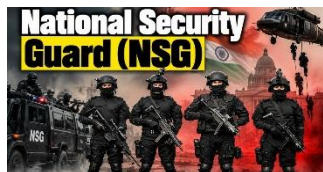


## Current Affairs - 17 October 2026

### WHAT IS THE NATIONAL SECURITY GUARD (NSG)?



- It is **India's premier counter-terror force**, specially trained and equipped to **respond to serious acts of terrorism** and other exceptional security situations.
- The NSG members are also known as **Black Cats** because of the black drill cotton coveralls and balaclavas, or helmets, they wear.
- **Establishment:**
  - It was **raised in 1984**, following **Operation Blue Star** and the **assassination of Indira Gandhi**.
  - It was established under the **National Security Guard Act of 1986**.
  - The Act places it under the **administrative control of the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)**, which exercises operational tasking.
  - The NSG was modelled **on the pattern of the Special Air Service of the UK and GSG-9 of Germany**.
- The NSG's specific goals include:
  - **Neutralization of terrorist threats**
  - **Handling hijacking situations** in the air and on land.
  - **Bomb disposal** (search, detection, and neutralisation of IEDs).
  - **PBI (Post Blast Investigation)**
  - **Hostage Rescue**
  - **VIP Security**
- **Motto: Sarvatra Sarvottama Suraksa.**
- **Headquarters: New Delhi**
- **Director General (DG):**
  - The **head of the NSG**, designated as **Director General (DG)**, is **selected by the Home Ministry**.

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- All the selected DGs have been officers from the **Indian Police Service (IPS)**.
- It is designed to be employed as a **specialised counter-terrorism force** “only in **exceptional situations**,” not to take over “functions of the State Police Forces or other paramilitary forces.”
- The teams of NSG work on a basic **philosophy of swift and speedy strike and immediate withdrawal** from the theatre of action.
- NSG **deployments** are **usually not made public**, with most of its operations remaining classified.

### SPECIAL SUMMARY REVISION: WHAT IT MEANS, AND HOW IT DIFFERS FROM SIR

- **Article 324** of the Constitution gives the EC authority to prepare electoral rolls for Parliament and Assembly elections.
- The process is governed by the **Representation of the People Act, 1950** and the **Registration of Electors Rules, 1960**.
- Electoral rolls are prepared constituency-wise, with the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) as the statutory authority.
- Section 21(2) of the 1950 Act mandates roll revision: before every general election, and “in any year” if directed by the EC with reference to a “qualifying date.”

#### How SSR Normally Works?

- SSR is the routine annual update, adding newly eligible electors and removing those who have died or shifted residence.
- Conducted before each Lok Sabha/Assembly election, and annually with **January 1 as the qualifying date** — meaning everyone turning 18 by January 1 becomes eligible for enrolment.
- **Why SSR 2026 Was Skipped:** After announcing the decision to conduct the SIR in June 2025 (where rolls were prepared afresh, requiring all existing electors to re-establish eligibility), the EC did not conduct SSR 2026.

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### The EC's New SSR Announcement: Key Details

- SSR will be held with a qualifying date of January 1, 2027 in:
  - States/UTs where SIR has already been completed in 2025 and 2026.
  - Assam, where the EC had decided not to conduct SIR at all.
- The 17 states/UTs covered:** Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Kerala, Lakshadweep, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Puducherry, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and West Bengal.
- For remaining states (where SIR is still ongoing), the EC will announce the SSR schedule later.
- Timeline For the SSR Process:**
  - Rationalisation of polling stations: Completed by November 2, 2026.
  - Publication of draft rolls: November 12, 2026.
  - Claims and objections period: November 12 to December 11, 2026.
  - Disposal of claims/objections: By December 28, 2026.
  - Final electoral rolls published: January 4, 2027.
- For voters:** Those turning 18 or seeking to shift enrolment can use Form 6 (new voters) or Form 8 (shifting/correction) during the revision.

### How SSR Differs from SIR: The Core Distinction

- The EC broke from its annual SSR practice in 2025, opting instead for an intensive revision of rolls — the first of its kind in 20 years.

| Aspect              | SIR                                                                                                                                                             | SSR                                                                                                   |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Entry to draft roll | Every elector required to fill an enumeration form and submit documents (including citizenship proof)                                                           | Existing electors automatically included in draft roll — no form required                             |
| Deletions           | Resulted in over 13 crore names deleted at draft stage across states                                                                                            | Officials can delete deceased/duplicate voters, but must follow statutory process (notices, hearings) |
| Post-draft scrutiny | EC issued centrally-generated notices to electors flagged by software for "logical discrepancies"; required additional documents and hearings to avoid deletion | No such centralised flagging/verification exercise planned                                            |
| Claims/objections   | Available after draft publication                                                                                                                               | Available after draft publication — electors get one month to seek additions/deletions                |

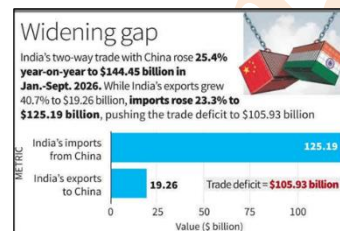
- The Essential Contrast:** SIR placed the **burden of proof** on every elector to re-establish eligibility from scratch; **SSR assumes continuity** — existing electors stay on the roll unless specifically flagged through a due process-bound deletion mechanism.

