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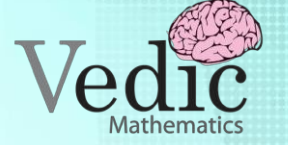
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Today in History on 17 OCT

➤ 1898 – US takes control of Puerto Rico from Spain:

The US takes control of Puerto Rico in 1898 under the Treaty of Paris following the Spanish–American War. The treaty marked the end of Spain's American empire, with the US taking control of Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines. Puerto Rico became a US territory, and remains so today. The annexation was seen as a significant step in US imperial expansion.



➤ 1922 - British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) founded:

On October 1922, the British Broadcasting Company was founded, later known as the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). It is the world's oldest and most prestigious public service broadcasting organization. The BBC has played an

important role in radio, television and online media and is known for unbiased and high-quality journalism. It is a major source of information in Britain and around the world.



➤ 1980 - First Himalayan Car Rally:

In 1980, India's first Himalayan Car Rally was organised, which was flagged off from the Brabourne Stadium in Bombay (now Mumbai). This rally became a symbol of India's participation in motorsports at the international level. It saw many participants from all over the world braving the challenging conditions of the Himalayan regions. This rally is considered an important event in the history of motorsports in India.



➤ 1995 - 11th Summit of Non-Aligned Countries:

The 11th summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) was held in Cartagena, Colombia in 1995. This summit represents countries that were not aligned to any superpower camp during the Cold War. This summit discussed issues of global peace, security and development. NAM emphasized cooperation and self-reliance of developing countries, and this summit underlined the importance of non-alignment in global politics.



Important NEWS on 17 OCT

National News

EPFO Allows 100% Provident Fund Withdrawal Under New Rules

In a landmark reform, the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has simplified and liberalised its withdrawal rules, allowing over 7 crore subscribers to now withdraw up to 100% of their eligible provident fund (PF) balance. The new guidelines were approved by the Central Board of Trustees (CBT) on October, 2025, under the chairmanship of Union Labour Minister Mansukh Mandaviya.

Key Points:

Full withdrawal of the entire PF balance (including the minimum balance of 25%) is also allowed in case of retirement after attaining 55 years of service, permanent disability, incapacity to work, retrenchment, voluntary retirement or leaving India permanently etc.

The Pension entitlement at the age of 58 years is completely unaffected by the proposed changes.

A member can withdraw the accumulation in pension account before completing 10 years of service at any point of time in these 10 years.

➤ 2007 - Allen Telescope Array (ATA) launched:

On October 2007, former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto returned to her homeland after eight years of exile. During her return, a grand motorcar rally was attacked by a suicide attack, killing 139 people and injuring hundreds. Bhutto narrowly escaped the attack. The incident reflects the serious state of instability and terrorism in Pakistan's politics. Her return was considered a turning point for Pakistan's democracy.



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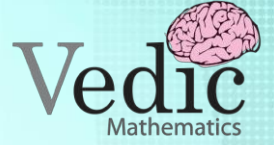
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India's Female Workforce Participation Rises to 42% in 2023-24

India has recorded a remarkable increase in female workforce participation, a key indicator of gender inclusion and economic progress. According to the Ministry of Labour and Employment, the Female Labour Force Participation Rate (FLFPR) has risen from 23% in 2017-18 to around 42% in 2023-24. This surge marks a major transformation in India's labour landscape and positions the country as a leader in women's economic inclusion among BRICS nations.

Key Points:

According to World Bank data, India has seen the fastest growth in women's labor force participation among the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) over the past decade.

The increase of nearly 19 percentage points between 2017-18 and 2023-24 reflects a significant shift in both social norms and government intervention.

International News

US and Middle East Leaders Sign Declaration to End Gaza War

In a landmark diplomatic move, U S President Donald Trump joined with leaders of Egypt, Qatar, and Turkey to sign a joint declaration supporting a ceasefire and peace plan for Gaza. The agreement was reached during the Sharm El-Sheikh Summit in Egypt as part of efforts to end the two-year war between Israel and Hamas and lay the groundwork for reconstruction and stability.

Key Point:

The joint statement, titled "The Trump Declaration for Lasting Peace and Prosperity," expresses a commitment to ending hostilities and establishing lasting peace in Gaza and the wider region.

It reaffirms the need for security, stability, humanitarian access, and dignity for both Palestinians and Israelis.

