



PATRIOTIC IAS

MONTHLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

JUNE 2026

GENERAL STUDIES PAPER IV (GS IV)

SUBJECT: UPPCS

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01J6 The Voice of Hind Rajab likely to get 'A' certificate

01J6 Evergreen Kohli second oldest to win PoM award in IPL final

PATRIOTIC IAS



26J6. Mahesh Dixit, IPS officer of 1993 batch, named new IB chief

- **Mahesh Dixit, a 1993 batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer of the Andhra Pradesh cadre has been appointed as Director, Intelligence Bureau (DIB), a government order said.**
- **He succeeds Tapan Kumar Deka, who held the post since 2022.**

26J6. Centre's hike in passport application fee to take effect on July 1

- The application fee for an ordinary fresh passport containing **36 pages** has been hiked from **₹1,500** to **₹2,500**, as the **Union government** revised the passport fee structure through an amendment to the **Passports Rules, 1980**.
- The new rules will come into effect from **July 1**.
- According to a **notification** dated **June 20**, and published by the **Ministry of External Affairs** on Thursday, the reissue of a **36-page passport** will also cost **₹2,500**.
- A **tatkal** application for a fresh or reissued passport will cost **₹5,000** as opposed to the current **₹3,500** rate.
- Similarly, the application fee for an ordinary fresh passport or reissue of a passport containing **60 pages** has been hiked from **₹2,000** to **₹3,500**.
- The **tatkal fee** for **60-page passports** will be **₹6,000** as against the current **₹4,000**.
- For **minors**, the fees for a fresh passport or reissue of passport containing **36 pages** is **₹1,750**, the notification added.
- In its **notification**, the government also issued a schedule which will substitute the **"Schedule IV to the Passports Rules, 1980"**.
- The revised schedule mentions **two sub-categories**: for applicants **18 years of age and above**, and minors aged **15 to 18 years**, if applied under this category; and minor applicants **below 18 years of age**.

25J6. QUIZ: FIFA World Cup

1. Who holds the record of scoring the most goals in a single World Cup match?

- **Oleg Salenko** created FIFA World Cup history during the 1994 tournament in the United States by scoring **five goals** in Russia's 6–1 victory over Cameroon.
- This remains the highest number of goals scored by a single player in one FIFA World Cup match.
- **Interestingly, although Russia was eliminated in the group stage, Salenko finished as the tournament's joint top scorer with six goals,**

sharing the **Golden Boot** with Hristo Stoichkov of Bulgaria.

- His five-goal feat remains unmatched in World Cup history.

2. Who holds the record of having played the most minutes in FIFA World Cup history?

- **Lionel Messi** holds the record for the **most minutes played** in FIFA World Cup history. After leading Argentina to victory in the **2022 FIFA World Cup**, he surpassed Paolo Maldini's previous record and had accumulated **2,315 minutes** by the end of the 2022 tournament.

3. Who is the only player to have won the Golden Ball and Golden Glove awards in the same FIFA World Cup tournament?

Answer: Oliver Kahn (Germany)

- **German goalkeeper Oliver Kahn** achieved a unique milestone at the **2002 FIFA World Cup** by becoming the only goalkeeper to win the **Golden Ball**, awarded to the tournament's best player, while also receiving the **Golden Glove** as the best goalkeeper.
- His exceptional performances guided Germany to the final, where they finished runners-up to Brazil.

4. Who won the Golden Boot and Golden Ball in the same World Cup and was part of the winning team?

Answer: Paolo Rossi (Italy)

- **Paolo Rossi** delivered one of the greatest comeback stories in football at the **1982 FIFA World Cup** in Spain.
- After returning from suspension, he scored **six goals**, winning the **Golden Boot** as the tournament's top scorer and the **Golden Ball** as its best player.
- Rossi's memorable hat-trick against Brazil and decisive goals in the semi-final and final inspired Italy to lift their third FIFA World Cup title.

5. Who has won the FIFA World Cup as a player, coach/manager, and also won the Best Young Player award?

Answer: Franz Beckenbauer (Germany)

- **Franz Beckenbauer** is one of football's greatest legends. He won the **FIFA World Cup** as **captain of West Germany in 1974** and later guided the team to another World Cup title as **manager in 1990**.
- **Earlier, during the 1966 FIFA World Cup, he was recognised as the**



tournament's outstanding young player, an honour retrospectively acknowledged because the official Best Young Player award was introduced later.

6. Which country withdrew from the 1950 FIFA World Cup because FIFA required players to wear boots, while they were accustomed to playing barefoot?

Answer (Updated): India (However, the traditional explanation is incomplete.)

- India qualified for the **1950 FIFA World Cup** after several Asian teams withdrew, but the **All India Football Federation (AIFF)** later decided not to participate.
- Although a popular belief claims that **FIFA's prohibition on playing barefoot caused India's withdrawal**, historical research shows this was **not the sole or official reason**.
- Major factors included **financial constraints, insufficient preparation time, administrative decisions, and the AIFF's greater focus on the 1952 Olympics**.

25J6. Kim unveils plans for 10,000-tonne warships, nuclear navy in N. Korea

- **North Korea** will equip its **navy** with **nuclear weapons** and build larger **warships**, leader **Kim Jong-un** said, according to **state media** on Wednesday.
- **Mr. Kim** made his remarks at the **commissioning of the Choe Hyon** — one of two **5,000-tonne class warships** launched last year — in the **port city of Nampho** on Tuesday.

25J6. DR Congo's living statue fan makes his World Cup debut

- **DR Congo's famous living statue** finally made his **World Cup** debut on Tuesday.
- **Michel Nkuka Mboladinga**, who gained fame during the **AFCON** (Africa Cup of Nations) for posing as a statue of **Congo's assassinated independence leader Patrice Lumumba** for the entirety of games, attended the match against **Colombia** after missing the opener against **Portugal**.

24J6. President presents second set of Padma awards

- **Tennis legend Vijay Amritraj**, actors **Mammootty** and **Satish Shah**, cricketer **Rohit Sharma**, and playback singer **Alka Yagnik** were among the eminent personalities who received the **Padma awards** from **President Droupadi Murmu** on Tuesday.

- In the second civil investiture ceremony at the **Ganatantra Mandap of the Rashtrapati Bhavan**, the President presented the **Padma Vibhushan** to former Supreme Court judge **K. T. Thomas** for **public affairs** and to eminent Malayalam journalist **P. Narayanan** for contribution to **literature and education**.
- **Alka Yagnik**, **Mammootty**, American oncologist **Dattatreya Nori**, **Vijay Amritraj**, industrialist **S.K.M. Maeilanandhan**, and social worker and educationist **Vellappally Natesan** received the **Padma Bhushan** from the President during the ceremony.
- **Rupi Soren**, wife of **Jharkhand Mukti Morcha** founder **Shibu Soren**, received the **Padma Bhushan** on behalf of the late leader.

Padma Shri

- The President conferred the **Padma Shri** on cricketer **Rohit Sharma**, who led India to victory in the last **T-20 World Cup**, and on hockey player **Savita Punia**.
- **Vladimir Mestvirishvili**, the Georgian coach who mentored Indian Olympic medallists such as **Sushil Kumar**, **Yogeshwar Dutt**, and **Ravi Dahiya**, was awarded the **Padma Shri** posthumously.
- The President also conferred the **Padma Shri** on actor **Satish Shah** posthumously.

24J6. Canberra town crier shouts his way into Guinness records

- **Joseph McGrail-Bateup**, an Australian professional **air conditioner cleaner** and honorary **town crier**, has been recognised as the world's **loudest person**.
- **Guinness World Records** last week acknowledged that the **58-year-old Canberra resident** recorded the loudest ever shout by an individual. He yelled "**now**" at **122.4 decibels (dB)**.
- That broke the previous record of **121.7 dB** set by Northern Ireland schoolteacher **Annalisa Flanagan** in **1994**.
- **She had yelled an ear-piercing "quiet."**
- **That is in the noise range of a chain saw, a jet aircraft taking off and an ambulance siren at close range.**
- The record attempt was not something Mr. McGrail-Bateup could train for, he said on Tuesday.

23J6. Tushar Mehta reappointed Solicitor-General for 3 years

- The **Centre** has reappointed **Tushar Mehta**, the **Solicitor-General of India**, for a further term of **three years** from **July 1**.



- An order in this regard was issued by the **Department of Personnel and Training** on **June 20**, an official source said.
- The **Appointments Committee of the Cabinet** approved the reappointment, ensuring continuity in the government's legal representation before the **Supreme Court** and other constitutional courts.
- The Centre also reappointed **five Additional Solicitors-General** — **Vikramjit Banerjee, K.M. Nataraj, Suryaprakash V. Raju, N. Venkataraman, and Aishwarya Bhati** — for the **Supreme Court** for a **three-year term**.

23J6. Alan Greenspan, U.S. Fed 'maestro', passes away at 100

- **Alan Greenspan**, hailed as the greatest **Federal Reserve chairman** when he retired in 2006 but derided for a severe **financial crisis** that followed barely 2 years later, died on Monday aged **100**, his wife said.
- Greenspan, who exerted a powerful influence on the **U.S. economy** during his tenure at the helm of the **Fed** from August 1987 to January 2006, died at his home from complications of **Parkinson's Disease**, Andrea Mitchell said in a statement.

PARKINSON'S DISEASE (PD)

- **Parkinson's Disease (PD)** is a **progressive neurodegenerative disorder** that primarily affects movement, balance, coordination, and several non-motor functions of the body.
- It occurs when nerve cells (neurons) in a specific part of the brain called the **Substantia Nigra** gradually degenerate and die.
- These neurons produce **dopamine**, a neurotransmitter that helps control smooth and coordinated muscle movements.
- As dopamine levels decrease, symptoms of Parkinson's disease gradually appear and worsen over time.
- The disease is named after **Dr. James Parkinson**, who first described it in **1817** in his work *An Essay on the Shaking Palsy*.
- **Basic Science Behind Parkinson's Disease**

Role of Dopamine

- Dopamine is a chemical messenger that allows different parts of the brain to communicate effectively.
- It plays a major role in:
- Movement control.
- Coordination.

- Learning.
- Motivation.
- **Reward mechanisms.**
- In Parkinson's disease, approximately **60–80% of dopamine-producing neurons** are lost before significant symptoms become noticeable.

Substantia Nigra

- The **Substantia Nigra** is located in the **midbrain**.
- It forms part of the **Basal Ganglia**, which regulates voluntary movement.
- Degeneration of this region leads to the characteristic movement problems seen in Parkinson's disease.

Causes

- The exact cause remains unknown.
- **Most cases are considered idiopathic**, meaning no single definite cause has been identified.

Genetic Factors

- **Certain gene mutations can increase susceptibility.**
- Important genes include:
- **LRRK2**
- **SNCA**
- **PARKIN**
- **PINK1**
- **Environmental Factors**
- **Exposure to some pesticides and industrial chemicals may increase risk.**
- Repeated head injuries have also been associated with a higher risk.
- **Ageing**
- Age is the most significant risk factor.
- Most cases occur after the age of **60 years**.

Major Symptoms

Motor Symptoms

- Resting tremor (shaking of hands, fingers, legs, or jaw).
- Bradykinesia (slowness of movement).
- Muscle rigidity or stiffness.
- Postural instability and balance problems.
- Difficulty in walking.
- Reduced facial expressions ("masked face").

Non-Motor Symptoms

- Depression and anxiety.
- Sleep disturbances.
- Constipation.
- **Loss of smell (Anosmia).**
- Cognitive impairment.



- Fatigue.
- Speech difficulties.
- Autonomic dysfunction (blood pressure and bladder control issues).

Stages of Parkinson's Disease

Early Stage

- Mild tremors.
- Slight stiffness.
- Symptoms often affect only one side of the body.

Moderate Stage

- Increasing difficulty with movement.
- Walking and balance problems begin.

Advanced Stage

- Severe mobility limitations.
- Dependence on caregivers for daily activities.
- Cognitive decline may develop in some patients.

Diagnosis

Clinical Diagnosis

- There is currently no single laboratory test that definitively diagnoses Parkinson's disease.
- Diagnosis is mainly based on:
 - Medical history.
 - Neurological examination.
 - Observation of symptoms.

Brain Imaging

- MRI is used mainly to exclude other disorders.
- Specialized imaging such as dopamine transporter scans (DaT scans) may assist diagnosis.

Treatment

Levodopa

- The most effective medication.
- It is converted into dopamine inside the brain.

Dopamine Agonists

- Mimic dopamine action.
- Examples:
 - Pramipexole.
 - Ropinirole.

MAO-B Inhibitors

- Help preserve dopamine.

Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS)

- Surgical procedure involving implantation of electrodes in specific brain regions.
- Useful in selected patients with advanced disease.
- **Supportive Therapies**
 - Physiotherapy.
 - Speech therapy.
 - Occupational therapy.
 - Nutritional support.

23J6. Japanese firm JAMCO launches Centre of Excellence in Pune

- **Tokyo-headquartered** aircraft interiors company **JAMCO Interiors** on Monday launched its **Centre of Excellence** in Pune, committing **\$150 million** to expand its India workforce "**six-fold**" and build the country into a **design engineering hub**, while also beginning to source components from Indian suppliers.
- "We are looking at **design technology** being transferred to India so that India becomes a **design centre** for our laboratory products," said **Kate Schaefer**, Executive Chair and CEO, JAMCO Interiors.
- JAMCO will also see a similar centre being inaugurated in **Bengaluru** later this week.
- A **design centre** in India would mean back-office engineering support which sends out simple packages of independent design work evolving into engineering and **product-development** base capable of handling "**cradle-to-grave**" designing work spanning the original request for quotation (**RFQ**), product design and development, certification support, and entry into service.
- The company supplies approximately **50%** of the world's **widebody lavatories**, including **100%** on the **Boeing 787** and **777**, and approximately **40%** of the world's widebody **galleys** (kitchen section), including **100%** on the Boeing 787, along with **100% Increased Cabin Efficiency (ICE)** galleys on the **Airbus A350**.
- Its portfolio also includes **business class seating, branding panels, and window shades**.
- The Pune centre has already received **technology transfer** for the design and development of aircraft **galleys**, and is expected to acquire similar capabilities for **lavatories** in the near future.

23J6. Messi sets record, Argentina in knockouts

- The **talisman** goes past **Klose** for the most number of goals in the showpiece after missing an early penalty; his **brace** consigns **Austria** to a **0-2 defeat**.
- And, just like that, he was the holder of most number of goals in the showpiece, going past German **Miroslav Klose**.

23J6. Vondrousova gets ban for refusing anti-doping test



- Former **Wimbledon women's champion Marketa Vondrousova** has been handed a **four-year suspension** for refusing an **anti-doping test** in December, the **International Tennis Integrity Agency (ITIA)** said on Monday.

23J6. Chiranth becomes the first Indian to win at Motegi racetrack

- Chiranth Vishwanath** from **Bengaluru** became the **first Indian** to win a race at the iconic **Mobility Resort Motegi racetrack** in **Japan** recently.
- He finished the **third round** of the **FIM Asia Road Racing Championship** with a victory and **fourth-place finish** in the **TVS Asia Championship** category.

23J6. Aaruthran owns the Mini under-10 race

- The **boy** comes out on top in the **Super Heat** and **Finals**; **Shiv Neel, Narain Karthikeyan's** son, takes the honours in the **Mini category**.
- Aaruthran Prabhu (Kartkrew Motorsports)** dominated the **Mini under-10 category**, winning both the **Super Heat** and **Finals**, in the second round of the **RA Motorsports-promoted IAME National Series India** held in **Coimbatore** on Sunday.

22J6. All eyes on Messi and Argentina

- After scoring the **61st hat-trick** of his career, 50 for clubs and 11 for **Argentina**, in the 3-0 win over **Algeria**, **Messi** stands one goal away from moving past **Miroslav Klose** as the **World Cup's all-time leading scorer**.

22J6. India regains Nations Cup, back in women's Pro League

- India** defeated host **New Zealand** 2-0 in the **final** to win its second **FIH Women's Nations Cup** title and secure a promotion to the **FIH Women's Pro League** here on Sunday.
- Lalremsiami** won the **Player-of-the-Match** award, while **Deepika** with six goals finished as the **joint-top scorer** in the tournament along with **USA's Ashley Sessa**.
- India remained **unbeaten** throughout the campaign, defeating **USA** 3-2, **Japan** 2-1, and **Uruguay** 3-2 in pool matches before routing **Chile** 6-0 in the **semifinal**.
- To recognise the team's achievements, **Hockey India** has announced a **cash award** of **₹ three lakh** for each player and **₹1.5 lakh** for each m

ember of the **support staff**.

21J6. Officer at the helm

- The new **Army Chief** assumes command at a juncture marked by rapid **technological advances**, evolving **security challenges**, and a growing emphasis on **joint operations**.
- Lt. Gen. Dhiraj Seth**, presently serving as the **Vice Chief of the Army Staff**, will assume office as the **31st Chief of the Army Staff** on **June 30**, succeeding **Gen. Upendra Dwivedi** upon his retirement.
- Lt. Gen. Seth will be the **seventh officer** from the **Armoured Corps** to assume the post.
- Of the previous six **Armoured Corps** officers who became **Army chief**, two took over after the position unexpectedly fell vacant.
- While the **Infantry** has produced most of India's **Army chiefs**, five have come from the **Corps of Artillery** and one from the **Corps of Engineers**.
- Lt. Gen. Seth is set to remain in office until **August 31, 2028**.
- The last **Armoured Corps** officer to head the Indian Army was **Gen. S. Roy Chowdhury**, who served as **Army chief** from **1994 to 1997**.
- A highly accomplished **Armoured Corps** officer with nearly **four decades of distinguished service**, Lt. Gen. Seth brings extensive operational experience, strategic vision and a strong record in military modernisation.
- An alumnus of the prestigious **National Defence Academy, Khadakwasla**, and the **Indian Military Academy, Dehradun**, Lt. Gen. Seth was commissioned into the **Armoured Corps** in **December 1986**.
- Throughout his career, he has served across diverse operational environments, from **desert warfare formations** to **counter-insurgency operations** in **Jammu and Kashmir**.
- He commanded an **Armoured Regiment** in the desert sector, an **Armoured Brigade** in the Western Theatre and a **Counter-Insurgency Force** in **Jammu & Kashmir**.
- Following his promotion to **Lieutenant General**, he led the prestigious **Sudarshan Chakra Corps**, one of the Indian Army's premier strike formations, before serving as **General Officer Commanding, Delhi Area**.
- He later commanded both **South Western Command** and **Southern Command**.
- Lt. Gen. Seth has also held several key staff and strategic appointments.
- These include **Brigade Major** of an Independent **Armoured Brigade** in **Jammu & Kashmir**, **Operations Officer** with the **UN Mission in Angola** and **Assistant Military Secretary** at **Army Headquarters**.
- Widely regarded as one of the architects of the Indian Army's **modernisation efforts**, Lt. Gen. Seth has played a pivotal role in strategic planning, force



structuring and capability development.

Tri-service exercises

- He also oversaw major operational preparedness and training activities, including large-scale **joint and tri-service exercises** focused on emerging domains such as **cyber, information warfare, multi-domain operations** and **amphibious capabilities**.
- Among these, **Exercise Trishul** reflected the growing emphasis on integrated operations and joint warfighting concepts.
- His tenure witnessed continued emphasis on **Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR)**, reflecting the Indian Army's commitment to national resilience and support for civil authorities.
- He has served as **Colonel Capability Development for Mechanised Forces, Brigadier Perspective Plans and Acquisition, and Additional Director General Capability Development**.
- In these capacities, he contributed to the Army's **Long-Term Integrated Perspective Planning** process and future capability enhancement roadmap.
- As **General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Southern Command**, he championed **technology adoption, innovation** and **civil-military collaboration**.
- A scholar-soldier, Lt. Gen. Seth is a graduate of the **Higher Command Course** and the **National Defence College**, and has attended advanced military courses in **France** and the **U.S.**
- He comes from a **military family**.
- He is the son of **Lt. Gen. Krishna Mohan Seth**, former **Adjutant General of the Indian Army** and former **Governor of Tripura and Chhattisgarh**.
- The family shares a unique legacy, with both father and son having commanded the **Sudarshan Chakra Corps**.
- His younger brother, **Rear Admiral Ravnish Seth**, is a serving **Flag Officer** in the **Indian Navy**.
- Lt. Gen. Dhiraj Seth assumes command at a crucial juncture marked by rapid **technological advancements**, evolving **security challenges** and an increasing emphasis on **joint military operations**.
- The task before him is to lead the **Indian Army** through its next phase of **transformation and preparedness**.

