STATES

- The Delhi Government – launches the free ride scheme for women in public buses on October 29
  - Under the free ride scheme, the bus conductors would be issuing pink tickets with the value of Rs 10 each to all female passengers free of cost.
  - The cost of each ticket will be reimbursed later to the transporters by the Delhi Government.
  - The free-ride scheme aims to ensure the safety and security of female passengers apart from making the transportation ride smooth for them.

NATIONAL

- Air India - to launch a new flight connecting Amritsar with London Stansted on October 31
The Boeing 787 aircraft will be displaying an important religious symbol ‘Ek Onkar’ or ‘God is One’ to mark the birth anniversary celebrations of Guru Nanak.

This flight service will be helpful for the Sikh pilgrims travelling to India on the occasion of 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev, founder of Sikhism

INTERNATIONAL

- The European Union - agreed to delay Brexit by three more months until January 31
- As per the earlier agreement, Britain was to exit EU by October 31, becoming the first country ever to leave the 28-nation bloc
- Britain’s departure has already been delayed twice by the Parliament on March 29 and April 12, during the tenure of new Prime Minister Boris Johnson
- Boris Johnson’s predecessor, Theresa May, also failed three times to get her deal ratified by Parliament.
- Britain had voted 52%-48% in a referendum in favour of leaving the EU, three and half years ago

INDIA AND NEIGHBOURS

- Pakistan - to establish a Guru Nanak university in Punjab province’s Nankana Sahib, the birth place of Sikhism founder Guru Nanak
- The foundation stone of the Baba Guru Nanak International University (BGNIU), spread over 10 acres, was laid by PM Imran Khan
- A budget of Rs 6 billion will be spent on the project
- It is expected to be completed in three phases.

PERSONALITIES

- Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the leader of terror organization, Islamic State (IS) – was killed in a raid by U.S. special forces in northwest Syria
✓ During the operation, Baghdadi blew himself up in a tunnel along with his three children
✓ A native of Iraq, Al-Baghdadi was the world’s most-wanted terrorist head
✓ A target of a $25 million bounty on him was placed by the American government
✓ The operation was named after Kayla Mueller, an American aid worker who was killed by al-Baghdadi
✓ The raid involved eight helicopters flying more than an hour from an undisclosed base
✓ It was carried out with the cooperation of Russia, Syria, Turkey and Iraq.
✓ At its height, IS controlled vast areas of Iraq and Syria and Baghdadi declared himself a ‘khalifa’

➢ **Nirmal Purja, a Nepali mountaineer, has become the fastest mountain climber as he scaled world’s14 highest peaks in just over six months.**

✓ He completed all 14 mountains, all higher than 8,000 metres (26,250 feet) in seven months under ‘Project Possible’
✓ Purja already had his name in the Guinness Book of Records before conquering the 14 peaks – for having scaled three of them in just five days in 2017 - Mount Everest (8,850 meters), neighboring Lhotse (8,516 meters) and Makalu (8,485 meters).
✓ At the age of 20, Purja joined the British Army's Brigade of Gurkhas and later became a member of the Special Boat Service, an elite unit of the Royal Navy
✓ The previous record of fastest mountain climbing was achieved in a span of 7 years, 11 months and 14 days, by Polish climber Jerzy Kukuczka in 1980s
DEFENCE

- Indo-French joint bilateral army exercise ‘Shakti 2019’ - is scheduled to begin on October 31, 2019 in Bikaner, Rajasthan

- The exercise will be conducted from October 31 to November 13, 2019.
- The 36 hours exercise will be conducted at the Foreign Training Node at Mahajan Field Firing Ranges in Rajasthan
- The Indian side will be represented in the exercise by a contingent of the Sikh Regiment of Sapta Shakti Command.
- ‘Shakti-2019’ will mainly focus on counter-terrorism operations to take place in the backdrop of semi-desert terrain
- The 'Exercise Shakti' series was launched between India and France in 2011.
- Last year, it was conducted in France from January 20 to February 4, 2018 at the combat training centre of Mailly-le-Camp, Aube, in eastern France.
- The Indian Army was represented last year by 45 personnel specialized in mountain combat from the 8th Gorkha Rifles

ECONOMY

- Transactions made through India’s Unified Payments Interface (UPI)—hit a landmark of one billion in October
- UPI, the country’s own domestic payments platform, recently crossed 100 million users, making it the fastest adoption of any payments system anywhere in the world.
- The UPI platform enables users to send money from their account to any account without entering bank details by using an email-like link or scanning a QR code.
- The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) operates the UPI platform
- The NPCI plans to take the network global by enabling acceptance of UPI in countries like Singapore and the UAE.
- The UPI platform was launched before demonetisation in 2016
GooglePay, Paytm and PhonePe—have dominated the market as customers of different banks use largely these three apps along with the NPCI’s BHIM app to transact.

The NPCI had also launched the Ru-Pay network

**SPORTS**

- Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty – finished runner up in the final of the French Open Super 750 at Paris

- The World No. 1 pair lost the game against top seeds Marcus Fernaldi Gideon and Kevin Sanjaya Sukamuljo of Indonesia in the final

- Recently, Satwik and Chirag had won their maiden Super 500 title at the Thailand Open in August

- Partho Ganguli and Vikram Singh Bisht were the last Indian pair to win the French Open in 1983.

- Papua New Guinea – defeated Kenya to book their maiden appearance at the T20 World Cup in Australia next year.

- Emerging cricket nation, Papua New Guinea beats the African nation Kenya by 45 runs at Dubai International Stadium
✓ With the win, they ultimately topped their group and qualified directly for Australia to their first World Cup in any format
✓ Among the Associate nations, Ireland also got qualified to play in the World Cup in Australia