Appointments

Dan Katz Appointed IMF's First Deputy Managing Director

On October, 2025, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Executive Board approved the appointment of Dan Katz as its First Deputy Managing Director, effective October, 2025. The nomination, put forward by IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva, comes at a critical time as the global economy navigates through complex transformations in trade, inflation, and geopolitical shifts.

Key Points:

Dan Katz most recently served as Chief of Staff at the U.S. Department of the Treasury, where he served as a principal advisor to Treasury Secretary Scott Bessant.

His responsibilities included shaping domestic and international economic strategy, particularly the U.S. economic partnership with Ukraine, and managing negotiations in regional and bilateral financial forums.

Sports

11th Asian Aquatics Championships in Ahmedabad Concluded

India made sporting history by hosting the 11th Asian Aquatics Championships for the first time on October, 2025, at the Veer Savarkar Sports Complex, Ahmedabad, Gujarat. The event marked a significant milestone, being only the second time South Asia has hosted this prestigious aquatics meet. With over 1,100 athletes from 29 countries, the championships brought global attention to India's aquatic potential and organizational capabilities.





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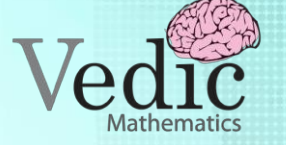
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Banking/Economy

Telangana Leads India in UPI Usage Intensity: RBI Study

Telangana has emerged as the leader in UPI transaction intensity among Indian states, according to a new study published in the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) September 2025 bulletin. Using PhonePe transaction data as a proxy for Unified Payments Interface (UPI) usage, the study highlights the growing shift towards digital payments, especially in southern and western India.

State news

Remuneration for State Finance Commission Chairman

The Tamil Nadu government has increased the monthly pay of the State Finance Commission Chairman from ₹6,500 to ₹2.25 lakh. The revision comes four months after the constitution of the Seventh State Finance Commission. An amendment was made to the Tamil Nadu State Finance Commission Chairman and Other Members (Conditions of Service) Rules, 1994.

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Current affairs MCQS on 17 OCT

Q.1. Palau President Surangel Whipps Jr. recently conducted the world's first underwater interview using which unique technology?

- (a) Wi-Fi
- (b) Bluetooth
- (c) Li-Fi
- (d) Satellite Communication

Answer: (c) Li-Fi

Palau's President Surangel Whipps Jr. conducted the world's first live underwater interview using a unique technology called the LiFi Talking Mask, which communicates underwater through light. Through this technology, he was able to speak with Estonian swimmer and activist Merle Livand, wearing scuba gear, with the aim of raising awareness about the importance of ocean conservation.





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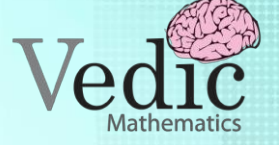
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Q.2. The recently revamped 'Sugamya Bharat App' was developed under which ministry?

- (a) Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment
- (b) Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
- (c) Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology
- (d) Ministry of Women and Child Development

Answer:(a) Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment

Taking a significant step towards building a digitally inclusive India, the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD), Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Government of India, launched the new 'Sugamya Bharat App' at the Purple Fest in Goa. The launch was led by Shri Rajesh Agarwal, Secretary, Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, at the ALIMCO stall, in the presence of Ms. Manmeet Kaur Nanda, Additional Secretary, Ms. Richa Shankar, Deputy Director General, Ms. Debolina Thakur, Joint Secretary (Financial Advisor), and Shri Praveen Kumar, Chairman & Managing Director, ALIMCO.

Q.3. How much amount has HSBC recently committed to support Indian startups?

- (a) US\$500 million
- (b) US\$750 million
- (c) US\$1 billion
- (d) US\$2 billion

Answer:(c) US\$1 billion

In a significant boost to India's startup ecosystem, HSBC has pledged \$1 billion to support early- and growth-stage startups through its newly launched Innovation Banking Platform. The initiative provides non-recourse debt capital, including working capital and term loans, helping startups access funding without giving up their equity. With this, India becomes the 13th global market to benefit from HSBC's dedicated Innovation Banking services.

Q.4. India's retail inflation fell to what percentage in September 2025, the lowest level since June 2017?