20J6. Maker of Battlefield says film is very much related to present-day conflict in Manipur

- An anti-war documentary from the ethnic

conflict-scarred **Manipur** is set to be screened at the ongoing **19th Mumbai International Film Festival (MIFF)** on Saturday.

- The seven-day **MIFF**, South Asia's oldest and largest festival dedicated to documentary, short fiction, and animation films, ends on Sunday.
- Manipuri filmmaker **Borun Thokchom's Battlefield**, an 80-minute documentary that revisits the battles of **Imphal** and **Kohima** during **World War II**, took 13 years to complete.
- Another film from **Manipur**, **Trishul Yumnam** and **Yaso Sharma's** 15-minute animation **Story of a Forest**, has also made it to **MIFF's** international competition.
- Present-day **Manipur** and **Nagaland** were theatres of **World War II** in 1944.
- Fought between the **Allied forces** and the **Imperial Japanese Army** alongside **Subhash Chandra Bose's Indian National Army**, the battles named after the State capitals are considered a turning point in the war in Asia.
- Locals, however, continue to feel the impact of the battles.
- "**World War II** turned **Manipur** into a frontline battlefield.
- Villages were bombed, people were displaced, and locals watched big foreign armies fight for their own freedom.
- That experience gave people new ideas about self-rule and nationhood," Mr. Thokchom told The Hindu.
- "Soon after the war, **Manipur** was merged with **India**.
- The destruction caused by the war and that forced merger left behind a deep anger, and that anger grew into the ethnic and separatist movements that have lasted ever since," he said.

Ethnic violence

- **The battlefield** was almost complete when the ethnic violence between the **Meitei** and the **Kuki-Zo** communities erupted in **Manipur** on May 3, 2023.
- It eventually qualified for **MIFF 2026**.
- Mr. Thokchom said the subject of his documentary may be a war fought eight decades ago, but "it is very much related" to the present-day conflict in **Manipur**.

20J6. Stripping Zelenskyy of top award: Poland President

- **Poland's nationalist President Karol Nawrocki** announced on Friday he was stripping **Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelenskyy** of the country's top award, escalating a row between the neighbours and allies over **Second World War** massacres.
- Relations between **Warsaw** and **Kyiv** have



been tense for days over Mr. Zelenskyy's naming of a Ukrainian army unit after a **Second World War nationalist insurgent army** that took part in massacres against Poles.

- Mr. Nawrocki's decision landed days before Poland is due to host the annual **Ukraine Recovery Conference** in its Baltic city of **Gdansk**.
- It is not clear if Mr. Zelenskyy will attend.
- Mr. Nawrocki revoked Mr. Zelenskyy's **Order of the White Eagle** — Poland's highest award — over the objections of both Kyiv and Poland's Prime Minister **Donald Tusk**.
- **"Historical truth** is not, and can never be, a bargaining chip," he said in a statement announcing the decision.
- Mr. Nawrocki said Poland had "repeatedly" called on Ukraine to reverse the naming of the unit.
- "The Ukrainian side's position has not changed," he added.
- "Therefore, in light of President **Volodymyr Zelenskyy's** consent to name one of the units of the **Armed Forces of Ukraine 'Heroes of the UPA'**... I have decided to revoke the **Order of the White Eagle** from the President of Ukraine," he said.
- **Kyiv** said the decision was a **"strategic mistake"** from which **"only Moscow** stands to gain".
- Ukrainian Foreign Minister **Andriy Sybiga** said he now planned to return an award he had received from Poland in **2022** after the "unjustified, impulsive and disrespectful" decision.
- **Poland** has been one of **Ukraine's** main allies during more than four years of **Moscow's invasion**, taking in hundreds of thousands of refugees and serving as a logistics hub for **Western aid** to Ukraine.

19J6. QUIZ

1. James Madison and the War of 1812

- James Madison, the fourth President of the United States, played a central role in the outbreak of the **War of 1812**.
- On June 1, 1812, he sent a message to Congress detailing American grievances against Britain, including the impressment of American sailors, interference with U.S. trade, and restrictive maritime policies during the **Napoleonic Wars**.
- Congress approved the declaration of war, and Madison signed it on June 18, 1812, formally initiating the conflict.

2. Paul McCartney and The Beatles

- **Sir Paul McCartney**, born on June 18, 1942, in **L**

iverpool, England, is one of the most influential musicians in modern history.

- He achieved worldwide fame as a founding member of The Beatles, serving as bassist, vocalist, and songwriter alongside John Lennon.
- The **Beatles transformed popular music through innovative songwriting and recording techniques.**
- Following the band's breakup in 1970, McCartney enjoyed successful careers with Wings and as a solo artist.

3. SALT II Treaty

- **The Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT II) Treaty was signed on June 18, 1979, by U.S. President Jimmy Carter and Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev in Vienna.**
- The agreement aimed **to curb the production and deployment of strategic nuclear weapons** by the two Cold War superpowers.
- Although the **U.S. The Senate never formally ratified the treaty following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan**, both countries largely adhered to its provisions for several years.
- **SALT II represented a major effort toward nuclear arms control and strategic stability.**

4. Charles de Gaulle's Appeal from London

- **Answer: Charles de Gaulle**
- On June 18, 1940, **French General Charles de Gaulle delivered his historic "Appeal of 18 June" from London after France's defeat by Nazi Germany.**
- **Broadcast through the BBC, he urged French citizens, soldiers, and officials to continue resisting German occupation rather than accept surrender.**
- **The speech became a symbol of French resistance during World War II and laid the foundation for the Free French movement.**
- **De Gaulle later emerged as one of France's most influential leaders and served as President of the French Republic.**

5. George Mallory and Mount Everest

- **British explorer and mountaineer George Mallory, born on June 18, 1886, is remembered for his pioneering attempts to climb Mount Everest.**
- **During the 1924 British Everest Expedition, Mallory and fellow climber Andrew Irvine disappeared near the summit.**
- **Their fate remained one of mountaineering's greatest mysteries for decades. Mallory's body was discovered in 1999, but it remains uncertain whether he reached the summit before his death.**



- His famous response to why he wanted to climb Everest—"Because it is there"—has become legendary.

- Britain (United Kingdom)** announced plans to prohibit children under the age of 16 from accessing major social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, and X.

6. Susan B. Anthony and Voting Rights

- Susan B. Anthony was a leading American suffragist and advocate for women's rights.
- In the 1872 U.S. presidential election, she voted despite laws prohibiting women from doing so.
- She was subsequently arrested, tried, and fined \$100.
- Anthony refused to pay the fine, arguing that she had exercised her constitutional rights as a citizen.
- Her act of civil disobedience became a landmark event in the women's suffrage movement. Decades later, the **Nineteenth Amendment granted American women the right to vote in 1920.**

3. Bharat Innovates 2026

- Bharat Innovates 2026** was jointly inaugurated by Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** and French President **Emmanuel Macron** in **Nice, France**, on June 14, 2026.
- The initiative is part of the **India–France Year of Innovation** and seeks to strengthen cooperation in deep technology, startups, artificial intelligence, research, and innovation ecosystems.
- The event brings together entrepreneurs, researchers, investors, policymakers, and industry leaders from both countries.

18J6. Manpreet scales a new peak

- Manpreet Singh**, with his **413th** appearance, became India's most-capped hockey player during the **FIH Pro League** match against **Germany** here on Wednesday.
- The **33-year-old** mid-eld star surpassed former captain and current **Hockey India** president **Dilip Tirkey**, who represented the country **412** times.
- In recognition of his achievement, **Hockey India** announced a cash reward of **₹10 lakh** for **Manpreet**.
- The day was made more special as **India** defeated **Germany 3-1** through goals from **Mandeep Singh (seventh minute)**, **Shilanand Lakra (13th)** and **Nilakanta Sharma (35th)**.
- Raphael Hartkopf (45th)** scored for **Germany**.

4. Elon Musk became the world's first trillionaire

- Following the reported **SpaceX IPO** and the continued rise in the valuation of his businesses, **Elon Musk** was widely reported to have become the world's first **trillionaire**. Musk's wealth is linked primarily to his stakes in **SpaceX**, **Tesla**, **xAI**, and other technology ventures.

5. Google Gemini

- Google Gemini**, developed by **Google** **DeepMind**, powers the rebuilt version of **Apple's Siri** through an external AI partnership.
- Gemini is a multimodal AI system capable of understanding and generating text, images, code, and other forms of data.

17J6. QUIZ

1. Anthropic

- Anthropic**, the U.S.-based artificial intelligence company behind the **Claude AI** models, temporarily disabled access to its most advanced models after the U.S. government ordered restrictions on foreign access, citing national security concerns.
- The **directive** affected the newly launched **Claude Fable 5** and **Claude Mythos 5** models. **Anthropic** stated that, because it could not selectively block only foreign users, it suspended access more broadly while discussions with U.S. authorities continued.

6. Razorpay

- Razorpay**, one of India's leading fintech companies, reportedly filed confidential documents for an Initial Public Offering (**IPO**) valued at around **\$600 million**.
- Founded in 2014, Razorpay provides digital payment solutions, payment gateways, banking services, and financial management tools for businesses.

7. Byju Raveendran

- Byju Raveendran**, founder of the edtech company **BYJU'S**, received temporary relief from a Singapore court in a contempt-related legal matter.

17J6. Astha breaks 17-year-old 200m butterfly record



- **Railways swimmer Astha Choudhury** clocked **2:18.37s** to break the **17-year-old women's 200m butterfly** record on the opening day of the **National Aquatics Championships** in **Ahmedabad** on Tuesday.
- **Vinayak Vijay** (men's **200m medley**, **2:04.13**) and **Aditi Hegde** (women's **1500m freestyle**, **17:20.82**) rewrote two new **individual records**.
- Meanwhile, **Karnataka women** registered **3:53.45** to shatter the **two-year-old 4x100m relay** record.

16J6. Kerala rolls out free travel for women on KSRTC buses

- Billed as a significant step towards **women's empowerment**, the **Kerala government** on Monday launched its flagship '**Priyadarshini**' **free travel scheme** for all women and transgender persons on ordinary buses operated by the **Kerala State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC)**.
- Under the scheme, women and transgender persons can travel free of charge on seven categories of KSRTC ordinary services — **ordinary, city ordinary, limited-stop ordinary, fair-stage ordinary, town-to-town, point-to-point, and Gramavandi services**.
- During the initial phase, women and transgender passengers will be allowed to travel free of charge on ordinary bus services for the first **100 days**.
- After a review of the scheme's performance, the government plans to extend the benefit to other categories of services.

16J6. Author-entrepreneur Indira Lankesh passes away at 83

- **Author Indira Lankesh**, 83, died of age-related ailments at her residence in **Bengaluru** on Monday.
- Indira's memoir **Hulimavu Mattu Nanu** is considered a landmark among memoirs by women in **Kannada**.

16J6. U.K. govt. bans social media for children under 16

- Britain will ban children aged under **16** from using **social media apps**, including **Snapchat, TikTok and YouTube**, to protect them from harmful content and excessive screen time, **Prime Minister Keir Starmer** said on Monday.
- **YouTube and Meta**, the parent company of **Facebook and Instagram**, warned that a blanket ban could push kids into unregulated online spaces.
- The ban, which is expected to take effect early

next year, makes the **U.K.** part of a growing global movement to tighten **online safety for children**.

- **Australia, Canada, Brazil and Indonesia** have introduced legislation or announced age-based restrictions or requirements for children's access to social media.
- The **U.K.** said its ban will apply to platforms including **Snapchat, TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, Facebook and X**, but not **YouTube Kids** or messaging services like **WhatsApp** and **Signal**.

15J6. Army unveils new uniform policy, phases out colonial-era practices

- In a significant move aimed at modernising military traditions and reinforcing an indigenous identity, the Indian Army has introduced revised dress regulations that progressively remove residual colonial-era practices, terminology, and non-essential accoutrements.
- The new policy, elaborated in the **Army Uniforms-2026 Pamphlet**, reflects the Army's effort to align its dress regulations with contemporary Indian values while maintaining the service's rich traditions and professional standards.
- A notable feature of the revised regulations is the introduction of a common **Uniform Numbering Scheme** for the Army, Navy, and the Air Force.
- The initiative is intended to improve clarity, interoperability, and synergy among the three services while simplifying references to various dress categories.
- The Army has retained four broad categories of uniforms — **Ceremonial Dress, Working Dress, Mess Dress, and Combat Dress**.
- **Unique dress numbers have been assigned to each uniform for ease of identification and administration**.
- Reflecting India's evolving national identity and contemporary ethos, the latest edition of the Army Uniforms Pamphlet introduces several key changes aimed at shedding remnants of colonial-era practices.
- Among the notable reforms are the **inclusion of the traditional Bandi Jacket** as part of formal civil attire, removal of the **pouch belt** from Mess Dress Nos. 5 and 6, making sword carriage by the **Reviewing Officer** optional, and discontinuing outdated terminology such as "**Royal**".
- The Army has announced the phased withdrawal of legacy patterns such as **Dress No. 3A**, which will be discontinued by **June 30, 2029**.

15J6. INS Sharda concludes visit to



Colombo, boosts bilateral ties

- **Indian Naval Ship (INS) Sharda departed Colombo on June 13 after a successful port call** that further strengthened maritime cooperation and friendship between India and Sri Lanka.
- The Indian Navy informed that as part of capacity-building initiatives, Sri Lankan Navy personnel received training in **small arms handling, basic firefighting, first-aid and rescue procedures** aboard the ship.

14J6. Lieutenant-General Dhiraj Seth named next Army Chief

- The government has appointed **Lieutenant-General Dhiraj Seth**, serving as the **Vice-Chief of the Army Staff**, as the next **Chief of the Army Staff** with effect from the afternoon of **June 30**.
- The **present Chief of the Army Staff, General Upendra Dwivedi**, retires from service the same day.
- As a **Lieutenant-General**, he commanded the **Sudarshan Chakra Corps** and later served as the **General Officer Commanding, Delhi Area**.

14J6. The house of cards

- The governing body of the 'beautiful game', long dogged by allegations of **corruption** and **abuse of power**, now faces criticism for its muted response to **U.S. immigration authorities** denying entry to fans, officials, and team personnel.
- The **Federation Internationale de Football Association**, known worldwide by its acronym **FIFA**, is the most powerful sports body outside the **International Olympic Committee**.
- It is the global custodian of football — popularly called '**the beautiful game**' — and conducts the **World Cup**, the most prestigious single-sport competition in the universe.
- What **started in 1930** as a 13-team tournament has now grown into a behemoth.
- The **ongoing edition in the U.S., Canada and Mexico** is the 23rd World Cup, and features a record **48 teams** and **104 matches**.
- Founded in **1904** in **Paris**, FIFA started with seven members — **France, Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, and Spain**.
- Its original mandate was to bring structure to the international game, organise fixtures, and agree on a common set of rules.
- The **British associations in England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland**, which predated FIFA and had already set in place organised football in their territories, joined FIFA starting in **1905**.
- Though the equation was stormy in the initial

decades — with the **First World War** and disputes over monetary compensation for amateur players competing at the Olympics leading to the British associations' withdrawal on multiple occasions — it stabilised after the **Second World War** and has remained so until now.

- After **Jules Rimet** took over as president in **1921**, FIFA was in charge of football at the Olympics for the first time at **Paris 1924**.
- The success of that, and of the event four years later in **Amsterdam**, prompted FIFA to think of a tournament of its own.
- The **inaugural World Cup** was born in **1930** and was held in **Uruguay**, the nation which won the Olympic golds in **1924** and **1928**.
- The in-form team, unsurprisingly, also became the first world champion.
- Since then, such has FIFA's growth been that it now has **211 members**, more than the **UN**.
- At its core, it is a **non-profit organisation** that "oversees and promotes the development of football at every level".
- But it is also among the richest bodies.
- At the end of **2025**, FIFA's reserves, according to its own financial report, amounted to **\$2.69 billion**.
- **Cape Verde**, which is competing in North America this summer and is the third-smallest nation ever to qualify (population less than six lakhs), has reserves of **\$0.78 billion**.

Generous powers

- Understandably, the **FIFA president**, who sits atop this edifice, wields enormous power, and with a generous term limit of **three four-year periods** (consecutive or otherwise), he or she can take decisions that can have lasting consequences.
- Prior to **2016**, term limits weren't enforced.
- In fact, for **41 years** from **1974 to 2015**, FIFA just had three presidents — **Stanley Rous, Joao Havelange, and Sepp Blatter**.
- Before that, **Jules Rimet** was at the helm for **33 years**.
- Current president **Gianni Infantino** has been the leading man since early **2016**.
- It is this structure, which allows a FIFA president to turn the organisation into a personal **fiefdom**, that has given rise to most controversies.
- The bosses have never shied away from striking friendships with problematic political figures and **authoritarian regimes** in search of big capital.
- FIFA, by virtue of being a **non-profit**, is duty-bound to redistribute its revenues to member nations.
- Prima facie, it's a democratic move, and even noble, considering that the money ensures the sport's survival and development in many countries.



- But this dole has often been weaponised in return for votes to keep the head in power for perpetuity.
- Every FIFA member, big or small, has a vote, and is directly involved in electing the president.
- The **1934 World Cup** was held in **Benito Mussolini's Italy**.
- The **1978 edition** was conducted in **Argentina** under dictator **Gen. Jorge Rafael Videla's** rule and **Havelange's** blessings.
- **Rous** was unwavering in his support for **Apartheid South Africa** while **Blatter** dangled the monetary carrot to the developing world to keep his throne for as long as he did.
- It is ironic that **Infantino** would preside over a FIFA which has remained unchanged.
- He vaulted to power promising reforms after serious **corruption charges** related to the allotment of the **2018** and **2022 World Cups** to **Russia** and **Qatar**.
- But he has since cultivated relationships with **Vladimir Putin** and **Donald Trump**, and attracted a deal worth **\$1 billion** from **Saudi Arabia**.
- In **2019**, he accepted the **Russian Order of Friendship medal** from Mr. Putin.
- Last December, FIFA created the first-ever **Peace Prize** and awarded it to Mr. Trump.
- Infantino has also moved to extend his term beyond the **12-year ceiling** that was brought in at the Extraordinary FIFA Congress in **2016**.
- The 56-year-old has said his first three years in office (**2016-19**) were from Blatter's unfinished term and hence would not stop him from being re-elected in **2027**.
- At the ongoing World Cup, FIFA has been heavily criticised for its cavalier attitude regarding American immigration authorities' arbitrary actions in denying entry to fans, match-officials and team personnel alike.
- Most notable was the rejection meted out to **Somalian referee Omar Artan**, the best men's referee from Africa in **2025**.

Limits of influence

- **Infantino** has defended FIFA by saying there are limits to how much the governing body can influence an individual country's immigration policies.
- But a decade ago, when **Trump** had signed an executive order banning immigration from six Muslim-majority countries, Infantino had declared that "there is no World Cup" if supporters and officials do not have access.
- While increasing the number of teams in the World Cup to **48** will help enlarge the game's footprint, the **FIFA Club World Cup** bloating to a **32-team** affair further entrenches FIFA's power.
- The competition, which has replaced the

Confederations Cup as a World Cup preparatory event, ran for a month in the **U.S.** last summer.

- That slot was otherwise reserved for players' rest and recuperation.
- Reportedly, there is an urge to make it **biennial**, and the **\$85 million** Chelsea received as prize money for winning in **2025** is a big enough perk for the participants to agree.
- All of this highlights a fundamental conflict at the heart of FIFA's functioning.
- On the one hand, it is the guardian of the sport, defines laws, puts in place the rules and is expected to act impartially in disputes between its members.
- At the same time, it has tournaments to sell and a partially self-imposed obligation to generate revenue, forcing it to turn a blind eye when those like the **U.S.** err.
- Can such a system, where the **referee** is also a **player**, stay true to the cause?

