

Highlights of 15 October 2026 Current Affairs

- **Mahila Kisan Diwas 2026 Celebrated Across India**

On 15 October 2026, the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare celebrated Mahila Kisan Diwas across the nation to honor the vital contributions of women farmers to Indian agriculture. The 2026 event was organized under the theme "Role of Women Farmers in Developing Agriculture and Developed India," aligning with the broader national target of Viksit Bharat. The celebration highlighted the active involvement of women in crop cultivation, livestock management, seed conservation, and agricultural enterprises. This emphasis on empowering female agricultural workers gains additional strategic importance ahead of the United Nations' designated International Year of the Woman Farmer in 2026.

- **Union Cabinet Approves Continuation of National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP)**

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the continuation of the National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) for the 2026–31 financial period. Implemented by the Ministry of Rural Development, the scheme provides financial assistance to senior citizens, widows, and persons with disabilities living below the poverty line. The decision ensures uninterrupted social security benefits to vulnerable populations across rural and urban India through direct benefit transfers (DBT).

- **Union Cabinet Approves ₹2,009.61 Crore Productivity Linked Bonus for Railway Employees**

The Union Cabinet approved a Productivity Linked Bonus (PLB) worth ₹2,009.61 crore for eligible non-gazetted railway employees for the financial year 2025–26. The payout benefits approximately 11.72 lakh non-gazetted railway staff, including track maintainers, loco pilots, train managers, station masters, and technicians. The approved bonus amounts to an equivalent of 78 days' wages per eligible employee to recognize their performance during the operational period. This annual measure serves to incentivize productivity and ensure smooth operational efficiency across the Indian Railways network.

- **Mandatory Train Ticket Counter Insurance to Launch On October 27, 2026**

Following a directive from the Supreme Court of India, Indian Railways will introduce travel insurance for passengers purchasing physical tickets at railway station counters starting October 27, 2026. Previously, the insurance scheme was only available optionally to passengers booking online tickets via the IRCTC portal at a nominal premium of 45 paise. Under the standard scheme, the policy provides maximum coverage of ₹10 lakh for death or permanent total disability, ₹7.5 lakh for permanent partial disability, and ₹2 lakh for hospitalization expenses resulting from train accidents. The Supreme Court Bench, comprising Justice Ahsanuddin Amanullah and Justice R. Mahadevan, mandated this move to ensure parity between offline and online rail passengers.

- **Himachal Pradesh Inaugurates Its First Solar Power Project in Spiti Valley**

Chief Minister Thakur Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu inaugurated Himachal Pradesh's first solar power project equipped with a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) at Rongtong in Kaza, located in the high-altitude Spiti Valley. Built at a cost of ₹4.42 crore, the facility features a 2 MW solar plant paired with a 1 MWh battery storage capacity to

stabilize local power supply. Additionally, the Chief Minister laid the foundation stones for 66/22 kV sub-stations at Sumdo and Kaza costing ₹47.95 crore to strengthen energy distribution in remote border regions. This green energy initiative significantly improves power reliability and supports Himachal Pradesh's target of becoming a Green Energy State.

- **India Proposes BS-VII Emission Standards Rollout from April 2029**

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) issued a draft notification proposing the implementation of Bharat Stage VII (BS-VII) emission standards in India starting April 1, 2029. The proposed regulatory transition will follow a phased rollout across three stages extending through April 2035, targeting new passenger cars and SUVs initially. BS-VII will impose stricter limits on vehicle emissions, specifically targeting nitrogen oxides (NOx), hydrocarbons (HC), and particulate matter (PM) to improve ambient air quality. The transition updates the existing BS-VI standards that were originally introduced nationwide in April 2020.

- **Asiatic Lions Return to Barda Wildlife Sanctuary After 144 Years**

In a major milestone for wildlife conservation, Asiatic lions (*Panthera leo persica*) have re-established a population in Gujarat's Barda Wildlife Sanctuary after an absence of nearly 144 years. Located in the Saurashtra region, Barda was last home to resident wild lions in 1879 before being designated as Satellite Population 8 under the national 'Project Lion' initiative. As part of habitat preparation and prey-base enhancement, over 440 chitals (spotted deer) were translocated from Gir National Park to Barda. A study published in *PLOS One* confirmed that Barda Wildlife Sanctuary currently hosts a stable population of 17 Asiatic lions, easing overcrowding in the core Gir landscape.

- **Vice-President Inaugurates KAUMARACON-2026 at All India Institute of Ayurveda**

Vice-President C. P. Radhakrishnan inaugurated KAUMARACON-2026, the 3rd International Conference on Kaumarabhritya (Ayurvedic Paediatrics), at the All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA) in New Delhi on October 15, 2026. The three-day international conference was organized by AIIA's Department of Kaumarabhritya to advance research and technology-enabled clinical practices in child healthcare. During the event, the Vice-President launched key digital initiatives and witnessed the signing of an international Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Maharishi International University (USA) and AIIA. The gathering brought together over 500 delegates and experts from countries including the USA, Germany, Brazil, Sri Lanka, and Nepal.

- **Urban Female Labour Force Participation Reaches Record High in PLFS September 2026**

The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) released the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) data for September 2026, revealing that urban Female Labour Force Participation Rate (FLFPR) reached its highest recorded level. The survey tracks employment metrics, including the Worker Population Ratio (WPR) and Unemployment Rate (UR) among women in urban areas using the Current Weekly Status (CWS) approach. The continuous rise in female participation reflects growing employment opportunities, higher urban female literacy, and policy interventions aimed at gender inclusion. For competitive exam aspirants, the PLFS is a crucial macroeconomic indicator conducted regularly by the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO).

- World Students' Day 2026 observed annually on October 15, commemorates the birth anniversary of India's 11th President and renowned scientist, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, honoring his dedicated legacy as an educator and visionary mentor to the youth.
 - Official Theme: "No official theme is designated for 2026; the day focuses on fostering innovation, scientific curiosity, and youth empowerment in education".
- **Barcelona and Real Madrid Legends to Clash in Kolkata**
Kolkata is set to host a high-profile exhibition match between the Barcelona Legends and Real Madrid Legends.
 - Venue: Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan (Salt Lake Stadium), Kolkata.