

Highlights of 24 September 2026 Current Affairs

- The 13th edition of the Sri Lanka-India bilateral maritime exercise (SLINEX-26) was successfully conducted in Visakhapatnam under the operational framework of the Indian Navy's Eastern Naval Command.
 - **Indian Navy Assets:** Represented by the indigenously built Kamorta-class anti-submarine warfare corvette **INS Kavaratti** and the fleet support tanker **INS Jyoti**.
 - **Sri Lanka Navy Assets:** Represented by the advanced offshore patrol vessel **SLNS Sindurala**.
- The 72nd National Film Awards ceremony was held at **Ekta Nagar (Kevadia), Gujarat**, with President Droupadi Murmu presenting the honours to the finest talents across Indian cinema.
 - **Dadasaheb Phalke Award:** Veteran actor **Anant Nag** was conferred with India's highest cinema honor in recognition of his illustrious career spanning decades across multiple film industries.
 - **Best Feature Film:** *Article 370* (Hindi)
 - **Best Actor (Joint):** **Kartik Aaryan** for *Chandu Champion* and **Mammootty** for *Bramayugam*.
 - **Best Actress:** **Yami Gautam** for *Article 370*.
 - **Best Director:** **Rajkumar Periasamy** for *Amaran*.
 - **Best Feature Film Providing Wholesome Entertainment:** *Kalki 2898 AD*
 - **Best Debut Film of a Director:** **Randeep Hooda** for *Swatantrya Veer Savarkar*.
- Veteran combat sports athlete **Suchika Tariyal** made history at the **2026 Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan**, by winning **India's first-ever medal in Mixed Martial Arts (MMA)**.
 - **Historic Milestone:** Competing in the **women's traditional -60kg category**, the 36-year-old secured a podium finish, marking a watershed moment as MMA made its official debut as a medal event at the continental multi-sport games.
 - **Path to the Podium:** Tariyal assured herself of at least a bronze medal by overcoming Mongolia's Altanchimeg Baigalmaa **2-0 in the quarterfinals**.
 - **Dramatic Semifinal Encounter:** In a grueling, tightly contested semifinal against Singapore's Teo Hui Hoon, neither fighter established a clear advantage through regulation time and an extra one-minute overtime period. Following an Indian challenge that converted an initial decision into a draw, the victor was ultimately decided by morning weigh-in figures. With Teo weighing approximately 700 grams lighter than Tariyal, the Singaporean advanced on the tiebreak rule, leaving the Indian campaigner with a hard-earned **bronze medal**.
- Indian cinema achieved a historic milestone on the international stage as *Angh*, a feature film rooted in Nagaland and directed by Theja Rio, won the coveted **Platform Prize** at the **2026 Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF)**.
 - **The Platform Competition:** *Angh* was selected as the sole Indian entry among 12 diverse international films in TIFF's premier juried section, which highlights bold, distinctive directorial voices.
 - **Jury Accolade:** The international jury—headed by Argentine filmmaker Pablo Trapero—praised the film for its "*refreshing perspective, strength of filmmaking*,"

and deeply resonant portrait of a world," while commending the director's vision, audacity, and courage.

- **Direct Path to the Oscars:** Under updated international film festival pathways, the Platform Prize win grants *Angh* **automatic eligibility and direct consideration** in the Best International Feature Film category for the **2027 Academy Awards**.
- **Prize Details:** Alongside the international recognition, the film secured a trophy and a cash award of **CAD 20,000**.
- The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) is set to issue an Expression of Interest (EOI) within the next six months to select a prime industrial production partner for its **30kW-class Directed-Energy Weapon (DEW)** system.
 - **Primary Application:** Designed principally for advanced **counter-drone operations**, the truck-mounted laser system is engineered to detect, track, and neutralize complex aerial threats, including **drone swarms, fixed-wing unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), and hostile surveillance sensors**.
 - **Operational Range:** The system boasts an effective tactical engagement range of **up to 5 km**.
 - **Development Status:** Following the successful completion of foundational trials, DRDO is transitioning the technology toward a **first-of-production model** through public-private manufacturing collaboration.
- Indian vice-captain and star opening batter **Smriti Mandhana** etched her name in the record books by becoming the **all-time leading run-scorer in Women's T20 International cricket**. She achieved the historic milestone during India's Women's T20 semifinal clash against Bangladesh at the **2026 Asian Games**. Coming into the match needing just eight runs to break the record, Mandhana surpassed New Zealand veteran **Suzie Bates**, finishing the innings with a blistering 19-ball 37 that featured five boundaries and two sixes.
- The historic **Town Hall complex in Chandni Chowk** is set for a major transformation, with the Delhi government signing a landmark Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) to convert the 160-year-old Grade-I heritage property into a **Global Heritage Centre**.
 - **The Agreement:** The MoU was signed between the Delhi Tourism and Transportation Development Corporation (DTTDC) and the MCD in the presence of Chief Minister Rekha Gupta. While repurposed for public and cultural use, the complex's ownership will remain strictly with the MCD.
 - **Scope of Redevelopment:** The project spans approximately **12,180 square metres**, encompassing the main Town Hall building, the Press Building, and the adjoining park.
- Union Home Minister Amit Shah inaugurated the **3rd National Conference of Anti-Narcotics Task Force (ANTF) Heads** in New Delhi. Organized by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), the two-day high-level summit focuses on aligning state and national enforcement agencies toward a drug-free India.
 - **Theme: "United Resolve, Shared Responsibility"**
 - **Core Focus:** The conference centers on executing the targets outlined in the **Vision Document on Narcotics Control (2026–2029)**, emphasizing a whole-of-