14J6. U.S.-Venezuela joint operation kills leader of Tren de Aragua

- The leader of the transnational gang **Tren de Aragua** was killed in a joint operation by the **United States** and **Venezuela**, authorities in the South American nation said on Friday.
- Founded in **Venezuela**, **Tren de Aragua** has been designated a **terrorist organisation** by the U.S. and is also active in **Colombia**, **Peru** and **Chile**.
- "There were clashes with members of these **criminal structures**, in which **Hector Rusthenford Guerrero Flores**, alias 'Nino Guerrero,' was neutralised," **Venezuela's Ministry of Communications** said in a statement.
- **U.S. President Donald Trump** said earlier Friday that American forces carried out a deadly strike on the gang leader.
- "At my direction, the **United States Southern Command** delivered a swift and lethal kinetic strike to successfully execute **Nino Guerrero**."

13J6. David Hockney, iconic British artist known for landscapes, dies at 88

- British artist **David Hockney**, famed for his shimmering **pool paintings** and colourful **iPad drawings**, has died at his **London** home aged 88.
- Over a **seven-decade career**, he became one of Britain's most celebrated **contemporary artists**, with record-breaking **auction sales** and global acclaim for his innovative work.

13J6. Thai Princess Bajrakitiyabha, who was known for her legal work, dies



- Thailand's Princess **Bajrakitiyabha Mahidol**, a lawyer and the eldest of King **Maha Vajiralongkorn's** children, has died at 47, the **Bureau of the Royal Household** said.
- She died on Thursday evening at a **Bangkok hospital** where she had been cared for since falling unconscious due to illness three years ago, it said.

Celebration begins: **Mexico's Julian Quinones**, second from left, scores the first goal of the **FIFA World Cup 2026** in the **inaugural match** against **South Africa** at the **Azteca Stadium in Mexico City** on Thursday. REUTERS (RELATED REPORTS:

12J6. U.S. attacks third ship with Indian seafarers, crew safe

- Thursday's attack was on **Guinea-Bissau-flagged** bitumen carrier **Jalveer** off the port of **Shinas, Oman**.

12J6. In a historic move, Colombia vows to ban female genital mutilation

- Colombia's Senate** approved a law on Wednesday to ban **female genital mutilation (FGM)**, a practice that persists in some of the country's **Indigenous communities**, after **two** years of debate.

12J6. Bangladesh wins maiden ODI series against Australia

- Towhid Hridoy** hit an unbeaten **40** as **Bangladesh won the second One-Day International (ODI)** by **five wickets** on Thursday to seal its first-ever series win against **Australia** in the **50-over format**.
- Chasing a **DLS revised victory target** of **192** in **41 overs** in a rain-hit match, **Bangladesh** eased home with **36 balls to spare** to take an unassailable **2-0 lead** in the **three-match series**.

11J6. Bharathiraja, ace film director, passes away in Chennai at 84

- Renowned Tamil film director Bharathiraja**, who had been ailing for a while, passed away in Chennai on Wednesday. He was 84.
- A towering personality in the film industry, fondly called **Iyakkunar Imayam** (pinnacle among directors), **Bharathiraja won six National Film Awards, four Filmfare Awards (South), six**

Tamil Nadu State Film Awards, and a Nandi Award.

- In a characteristic move, he rechristened many actors with names beginning with **"R"**, gifting the industry with **Radikaa, Revathi, Radha, Ranjitha, and Rekha**.
- Bharathiraja shared a close association with composer **Ilaiyaraaja** and his brother **Gangai Amaran** even before they had made their mark in the film world.

11J6. Bristol, York, and UNSW get nod for campuses in India

- The **Education Ministry** issued three **Letters of Approval (LoAs)** to three **Foreign Higher Education Institutions — University of Bristol, the University of York and the University of New South Wales (UNSW)** on Tuesday.
- The **LoAs** were handed over by **Secretary, Department of Higher Education and Chairman, University Grants Commission, Dr. Vineet Joshi**, in the presence of **Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan**.
- Mr. **Pradhan** said that the setting up of campuses in India marked another important step in advancing the **internationalisation of education vision of NEP 2020**.
- He said that these institutions will further strengthen **quality education, global learning partnerships and research collaboration in India**.

World Cup's mascot axolotl nowhere in Mexico City

- One of the first things visitors arriving in Mexico City for the **FIFA football World Cup** are likely to see is the **wide grin of an axolotl** — with the salamander unique to this part of the world splashed in bright purple on murals and subway cars or depicted in sculptures dribbling a soccer ball.
- Named after the Nahuatl word for **"water monster"**, the axolotl (pronounced ah-sho-LO-tul) has become the unofficial mascot as the city gears up to host five World Cup matches.
- But despite the undoubted cuteness of the almost otherworldly axolotl, the use of its image has drawn backlash from many Mexico City residents, who say the peppy portrayal of the **critically endangered animal** is being used to distract from both the infrastructure problems of the capital and its lack of conservation efforts.

A disappearing habitat

- For centuries, **Ambystoma mexicanum**, an amphibian that remains living in water through its life cycle, thrived



between chinampas — farms built on human-made floating islands that once sustained the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan, where modern-day Mexico City lies.

- UNAM, Mexico's top university, identified around 36 axolotls per sq. km in Xochimilco in 2014 — a steep drop from the 6,000 per sq. km in 1998.
- The latest census began in 2024, and, two years later, researchers have yet to find a single axolotl.
- Even as their habitat disappears, axolotls are widely bred in captivity.
- Scientists believe their unique skin mucus and ability to regrow limbs and even parts of their brain offer promising leads in cancer research.

Netanyahu will run in the next Israel election, says Likud party

- Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will seek re-election in Israel's upcoming national vote, his **Likud party** announced on Wednesday, after U.S. President Donald Trump publicly questioned whether the 76-year-old would run.

Sport during a war

- With 48 teams and 104 matches, it is the biggest ever.
- With roughly one in four FIFA member nations qualifying, and six of the seven continents represented, it is the most inclusive yet.
- It is also the first time that three countries will be hosting the quadrennial extravaganza — the United States, Canada and Mexico.
- While Messi will aim for a repeat of Argentina's trophy-winning exploits from 2022, Ronaldo will gun for Portugal's first.
- Neymar, yet to win the coveted Cup, has a very heavy cross to bear, for he comes from the land of Pele and five-time champion Brazil.
- Kylian Mbappe's France, titlist in 2018 and runner-up in 2022, remains strong.
- Spain, with the irresistible teenager Lamine Yamal in its ranks, is a favourite, and so are Germany and England to a lesser degree.
- The World Cup also serves a purpose beyond the turf — of shrinking differences, uniting populations and promoting cross-cultural exchanges.
- On Monday, it emerged that the U.S. had denied entry to Somalian referee Omar Artan, the best men's referee from Africa in 2025 and one of the 52 handpicked by governing body FIFA.
- There are credible reports of journalists being refused visas and squad members being questioned by immigration authorities.

10J6. Vijay keeps promise, launches Singappen Special Force in T.N.

- He was launching the '**Singappen Special Force**' in the Tamil Nadu Police at the **Rajarathinam Stadium** at **Egmore** in **Chennai**.
- The Chief Minister said the root cause of threats to **women's safety** was the **spread of narcotics and substance abuse**, and it must be stamped out.
- "The success of a government should not be measured by **infrastructure** and **economic growth** alone; it should be measured by dignity and respect with which **women and children** live," he said.

Close to heart

- "It is connected to **social discipline**, and **within social discipline lies individual discipline**."
- "If individuals behave responsibly and with self-control, **society will change**."
- "Women must have **dignity** and **no fear** at educational institutions and workplaces, during travel, and in their daily lives," Mr. Vijay said.

10J6. Shipping authority's inquiry report lists reasons for MSC Elsa 3 sinking

- The Directorate General of Shipping concluded the **preliminary investigation** into the sinking of the **container ship MSC Elsa-3** off the **Alappuzha coast** in **May 2025**.
- The inquiry report, submitted in an affidavit before the **Kerala High Court**, identified causes of the incident that led to **marine pollution off Alappuzha** and along parts of the southern coast.
- **Critical system malfunction**, compounded by **structural failures** and the **incompetence of crew members**, was identified as the causative factor in the report.
- It said that the ship had shown an inherent tilt to the right in previous voyages.
- During the **journey from Vizhinjam to Kochi**, the ship's **ballast water system** failed first, and as a result, the crew could not stop the progressive flooding into the ballast tanks.
- The ship's **safety management system** was reported to be deficient, especially regarding **maintenance procedures** and **spare parts management**.
- The ship had tilted to about **26 degrees**, causing several **container stacks** to shift, further compromising the ship's stability.
- By midnight on **May 24, 2025**, the containers had begun to fall overboard, creating additional hazards.
- Interviews of the crew showed that there were gaps in practical training for **emergency ballast operations**.
- Many crew members had only demonstrated



theoretical knowledge with no real-time experience, according to the report.

10J6. First-timers

- **Upsets and withdrawals** saw new champions at the **French Open**.
- The triumphs of **Alexander Zverev and Mirra Andreeva at the French Open for their maiden Grand Slam singles titles** appear to have evoked contrasting feelings in both.
- But for **Andreeva**, the straight-forward win over the unheralded qualifier **Maja Chwalinska** — albeit under testing windy conditions — was a journey to seventh heaven and a realisation of her prodigious teenaged promise.
- Among men, **Carlos Alcaraz** withdrew while red-hot favourite **Jannik Sinner** and **24-time Major winner Novak Djokovic** fell by the third round.
- In the ladies section, none among **Aryna Sabalenka, Iga Swiatek, Coco Gauff and Elena Rybakina** reached the semifinals.
- **Zverev** was — and still is — **World No. 3**, has been in the **top-4** for the last two years, and in the **top-10** for a good part of the last decade.

09J6. Gallantry awards conferred on security personnel; IAF pilot receives Kirti Chakra

- President Droupadi Murmu on Monday conferred **seven Kirti Chakras**, including **two posthumously**, on personnel of the armed forces for displaying raw courage, unparalleled bravery and total disregard for personal safety in the line of duty.
- **Air Commodore Prasanth Balakrishnan Nair**, an Indian Air Force pilot and **Gaganyatri**, was also among the recipients of the **Kirti Chakra**, India's second-highest peacetime gallantry award.
- Ms. Murmu also conferred **15 Vir Chakras**, including **three posthumously**, and **29 Shaurya Chakras**, including **one posthumously**, on the personnel of the defence forces, Central Armed Police Forces and State and Union Territory police forces during **Phase 1 of the Defence Investiture Ceremony** hosted at **Rashtrapati Bhavan**, the Defence Ministry said.
- **Lt. Commander Dilna K. and Lt. Commander Roopa A.** of the Navy were among the **Shaurya Chakra** recipients.
- The President presented the gallantry award to them for their bravery and devotion to duty in '**Navika Sagar Parikrama 2**'.
- Lt. Commander Roopa along with Lt. Commander Dilna sailed over **25,600 nautical miles** through the **Indian, Pacific, Atlantic and Southern Oceans**.

- "While navigating through the perilous **Drake Passage** in stormy conditions that caused the boat to heel severely, regaining control required exceptional skill and extraordinary courage.
- During the expedition, they also became the first Indians to reach **Point Nemo**, the oceanic Pole of Inaccessibility, by sailboat," reads the citation in a post on X by the Rashtrapati Bhavan.
- **Lance Naik Meenatchi Sundarama of Rashtriya Rifles, Naib Subedar Doleshwar Subba of Para (Special Forces), Major Arshdeep Singh of Assam Rifles and Captain Lalrinawma Sailo of Para (Special Forces)** have also been conferred the **Kirti Chakra**, according to the list of awardees shared by the government.
- **Sepoy Janjal Pravin Prabhakar of the Mahar Regiment of Rashtriya Rifles and Lt. Shashank Tiwari of the Sikkim Scouts** have been conferred the **Kirti Chakra posthumously**.
- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** also attended the ceremony.
- In a post on X, he said, "We are proud of their extraordinary courage, commitment and selfless service to the nation."

09J6. Modi to complete 4,399 days as PM, set new record

- **Narendra Modi becomes the longest continuously serving elected Prime Minister of India**
- As numbers go, **4,399** will not appear significant in itself except to mathematicians who may find value in the odds and evens around it, but for political observers, it marks a watershed moment in the history of post-Independence India, when **Narendra Modi** becomes the longest continuously serving elected Prime Minister of the country.
- On **June 10**, Mr. Modi will be crossing the record set by India's first Prime Minister **Jawaharlal Nehru**, who was elected to the post in **1952**.
- (Nehru's previous stint, from **1947-52**, was as head of an interim government since elections were yet to be institutionalised and held at the time.)
- Later, **Indira Gandhi** had a fractured tenure totalling **14 years**.
- Mr. Modi's tenure as Prime Minister for **12 years**, or **4,399 days**, therefore calls for closer examination.
- "**Milestones do not define an epoch of transformation**," **Ajay Singh**, former press secretary to Presidents **Ram Nath Kovind** and **Droupadi Murmu** said.
- "The milestone of surpassing the record of former Prime Minister Nehru is remarkable yet Prime Minister Modi will be remembered less for statistics and more for



reimagining India's politics in the most profound way."

- "In the arena of power politics he stands, without question, as the most consequential and transformative leader in post-Independence India," Mr. Singh said.
- He argues that while comparisons between Prime Ministers are redundant since they are products of a specific historical context, Mr. Modi's years at the helm of affairs have to be acknowledged as a period during which many of the givens of Indian politics were shattered.
- The **National Democratic Alliance government** led by Mr. Modi is marking **12 years in power** this week.
- The milestone of **4,399 days** as Prime Minister is somehow subsumed within that, and history will likely have a better view on what his tenure has meant.

09J6. Sports Minister felicitates India under-18 men's and women's teams

- **Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya** felicitated the Indian men and women's hockey teams here on Monday for their stupendous performance in the recently concluded **Under-18 Asia Cup in Japan**.
- The men, led by **Ketan Kushwaha**, were crowned champion after defeating host **Japan** 4-1 in the final in **Kakamigahara** on Friday.
- The minister handed a cheque of **₹61.5 lakh** to the team.
- On the other hand, the women's team, led by **Sweetie Kujur**, secured the **bronze medal** after registering a 3-0 win over **Korea** in the bronze medal match.
- Mandaviya handed the team a cheque of **₹21 lakh**.
- "I would like to congratulate both the teams for the hard work they have put in for bringing laurels for the country. The entire nation is proud of you. I would like to tell you that this is just the start.
- "There is no alternative for **hard work**.
- "Someone who has scored **13 goals** should think of scoring **15 or more goals**.
- "Someone who has stopped **10 goals** should aim for not letting the opponents even score one," said Mandaviya.
- The minister also felicitated the best scorers **Ashish Tani Purti** (men) and **Nousheen Naz** (women) and goalkeeper **Ayush Rajak**, who saved **10 goals** in the tournament.
- **Rani and Sardar feted**
- The minister also felicitated former Indian hockey captains **Rani Rampal** and **Sardar Singh**, who were the coaches of the Indian women's and men's teams respectively at the **Asia Cup**.

08J6. Modi congratulates Major Abhilasha Barak on UN Award

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** on Sunday congratulated **Major Abhilasha Barak** on being conferred the **UN Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award** and said the honour is a recognition of her exemplary service and also of India's longstanding contribution to the **United Nations peacekeeping efforts**.
- Major Barak, currently serving with the **United Nations mission in Lebanon**, has been honoured with the award for her **outreach efforts** with women and girls during her deployment in the **West Asian nation**.
- She is also the **first woman combat helicopter pilot of the Indian Army**.

08J6. QUIZ

1. What was the name of the World Cup before it was changed to the FIFA World Cup Trophy since 1974?

Answer: Jules Rimet Trophy

- The **original FIFA World Cup trophy** was known as the **Jules Rimet Trophy**, named after **Jules Rimet**, the former FIFA President who played a key role in establishing the FIFA World Cup in **1930**. Initially called "Victory," it was renamed in his honour in **1946**.
- The **trophy was awarded from 1930 to 1970**. After **Brazil won the World Cup for the third time in 1970**, it received permanent ownership of the trophy. Consequently, FIFA introduced the **FIFA World Cup Trophy in 1974**, which continues to be awarded today.

2. Who scored the first-ever goal in World Cup Football history?

- The distinction of scoring the **first goal in FIFA World Cup history** belongs to **Lucien Laurent** of **France**. He achieved this landmark feat on **13 July 1930** during the inaugural FIFA World Cup held in **Uruguay**.
- **Laurent scored against Mexico in the match played at Estadio Pocitos, Montevideo**.
- France eventually won the game 4-1. His goal marked the beginning of World Cup scoring history and secured his place in football folklore as the first-ever World Cup goalscorer.

3. Which country has taken part in all editions of the FIFA World Cup held so far?

Answer: Brazil

- **Brazil is the only nation to have participated in every FIFA World Cup tournament since the competition began in**



1930. As of the latest completed edition (2022 FIFA World Cup), Brazil has appeared in **all 22 editions** of the tournament.

- The **country** is also the most successful team in World Cup history, having won the title **five times** (1958, 1962, 1970, 1994, and 2002).

4. Which country has played the World Cup final the most times without ever winning it?

Answer: Netherlands

- The **Netherlands** holds the unfortunate record of reaching the FIFA World Cup final the most times without winning the tournament.
- The Dutch team finished as runners-up on **three occasions** — in **1974, 1978, and 2010**. In 1974 they lost to **West Germany**, in 1978 to **Argentina**, and in 2010 to **Spain** after extra time.

5. Which country has reached the semi-finals the most times in World Cup history?

Answer: Germany

- **Germany** holds the record for the highest number of **FIFA World Cup semi-final appearances**.
- Including appearances as **West Germany** before reunification and as unified Germany thereafter, the nation has reached the semi-finals **13 times** (updated after the 2022 World Cup cycle).
- Germany's remarkable consistency has also translated into **four World Cup titles** (1954, 1974, 1990, and 2014) and multiple runner-up finishes.



Breaking new ground: Andreia is the first player, man or woman, born after 2005 to win a Grand Slam while the 114th-ranked Chwalinska will climb to 21 after her runner-up finish. AP

Breaking new ground: **Andreia** is the first player, man or woman, born after 2005 to win a Grand Slam while the 114th-ranked Chwalinska will climb to 21 after her runner-up finish.

07J6. Actor Salim Kumar passes away at 56

- National award-winning Malayalam actor **Salim Kumar**, 56, passed away at a private hospital in **Kochi** late on Saturday night.
- He has won both the **National and State awards** for 'Best Actor' for his moving portrayal in film **Adaminte Makan Abu (2010)**.
- He has won the **Kerala State Film Award** on four occasions.
- Since his debut in a small role in **Ishtamanu Nooru Vattam (1996)**, Kumar has acted in over **250 films**.
- Kumar, who has acted in **Tamil and Bengali** movies, has also tried his luck in writing and directing.

07J6. HC raps U.P. police, says officers serve 'political bosses'

- Questioning the functioning of the **Uttar Pradesh police**, the **Allahabad High Court** recently observed that the loyalties of the State's police officers often appear to be aligned with the ruling dispensation rather than the **Constitution**.
- The remarks came from the Bench of **Justice Vinod Diwakar**, which was hearing a case pertaining to the **Gangsters Act** against **Ghaziabad** resident **Rajendra Tyagi** and his family on Wednesday.
- While quashing the case, the court found that the allegations arose from land and financial disputes and did not meet the legal requirements for invoking the stringent law.
- The court expressed serious concern about the arrest of **Lalita Tyagi**, a homemaker, who spent nearly **80 days in jail**.
- It termed her arrest "**patently illegal, arbitrary and wholly unwarranted**".
- Reprimanding the police, the court noted that a deeply entrenched culture has taken root in which the **rule of law** is treated less as a Constitutional mandate and more as an administrative obstacle.
- "The vertical loyalty of officers runs not toward the **Constitution** but toward the ruling dispensation."
- Field officers, acutely conscious of the **transfer-posting economy**, calibrate their conduct to satisfy political superiors.
- **Encounter killings**, selective crackdowns, and targeted use of the **Gangsters Act** against inconvenient individuals have periodically attracted judicial notice," the court said.
- It further recorded a prima facie finding that former **Ghaziabad Police Commissioner Ajay Kumar Mishra**



appeared to have misused his authority while approving the **Gangsters Act** proceedings.