## Current Affairs - 17 October 2026

### INDIA-CHINA TRADE DEFICIT - CAUSES, CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARD

India-China economic relations are characterised by substantial bilateral trade but an uneven balance between exports and imports.

- **Bilateral trade:** Trade between the two countries reached **\$144.45 billion** during January-September 2026, registering 25.4% growth.
- **India's exports:** Indian exports to China rose by 40.7% to \$19.26 billion during the first nine months of 2026.
- **India's imports:** Imports from China increased by 23.3% to \$125.19 billion over the same period.
- **Trade deficit:** The deficit reached \$105.93 billion and was on track to surpass the previous year's record of \$116.12 billion.
- Although exports have grown significantly, they remain much smaller than imports.



#### Structural Causes of the Trade Imbalance

- **Dependence on Chinese intermediate goods**
  - Indian manufacturers import substantial quantities of intermediate goods from China for domestic production. These inputs support industrial activity but also expose Indian supply chains to external disruptions.
  - The continued import of finished products, particularly electronics and machinery, is another concern because it can limit opportunities for domestic manufacturing to capture greater value addition.
- **Unequal trade composition**
  - India imports large quantities of industrial inputs, electronics and machinery, while its exports to China are concentrated in a narrower range of products, including seafood, naphtha and printed circuit boards.
  - This difference in trade composition contributes to the persistent imbalance and highlights the need to diversify India's export basket.

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### Strategic and Supply Chain Concerns

- The trade deficit is not merely a question of the value of imports and exports. It also has implications for India's industrial resilience and economic security.
  - **Export controls:** Chinese restrictions on exports in sectors such as fertilisers and rare earths create uncertainty for Indian industries that depend on these supplies.
  - **Manufacturing vulnerability:** Dependence on imported components and machinery can expose production to external price shocks and supply interruptions.
  - **Limited value addition:** Continued reliance on finished goods can constrain the development of domestic manufacturing capabilities.
  - **External trade pressures:** High import expenditure, including on crude oil and fertilisers, can increase the pressure on India's overall import bill.

### Way Forward

- Addressing the India-China trade deficit requires a combination of market access negotiations, domestic industrial development and export diversification.
- **Improve market access:** Pursue transparent and time-bound resolution of regulatory barriers affecting Indian products in China.
- **Diversify exports:** Expand opportunities in pharmaceuticals, agricultural products, processed foods, engineering goods and other competitive sectors.
- **Strengthen domestic manufacturing:** Improve infrastructure, technology adoption, productivity and component manufacturing to reduce excessive dependence on imported finished goods.
- **Diversify supply chains:** Develop alternative sources for critical inputs while maintaining reliable access to essential Chinese intermediates.
- **Accelerate trade agreements:** Use bilateral and multilateral trade arrangements to expand India's export opportunities across global markets.
- **Promote value addition:** Encourage domestic production of higher-value goods to improve export competitiveness and strengthen industrial capabilities.

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### GLACIAL LAKE OUTBURST FLOOD WARNING SYSTEM



- It is installed at **Ghepan Ghat glacial lake in Himachal Pradesh.**
- It is developed by the **Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC)** under a pilot project funded by the **National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA).**
- **Components:** It comprises a **floating buoy deployed** in the water, an **automatic weather station** on the shore and a **glacier vision unit** equipped with two cameras.
- **Working:**
  - The floating buoy **continuously monitors changes in the water** and transmits data at intervals of **10 minutes under normal conditions.**
  - In an **emergency**, the system is designed to begin **transmitting information within 30 seconds**, enabling authorities to detect sudden changes in the lake.
  - The automatic **weather station records 14 environmental parameters**, while the two-camera **glacier vision unit continuously monitors changes in the lake and its surroundings.**
  - All three systems are interconnected through a **supercomputer-based analytical platform.**
  - It will provide disaster management authorities with **crucial data for timely risk assessment and preparedness against potential hazards.**

#### Significance:

- The installation marks a **significant milestone in monitoring glacial lakes** and assessing potential flood threats in the ecologically sensitive Himalayan region.
- The initiative will also help raise public awareness about **flood-prone areas** and support disaster management planning.