- government approach across supply reduction, demand reduction, harm reduction, and institutional capacity building.
- **Emerging Threats:** High-priority technical sessions targeted sophisticated modern trafficking vectors, including **synthetic drugs, darknet marketplaces, and cryptocurrency-enabled financial networks**.
 - **Infrastructure & Launches:** During the event, the Home Minister laid the foundation stones for new NCB Zonal complexes in **Lucknow and Dehradun**, launched the revamped NCB website, and released a series of public awareness television commercials (TVCs).
 - **State Recognition:** The **Telangana Anti-Narcotics Task Force (ANTF)** was felicitated as the best-performing state ANTF for its exceptional operational breakthroughs.
 - Union Minister for Communications Jyotiraditya Scindia inspected the proposed site for **Asia's first Telecom Manufacturing Zone (TMZ)** at the Shrimant Madhavrao Scindia Counter Magnet City (SADA) and IT Park in **Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh**.
 - **Investment Scale:** The comprehensive manufacturing hub is backed by planned investments totaling approximately **₹5,500 crore (US\$ 582.75 million)**, originating from robust corporate commitments secured during investor roadshows in Delhi (₹3,500 crore) and Mumbai (₹2,000 crore).
 - **Industrial Footprint:** Designed as an integrated ecosystem rather than a standalone facility, the project will house **24 to 25 specialized telecom manufacturing units** producing critical components, optical fiber, routers, and next-generation equipment.
 - **Phase-I Land Allocation:** Approximately **170 acres** have been designated for the initial phase, spanning over 90 acres in SADA and over 70 acres in the Gwalior IT Park. Due to overwhelming demand, authorities are already identifying expansion land.
 - **Employment Generation:** The zone is projected to create over **18,000 direct employment opportunities** alongside thousands of indirect jobs.
 - Veteran goalkeeper and former captain **Savita Punia** etched her name in the history books by becoming the **most-capped player in the history of Indian women's hockey**.
 - Global coffee giant **Starbucks** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Tamil Nadu government to set up its first **Global Capability Center (GCC)** in India, located in **Chennai**.
 - **Job Creation:** The initial phase of the technology and business hub is expected to create around **800 high-value technology and engineering jobs**.
 - **Independent Operations:** Operating separately from Starbucks' retail coffeehouse business in India (which runs as a joint venture with Tata Consumer Products), the new center will function as a standalone corporate entity supporting global operations.
 - **Strategic Focus:** The facility will handle critical global technology requirements, software engineering, digital products, and infrastructure capabilities.
 - **Why Chennai?** Starbucks Chief Technology Officer Anand Varadarajan cited Chennai's deep pool of skilled tech talent, strong employee retention levels, robust infrastructure, and targeted state government incentives as primary drivers for the location selection.

- The **18th edition of the India–Mongolia Joint Military Exercise, NOMADIC ELEPHANT 2026**, officially commenced at the Foreign Training Node in **Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand**.
 - **Duration & Schedule:** The bilateral exercise is scheduled to run from **September 21 to October 3, 2026**.
 - **Participation:** The annual platoon-level exercise features contingents of **45 personnel each** from the Indian Army and the Mongolian Armed Forces.
 - **Core Mandate:** The training focuses heavily on enhancing joint military capabilities to execute **Counter-Insurgency and Counter-Terrorism operations** in challenging semi-urban and mountainous terrains under a **United Nations (UN) mandate**.
- **World Maritime Day** is being observed globally today, **September 24, 2026**, celebrating the critical contributions of the shipping and maritime sectors to global trade, supply chains, and economic development.
 - Theme: "From Policy to Practice: Powering Maritime Excellence"
 - **Biennial Focus:** For the first time, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) has chosen a two-year framework spanning **2026 and 2027**.