Granollers eased to a 6-4, 6-2 victory to secure their third **Grand Slam** title as a pairing, after also winning last year's **US Open**.

07J6. Praggnanandhaa caps fairytale run with title win

- The **20-year-old** from **Chennai** stormed to the title in sensational style after languishing in the last place after round six of the Open event in **Norway Chess 2026**.
- His victims included **Alireza Firouzja**, the great **Magnus Carlsen**, **D. Gukesh** and **Vincent Keymer**.
- In the process, he became the **first Indian** to win the prestigious title.
- He topped the leaderboard with **18 points**, one ahead of American **Wesley So**, with his convincing win in the final round.
- While Praggnanandhaa came up with a special performance, his compatriot and **World Champion D. Gukesh's** form was up-and-down.
- He finished with the wooden spoon after a last-round loss to **Magnus Carlsen**.
- **Carlsen** wound up fourth after an eminently forgettable outing.
- The women's event saw **Kazakhstan's Bibisara Assaubayeva** slump to a defeat in her final outing after having clinched the title on Thursday with a round to spare.
- **China's Zhu Jiner** had a strong finish to take the second spot ahead of the **2025 champion Anna Muzychuk**.
- **India's Divya Deshmukh** and **Koneru Humpy** suffered losses to finish fifth and sixth, respectively.

07J6. Andreeva ends Chwalinska's dream run for first Major title

- **Mirra Andreeva** won her first **Grand Slam** title on Saturday by downing Polish qualifier **Maja Chwalinska** in straight sets in the **French Open** final.
- The **19-year-old Russian** beat Chwalinska **6-3, 6-2** to become the youngest **Roland Garros women's singles champion** since **Monica Seles**, then aged 18, won her third straight title in Paris in **1992**.
- With her first-ever **Major crown**, Andreeva also became the first player, man or woman, born after **2005** to win a **Grand Slam**.
- **Argentina's Horacio Zeballos** and **Spain's Marcel Granollers** won their second straight **French Open men's doubles title** by beating **Harri Heliovaara** and **Henry Patten** in the final.

Third title as a pair

- The **41-year-old Zeballos** and **40-year-old G**

07J6. India defeats Bangladesh, wins title for the sixth time

- **India** clinched the **SAFF Women's Championship** football title for the **sixth time** and its **first in seven years** with a **3-1** win over **Bangladesh** in the summit clash here on Saturday.
- **Pyari Xaxa (42nd minute)**, **Sanfida Nongrum (46th minute)** and **Lynda Kom Serto (82nd minute)** scored for **India**.
- **Ritu Porna Chakma (45+2 minute)** pulled one back for **Bangladesh**.
- The host had beaten the same opponents **3-0** in the **group stage**.
- **India** ended the tournament **unbeaten**, scoring **18 goals** while conceding just **one goal**.
- India had last won the title in **2019**.

07J6. Indian men triumph, women bag bronze

- **Ashish Tani Purti's** hat-trick powered the **Indian men's hockey team** to the **U-18 Asia Cup** title win after defeating host **Japan 4-1** in the final here on Saturday.
- **Ashish Tani Purti** starred with a hat-trick, while captain **Ketan Kushwaha** also found the back of the net as India produced a commanding display against the host.
- **Numada Gaku** scored for **Japan**, according to a press release.
- The **Indian women's team** won the **bronze medal** after registering a commanding **3-0** victory over **Korea** in the third-place match.
- **Sandeepa Kumari**, captain **Sweetie Kujur** and **Nousheen Naz** were on target as the women capped off their campaign with a podium finish.
- **Hockey India** announced a cash award of **₹3 lakh** for each player in the men's team and **₹1.5 lakh** for each member of the support staff.
- Each member of the women's team was awarded **₹1 lakh** while the support staff got **₹50,000** each.
- **Purti** was awarded **Player of the Match** for his stellar performance in the men's final and was also recognised as the tournament's **top scorer** with an impressive **17 goals**.
- India further dominated the individual honours with **Ayush Rajak** being named the **best goalkeeper**.
- Among the women, **Nousheen Naz** emerged as the **top scorer** with **12 goals**.
- **Sandeepa Kumari** was adjudged the **Player of the Match** in the women's final.



06J6. Air Marshal Ashutosh Dixit to be next Vice-Chief of Air Staff

- **Air Marshal Ashutosh Dixit**, a distinguished fighter pilot and test pilot, has been appointed the next **Vice-Chief of the Air Staff (VCAS)** and will assume office on **July 1**.
- He succeeds **Air Marshal Nagesh Kapoor**.
- Currently serving as the **Chief of Integrated Defence Staff (CISC)**, Air Marshal Dixit has played a pivotal role in enhancing jointness among the armed forces and advancing efforts towards the creation of **integrated theatre commands**.
- His tenure has focused on improving coordination and operational synergy between the **Army, Navy and Air Force**.
- An accomplished officer with extensive operational and leadership experience, Air Marshal Dixit has also been closely associated with the **Indian Air Force's modernisation drive**.
- During various assignments at the Air headquarters, he contributed significantly to the promotion of **indigenous fighter aircraft programmes** and capability enhancement initiatives.
- Commissioned into the fighter stream of the **Indian Air Force** on **December 6, 1986**, Air Marshal Dixit is an alumnus of the **National Defence Academy, Khadakwasla**, the **Defence Services Staff College, Bangladesh**, and the **National Defence College, New Delhi**.

Flying instructor

- A qualified flying instructor and an experimental test pilot, he has accumulated more than **3,300 flying hours** on over **20 types of aircraft**, including the **Mirage-2000, MiG-21 and Jaguar** fighter jets.
- During his distinguished career, he commanded a premier fighter training base under the **Southern Air Command**, which earned recognition as the best base in the command during his tenure.

Firefighting drill: A **Canadair CL-415 aircraft** drops water during a demonstration at the launch of France's national wildfire prevention campaign in Nîmes, southern France, on Thursday.

05J6. Former LS Secretary General Subhash Kashyap passes away

- Former **Lok Sabha Secretary General** and constitutional expert **Subhash C. Kashyap** passed away on Thursday after prolonged illness.
- He was **97**.
- Mr. Kashyap was part of the **high-level committee** headed by former President **Ram Nath Kovind** to prepare a legal framework on **simultaneous elections**.
- **Author of over 100 books**, he served as the **Secretary General of Lok Sabha from 1983 to 1990**.
- He served Parliament for over **37 years** from the time of **Jawaharlal Nehru's first Lok Sabha to the 9th Lok Sabha**.
- Born in **1929** in a family of **freedom fighters in Bijnor in the then United Provinces (now Uttar Pradesh)**, he actively took part in the struggle for Independence as a teenager.
- He received his **higher education** and professional training at **Allahabad, New Delhi, Washington DC, London and Geneva**.
- He was also **awarded the Padma Bhushan**.

05J6. QUIZ

05J6. Maruti Suzuki unveils 'India's first' flex-fuel car

- **Maruti Suzuki India Ltd.** unveiled 'India's first' **flex-fuel car** giving flexibility to clients to operate on any blend of **ethanol and petrol** from **E20 to E100**.

05J6. Acclaimed Iranian-French cartoonist, filmmaker Marjane Satrapi dies at 56

- Acclaimed **Iranian-French** cartoonist and filmmaker **Marjane Satrapi**, a prominent advocate for **women's rights** and author of **Persepolis**, has died at **56**, the French presidency said on Thursday.

05J6. French Open: Errani-Vavassori pair

Rescue-ready



Firefighting drill: A Canadair CL-415 aircraft drops water during a demonstration at the launch of France's national wildfire prevention campaign in Nîmes, southern France, on Thursday. AFP



retains mixed doubles title

- Italy's **Sara Errani** and **Andrea Vavassori** retained the **French Open mixed doubles title** on Thursday, defeating American **Evan King** and Canadian **Gabriela Dabrowski** 4-6, 6-3, [10-4].
- The duo is the first to defend the title since **Ivan Dodig** and **Latisha Chan** (2018, 2019).
- It was the pair's **fourth mixed doubles trophy** in the last **seven Slams**.

Rank	Country	Fertility Rate*
1	Niger	~6.6
2	Chad	~6.2
3	Somalia	~6.1
4	Democratic Republic of the Congo	~6.0
5	Central African Republic	~5.9

04J6. 28 lakh women to get monthly dole as Bengal govt. rolls out Annapurna Bhandar scheme

- West Bengal Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari** on Wednesday rolled out the **Annapurna Bhandar scheme** that will provide monthly aid of **₹3,000** to eligible women in the **25 to 60 age group** in the State.
- Mr. **Adhikari** handed over cheques to five beneficiaries at the **State Secretariat** to mark the launch of the **direct benefit transfer scheme**.
- Doubling the aid of **₹1,500** provided by the previous **Trinamool Congress government** under its **Lakshmi Bhandar scheme** to **₹3,000** was one of the promises made by the **BJP** during the campaign for the **Assembly poll**.

04J6. Japan's fertility rate falls to a record low

- Japan's **fertility rate** fell again last year to a **record low**, official data showed.
- Japan has one of the world's **lowest birth rates**, as well as a **falling and ageing population**, leading to **labour shortages**, a ballooning **social security bill** and a shrinking **tax base**.

Top 5 Countries/Regions with the Lowest Fertility Rates

Rank	Country/Region	Fertility Rate*
1	South Korea	~0.8
2	Singapore	~0.97
3	Hong Kong	~1.0
4	Macau	~1.03
5	Taiwan	~1.06

Top 5 Countries with the Highest Fertility Rates

Rank	Country	Fertility Rate*
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04J6. QUIZ: PCS Special

1. V.K. Krishna Menon – The Longest Speech in UN History

- V.K. Krishna Menon**, India's Permanent Representative to the United Nations and later Defence Minister, delivered one of the most remarkable speeches in diplomatic history during the **UN Security Council debates on Kashmir in January 1957**.
- Spread across three meetings over two days**, the speech lasted for more than **eight hours**, setting a record recognized by the United Nations and Guinness World Records.
- Menon meticulously defended India's legal and constitutional position on Jammu and Kashmir**, making the speech a landmark in India's diplomatic history and earning him the title **"Hero of Kashmir."**

3. Pablo Picasso and Guernica

- Pablo Picasso**, one of the most influential artists of the twentieth century, painted **"Guernica"** in 1937.
- The masterpiece was inspired by the bombing of the Spanish town of Guernica during the **Spanish Civil War**.
- Created in black, white and grey tones, the painting depicts human suffering, destruction and the horrors of war.
- Today, **Guernica** is regarded as a universal symbol of peace and resistance against violence.
- It remains one of the most celebrated anti-war artworks and is displayed at the **Museo Reina Sofia in Madrid, Spain**.

4. Yasser Arafat's Olive Branch Speech

- The famous statement, **"I have come with a freedom fighter's gun in one hand and an olive branch in the other. Do not let the olive branch fall from my hand,"** was delivered by **Yasser Arafat** at the **United Nations General Assembly on 13 November 1974**.
- As Chairman of the **Palestine Liberation**



Organization (PLO), Arafat used the speech to seek international recognition of Palestinian aspirations and statehood.

- The olive branch symbolized peace, while the gun represented resistance.

5. Robert Mugabe's "We Are Not Gays" Statement

- During his speech at the **UN General Assembly in September 2015**, Zimbabwean President **Robert Mugabe** declared, "We are not gays," while criticizing Western countries for linking aid and international cooperation to LGBTQ+ rights.
- Mugabe had long been known for his opposition to same-sex marriage and LGBTQ+ rights, which he argued were inconsistent with Zimbabwe's cultural values.
- The remark generated significant international debate and criticism, highlighting the broader global divide over human rights, cultural sovereignty and social values in international politics.

04J6. Denmark PM presents new govt., with majority of women Ministers

- Denmark's Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen** on Wednesday presented her new Cabinet, which for the **first time in Danish history included more women than men**.
- Eleven out of the 21 Ministers** were women and the list also included familiar names from Ms. Frederiksen's former government.

04J6. Praggnanandhaa does the double over Carlsen

- Victory with black pieces** takes the Indian GM to the **third spot**.
- Firouzja** gets the better of **Gukesh**.
- He beat **World No.1 Magnus Carlsen** for a second time in the same tournament.

03J6. Overloading, long ride hours weighed heavy on Gulmarg Gondola

- Set up in **1998**, the gondola runs in two phases every day: **Gulmarg to Kongdoori** (10-minute ride) and **Kongdoori to Apharwat** (12-minute ride), with the highest point located at an altitude of **4,390 metres (14,403 feet)**.

TOP 5 HIGHEST AND LONGEST CABLE CAR SYSTEMS IN THE WORLD

Highest Cable Car Systems



Address : 30
Email Id : in
Contact Nu
Website : p

ganj Road, Gorakhpur

1. Matterhorn Alpine Crossing

- Highest 3S cableway in the world.
- The system reaches Europe's highest cable-car station at about **3,883 m (12,739 ft)** above sea level.
- It connects Switzerland and Italy across the Alps.

2. Gulmarg Gondola

- Reaches approximately **3,980 m (13,058 ft)** at Apharwat Peak and is widely recognized as one of the world's highest operating gondolas.



3. Mérida Cable Car

- The famous **Mukumbarí** system climbs to Pico Espejo in the Andes at around **4,765 m (15,633 ft)**, making it one of the highest cable-car systems ever built.

4. Tianmen Mountain Cableway

- Although not the highest by summit elevation, it rises dramatically over **1,279 m vertically**, one of the greatest elevation gains achieved by a passenger cableway.

5. Mi Teleférico

- The world's largest urban cable-car network operates at elevations exceeding **4,000 m**, making it one of the highest public transit systems on Earth.

Longest Passenger Cable Car Systems

1. Hon Thom Cable Car

- Length: **7.899 km**, Holds the Guinness record for the world's longest non-stop three-rope cable car over the sea.

Quick Comparison

Cable Car	Country	Approx. Length	Maximum Elevation
Hon Thom Cable Car	Vietnam	7.9 km	~175 m
Tochal Teleabin	Iran	7.5 km	~3,740 m



Cable Car	Country	Approx. Length	Maximum Elevation
• Tianmen Mountain Cableway	• China	• 7.455 km	• ~1,519 m
• Gulmarg Gondola	• India	• ~5 km (two phases)	• ~3,980 m
• Matterhorn Alpine Crossing	• Switzerland–Italy	• Multi-section	• ~3,883 m station
• Wings of Tatev	• Armenia	• 5.75 km	• ~320 m above gorge

03J6. Brand value

- A commanding display over **Gujarat Titans** in the final at Ahmedabad's **Narendra Modi Stadium** on Sunday ensured that RCB joined the likes of **Chennai Super Kings (CSK)** and **Mumbai Indians**, teams that have won the title for two consecutive years.
- Ever since the league's inception in **2008**, the Bengaluru squad tended to flourish in spurts and then fade away.
- Last year, however, a turnaround was effected but as **Rajat Patidar's** men exulted, the moment turned tragic with 11 fans losing their lives in a stampede outside the **M. Chinnaswamy Stadium** in Bengaluru.
- Having commenced on **March 28**, the IPL with **10 teams and 74 matches**, had a bloated air and at times viewer interest dipped.
- Just as **Sachin Tendulkar** made his international debut at 16, Sooryavanshi too seems set to join that space of young talent pursuing higher glory.
- Just as RCB, Titans, **Sunrisers Hyderabad** and **Rajasthan Royals** made it to the play-offs, legacy units such as CSK, Mumbai Indians and **Kolkata Knight Riders** fell by the wayside.
- The IPL is a massive sporting brand but it should not **cannibalise** traditional cricket.

03J6.The finish line is still far for Indian spr

inting

- **Gurindervir Singh's national-record, 10.09s, ranks 524th on the all-time list; only 39 countries have broken the 10-second barrier.**
- By the time the men's **100m final** began at the **Federation Cup** in Ranchi on **May 23, 2026**, India's national record had already changed hands twice within that tournament — a first in Indian sprinting.
- A day earlier, **Gurindervir Singh** had lowered the national record to **10.17 seconds** in the first semifinals.
- His time of **10.09 seconds** not only restored the record to his name but also made him the first Indian to break the **10.1-second barrier**.
- **Anil Kumar's** national record of **10.21 seconds** had remained unbeaten since **2000**.
- By clocking **10.18 seconds**, Animesh not only broke that in **July 2025**, but became the first Indian to cross the **10.2-second barrier**.
- On the global all-time list, Gurindervir's record ranks only **524th**.
- At the very top, the sport remains remarkably concentrated.
- Ten of the top 11 performances belong to sprinters from just two countries — **Jamaica** and the **U.S.**
- Jamaica's **Usain Bolt** holds the world record at **9.58 seconds**.
- American **Tyson Gay** shares the second-fastest time in history at **9.69 seconds**.

03J6. QUIZ: IPL

1. Teams That Successfully Defended Their IPL Titles

- Chennai Super Kings (CSK) and Mumbai Indians (MI)
- Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) joined a very exclusive group of IPL teams by successfully defending their title in IPL 2026.
- Mumbai Indians defended their title in 2020 after winning in 2019, while Chennai Super Kings retained their crown in 2011 after winning in 2010.

2. The Only Batter to Score Two Centuries

- Sanju Samson emerged as the only batter to score **two centuries in IPL 2026**.
- His second hundred of the season made him the only player to achieve multiple centuries during the tournament.

3. Locations of Two Major IPL Stadiums



- The **Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh International Cricket Stadium** is located in **Raipur**.
- The **Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium** is situated in **Hyderabad**.

4. Unique Feature of Match 38 Played on April 26

- The match was decided by a Super Over, with KKR defeating LSG.
- Match 38 of IPL 2026 became memorable because it was the **only match of the season to be decided through a Super Over**.
- The contest between **Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR)** and **Lucknow Super Giants (LSG)** ended in a tie after both teams scored identical totals.

5. First Player to Win Back-to-Back IPL Titles with Two Different Teams

- Krunal Pandya created a unique IPL record by winning consecutive IPL titles with **different franchises**. He was part of **Mumbai Indians' championship-winning teams in 2019 and 2020**, and later became a member of **Royal Challengers Bengaluru's title-winning squads in 2025 and 2026**.

6. Awards Won by Vaibhav Sooryavanshi

- Teenage sensation **Vaibhav Sooryavanshi** enjoyed a breakthrough IPL 2026 season and received multiple official awards. He won the **Most Valuable Player (MVP)** award for his overall impact on matches.
- He was also named the **Emerging Player of the Season**, recognizing his exceptional performances at a young age.
- Additionally, he secured the **Super Striker Award** for maintaining an outstanding strike rate and the **Super Sixes Award** for hitting the highest number of sixes.
- His record-breaking performances established him as one of the brightest young talents in Indian cricket.

03J6. Pope picks first lay woman to head communications dept. at Vatican

- Pope Leo XIV** on Tuesday named a **Mexico-born** news executive to head up the Vatican's powerful communications department.
- The first lay woman to hold a post in the **Roman Curia**.
- Maria Montserrat Alvarado**, currently president of the Catholic media outlet **EWTN News**, will

take up her post in November.

03J6. Bahutule is India's spin-bowling coach ahead of Afghanistan Test

- Sairaj Bahutule** has joined the Indian team as **spin-bowling coach** ahead of the Test against **Afghanistan**.
- The former India leggie will oversee the national team's spin department across formats.

03J6. India men rout Korea in under-18 Asia Cup

- The **Indian men** produced a dominant **4-1 victory** against **Korea** in their third **under-18 Asia Cup 2026 Pool A** match here.
- India faces **Taiwan** on Wednesday.

