotax MAX Challenge (RMC) Mini title.
- She won the Mini Max category at the FMSCI RMC Indian National Karting Championship 2026, held at Mecor Kartopia, Bengaluru.
- She will represent India in the Mini Max category at the Rotax MAX Challenge Grand Finals 2026, scheduled in Portugal.

Mona Agarwal Wins India's First Gold Medal at Asian Para Games



- Indian para-shooter Mona Agarwal won India's first gold medal at the 5th Asian Para Games 2026.
- She won gold in the Women's 10m Air Rifle Standing SH1 (R2) event held in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan.
- Mona scored 250.0 points in the final, setting a new Asian Para Games record.

Nihal Sarin & Koneru Humpy Win Gold at European Chess Club Cup



- Indian grandmasters Nihal Sarin and Koneru Humpy won individual gold medals in the men's and women's sections, respectively, at the European Chess Club Cup 2026, held in Montenegro.
- The second silver medalist was Harikrishna, who won 5 out of 6 games and obtained silver in individual competition on Board 3.
- Murali won bronze on Board 2 in the games played for Montenegro club Team Electroprireda, which ranked 11th in the team classification.

DEFENCE & TECHNOLOGY



ISRO to Launch NVS-03 Navigation Satellite

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is scheduled to launch the NVS-03 navigation satellite on 30 October 2026 aboard the GSLV Mk II launch vehicle.
- The satellite will be launched from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota, AP.
- NVS-03 is the third satellite in the second-generation Navigation with Indian Constellation (NavIC) series.

India and Singapore Begin 33rd SIMBEX in Visakhapatnam



- The Indian Navy & Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN) commenced the 33rd edition of SIMBEX-2026 at Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.
- SIMBEX stands for Singapore–India Maritime Bilateral Exercise.
- SIMBEX was first conducted in 1994 as Exercise Lion King.

India-Aus. Exercise AUSTRALIND 2026 Begins in Keralam

- The fifth edition of the India–Australia Joint Military Exercise AUSTRALIND 2026 at the Foreign Training Node in Thiruvananthapuram, Keralam.
- The Indian contingent comprises troops from the Garhwal Rifles, while the Australian contingent includes personnel from 13 Brigade.
- The theme is “Joint Sub-Conventional Operations in Island and Coastal Environment under Chapter VII of the UN Mandate.”

DCGI Approves Zytorvi for Advanced Esophageal Cancer

- the Dr. Reddy's Laboratories received approval from the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) for Zytorvi to treat advanced esophageal squamous cell carcinoma (ESCC).
- Approval granted by Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) under the DCGI.
- Zytorvi is a monoclonal antibody immunotherapy that targets the PD-1 receptor, helping the immune system fight cancer cells.

AstraZeneca and Oracle Launch AI Clinical Trials in Abu Dhabi

- The initiative was launched in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE), in collaboration with healthcare company M42.
- The first programme focuses on hypertension (high blood pressure) care and clinical research.
- AstraZeneca developed Vaxzevria (AZD1222), a COVID-19 vaccine developed in collaboration with the University of Oxford.

Nexon Geochem to Set Up ₹1,250 Crore Magnet Plant in Andhra



- Nexon Geochem, a Hyderabad-headquartered advanced materials company, signed an MoU the Andhra Pradesh Economic Development Board (APEDB) to establish a rare-earth permanent magnet manufacturing plant.
- The proposed plant will be located at Thondangi in Kakinada district, Andhra Pradesh.
- These magnets are used in electric vehicles (EVs), wind turbines, industrial automation, electronics and defence equipment.