- (a) 2.07%

- (b) 1.54%
- (c) 1.87%
- (d) 2.25%

Answer:(b) 1.54%

There's some relief for both consumers and policymakers. India's retail inflation fell to 1.54% in September 2025, its lowest level since June 2017. According to the Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation (MoSPI), this decline was primarily due to a continued decline in food prices and a favorable base effect from the previous year. This figure represents a sharp decline from 2.07% in August 2025, indicating that pressure on prices of essential commodities is steadily easing.

Q.5. India's net direct tax collection recently reached how many lakh crore rupees, representing an increase of 6.33%?

- (a) ₹11.89 lakh crore
- (b) ₹13.92 lakh crore
- (c) ₹10.56 lakh crore
- (d) ₹12.45 lakh crore

Answer:(a) ₹11.89 lakh crore

India's direct tax collections have seen a steady increase in the current fiscal year, with net receipts crossing ₹11.89 lakh crore, a year-on-year increase of 6.33%. According to the Income Tax Department, this increase was primarily due to corporate tax inflows and lower tax refunds issued during the period. This performance provides a strong foundation for the government's ambitious full-year tax collection target of ₹25.20 lakh crore for FY 2025-26.

Q.6. Which program has the Chief Minister of Assam recently launched with the aim of connecting youth with global career opportunities?

- (a) CM Global Path
- (b) Assam Skill Vision
- (c) CM Flight
- (d) Youth Connect Assam

Answer:(c) CM Flight





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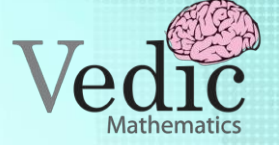
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The Assam Chief Minister recently launched a program called CM-FLIGHT (Chief Minister's Foreign Language Initiative for Global Human Talent), which helps young people find jobs abroad by training them in foreign languages. The initiative aims to connect young people with global career opportunities, starting with Japan, where the first batch of 180 trainees will learn the Japanese language and workplace skills.

Q.7. Himachal Pradesh University's incubated startup 'Taste & Heal' recently received which award at the National Mushroom Fair 2025?

- (a) ICAR-National Progressive Farmer Award
- (b) Prime Minister's Youth Award
- (c) Himachal Startup Innovation Award
- (d) National Biotechnology Award

Answer:(a) ICAR-National Progressive Farmer Award

Taste & Heal, a startup incubated at the Biotechnology Incubation Centre of Himachal Pradesh University, has achieved a milestone. During the National Mushroom Fair 2025 held at the Directorate General of Mushroom Research Centre (DMRC) in Solan, the startup was awarded the ICAR-National Progressive Farmer Award for mushroom-based products. The award recognizes the startup's pioneering work in developing a range of nutrient-rich, value-added mushroom-based food products that contribute to sustainable health and rural entrepreneurship. Taste & Heal, established under the guidance of the Bio-Incubation Centre of Himachal Pradesh University, has become a model for the integration of food innovation and biotechnology.

Q.8. What percentage increase did the Central Government recently announce in the dearness allowance (DA) of its employees?

- (a) 2%
- (b) 4%
- (c) 3%
- (d) 5%

Answer:(c) 3%

The central government recently announced a 3% increase in dearness allowance (DA) for its employees. This increase will be effective from July 2025, increasing the DA from 55% to 58% of the basic pay. The Union Cabinet approved this decision to help employees and pensioners cope with rising inflation. This will benefit approximately 49.19 lakh central government employees and 68.72 lakh pensioners.

Q.9. To whom did Israel recently announce the conferment of its highest civilian award, the "Israeli Presidential Medal of Honor"?

- (a) Donald Trump
- (b) Joe Biden
- (c) Benjamin Netanyahu
- (d) Isaac Herzog

Answer:(a) Donald Trump

In a significant diplomatic move, Israel has announced that it will award its highest civilian honor – the Israeli Presidential Medal of Honor – to former US President Donald Trump. The award recognizes Trump's role in brokering a ceasefire in Gaza and securing the release of Israeli hostages, underscoring his influence in Middle Eastern geopolitics even after he leaves office.

Q.10. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) recently allowed residents and banks of which countries to lend in Indian Rupees (INR) to boost regional trade?