03J6. I know I am not far away from the top

- After quietly climbing to **World No. 40**, **Chotrani** has his eyes fixed on the **Asian Games singles gold**.
- After taking up **squash** full-time following his graduation from **Cornell University** in the USA two years ago, **Veer Chotrani** has emerged as one of the players to watch out for on the **PSA Tour**.
- The **24-year-old** from **Mumbai** has quietly climbed the PSA rankings ladder to a career-high **World No. 40**, registering notable wins over top players.
- Chotrani** has now set his sights on winning the **Asian Games gold medal** in singles, which offers direct qualification for the **2028 Los Angeles Olympics**.

02J6. The silken voice of Hindi cinema that touched hearts falls silent

- Suman Kalyanpur**, who touched the deepest corners of our hearts with her silken voice, passed away in **Mumbai** on Sunday night after a brief illness.
- Born on January 28, 1937, in **Dhaka** to **Shankar Rao Hemmady**, a noted banker, she relocated to **Bombay** with her family in 1943.
- Later, maestro **Khan Abdul Rehman Khan of Kirana gharana** gave her a grounding in Hindustani classical music, followed by a stint with **Master Navrang**.
- In a career spanning three decades, the **Padma Bhushan** sang in around 100 films in different languages.

02J6. Divyanshi is youngest Indian to win



WTT Feeder women's title

- Fifteen-year-old **Divyanshi Bhowmick** produced a dream performance at **Prishtina in Kosovo** as she became the youngest Indian to win a **WTT Feeder women's singles title**.
- The World No. 211 Divyanshi stunned **Chinese Taipei's Yeh Yi-Tian**, placed 38 in the chart, with a 8-11, 11-8, 11-5, 7-11, 11-7 victory.
- According to the **Table Tennis Federation of India**, she is the second-youngest player in the world to capture a **WTT Feeder women's crown**.

02J6. A tribute to Satwik and Chirag's resilience

- For nearly two years, **Satwiksairaj Rankireddy** and **Chirag Shetty** were forced to watch title opportunities slip away amid injuries, setbacks and frustrating near-misses.
- On Sunday, however, India's premier men's doubles pair ended the drought by becoming the first Indian duo to win the **Singapore Open** after defeating Indonesia's **Fajar Alfian** and **Muhammad Shohibul Fikri** 18-21, 21-17, 21-16 in the **Super 750 final**.

BIG SHOT



Mummy homecoming: People of the Kolla indigenous community participate in a ceremony

following the return of the so-called '**Child of Chani**', an Inca-era child mummy found frozen in 1905 at nearly 5,900 m on a mountain, in Jujuy province, Argentina on May 28. The mummy had been in a Buenos Aires museum for around 120 years.

OF CHANI

- The Kolla People, an Indigenous community living mainly in the **Andes Mountains of Argentina and Bolivia**. They participated in a ceremony after the return of an **ancient Inca child mummy** known as the "**Child of Chani**."
- The mummy was discovered in **1905** near the summit of **Mount Chani** in Argentina at an altitude of nearly **5,900 metres** above sea level. The child belonged to the Inca Civilization, which flourished in South America before the arrival of the **Spanish in the 16th century**.
- The child's body remained naturally preserved for centuries because of the extreme cold temperatures high in the Andes. Such preserved bodies are called **mummies**.
- Unlike Egyptian mummies, which were artificially preserved using chemicals and wrapping, these **Andean mummies** were preserved naturally by freezing conditions, similar to food being preserved in a freezer.
- Historians believe that some Inca children were part of a ritual called **Capacocha**. In this ritual, children considered pure or special were ceremonially offered to mountain gods.
- Mountains were sacred in Inca belief because they were **thought to control weather, water, and fertility**.
- The **Inca civilization** developed in the Andes Mountains region of western South America, mainly in present-day Peru, during the **13th to 16th centuries**.
- The capital of the **Inca Empire was Cusco**, which was considered the political and cultural center of the empire.
- The Incas built a vast empire called the "**Tawantinsuyu**," meaning "**Land of Four Regions**." At its peak, the empire extended across modern **Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, Chile, and parts of Argentina and Colombia**. The ruler of the empire was called the "**Sapa Inca**," who was treated as the son of the Sun God. The Incas mainly worshipped the Sun God, known as "**Inti**."
- The **civilization is famous for its advanced engineering and architecture**.
- Despite lacking modern tools, iron technology, or wheeled transport, the Incas built strong roads, bridges, terraces, and stone buildings**.
- Their road network stretched thousands of kilometers across mountains. One of the best examples of Inca architecture is Machu Picchu, a magnificent hilltop city built with precisely cut stones that fit together without cement.

01J6. Mann Ki Baat: PM praises athletes, changemakers

- He praised Indian sprinters **Gurindervir Singh** and **Animesh Kujur**;

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lauded mango farmers for reaching global markets; shared the story of educator **Girija Amma** for raising funds for soldiers.

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi**, in the **134th episode of Mann Ki Baat** on Sunday, highlighted India's achievements in sports, environmental conservation, cultural heritage, and scientific learning, while urging citizens to continue contributing towards nation-building through innovation, community participation, and social responsibility.
- A major highlight of the address was the Prime Minister's praise for **Indian sprinters Gurindervir Singh and Animesh Kujur**, who delivered historic performances at the **Federation Cup in Ranchi**.
- Mr. Singh recently became India's fastest man after clocking a remarkable **10.09 seconds** in the **100-metre sprint**, becoming the first Indian athlete to break the **10.10-second barrier**.

Praising mango farmers

- Reflecting on his recent visit to the **Netherlands**, the Prime Minister described it as a significant step in strengthening India's international partnerships.
- He also spoke about the **return of rare Chola-era copper plates by the country**, describing them as invaluable historical treasures that offer insights into the maritime strength, governance, and international relations of the **Chola empire**.
- Mr. Modi also underlined the importance of environmental conservation and highlighted efforts to protect the **endangered Ganga river dolphin**.
- He also appreciated grassroots initiatives such as the **work of Saji Valasheril in Kerala**, who has trained thousands of people, including children with disabilities, through swimming programmes.

Astronomy initiatives

- Encouraging scientific curiosity among young people, Mr. Modi highlighted astronomy outreach initiatives by **organisations such as Astro Kerala, the Bangalore Astronomical Society, and the Big Bang Astronomy Club of Rajkot**.
- The Prime Minister concluded by sharing the inspiring story of educator **Girija Amma**, whose initiative of collecting one rupee daily from students for soldiers raised nearly **₹40 lakh**, calling it a shining example of patriotism and collective responsibility towards the nation.

01J6. The Voice of Hind Rajab likely to get 'A' certificate

- The **Voice of Hind Rajab**, the critically

acclaimed 2025 film on the killing of the eponymous Palestinian five-year-old by Israeli forces, is set to be cleared by the **Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC)** with an 'A' certificate, official sources say.

- For the film to release, the **CBFC** will have to issue the certificate on its website (a step yet to be completed), and hand over the certificate to the film distributor.

01J6. Evergreen Kohli second oldest to win PoM award in IPL final

- At the age of **37 years and 207 days**, **Virat Kohli** became the **second oldest player to win the Player-of-the-Match** award in an **Indian Premier League** final.
- **Anil Kumble** (38y 219d, 4-0-16-4 for **Royal Challengers Bengaluru** vs. **Deccan Chargers** in 2009) remains the oldest recipient of the award.

01J6. 15-year-old Sooryavanshi the youngest to clinch Orange Cap

- **Rajasthan Royals** opener **Vaibhav Sooryavanshi** became the youngest player to clinch the **IPL Orange Cap**.
- The **15-year-old** amassed **776 runs** (one century and five half-centuries) in 16 innings to walk home with the prize.

01J6. Royal Challengers retain title with a regal display

- The **RCB** bowlers set the tone early at the **Narendra Modi Stadium**, relentlessly hitting hard lengths to strangle GT.

01J6. Satwik-Chirag win Singapore Open, end their two-year title drought

- The premier Indian men's doubles team bounces back to defeat **Indonesia's Alfian and Fikri** for its first crown since the **2024 Thailand Open**.
- **Satwiksairaj Rankireddy** and **Chirag Shetty** fought back from a game down to clinch their maiden **Singapore Open** title, defeating Indonesia's **Fajar Alfian** and **Muhammad Shohibul Fikri** in the men's doubles final of the **BWF Super 750** badminton tournament, here on Sunday.
- The **Asian Games** and **Commonwealth Games** champions produced a gritty comeback to secure their first title in two years and their ninth career World Tour crown, besides claiming a third Super 750 title, with a tense 18-21, 21-17, 21-16 win in 73 minutes.
- The victory was particularly significant for the **World No. 4** Indian duo, who became the first



Indians to win the doubles title at the Singapore Open.

- Satwik and Chirag had last lifted a trophy at the Thailand Open in 2024.

01J6. Women's relay gold caps India's strong campaign in Asian U-20 Championships

- India ended the **Asian Under-20 Athletics Championships** in **Hong Kong** with another gold as its women's 4x400m relay team set a meet record on the final day on Sunday.
- The quartet of **Bhumika Sanjay Nehate, Tahura Khatun, Sehnoor Bawa and Neeru**
-

Pathak clocked 3:38.07 to finish ahead of **Kazakhstan**, which took silver in 3:43.63.

- Host **Hong Kong** claimed bronze in 3:49.94.
- India added another relay medal soon after, with the men's 4x400m team of **Piyush Raj, Sayed Sabeer, Ranjith Kumar S. and Mohammed Ashfaq** taking bronze in 3:05.54.
- **China** won gold in 3:04.88, while **Qatar** finished second in 3:05.06.
- Earlier in the day, **Venkatram Reddy Mogali** won gold in the men's 800m with a personal best of 1:48.27.
- **Muskan** had also topped the women's 5000m in 16:53.08.
- While **Nishchay** claimed silver in the men's discus throw with a personal best of 60.10m.



PATRIOTIC IAS

MONTHLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

JUNE 2026

GENERAL STUDIES PAPER I (GS I)

SUBJECT: HISTORY

TOPICS COVERED

- | | | | |
|------|--|------|---|
| 26J6 | Punjab CM says 'mask' used to create fake video | 22J6 | All convey the same truth |
| 26J6 | One who holds all things | 17J6 | Savarkar filed 10 mercy pleas before the British, grandnephew tells court |
| 24J6 | Vijayanagara-era inscriptions come to light in A.P.'s Seshachalam forest | 16J6 | QUIZ: Mona Lisa |
| 24J6 | BJP chief says Syama Prasad Mookerjee was a great nationalist | 15J6 | The hidden history of the Thai-Bharat connection |
| 23J6 | ASI transfers Rakhigarhi skeletons to AnSI for a scientific investigation | 10J6 | QUIZ |
| 23J6 | QUIZ | 07J6 | Besieged history |
| 23J6 | Israeli strikes leave Lebanon's ancient coastal city of Tyre shaken, shattered | 02J6 | How red moved through empires, trade networks, and industrial factories |
| 22J6 | U.P. govt. must avoid targeting heritage structures, say MPs | 02J6 | QUIZ |
| | | 01J6 | The majoritarian shadow over Adivasi identity, faith |



26J6. Punjab CM says 'mask' used to create fake video

- He said the matter would be placed before the **Akal Takht**, the highest **Sikh temporal seat**, along with the evidence.

26J6. One who holds all things

- The **tenth of Muharram** stands apart in the **Islamic calendar**.
- **Ashura**, derived from the Arabic **ashara (ten)**, arrives as both a summons to remembrance and an invitation to gratitude.
- For **Shias**, it is a solemn period of mourning.
- **Hussein — Prophet Muhammad's** grandson and the **third Shia Imam** — refused to yield to tyranny and was killed in the **Battle of Karbala** on this day in **680 CE**.
- In **Sunni** tradition, the day is marked by **voluntary fasting** — an observance that predates the tragedy at **Karbala**.
- **Prophet Muhammad** came upon **Jews** fasting in **Madinah** on the day to commemorate the deliverance of the **Israelites** from **Pharaoh** (referring to the parting of the **Red Sea**).
- He declares that **Muslims** had greater right to honour **Prophet Musa (Moses)** and prescribed the fast.
- Beyond this foundational event confirmed in **Sahih al-Bukhari**, several divine interventions are associated with **Ashura** in classical Islamic narrations.
- **Prophet Yunus (Jonah)** was freed from the belly of the whale on this day, illustrating the power of sincere repentance.
- **Prophet Adam's** transgression was forgiven by **Allah**, marking the beginning of human redemption.
- **Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham)** was cast into a massive fire by **King Nimrod**, and emerged unharmed through **Allah's** command — an outcome symbolising unwavering faith.
- **Prophet Ayyub (Job's)** affliction was cured after years of trial and tribulation — the ultimate reward for **sabr (steadfast patience)**.
- **Ashura** reminds the faithful of one constant: that no trial is final.
- Every **Prophet** tested was ultimately upheld — not just by their own strength, but by the mercy of the **One who holds all things**.

24J6. Vijayanagara-era inscriptions come to light in A.P.'s Seshachalam forest

- An expert team from the **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)** has found **three rare inscriptions** dating to the **16th century** in **Sadasivakona**, deep inside the **Seshachalam forest** in **Tirupati district** of **Andhra Pradesh**.
- After an epigraphical survey carried out recently in the **Nallamala Hills**, the team focused its attention this time on **Sadasivakona**, a pristine and mostly under-explored forest stretch in the **Seshachalam range**.
- The inscriptions contained text in **Telugu, Tamil and Kannada**, representing characters of the **16th century**.
- The inscriptions of the **Sadasiva Devaraya** era of **Vijayanagara dynasty** in **1554** were copied in the form of **estampages** for preservation and further study.
- The main inscription records the construction of a **Siva temple** and a **monastery (mutt)** at **Papavinasa** in **Sadasivakona** by **King Sadasivaraya** during his pilgrimage to the site.
- "It is thrilling to note that **King Sadasivaraya** personally visited this sacred spot to take a holy bath and grant a donation," Mr. Reddy said.
- Though known to be **India's first Siva temple**, the **2nd-century BC shrine** in **Gudimallam** remained overshadowed by other temples in its vicinity, which gained prominence over time.
- However, **this latest inscription of the 16th century** is a pointer to its past glory, when it was personally visited by the ruler of this region.

24J6. BJP chief says Syama Prasad Mookerjee was a great nationalist

- **BJP president Nitin Nabin** on Tuesday paid tributes to **Jana Sangh founder Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee** on his **73rd "Balidan Diwas"**, describing him as a **profound thinker** and a **great nationalist**.
- "The sacrifice and patriotism of **Dr. Mookerjee**, who dedicated his entire life to the resolve of '**Nation First**', serve as a guiding light for all of us."
- He said over **14 crore BJP workers** were moving forward under the leadership of **Prime Minister Modi**, **guided by the same nationalist ideology and commitment to the nation** with which **Dr. Mookerjee** had founded the **Jana Sangh** in **1951**.



23J6. ASI transfers Rakhigarhi skeletons to AnSI for a scientific investigation

- Human skeletal remains excavated from the archaeological site of Rakhigarhi in Haryana have been formally handed over by the Archaeological Survey of India to the Anthropological Survey of India, a national research institute under the Union Culture Ministry, for a detailed scientific investigation.
- The transfer, carried out under a memorandum of understanding between the two institutions, is expected to significantly advance multidisciplinary research into one of the most important urban centres of the Indus-Saraswati Civilisation, B.V. Sharma, Director of the Anthropological Survey of India, said.
- Rakhigarhi, spread across approximately 550 hectares in Haryana, is widely recognised as the largest known settlement of the Harappan Civilisation.
- Archaeological excavations have revealed evidence of continuous habitation, from the Early Harappan to the Mature Harappan periods.
- Mound 7 at the excavation site has been identified as a burial plot where 56 skeletons were recovered.
- These included that of a woman, roughly 4,600 years old, which created a buzz in the fields of history, anthropology, genomics, and linguistics.
- DNA analysis of the skeleton revealed that the Rakhigarhi woman did not possess the steppe pastoral gene, fuelling the debate on Aryan migration to India.
- The word "Aryan" has been interchangeably used for the steppe pastoralists, though many scholars now prefer the term Indo-Aryan to avoid racial connotations.
- Three complete human skeletons among those recovered from Mound 7, along with skeletal fragments recovered from other burials, have now been transferred to the Anthropological Survey of India's ancient human skeletal repository and laboratory in Kolkata for detailed examination.
- Researchers believe the remains present a rare opportunity to apply modern scientific techniques, including ancient DNA analysis, stable isotope studies, osteological assessments, palaeopathological investigations, and environmental reconstruction.
- The research will be conducted in collaboration with leading scientific institutions, including the Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeosciences, University College London, and Banaras Hindu University.

RAKHIGARHI

- Rakhigarhi is one of the most important archaeological sites of the Indus Valley Civilization (IVC) and is widely regarded as the largest known Harappan site in the Indian subcontinent.
- It is located in Hisar District, Haryana, on the Ghaggar-Hakra (ancient Saraswati-Drishadvati) plain.
- Located near the villages of Rakhi Khas and Rakhi Shahpur in Haryana.
- Approximately 150 km northwest of Delhi.
- Discovery and Excavation**
- The site was identified in 1963.
- Systematic excavations were carried out by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) between 1997–2000 under Amarendra Nath.
- Further excavations were undertaken by Deccan College, Pune, under Prof. Vasant Shinde between 2011–2016.

23J6. QUIZ

1. Why did PM Modi suggest June 21 as the International Day of Yoga at the UN in 2014?

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi, during his address to the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in September 2014, proposed that 21 June be observed as the International Day of Yoga.
- He highlighted that this date coincides with the Summer Solstice, the longest day in the Northern Hemisphere, and holds special significance in many cultures and spiritual traditions.
- In Indian yogic philosophy, it is associated with the transition towards Dakshinayana and symbolizes harmony between humans and nature.
- The UN adopted the proposal on 11 December 2014 with support from 177 member states, one of the highest co-sponsorships for any UN resolution.

2. What was the theme for the International Day of Yoga (IDY) this year?

- The theme for International Day of Yoga 2026 was "Yoga for Healthy Ageing."
- The theme emphasizes yoga's role in promoting physical fitness, mental well-being, flexibility, balance, and emotional resilience throughout life.
- With increasing life expectancy worldwide, healthy ageing has become a major public health priority.



3. Apart from **Bhakti Yoga and Karma Yoga**, what are the other three broad classifications of Yoga?

- Yoga traditions are often classified into different paths according to the seeker's temperament and spiritual goals. **Jnana Yoga** is the path of knowledge, wisdom, and self-inquiry.
- **Dhyana Yoga** focuses on meditation and concentration to attain higher consciousness.
- **Kriya Yoga** emphasizes disciplined practices, purification techniques, and spiritual exercises aimed at self-realization.
- Along with **Bhakti Yoga** (devotion) and **Karma Yoga** (selfless action), these paths provide complementary approaches for achieving physical, mental, and spiritual development.

4. What are 'Yuktahara' and 'Pratyahara'?

- **Yuktahara** is a concept found in yogic texts that advocates moderation and balance in diet.
- It emphasizes consuming nutritious food in appropriate quantities and maintaining healthy eating habits to support physical and mental well-being.
- **Pratyahara**, the fifth limb of **Ashtanga Yoga** described by **Patanjali**, involves consciously withdrawing the mind from external sensory distractions.

TYRE: A HISTORIC CITY IN LEBANON

- Tyre is an ancient coastal city in **southern Lebanon**.
- It is located on the **Mediterranean coast**, about **83 km south of Beirut**.
- It was one of the most important cities of ancient **Phoenicia**.
- Tyre is famous for its **maritime trade, purple dye, Phoenician colonies, Roman ruins and UNESCO World Heritage status**.
- UNESCO describes Tyre as a great Phoenician city that ruled the seas and founded colonies such as **Carthage and Cadiz**.
- The city became prominent as a **Phoenician city-state** during the **first millennium BCE**.
- Phoenicians were known as skilled sailors, traders and colonizers.
- Tyre became especially famous for its **purple dye**, often called **Tyrian purple**.
- One of the most famous events in Tyre's history was the **Siege of Tyre in 332 BCE**.