## Current Affairs - 17 October 2026

### NEW CENTIPEDE SPECIES



Recently, researchers discovered three new centipede species from South India and named them as *Rhysida quadrispinosa*, *Rhysida coorgensis* and *Rhysida neyyarensis*.

- It got its name from the Latin-derived term **quadrispinosa**.
- It has **four ventrolateral spines** on its ultimate leg prefemur.
- It features **18 antennal articles**, unique body segment margination starting from tergites 7–11, and a distinct arrangement of spines on its ultimate legs.

#### About *Rhysida coorgensis*:

- It is **named after Coorg in Karnataka**, where researchers first collected the specimen.
- It has a specific paramedian suture starting points on its back plates and unique coxopleural spine configurations

#### About *Rhysida neyyarensis*:

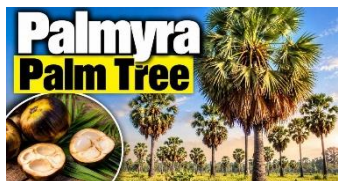
- It is **named after the Neyyar Wildlife Sanctuary in Kerala**, where it was discovered.
- It is distinguished by its specific pattern of **tarsal and tibial spurs**, possessing two tarsal spurs on legs 1 through 19, alongside its own distinct spinal formula on the ultimate legs.

#### Key Facts about Centipede:

- These are long, many-legged
- Centipedes are not insects. They are arthropods in the myriapod group and belong to the class Chilopoda.
- **Habitat:** They live in **damp, sheltered places such as leaf litter**, soil, under bark, beneath rocks and inside rotting logs.
- **Appearance:** They have **segmented bodies, antennae, breathing holes** called spiracles and one pair of legs on each body segment.
- **Diet:** Centipedes are Their first pair of legs has changed into venom claws, called forcipules, which help them catch and hold prey.

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### PALMYRA PALM TREE



India has exported a consignment of 1.755 tonnes of organic 'Palmyra' jaggery powder derived from Palmyra (a variety of palm tree) blossom nectar from Erode district of Tamil Nadu to Varna, Bulgaria.

- It is commonly named as **sugar palm, or toddy palm or fan palm**.
- It is a **native of tropical Africa** but cultivated and naturalized throughout India.
- **Required Climatic Conditions:**
  - **Soil:** It exhibits adaptability to a wide range of soil types, including **arid and wastelands**. They thrive particularly well in **sandy soil, red soil, black soil, and river alluvium**.
  - **Rainfall:** These palms are also **suited for semi-arid regions** with an annual rainfall of less than **750 mm**.
  - They can grow at altitudes from **sea level up to 800 meters**.
  - Palmyra is mainly propagated through seeds and there is no vegetative method available for its propagation.

### **Benefits of Palmyra Palm Tree:**

- The chief product of the **palmyra is the sweet sap** (toddy) obtained by tapping the tip of the
- The **toddy ferments naturally** within a few hours after sunrise and is locally popular as a beverage.
- **Palmyra palm jaggery** (gur) is much more nutritious than crude cane sugar.
- Traditionally, the Indian 'Nadar' community are the people who make their living from this tree using its wood, fruits, sap, stems, petioles and leaves to process a variety of food products, beverages, furniture, building materials, and handicrafts.

## Current Affairs - 17 October 2026

### SUKHNA WETLAND AND SAUJ JHEEL



Recently, India has added Sukhna Wetland and Sauj Jheel to the List of Wetlands of International Importance, bringing its total number of “Ramsar Sites” to 103.

- **Location:** It is located in **Chandigarh** and at the **base of the Outer Himalayas**.
- It is a **peri-urban reservoir** that plays an important role in regulating sediment and water flows from the surrounding catchment.
- It **supports a range of habitats**, from open water to littoral vegetation, scrub and forest, providing habitat for diverse species.
- It is particularly important for resident waterbirds and others migrating along the **Central Asian Flyway**, providing **feeding, breeding, roosting and wintering habitats**.
- **Fauna:** Notable species include the **vulnerable common pochard** (*Aythya ferina*) and the **endangered Pallas’s fish eagle** (*Haliaeetus leucoryphus*). The shallow littoral habitats also support reptiles such as the endangered **black pond turtle** (*Geoclemys hamiltonii*).

#### About Sauj Jheel:

- **Location:** It is located in **Uttar Pradesh**.
- It is a **shallow lake** surrounded by farmland in the **floodplain of the Ganga River**.
- It forms part of a larger network of wetlands, contributing to ecological connectivity in the wider landscape, and is **close to Saman Bird Sanctuary**.
- **Vegetation:** The lake supports diverse wetland-associated vegetation, including the sacred lotus (*Nelumbo nucifera*) and the **wild sugarcane** (*Saccharum spontaneum*).
- **Fauna:** Notable waterbird species recorded at the Site include the **vulnerable sarus crane** (*Grus antigone*) and **greater spotted eagle** (*Clanga clanga*).