- (a) Bangladesh, Maldives, and Myanmar
- (b) Nepal, Bangladesh, and Bhutan
- (c) Bhutan, Nepal, and Sri Lanka
- (d) Afghanistan, Myanmar, and Pakistan

Answer:(c) Bhutan, Nepal, and Sri Lanka

In a strategic move to boost regional trade and improve external payment systems, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced that Indian banks and their overseas branches will now be able to lend in Indian rupees to residents and banks of Bhutan, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. The announced move is expected to streamline cross-border trade





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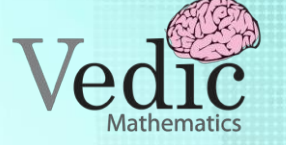
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transactions and expand the use of the rupee in South Asia.

Q.11. What agenda did Hamirpur MP Anurag Singh Thakur recently present on the occasion of World Standards Day 2025 in Baddi?

- (a) A four-point plan for Himachal tourism development
- (b) A three-point plan for startup financing
- (c) A five-point agenda for standard excellence
- (d) A seven-point plan for state education reform

Answer:(c) A five-point agenda for standard excellence

Anurag Singh Thakur, former Union Minister and Member of Parliament from Hamirpur Lok Sabha constituency, said that India has now accepted quality not as an option but as a necessity. He said that it is every consumer's right to demand certified, marked and safe products and when consumers insist on quality, the market responds with excellence. Anurag Thakur was speaking as the keynote speaker at an event organized by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) on the occasion of World Standards Day 2025 in Baddi. During the event, he presented a 'Five-Point Agenda for Standards Excellence' to strengthen India's quality ecosystem and realize the vision of 'Make in India'.

Q.12. Which company recently developed Mappls, an indigenous navigation app that rivals Google Maps?

- (a) Reliance Jio
- (b) TCS
- (c) MapmyIndia (CE Info Systems Ltd.)
- (d) Infosys

Answer:(c) MapmyIndia (CE Info Systems Ltd.)

Mappls, an indigenous app that competes with Google Maps, has been launched. Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnav shared a video of this navigation app on a social media platform. This indigenous navigation app has more features than Google Maps. Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav himself has become a fan of this app. He said that an MoU will soon be signed between the Railways and Mappls.

MapmyIndia has developed Mappls' indigenous app. It will have all the features available on Google Maps. Not only this, on this indigenous navigation app, users will also be able to update information about road conditions, petrol pumps, dhabas, and junction points on the routes, etc.

Q.13. In which city was the 45th edition of GITEX Global 2025, the world's largest technology and AI exhibition, recently held?

- (a) Dubai
- (b) Abu Dhabi
- (c) Riyadh
- (d) Doha

Answer:(a) Dubai

The 45th edition of GITEX Global, the world's largest technology and artificial intelligence (AI) exhibition, has officially kicked off in Dubai. Held at the Dubai World Trade Centre and Dubai Harbour, the five-day event is attracting over 6,800 exhibitors and 2,000 startups from over 180 countries. With a special focus on AI, quantum computing, biotechnology, and sustainable technology, GITEX 2025 is playing a key role in establishing the UAE as a global hub for digital transformation.

Q.14. Dr. Sonali Ghosh was recently honored with which award, given for innovation in the sustainable management of protected areas?

- (a) National Biodiversity Award
- (b) Rajiv Gandhi Environment Award
- (c) Kenton R. Miller Award
- (d) World Nature Foundation Award

Answer:(c) Kenton R. Miller Award

Sonali Ghosh, director of Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve, has become the first Indian to receive the prestigious Kenton R. Miller Award for Innovation in Sustainable Protected Area Management. The honour was presented to her by the World Commission for Protected Areas (WCPA), part of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), at a ceremony in Abu Dhabi.





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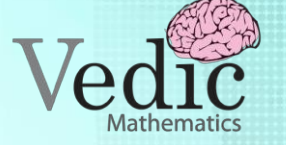
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Q.15. Recently, India announced plans to develop how much hydropower capacity from the Brahmaputra River Basin by 2047?

- (a) 76 gigawatts
- (b) 50 gigawatts
- (c) 100 gigawatts
- (d) 60 gigawatts

Answer: (a) 76 gigawatts

According to the Central Electricity Authority (CEA), India has unveiled a \$77 billion plan to develop over 76 gigawatts (GW) of hydropower capacity from the Brahmaputra river basin by 2047. The plan includes 208 major hydropower and pumped storage projects in 12 sub-basins of the northeastern states.



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