Tyre under Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine Rule

- The city contains major archaeological remains from the **Roman period**, including roads, baths, arches, necropolis areas and the famous **Roman Hippodrome**.
- The **Roman Hippodrome of Tyre** is one of the most important ancient chariot-racing sites in the region.
- In the Byzantine period, Tyre remained an important religious and urban centre.
- The **Al-Mina site** contains remains close to the ancient harbour and Roman urban structures.

UNESCO World Heritage Site

- Tyre was inscribed as a **UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1984**.
- UNESCO recognized Tyre because of its outstanding Phoenician and Roman heritage.
- Its cultural memory survives through legends connected with **Europa, Dido or Elissa**, and the foundation traditions of **Carthage**.

- Through **Pratyahara**, practitioners gain greater control over their senses and develop inner awareness.

5. From which animals are the following asanas inspired: **Catur Svanasana, Sasakasana and Ustrasana**?

- Many yoga postures are inspired by observations of nature and animals. **Catur Svanasana**, commonly known as the **Dolphin Pose**, mimics the streamlined posture of a dolphin and helps strengthen the shoulders and spine.
- **Sasakasana**, or **Rabbit Pose**, resembles the crouched posture of a rabbit and promotes spinal flexibility and relaxation.
- **Ustrasana**, known as the **Camel Pose**, imitates the arched stance of a camel and is an important back-bending posture that improves posture, chest expansion, and flexibility.
- These animal-inspired asanas reflect yoga's deep connection with the natural world and bodily awareness.

6. From where does the shloka "**Sam gacchadhvam sam vadadhvam...**" originate?

- The shloka "**Sam gacchadhvam sam vadadhvam sam vo manamsi janatam...**" originates from the **Rig Veda (Mandala 10, Sukta 191)**.
- It is a celebrated Vedic hymn promoting unity, cooperation, and collective harmony.
- The verse encourages people to move together, speak together, and share common understanding and purpose.
- Because yoga seeks harmony among individuals, society, and nature, this mantra



is often recited at the beginning of yoga sessions.

- It reflects the ancient Indian vision of social cohesion, mutual respect, and spiritual unity, making it highly relevant to the universal message of yoga even today.

Period	Approximate Time	Main Region	Main Contribution
Phoenician	1500–300 BCE	Levant and Mediterranean	Trade, colonies, alphabet
Hellenistic	323–30 BCE	Eastern Mediterranean and Near East	Spread of Greek culture
Roman	27 BCE–476 CE in the West	Mediterranean Empire	Law, roads, administration, empire
Byzantine	330–1453 CE	Eastern Mediterranean	Roman continuity, Greek culture, Christianity

22J6. U.P. govt. must avoid targeting heritage structures, say MPs

- The MPs were questioning **Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari's** comments on the alleged threat to the **1,000-year-old Masjid Ganj Shaheeda** in Varanasi.

Ghazi Saiyyad Salar Masud (Ghazi Miyan)

- Ghazi Saiyyad Salar Masud** (also known as **Ghazi Miyan**) is a medieval figure who occupies a unique place in the history and folklore of North India.
- He is revered by many devotees as a warrior-saint, while historians generally view him in the context of the early Turkic military expeditions into northern India.

Historical Background

- He is believed to have lived during the early **11th century CE**.
- According to traditional accounts, he was the son of **Salar Sahu** and a relative (often described as a nephew) of Mahmud of Ghazni.
- Medieval Persian texts, particularly the **Mirat-i-Masudi** written in the **17th century** by Abdur Rahman Chishti, describe his military campaigns in northern India.
- Tradition states that he entered northern India with forces associated with the Ghaznavids and was killed in a battle near Bahraich around **1034 CE**.

Shrine at Bahraich

23J6. Israeli strikes leave Lebanon's ancient coastal city of Tyre shaken, shattered

- His most famous shrine is the Dargah of Ghazi Saiyyad Salar Masud.
- The shrine attracts devotees from different communities, including both Muslims and Hindus.
- An annual fair known as the **Jeth Mela** is organized there and has historically been one of the major religious gatherings of eastern Uttar Pradesh.

Historical Debate

- Historians debate the extent to which the traditional narratives are historically accurate.
- Contemporary evidence from the **11th century** regarding Salar Masud is limited.
- Much of the popular narrative comes from later literary and devotional traditions, especially the **Mirat-i-Masudi**, written several centuries after his death.
- As a result, historians distinguish between:
- The historical figure**, about whom limited evidence exists.
- The legendary Ghazi Miyan**, whose life story became enriched through folklore and popular religious traditions

22J6. All convey the same truth

- The Vedas describe many **samskaras (sacraments)**.
- Since elaborate **Vedic sacrifices** are beyond the capability of most people in this yuga, ordinary devotees are encouraged to engage in **nama sankirtana — the chanting of the divine names of God**.
- Such practices contribute not only to personal spiritual growth but also to **loka kshema — the welfare of the entire world**.
- Ramanuja** taught that for ordinary people, simply walking to a temple and worshipping the Lord with devotion is equivalent to performing a **yajna**.
- Sage Vyasa** taught through the **Bhagavata Purana** that listening to the glories of the Lord (**sravanam**) itself is a form of yajna.
- Andal** emphasised devotion through singing the Lord's names and contemplating Him with the mind.
- "Sing with the mouth and meditate with the mind."



- The **Vedas**, the **Bhagavad Gita**, the **Bhagavata Purana**, the **Ramayana**, the **Azhwars** and the great **Acharyas** all convey the same truth.

Sage Vyasa

- Sage Vyasa**, also known as **Veda Vyasa** or **Krishna Dvaipayana**, is one of the most revered sages in Indian tradition.
- The word **Vyasa** means **compiler, arranger or divider**, which reflects his traditional role in arranging sacred knowledge.
- He is traditionally credited with compiling or arranging the **Vedas**, composing or arranging the **Mahabharata**, and contributing to the **Puranic tradition**.
- Historical and Cultural Significance**
- Vyasa is traditionally linked with the division of Vedic knowledge into **Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda and Atharvaveda**.
- He is also connected with the **Mahabharata**, one of the greatest epics of India.
- The **Bhagavad Gita**, which is part of the Mahabharata, became one of the most influential texts of Indian philosophy.
- Vyasa is also remembered on **Guru Purnima**, which is observed on the full moon day of **Ashadha month**, generally falling in **June or July**.

Andal

- Andal** was a major woman saint of the Tamil **Vaishnava Bhakti tradition**.
- She is regarded as the **only female saint among the twelve Alvars**, who were early Tamil poet-saints devoted to **Lord Vishnu**.
- Andal is closely associated with **Srivilliputhur** in present-day **Virudhunagar district of Tamil Nadu**.
- The official Tamil Nadu HRCE page identifies **Srivilliputhur Andal Temple** as one of the **108 Divya Desams** dedicated to Lord Vishnu.

Literary Contribution

- Andal is famous for **composing Tiruppavai**, a collection of **30 devotional hymns**.

- She is also associated with **Nachiyaar Tirumoli**, another important devotional composition.
- Her poetry expresses intense devotion, surrender and spiritual longing for Lord Vishnu.
- Her compositions are especially important during the Tamil month of **Margazhi**, when **Tiruppavai** is recited widely.

Historical Importance

- Andal gave a powerful voice to **women's participation in Bhakti**.
- Her devotional poetry shows that Bhakti was not limited to Sanskritic learning or elite groups.
- She used **Tamil language**, making devotion more accessible to ordinary people.
- The **Srivilliputhur temple gopuram** is widely recognized as an important symbol of Tamil cultural heritage.
- Simple Example**
- Andal's Bhakti can be understood as personal and emotional devotion.
- Instead of treating religion only as ritual, Andal expressed devotion as love, surrender and direct connection with the divine.

Ramanuja

- Ramanuja**, also known as **Ramanujacharya**, was a major philosopher, theologian and social-religious reformer of South India.
- He was born around **1017 CE** at **Sriperumbudur** and died in **1137 CE** at **Srirangam**.
- He is one of the most important teachers of **Sri Vaishnavism**.
- His philosophy is known as **Vishishtadvaita Vedanta**, meaning **qualified non-dualism**.

Philosophy of Vishishtadvaita

- Ramanuja accepted that **Brahman** is the ultimate reality.
- He identified Brahman with **Vishnu-Narayana**, along with **Lakshmi**.
- Unlike absolute non-dualism, he argued that the soul and the world are real, but they depend on God.
- In simple words, Ramanuja taught that God, soul and world are connected, but not completely identical.



- **Contribution to Bhakti Movement**
- Ramanuja gave a strong philosophical foundation to **devotion or Bhakti**.
- He emphasized **surrender to God**, known as **prapatti**.
- He organized temple worship at **Srirangam** and helped spread Sri Vaishnava teachings.
- He connected Sanskrit Vedanta with the Tamil devotional tradition of the **Alvars**.
- **Social Significance**
- Ramanuja is remembered for promoting the idea of wider access to devotion.
- The **216-feet Statue of Equality** in Hyderabad commemorates his teachings on equality in matters of faith, caste and creed. It was dedicated to the nation by the Prime Minister on **5 February 2022**.

Simple Example

- If Shankara emphasized the ultimate unity of reality, Ramanuja emphasized a devotional relationship between the soul and God.
- His teaching made philosophy more connected with worship, temple tradition and public devotion.

RIGVEDA (VEDA OF HYMNS)

- The **oldest Veda**, composed around **1500–1200 BCE**.
- Contains **1,028 hymns (Suktas)** dedicated to various deities such as

Agni (Fire), Indra (Rain and War), Varuna, and Soma.

- Provides valuable information about the early Vedic society, religion, economy, and polity.

Yajurveda (Veda of Sacrificial Formulas)

- Often called the "**Book of Prayers**".
- Contains prayers, chants, and procedures used during **sacrifices (Yajnas)**.
- Acts as a guidebook for priests conducting rituals.
- Divided into:
- **Krishna (Black) Yajurveda**
- **Shukla (White) Yajurveda**
- Focuses more on **rituals and ceremonies** than philosophy.

Samaveda (Veda of Melodies)

- Consists mainly of hymns borrowed from the **Rigveda** but arranged for singing.
- Contains musical notations and chants used during religious ceremonies.
- Considered the **foundation of Indian classical music**.
- Often called the "**Veda of Music**."

Atharvaveda (Veda of Everyday Life)

- Contains hymns, prayers, charms, spells, and incantations.
- Deals with everyday concerns such as health, protection, family welfare, agriculture, and healing.
- Provides insights into the social life and beliefs of common people.
- Sometimes called the "**Veda of Folk Traditions**."

Difference Between Advaita and Dvaita (For a Layperson)

- The simplest way to understand **Advaita** and **Dvaita** is through the relationship between **God and the individual soul (you and me)**.

Advaita (Adi Shankaracharya)

- The drop of water and the ocean are essentially made of the same substance.
- The drop appears separate, but once it merges into the ocean, it realizes it was never truly different.

- Similarly, your soul (**Atman**) and the ultimate reality (**Brahman**) are actually one.

- **Formula:**
Atman = Brahman

Dvaita (Madhvacharya)

- The drop of water and the ocean are always different.
- The drop can be close to the ocean, depend on it, and love it, but it never becomes the ocean.
- Similarly, the soul can worship God and attain salvation, but it never becomes God.



- **Formula:**
Atman ≠ God

Advaita

- Suppose you dream at night.
- In the dream, you see many people, animals, and places.
- When you wake up, you realize everything was created by your own mind.
- Advaita says:
- Just as the dream ultimately comes from one mind, the entire universe ultimately comes from one reality, Brahman.

Dvaita

- Think of a king and his subjects.
- The subjects depend on the king.
- They can love and serve the king.
- But they never become the king.
- Dvaita says:

- God is the supreme ruler, and souls are His servants forever.

Where Does Ramanuja Fit?

- There is also a middle path called **Vishishtadvaita** proposed by Ramanuja.
- Ramanuja said:
- The soul is not completely identical to God (unlike Advaita).
- The soul is not completely separate from God (unlike Dvaita).
- Souls and the universe are parts of God's body and depend on Him.

Simple Analogy

- God = Tree
- Souls = Leaves
- Leaves are different from the tree, yet they cannot exist independently of it.

17J6. Savarkar filed 10 mercy pleas before the British, grandnephew tells court

- **Satyaki Savarkar, the grandnephew of Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, told a special MP/MLA court in Pune that the right-wing ideologue had submitted 10 clemency petitions to the British government seeking reduction of his sentence.**
- The testimony was part of a **criminal defamation case** Mr. Satyaki has filed against **Congress leader Rahul Gandhi**.
- During the hearing of the case in the court of special judge **Amol Shinde**, Mr. Satyaki said Savarkar was referred to as "**veer**" in a periodical run by the **Gadar Organisation** before he was transferred to the **Andaman Islands**.
- Asked about incarcerations of other revolutionaries from the same period, Mr. Satyaki said the likes of **Rajguru, Batukeshwar Dutt, and Ashfaqulla Khan** did not file clemency petitions.
- But Savarkar submitted a mercy petition within the first month after receiving his sentence, he said.
- Mr. Satyaki told the court that he was not aware of **Bhagat Singh** and **Dutt** petitioning the British government to demand treatment as prisoners of war, and to refuse concessions or leniency.
- He agreed that **Singh and Dutt stood by their ideology until the end of their lives.**

- Mr. Satyaki informed the court that records of Savarkar's **10 petitions** exist in government archives.
- He said the language in these petitions did not indicate loyalty to the British regime and were forwarded by prison authorities for approval.
- He said language used in clemency petitions followed official protocol.
- Mr. Satyaki said he was not aware that Savarkar signed each petition with the phrase, "**I beg to remain, Sir, your most obedient servant, V.D. Savarkar.**"
- He denied that Savarkar was released after these **10 pleas** were filed.
- According to him, the **British government had the authority to commute or alter sentences** in mercy petitions.

'All pleas rejected'

- Mr. Satyaki said the colonial government had rejected all of Savarkar's **clemency petitions**.
- In their replies, the authorities expressed apprehension that Savarkar would rejoin the revolutionary movement if released, he said.
- Savarkar's grandnephew said that filing clemency petitions were standard procedures under the British government, adding that other prisoners had filed such petitions and the practice was neither exceptional nor illegal.
- The court recorded excerpts from one mercy petition in which Savarkar stated that others sent to the Andaman jail with him be released and he be kept incarcerated and



classified as a **Class D prisoner** facing harsh punishment.

- Leonardo's scientific understanding of optics and human vision enabled him to perfect this technique, making the painting one of the greatest achievements of Renaissance art.

16J6. QUIZ

1. Who is widely believed to be the woman depicted in the Mona Lisa?

- The woman portrayed in Leonardo da Vinci's **Mona Lisa** is widely identified as **Lisa Gherardini del Giocondo**, the wife of Florentine silk merchant **Francesco del Giocondo**.
- Because of her husband's surname, the painting is also known as **La Gioconda** in Italian and **La Joconde** in French.

2. Around what year is Leonardo da Vinci believed to have begun painting the Mona Lisa?

- Most scholars agree that **Leonardo da Vinci** began painting the Mona Lisa around **1503** in Florence.
- Italian Renaissance.
- However, **Leonardo continued refining the painting for many years, possibly until 1516–1517, carrying it with him to France.**

3. What is the approximate size of the Mona Lisa?

- Despite its immense fame, the **Mona Lisa** is relatively small in size, measuring approximately **77 centimetres by 53 centimetres** (30 inches by 21 inches).
- The painting is **executed in oil on a poplar wood panel**, a common support used by Renaissance artists.

4. Which artistic technique, heavily employed in the Mona Lisa, creates the painting's characteristic soft transitions between light and shadow?

- The signature visual effect of the Mona Lisa comes from Leonardo's masterful use of **sfumato**, an Italian term meaning "smoky" or "softly blurred."
- This technique involves **applying multiple thin layers of translucent paint to create seamless transitions between light and dark areas without visible outlines.**
- **Sfumato** gives the portrait its lifelike quality and contributes to the famous ambiguity of Mona Lisa's smile and expression.

5. Which French king acquired the Mona Lisa for the royal collection?

- The **Mona Lisa** entered the French royal collection through **King Francis I of France**, one of the most influential patrons of Renaissance art.
- **Francis I** invited **Leonardo da Vinci** to France in **1516**, where the artist spent his final years at Clos Lucé near the Château d'Amboise.
- **Leonardo** brought the Mona Lisa with him, and after his death in 1519, the painting became part of the French royal collection.
- Over the centuries, it remained in royal residences before eventually becoming one of the most treasured works displayed in the **Louvre Museum** in Paris.

6. What major event in 1911 dramatically increased the painting's worldwide fame?

- The **Mona Lisa's** global fame increased dramatically after its sensational **theft from the Louvre Museum in 1911** by **Vincenzo Peruggia**, an Italian museum worker.
- Peruggia believed the painting should be returned to Italy and hid it for more than two years. The disappearance generated international headlines, turning the artwork into a worldwide cultural phenomenon.
- The **painting was recovered in Florence in 1913** and returned to France.

15J6. The hidden history of the Thai-Bharat connection

- Today, June 15, marks the 84th anniversary of a historic meeting we have allowed ourselves to forget, which led to the birth of the **Indian National Army (INA)**.
- I learned about it on a visit to the **Thai-Bharat Cultural Lodge (TBCL) in Bangkok**, discovering a remarkable, overlooked chapter of history that reveals Thailand's vital role as a neutral, strategic beacon for Indian revolutionaries seeking refuge from British colonial rule.

From culture to cause

- The roots of this alliance were sown in 1927 during a historic visit to **Siam, now Thailand**,



- by Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore, who met with King Prajadhipok (Rama VII).
- Inspired by his vision, **Prafulla Kumar Sen, a Bengali scholar who became known as Swami Satyananda Puri, arrived in Bangkok in 1932.**
- In December 1940, this ashram was transformed into the TBCL.
- One of the most instrumental figures in this era was **Sardar Giani Pritam Singh**, a Sikh missionary and Ghadar Party veteran who had been preaching revolutionary ideals among the Indian diaspora in Bangkok.
- In December 1941, the Indian National Council (INC) was founded at the Silpakorn Theatre in Bangkok by a group of nationalists associated with the TBCL, with Swami Satyananda Puri as its president and Debnath Das as its secretary.
- This organisation played a crucial role in coordinating the efforts of the Indian independence movement, bridging the gap between civilian aspirations and the military mobilisation led by the Indian Independence League (IIL).

Toward organised resistance

- The cooperation between these groups culminated in the historic **Bangkok Conference**, which took place between **June 15 and June 23, 1942**, at the **Silpakorn Theatre**.
- This gathering represented a turning point in the struggle, bringing together more than a hundred representatives of Indian communities and freedom fighters from across Southeast Asia, including Burma, Malaya, and Singapore.
- The conference served three primary functions.
- It brought together diverse nationalist factions under a coherent political and military framework, effectively establishing the **Indian Independence League** as the central body for Indians residing outside of India.
- It adopted a comprehensive **34-point resolution**, which provided the official blueprint for the **Indian National Army**, stipulating that it would be composed of volunteers and former prisoners of war and supervised by the Indian Independence League rather than the Japanese military.
- The delegates urged Japan to formally recognise India as an independent nation and acknowledge the Indian Independence League as its sole legitimate representative, reflecting a strategic effort to ensure that the independence movement maintained its own agency despite its reliance on Japanese support.

- In March 1942, a plane carrying the Swami and the Sardar, who were en route to a high-level meeting in Tokyo to secure further commitments for the movement, crashed, resulting in their deaths.
- Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's** arrival in 1943 provided the centralised, charismatic, and revolutionary military leadership needed.
- He took command of the Indian Independence League and the Indian National Army, shifting the focus from decentralised regional council discussions toward a unified, disciplined military and political front designed to launch an armed struggle for Indian independence.

10J6. QUIZ

1. Sardari Larai (Sardar Movement) and its Influence on Birsa's Uprising

- The **Sardari Larai**, active mainly between the 1850s and 1890s in the Chotanagpur region, was an agrarian movement led by Munda and Oraon tribal leaders known as **Sardars**.
- It emerged against land alienation, excessive rents, forced labour, and the erosion of traditional **Khuntkatti** land rights under British rule.
- The movement largely relied on petitions and legal appeals. Young **Birsa Munda** closely observed this struggle and was influenced by its demands.
- Historians regard the Sardari movement as the immediate precursor to Birsa's rebellion because it shaped the political consciousness and anti-colonial atmosphere of Chotanagpur.

2. Ulgulan – The “Great Tumult”

- The Munda uprising led by **Birsa Munda** during 1899–1900 is popularly known as **Ulgulan**, meaning “Great Tumult” or “Great Upheaval.”
- It was not merely a tribal revolt but a broad social, economic, religious, and political movement against British colonial rule, exploitative landlords, moneylenders, and missionary influence.
- The movement reflected deep resentment against land dispossession and exploitation. Though suppressed by the British, Ulgulan became a landmark in tribal resistance and later influenced protective laws such as the **Chotanagpur Tenancy Act, 1908**.

3. “Abua Raj ete jana, Maharani raj tundu jana”



- The slogan **"Abua Raj ete jana, Maharani raj tundu jana"** translates as "Let our rule come, let the Queen's rule go." It became the political message of Birsa Munda's movement.

4. Birsa – The Faith Founded by Birsa Munda

- Birsait** refers to the distinct religious community that emerged around the teachings of Birsa Munda. Birsa preached monotheism, moral reform, social discipline, and a return to indigenous tribal traditions.
- He opposed excessive **ritualism, superstition, missionary conversions, and social evils** affecting tribal society.
- His followers regarded him as a spiritual guide and often referred to him as **"Dharti Aba" (Father of the Earth)**. Birsait combined elements of traditional Munda beliefs with reformist ideas and became a powerful source of social unity.



Visual Question:-

This famous photograph of Birsa Munda was reproduced in which pioneering ethnographic work by Sarat Chandra Roy?

5. Birsa Munda's Death in Ranchi Jail

- Birsa Munda** died in **Ranchi Jail** on **9 June 1900** while in British custody.
- The official British record stated that the **cause of death was cholera**.

This famous photograph of Birsa Munda was reproduced in which pioneering ethnographic work by Sarat Chandra Roy?

07J6. Besieged history

- A **12th-century hilltop castle** has emerged as a key strategic flashpoint in **Israel's war with Hezbollah** in occupied southern **Lebanon**.
- The **Beaufort Castle** sits right beside the **Litani River** in southern Lebanon, with an unobstructed view of northern Israel and the sweeping **Beqaa Valley**.
- The **900-year-old structure**, which literally means **"beautiful fort"** in Old French, has come under renewed spotlight after the Israeli military invasion on **June 1**.
- Originally called **Qalaat al-Shaqif**, or the **"Castle of the High Rock"**, Beaufort was built by European crusaders atop older fortifications in **1139**.

- In **1190**, the stately structure was captured by **Saladin**, the first Sultan of Egypt and Syria, who used it as an important border outpost to strengthen his reign.
- Due to its military importance, the castle has changed hands frequently, with **Crusaders, Knights Templar, Egyptian Mamluks, Ottomans**, and the **French** all leaving their marks on it.
- The **Frankish Crusaders** created its two-storey keep with an entry through the ground floor, unlike other forts of its time.
- The natural trench between the fortress and the fast-flowing **Litani** leads to the city of **Nabatieh**, an ancient centre for the trade of precious spices and commodities like **Myrrh** and **Frankincense** in its historical **Souk el-Tanen** market.

Caught in the war

- The sand-battered behemoth is on track to become a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** and has been included on the country's **'tentative list.'**
- November 2024** saw the global body granting it provisional enhanced protection under the **1954 Hague Convention**.
- During the **1970s**, the **Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO)** attacked Israel from the fort's ramparts.

02J6. How red moved through empires, trade networks, and industrial factories

- In 1799, during the storming of the fortress of **Seringapatam**, British troops broke through the defences of **Srirangapatna** and killed **Tipu Sultan**, the ruler of **Mysore**.
- Officers wrote with particular fascination about the **intensity of the dyed fabrics** stored in the royal workshops.

Global red trade

- In the Mediterranean world, the **most famous red-purple dye** was extracted from marine snails harvested along **Levantine shores**.
- In the Americas, Indigenous farmers raised the **cochineal insect on cactus paddles**, harvesting the tiny bodies and drying them into a powder that produced a red of extraordinary intensity.
- When **Spanish ships** began exporting cochineal to Europe in the sixteenth century, the dye rapidly became one of the most valuable commodities of the Atlantic world, rivaling silver in price and strategic importance.
- Elsewhere, especially across **Eurasia**, **dyers cultivated the roots of the madder plant**,



whose alizarin compounds could produce deep crimson lakes.

- A single crimson cloak worn in **London** or **Istanbul** might contain colour drawn from insects cultivated in **Oaxaca**, plants grown in **Central Asia**, or mollusks harvested from Mediterranean shores.
- The **siege of Seringapatam** unfolded within this global colour economy.
- For centuries, every brilliant red had depended on living organisms, whether it was roots pulled from soil, or insects harvested from cacti, or shellfish gathered along rocky coasts.
- In 1856, the English chemist **William Henry Perkin** inadvertently altered this relationship.
- While attempting to synthesise quinine in an experiment, he produced a purple residue that dyed silk with remarkable intensity.
- The compound, later marketed as **mauveine**, inaugurated the modern synthetic dye industry.
- In 1869, industrial chemists succeeded in synthesising **alizarin**, which is the key red component of **madder**, making centuries of agricultural cultivation suddenly unnecessary.
- **Madder fields across Europe** collapsed almost overnight.
- **Cochineal plantations** faced competition from cheaper laboratory pigments.
- What had once required soil, insects, seasons and skilled cultivation could now be produced in factories wherever coal, glassware and chemical knowledge were available.
- Red moved from earth, to organism, to laboratory — from ritual substance to industrial commodity.

02J6. QUIZ: Goa Statehood

1. Goa attained statehood in 1987 and was separated from Daman and Diu

- Goa was granted full **statehood** on **May 30, 1987** through the **Goa, Daman and Diu Reorganisation Act, 1987**. Before this, Goa, Daman and Diu functioned as a single Union Territory after their liberation from Portuguese rule in 1961.
- With statehood, **Goa became the 25th State of India**, while Daman and Diu continued as a Union Territory.

2. Goa celebrates its Liberation Day on December 19, 1961

- **Goa Liberation Day** is observed every year on **December 19** to commemorate the end of Portuguese colonial rule in Goa.

- On this day in **1961**, the Indian Armed Forces launched **Operation Vijay**, leading to the successful integration of Goa, Daman, and Diu into India.
- **Portuguese rule in Goa had continued for nearly 451 years.**

3. Goa became the 25th State of India

- The inclusion of **Konkani in the Eighth Schedule** of the Constitution in 1992 further strengthened Goa's linguistic recognition at the national level.

4. Goa was owned by Portugal and annexed to India in 1961

- Before joining India, **Goa was under the control of Portugal**, which had established colonial rule there in **1510** under Afonso de Albuquerque.

5. "Little Russia" in Goa refers to Morjim Beach

- The term **"Little Russia"** is popularly associated with **Morjim Beach** in North Goa.
- The area gained this nickname because of the **large number of Russian tourists and expatriates who began visiting and residing there from the late 1990s onward.**
- Russian restaurants, signboards, cultural influence, and businesses became common in the locality.
- **Morjim is also ecologically significant** because it serves as a nesting site for the protected **Olive Ridley turtles**, attracting both tourists and conservationists.

6. Goa was earlier known by names such as Gomantak and Govapuri

- Historically, Goa was known by several ancient names including **Gomantak, Govapuri, Gopakapattana, and Aparanta.**
- These names are found in ancient Indian texts, Puranas, and historical records. "Gomantak" is often interpreted as "fertile land" or "land of cows."
- During different historical periods, **Goa was ruled by the Kadambas, Bahmani Sultanate, Vijayanagara Empire, and the Portuguese.**

01J6. The majoritarian shadow over Adivasi identity, faith

- Last week, the **Janjati Suraksha Manch (JSM)** and **Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram**, both **Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS)** progeny, held a conclave in Delhi —



“Janjati Sanskritik Samagam” — attended by thousands of Adivasis from across the country.

- The stated occasion was the **150th anniversary** of legendary hero **Birsa Munda**.
- The **JSM’s** core agenda against Christian conversions is well known, its main demand being the **delisting of all Adivasi communities that have converted to Christianity and the stripping of their constitutional and legal protections on the grounds that they no longer subscribe to Adivasi beliefs.**
- The organisation has run violent campaigns in several States in central India, particularly **Chhattisgarh**, targeting Adivasi families who have converted to Christianity — campaigns that have gone so far as the forcible exhumation of bodies from graves on privately owned land belonging to Christian Adivasis in tribal villages.

A foundational distinction

- At the conclave, the demand for delisting was framed with reference to the recent Court judgment upholding the **Presidential Order of 1950**, which holds that persons belonging to **Scheduled Castes (SC)** who profess a religion “other than Hinduism” do not qualify for constitutional or legal benefits meant for SCs.
- The **JSM’s** demand is that **this principle be extended to Scheduled Tribes (ST)** — a move that would require removing what one of its leaders described as “a weakness in the Constitution.”
- What the **JSM** considers a weakness is, in fact, a foundational distinction: **unlike in the case of SCs, neither the Constitution of India nor the law links the identity of STs to religion.**
- On the conclave stage, alongside portraits of **Birsa Munda** and a Hinduised image of “**Bharat Mata**”, was a portrait of the late **Kartik Oraon** — a Congress Member of

Parliament who once filed a petition challenging the candidature of two members of the **Oraon community** from an ST-reserved seat on the grounds that they were Christians.

- The **Patna High Court**, in its ruling in **1963**, rejected his petition categorically, holding that “tribal identity is not religion-based,” that it rests on ethnic and community kinship ties, and that “an Oraon remains an Oraon” regardless of whether he is Hindu, Christian, or Buddhist.
- The High Court further observed that, by and large, converted Adivasis continued to participate in community festivals and celebrations, and joined others in raising concerns common to all Adivasi communities.

A campaign of cooption

- Adivasis are fully entitled to choose their religion under **Article 25** of the Constitution, which guarantees freedom of conscience and religion.

The urgent issues Adivasis face

- **Birsa Munda’s Ulgulan** was a revolt against colonial rule — and notably, he broke with Christian missionaries precisely because he saw them as instruments of that rule.
- The urgent issues before Adivasis are the sabotage of the **Forest Rights Act**, the virtual elimination of the rights of the gram sabha, the subversion of the **Panchayat (Extension to Scheduled Areas)**, or **PESA**, the huge backlog in employment in reserved posts, the pathetic condition of Adivasi student hostels and arrears in scholarship payments, and the continuing lack of civic and health facilities in Adivasi areas, to name a few.



PATRIOTIC IAS

MONTHLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

JUNE 2026

GENERAL STUDIES PAPER I (GS I)

SUBJECT: SOCIETY

TOPICS COVERED

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| 26J6 | Revisiting India's ultrasound laws | | |
| 26J6 | In a first, Swedish Minister brings baby to EU talks | 13J6 | Indian children |
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| | | 09J6 | SC says pre-marital relationship is not a blot on character |
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| 15J6 | The 'seven-point IQ opportunity' for | | |



- Once installed, the machine must remain at the approved location, its details must be recorded in official registers, and strict documentation,

26J6. Revisiting India's ultrasound laws

- Technological advances, like **portable ultrasound machines**, have made it possible to bring **cancer diagnostics**, such as **ultrasound imaging** and **ultrasound-guided biopsies**, closer to people's homes.
- This machine could, perhaps, have given Mrs. Janaki a diagnosis at her doorstep.
- However, India's **Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act** treats the movement of an **ultrasound machine** outside a registered facility as a serious offence, with penalties that can include a minimum of **three months' non-bailable imprisonment**.

Provisions of the PCPNDT Act

- The **PCPNDT Act** was introduced in **1994** in response to a sharp decline in the **child sex ratio** in India, driven by a strong societal preference for **male children** and the growing misuse of technologies such as **ultrasonography** for **prenatal sex determination**, followed by selective abortion of **female fetuses**.
- Abortion of **female fetuses** became more evident from the **1980s**, with the increasing availability of imaging technologies, raising serious **ethical, demographic, and public health** concerns.
- The legislation, therefore, aimed not only to prevent the misuse of medical technology but also to address the deeper issue of **gender discrimination**.
- The law mandates registration of all **genetic clinics, ultrasound centres, and laboratories** and strictly prohibits the communication or disclosure of the **sex of the fetus**.
- It prescribes detailed **record-keeping, monitoring mechanisms, and penalties** to ensure compliance.
- Under this Act, the purchase of an **ultrasound machine** is not a routine commercial transaction but a tightly-regulated process.
- A clinic or hospital must first be registered with the **district government** as a **genetic clinic** or **imaging centre** before acquiring a machine.
- Purchasing one without prior registration is illegal.
- Manufacturers or dealers are required to verify the buyer's credentials and obtain a written undertaking that the machine will not be used for **sex determination**.
- The sale must be documented with invoice details that match the registered centre, and the transaction is reported to the authorities for monitoring.

Impact of PCPNDT Act

- including **patient records** for every scan, must be maintained.
- Following the introduction of the **PCPNDT Act**, the **sex ratio at birth** in India has shown a gradual improvement at the national level.
- While this improvement cannot be conclusively attributed to the introduction of the Act, several unintended consequences can be directly attributed to it.
- Evidence suggests that families whose first child is a **girl** tend to have more children in an effort to have a **son**, compared to families with a firstborn **boy**.
- Following restrictions on **prenatal sex selection**, families experienced a **25% higher child mortality rate** among firstborn girls relative to firstborn boys.
- This could be explained by the decline in **parental investment** in health, particularly among girls.
- Fertility also increased in these families, indicating a shift toward having more children when sex selection was not an option.
- Having a larger number of children also led to dilution of resources, likely reducing overall investment per child.
- Similar patterns were observed in **education** as **gender disparities** widened.
- These effects were more pronounced among poorer, rural households that were more affected by the restrictions, as they could not afford illegal services to abort the child.
- Recent reports indicate that **sex-selective practices** continue despite decades of legal prohibition.
- In **October 2025**, authorities uncovered an illegal racket in **Karnataka** where organised networks were carrying out **prenatal sex determination** and facilitating abortions, often targeting vulnerable women from rural areas.
- Similar crackdowns across different **States** show that such activities are frequently conducted outside formal health systems, using **portable ultrasound devices**, informal providers, and covert arrangements to evade regulation.
- The issue is not confined to **India**.
- Reports from the **United Kingdom** indicates that **son preference** may persist among some diaspora communities as well.
- Reports have also raised concerns that families of **Indian origin** may be engaging in **sex-selective practices** even in settings with stricter oversight, highlighting the deep-rooted nature of **gender bias** that transcends national boundaries.



- Taken together, these patterns underscore a critical limitation of legislative approaches.
- While laws such as the **PCPNDT Act** establish an essential regulatory framework, they are insufficient on their own to drive social change.

The case for reform

- Available evidence suggests that the **PCPNDT Act** has not fully achieved its intended objectives and may, in some contexts, have had unintended adverse effects.
- Additionally, fear of **legal repercussions** and stringent regulatory requirements has had a chilling effect on service provision.
- Moreover, the **PCPNDT Act** has not kept pace with advances in **ultrasound technology**.
- Portable, handheld **ultrasound devices**, often connected to **smartphones** or **tablets**, make it technically feasible to bring diagnostic services closer to patients' homes, which is particularly relevant for early **cancer detection** in underserved areas.
- However, the use of such devices at the **community level** is currently illegal in India.
- Modern **high-frequency probes** used for applications such as **cancer detection** and the assessment of other superficial conditions cannot be used for **foetal sex determination**, yet remain subject to the same regulatory restrictions, limiting access to essential diagnostic care.
- Recent developments in **artificial intelligence (AI)** further strengthen the case for a more nuanced regulatory approach.
- **AI-enabled ultrasound systems** can assist with image acquisition and interpretation, and in some configurations generate automated reports based on pattern recognition without requiring full image storage or display.
- Such technologies could enable safe, purpose-specific use of **ultrasound** for diagnostic applications while substantially reducing the risk of misuse for **foetal sex determination**.
- Recent research has also demonstrated the potential of **AI** in improving access to reliable **ultrasonography**.
- In a pilot study, portable ultrasound scans performed by individuals with minimal training were combined with **AI** to identify suspicious **breast lesions** with high accuracy, correctly flagging all confirmed **cancer cases**.
- This suggests that **AI-assisted ultrasound** could enable frontline health workers to assess patients with **breast lumps**, refer those with suspicious findings for further evaluation, and reassure those with benign conditions.
- For countries such as **India**, where access to specialist **radiologists** and diagnostic imaging remains uneven, especially in rural areas where nearly **70%** of the population resides, such innovations could substantially improve the

timely assessment and treatment of symptomatic patients.

- Earlier diagnosis and referral have the potential to reduce **breast cancer mortality** while expanding access to care in rural and underserved areas.
- This contrasts with many **Western countries**, where breast cancer control strategies rely more heavily on **mammographic screening programmes** that detect tumours before symptoms appear but require considerably greater resources and infrastructure.

Serving a greater need

- These technological shifts and the rising need for **community-based cancer screening** in view of the high **cancer burden** in India suggest that regulatory frameworks need to adapt to distinguish between different use cases of **ultrasound**.
- An amendment to the **Act** could make community-based ultrasound using a **high-frequency linear probe** legal, as it will not impact **sex determination**.
- Additionally, the **Act** should incorporate provisions addressing emerging technologies, including **AI-enabled** and safeguarded **USG imaging systems** designed to prevent the determination or disclosure of **foetal sex**, irrespective of intent.

26J6. In a first, Swedish Minister brings baby to EU talks

- **Sweden's Environment Minister** brought her baby to an **EU** meeting Thursday, in a barrier-breaking move she showed it was possible to be both "a present **Minister** and a present **mother**".
- **Romina Pourmokhtari** arrived at the ministerial talks in **Luxembourg** with her **three-month-old** son, **Adam**, in a sling with a pram-pushing aide in tow — becoming the latest public figure to shake up conventions around **motherhood** and **work**.
- "Happy also to be an example of not having to choose between being a present **Minister** and a present **mother**," the **30-year-old** told journalists as **Adam** rested on her chest.
- Her **French** colleague **Monique Barbut** promptly gave her a baby gift.
- An **EU official** said it was thought to be the first time a baby was brought to one of the bloc's ministerial meetings.
- **Mothers** are particularly affected by the challenge of juggling **work** and **childcare**, with studies showing women tend to miss out on **promotions**, **career opportunities** and **higher earnings** after having a child.
- In a bid to make the lives of female lawmakers easier, the **European Parliament** recently



changed its internal rules to allow new mothers the right to **vote by proxy**.

- Ms. **Pourmokhtari** is not the first politician to highlight **maternity** struggles.
- In **2018** former **New Zealand** leader **Jacinda Ardern** won accolades for bringing her **three-month-old** daughter, **Neve**, to the **United Nations General Assembly** in the first such appearance by a baby in the organisation's history.
- A year earlier **Larissa Waters** made **Australian** political history by becoming the first woman to nurse her newborn baby in the nation's **Parliament**.



A protester dressed in traditional Zulu attire gestures during a protest in Umlazi township south-west of Durban in South Africa on Monday. The country has been on edge following weeks of sometimes violent xenophobic unrest that has left at least two people dead. AP

A protester dressed in traditional **Zulu** attire gestures during a protest in Umlazi township south-west of Durban in **South Africa** on Monday. The country has been on edge following weeks of sometimes violent xenophobic unrest that has left at least two people dead.

- The **Zulu (AmaZulu)** are the largest ethnic group in **South Africa** and are among the most influential cultural and historical communities in Africa. They primarily inhabit the province of **KwaZulu-Natal** in eastern South Africa.
- The Zulu people belong to the larger **Nguni-speaking Bantu group**, which migrated into southern Africa centuries ago.

20J6. 3-language policy not viable, say CBSE schools in Nagaland

- Principals from **19 schools** urge the Education Minister to grant the State a **flexible framework** as it is home to over **17 major recognised tribes** each with their own distinct language and oral tradition.
- Principals from **Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)** affiliated schools in **Nagaland** have written to Union Education Minister **Dharmendra Pradhan** conveying their difficulty in implementing the compulsory **three-**

language policy framework, including introduction of **Sanskrit**, in Naga schools.

- The letter dated **May 23** states that principals from **19 CBSE schools** in Nagaland have on-ground concerns about implementation of **R3 language framework**, where a compulsory third language is to be introduced from **Class 6 onwards** with at least two of them being native Indian languages, considering the unique socio-linguistic context of Nagaland.

'Linguistically complex'

- The letter states that **Nagaland** is home to over **17 major recognised tribes** and dozens of sub-tribes each with their own distinct language and oral tradition.
- "Unlike most Indian States where a dominant regional language unifies communities, Nagaland has no single native tongue that all Nagas share.
- **English** has served as practical **lingua franca** across tribal communities in formal settings," the letter states.
- "In many of our urban and semi-urban schools, a single classroom holds children from more than **30 different linguistic backgrounds** — **Ao, Angami, Sumi, Lotha, Konyak, Chang, Phom, Zeliang, Chakhesang, Pochuri, Rengma, Khiamniungan, Tikhir, Yimkhiong** and so on," the letter further adds.
- Principals in **CBSE-affiliated schools** of Nagaland have urged the **Education Ministry** to grant Nagaland a special linguistic exemption or a flexible framework as it is a "**linguistically complex territory**".
- They have also requested the State government of **Nagaland** in coordination with the **Education Ministry** to establish a scheme for appointment or deputation of trained language teachers to **CBSE-affiliated schools**.
- "The **Nagaland Board of School Education (NBSE)** once attempted to introduce a compulsory second language policy, but the practical realities of Nagaland's diversity made implementation deeply challenging," one of the principals of **CBSE-affiliated school** in Nagaland told The Hindu.

Abrupt discontinuity

- "Students who have been learning **French, German, or Spanish** since Classes 1 or 2 now face abrupt discontinuity with no transitional pathway or recognition of their prior learning.
- Schools were given a **seven-day compliance window** — leaving principals, parents and students scrambling with no planning time," the principal added.
- The letter states that teaching **Hindi** effectively in Nagaland is highly demanding and securing qualified teachers is exceptionally difficult, and



with the current policy framework, **Sanskrit** emerges (as a third language alternative) not by educational or cultural choice, but by the absence of a more feasible alternative.

- The letter further says that if the noble goal of the **three-language policy** is to preserve mother tongues and indigenous identities, then the current trajectory of defaulting to **Sanskrit** represents a compliance exercise rather than a cultural mission.

19J6. Silent scream that lingers: Boong's quiet reckoning with patriarchal injustice

- **The Manipuri movie Boong** written and directed by **Laxmipriya Devi** and co-produced by **Farhan Akhtar**, was understandably celebrated in **Manipur** for its cinematic brilliance, and for the pride it brought the place, after all it was the **first Indian film to win a prestigious BAFTA Award**, the British equivalent of the Oscar, in the **Children's Film Category** in **2026**.
- I watched it with my family on the third day of its theatrical release in **Imphal**.
- Beyond the engaging drama of **a boy's longing for his long-missing father**, and the intimate glimpses his search offers into the complex and emotionally fragile **inter-community relationships in multi-ethnic Manipur**, the film also struck a deeper, raw nerve among the **Manipuri audience**.
- As the show ended and lights flooded back into the theatre, there was a palpable sense of **catharsis — the kind that good performing arts leave behind**.
- Yet, some women remained seated, quietly wiping off tears, taking a few extra moments to regain composure before rising to join the rest of the audience.
- **Manipur's gender equation reality** is complex.
- At one level, **women have historically been at the forefront of many social, economic and political upheavals**.
- **Across both the hills and the valley, exclusive women-run markets thrive, and in the agrarian economy, men and women function as equal partners**.
- The fact that the director of **Boong** is a woman reflects this sinew of **gender empowerment** too.
- The **Meira Paibi movement amongst Meiteis**, which also manifests under different nomenclatures amongst hill communities, is the most prominent alibi of Manipuri women's well-deserved image as **social torchbearers**.
- During the **colonial period, in 1904** and again in **1939**, women rose to protest against **British policies**, ultimately forcing their withdrawal.
- These uprisings are now commemorated as **Nupi Lan or Women's War**.

- The first was against the **forced labour of Manipuri men to rebuild the British Residency in Imphal**, which had been gutted in an arson attack by disgruntled elements.
- The second opposed the **large-scale export of rice from the State to support the British World War II effort**, which led to severe shortages for local consumption.

Patriarchy persists

- Despite this, there are strongly entrenched **gender-oppressive patriarchal norms** which have persisted.
- This is especially true among **Meiteis**, who continue to carry the albatrosses of a **feudal past**.
- **Polygamy is arguably the most troubling**.
- The practice persists since it is normalised, even though not encouraged.
- **This is particularly common among the elite section, where keeping mistresses or even taking more than one wife, is not uncommon**.
- Many of Manipur's current set of **Ministers and MLAs** would be guilty of this **despicable feudal legacy**.
- The hurt and humiliation endured by women who suffer this fate are profound.
- Even those who are spared often live with anxiety over the vulnerability of their daughters and loved ones.
- **As the practice has become normalised within society, this deeply gendered anguish largely remains invisible**.
- **Women often become gatekeepers of the patriarchal order** that oppresses them, reflecting what **Frantz Fanon** characterised as the **silent desire of the oppressed to emulate their oppressors**.
- **Hence, even women vigilantes tend to overlook men who betray marital fidelity, accepting it as destiny**.
- **However, if a woman were to make this breach, these same vigilantes often become the harshest moral police**.
- Change, however, may not be too far away.
- Although, no study has yet established a connection, rising cases of **divorce among younger Meiteis** may be a herald of Fanon's "mailed fist".
- In the spirit that good art is hiding good art, **Boong** succeeds in drawing up a non-dogmatic but piercing portrayal of this inherent **gender injustice**.
- **Boong's father, Joykumar — a carpenter and timber trader played by Hamom Sadananda — works along the India-Myanmar border, in the town of Moreh and the neighbouring township of Tamu in Myanmar**.
- At some point, the family loses contact with him and for a prolonged period.



- Many presume he is dead or has joined the insurgents, but the family refuses to give up.
- **Boong**, or **Brojendro**, played by **Gugun Kipgen**, yearns to find his father and bring the good news to his mother **Mandakini**, played by **Bala Hijam**.
- On one occasion the boy dupes his mother that his school was organising a **two-day excursion** to **Ukhrul district** and would like to be part of the tour.
- He then slips away to make a trip to **Moreh** instead.
- His bosom friend, a **Manipuri Marwari**, **Raju Agarwal**, played by **Angom Sanamatum**, follows him there out of concern.
- The families of the boys learn of the trip but too late.
- The two boys' adventure is thrilling.
- Boong traces his father in **Tamu**, but to his horror, discovers that he has remarried and has a daughter.
- The **final scene** is powerful.
- Boong finds his mother, on crutches after a scooter accident, waiting for him at their courtyard.
- Both know the truth — and both know that the other knows.
- The boy tells his mother bluntly, "**Baba is dead.**"
- The camera then closes in on her.
- She pauses a while before asking in resignation, "**Is he doing well?**"
- Boong replies, "**Yes,**" and hugs her.
- **Bala's** breathing deepens; her face reddens, and her eyes well up.
- She is forced to confront what she had long suspected but tried not to believe.
- Not a word is spoken, yet her **pain, humiliation, anger and resilience** surface.
- She remains standing for the sake of her son.
- For those sensitive enough to hear it, her **silent, agonised scream** is deafening.
- For many others who have endured this betrayal themselves, or have witnessed loved ones suffer it, **Bala's silent scream** becomes their own.
- Powerful as this portrayal of an invisible oppressive order is, life may well settle back into its old, abnormal normal.
- Yet, for many, **Bala's silent scream** affirms that **Boong** is, at its heart, a desperate appeal for **social introspection**.

18J6. Step forward

- The top court has given an economic value to unpaid domestic work
- Recognition of Homemakers' Economic Value

- The **Supreme Court's judgment** in **Shishupal @ Shish Ram vs Surjeet** by a Division Bench of Justices **Sanjay Karol** and **N.K. Singh**, is likely a landmark.
- The ruling originated as the Court revised compensation granted by the **Motor Accident Claims Tribunal (MACT)** for a road accident in 2001.
- The first MACT awarded the family of **Reshma**, the accident victim, **₹2.42 lakh**, which the **Punjab and Haryana High Court** revised in 2024 to **₹8.43 lakh**.
- But in its order, the Court revised it to **₹62.78 lakh** after attaching a sum of **₹30,000 a month** to Ms. Reshma's **economic value**, for the service she rendered as a **homemaker**.
- The ruling is not surprising.
- In **Lata Wadhwa (2001)**, the Court valued a homemaker's services at a modest **₹3,000**.
- In **Kirti vs Oriental Insurance (2021)**, it said the economic value of a homemaker's work cannot be discounted simply because it is unpaid or performed by women.
- However, the 'official' value attached to that work has suffered from **inconsistent quantification**.
- The Bench's value of **₹30,000 a month** is itself notional and a floor.
- It added that the floor must be hiked by **10% every three years** and a woman's salary, where applicable, has to be added to the floor, in the context of MACT's claims.
- The judgment does not create a salary, wage entitlement, pension scheme or employment relationship for homemakers, and applies to compensation calculations in MACT cases only.
- That said, the now-normalised societal tendency to undervalue women's work means that any advance is valuable and will likely have ripple effects.
- The connection between **unpaid domestic labour** and suppressed **female labour force participation** is a major theme in contemporary Indian labour economics.
- Now, for example, homemakers seeking maintenance under the **Hindu Marriage Act**, say, have judicial reasoning supporting the economic value of their domestic work.
- Rural women who "assist in sowing, harvesting, and cattle-tending", as the Court noted, can now invoke the Court's reasoning to pitch to have their labour, which is often treated as being incidental to household work, valued higher.
- The additive rule may encourage litigants to invoke similar reasoning in employment disputes vis-à-vis 'work from home' arrangements and domestic responsibilities.
- Future litigation may test whether **male homemakers** can claim equivalent treatment.
- **Motor insurance** is already a low-margin segment for many insurers, and a large increase in the average claim size — likely applied



retrospectively as well — may force companies to reassess their risk models and render them more inclined to settle claims quickly in Lok Adalats.

- All said, the **Shishupal judgment** is a vital corrective to decades of **economic erasure**.

18J6. Why A.P.'s incentive for having more children is misplaced

Population Incentives and Fertility Trends

- On May 16, **Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu** announced a one-time incentive of **₹30,000 for the third child and ₹40,000 for the fourth**.
- He said that these incentives were a part of the State's new **population management policy** to encourage population growth.
- On the surface, the incentives to have bigger families may sound sensible with the latest **National Family Health Survey** report for the year **2023-24** placing the State's fertility level at **1.8**, which is below the **replacement level of 2.1**.
- However, a closer look warrants questions on at least three fronts: whether such an incentive is adequate for families to have more children; what the key reasons are for the dropping fertility rate; and whether such an intervention is necessary now.
- A comparison of this one-time cash incentive against basic expenditures shows that it cannot offset the **childcare costs**, a concern that is prompting families to rethink having more children.
- The government's incentive is about twice the average cost of **hospitalisation for childbirth** in India, and a far smaller multiple of the cost in Andhra Pradesh.
- In fact, it is almost the same as the cost of hospitalisation for childbirth in the State's urban area.
- In a State where **more than 50% of births happen in private hospitals and about 52% of all deliveries happen through Caesarean sections**, this incentive will just offset the **hospitalisation cost in rural areas**.
- It is also inadequate to cover the cost of Caesarean sections in private hospitals in urban areas.
- For a family of five (assuming there are two adults and three children), this incentive is about **1.5 times their Monthly Per Capita Expenditure** in rural areas and almost similar to the monthly expenditure in urban areas, as per the **Household Consumption Expenditure Survey for 2023-24**.
- This means that the incentive could just help the families meet their consumption needs for one month, provided the same was not already spent in hospital during childbirth.

- **Cannot afford children**
- Moreover, the question around family planning has moved from whether families 'should' have more children to whether they can **afford to**.
- The **United Nations Population Fund's State of World Population Report 2025** shows that **financial limitations** are the prime barrier to having children.
- Other barriers included **housing limitations**, followed by **unemployment or job insecurity**, and the lack of **quality and affordable childcare options**.
- In many of these indicators, the share of Indians pointing to these concerns was much higher than the average share across the 14 countries that were surveyed for the report.
- The survey further pointed out that a larger share of Indian men and women preferred having either **one or two children**.
- Less than **10% of Indian respondents** said they would prefer to have three, four or more children, which is almost on a par with the share of Indians who preferred having no children.
- It is noteworthy that the below-replacement fertility rate in **Andhra Pradesh** and across **India** does not mean that population decline is imminent.
- The population will continue to increase, then stabilise and eventually begin to decline, which, for India, is likely to happen only in **2063** as per estimates.
- For instance, although **Japan** and **South Korea's** fertility rates dropped below the replacement level in the late 1970s and the early 1980s respectively, their populations — which are less than **10% of India's** — began to decline only around **2010 and 2020**.

16J6. Tribal body blocks installation of shivling near Om Parvat, says won't allow artificial structures

- The **Rung community** in a village in **Vyans valley** here on Monday refused to allow installation of a three-tonne **shivling** and **Nandi** in front of **Om Parvat**, stating they are "nature worshippers" who do not allow artificial structures on their land.
- **Rung** is an indigenous tribal community residing primarily in border valleys of **Dharchula in Uttarakhand's Pithoragarh district**, known for their distinct cultural traditions of nature worship.

16J6. Politics over people

- The move gave shape and substance to a thought expressed by Home Minister **Amit Shah**: "**unnatural demographic change**" is a "**very significant challenge to the present and future of any nation**".
- The **committee**, chaired by retired Supreme Court judge **Justice P.P. Naolekar**, is to assess



demographic changes, examine patterns of abnormal population shifts among religious and social communities, and recommend a time-bound solution.

- Mr. Shah linked demographic changes not only to **sovereignty** but also to **national security**, law and order, "profound changes in social structure and the preservation of tribal society".
- According to the government, demographic shifts have affected public service delivery, local governance, resource distribution and social cohesion, and Justice Naolekar has said that the panel will also formulate a system for the custody and deportation of infiltrators.
- On June 14, **Switzerland** held a referendum and rejected a proposal to cap the country's population at 10 million.
- Across the world, immigration has become contentious, with unregulated cross-border movement seen as a challenge to sovereignty.
- Population management, however, is not entirely about illegal infiltration, and securitising demographic trends at the cost of all adjacent factors could do more harm than good.
- If this exercise creates a large stateless population with no country willing to accept them, it could result in a demographic deadlock rather than a solution.
- The fear of communal profiling of **Muslims** is real, and the Centre should also seriously consider whether the human costs are worth it.
- **Rising life expectancy** and falling **birth rates** are changing the composition of India's population.
- There are concerns of India losing its **demographic dividend**, as the quality of education and health, and the evolving dynamics of work, remain very challenging.
- **Partition** created three sovereign countries out of a geographical and cultural continuum, and its legacy included voluntary and involuntary movement of people.

15J6. Series of gaps

- Distrust of **police** has led to **underreporting of child sexual abuse**.
- In over **90% of cases**, including the recent **Sulur case** in Coimbatore in which a charge sheet was filed last week, the threat to a child is from within the family's trusted circles.
- In **2024**, the **National Crime Records Bureau** recorded **69,191 POCSO cases** involving more than **70,000 child victims**.
- Even the **2018 and 2019 amendments to the POCSO Act** reacted to public outrage rather than considered evidence and focused on harsher punishments.

15J6. The 'seven-point IQ opportunity' for Indian children

- For decades, India's early childhood agenda has focused on ensuring that children survive early childhood, reducing under-five mortality from **43 in 2012 to 32 in 2020** with sufficient inputs invested toward their health, nutrition, immunisation and sanitation conditions.
- The **Anganwadi system** reflects these priorities at scale: approximately **eight crore children (ages 0-6 years)** receive supplementary nutrition, growth monitoring and health services, alongside counselling and home visits for their parents.
- In the first year alone, **grey matter volume** increases by **149%** and the **cerebellum** by **240%** as millions of synapses form in regions associated with movement, language, and planning.
- Researchers working with **stunted children** found that nutritional supplementation improved physical health alone, but adding regular psychosocial stimulation (love-talk-play and responsive interaction) resulted in stronger cognitive gains.
- Similar findings emerged in India from a **birth cohort study in Vellore** (250 children followed from birth to age 9) where **children stunted early in life** performed worst on later cognitive assessments, but those who recovered physically also showed better cognitive outcomes.
- International research on **enteric dysfunction** and **poor sanitation** has shown that nutritional inputs are mediated by the child's environment.
- A child's body may receive food, but infection, inflammation, toxic exposure and deprivation of stimulation can adversely influence this very nutrition.
- In studies in **Vellore**, children with **iron deficiency** or high **lead exposure** in early life, score lower on developmental and cognitive assessments, even when their height and weight appear normal.
- The **quality of the home environment** — how much they are talked to, read to, played with and emotionally supported, keeps emerging as a stronger predictor of cognitive outcomes than diet alone.
- Most encouragingly, **exposure to structured preschool** and early stimulation has the **potential to transform a generation**.
- Children in the **Vellore cohort** who attend preschool regularly for **18 to 24 months**, including in **Anganwadi centres**, are **scoring seven IQ units higher** on cognitive tests than those not attending preschool, even after accounting for poverty, maternal education and early stunting.
- The **Anganwadi system** has started to incorporate this broader understanding of holistic early childhood development into its core design.



- This shift is most visible in the rollout of national frameworks such as **Aadharshila** and **Navchetana** and programmes such as **Poshan Bhi Padhai Bhi**.
- They are critical inputs in redefining neighbourhood Anganwadis as vibrant early childhood education centres that nourish both mind and body.
- **Aadharshila** strengthens play-based preschool education within centres, while **Navchetana** extends early stimulation into the home, equipping caregivers with simple, science-based ways to support development through everyday interactions.
- We encourage the integration of **Navchetana's "loving, talking and playing"** into daily life while feeding, cooking or playing with children.
- The home lays the foundation of early language, cognition and socio-emotional skills in the first three years, and Anganwadis deepen it through structured play-based activities, storytelling and peer learning from ages three to six.
- Systemic community mobilisation initiatives, such as **Poshan Pakhwada** conducted in April 2026 by the **Ministry of Women and Child Development**, focus on promoting early stimulation for brain development, play-based education in the early years, and the role of parents and communities in reducing screen exposure and strengthening engagement with Anganwadis.

13J6. 'Deep-seated' bias for male child persists in society: SC

- The **Supreme Court** has observed that though the country's **child sex ratio** has shown "clear signs of improvement", the continued prevalence of **sex selection practices** reflects "deep-seated **patriarchal preferences**" for a **male child**.
- A Bench of Justices **Sanjay Karol** and **P.K. Mishra** made the observation while dismissing a Maharashtra doctor's appeal challenging criminal proceedings against him under the **Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of Sex Selection) Act, 1994 (PCPNDT Act)**.
- Referring to various schemes introduced by **State governments** to curb **female foeticide**, the court said these reflected sustained efforts to address the systemic discrimination faced by "the **girl child** in an inherently patriarchal" society.
- However, it pointed out that several States continue to record **sex ratios at birth** below the national average.
- "...the country's **sex ratio** has shown clear signs of improvement in recent years... Nonetheless, several States still report **sex ratios at birth** below the national average. This shows the continuing presence of deep-seated **patriarchal**

preferences towards a **male child** and the 'behind the curtains' prevalence of **sex selection practices**," the Bench said.

- Accordingly, the top court stressed that strict enforcement of the **PCPNDT Act** would remain essential until entrenched social attitudes towards the **girl child** undergo change.
- The judges also noted the country continues to face significant challenges in achieving **gender parity** when assessed against global indicators.
- "On a global level though, unfortunately, the data does not present a positive outlook. The **World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2025** records a drop in our ranking in terms of overall **gender parity score** from the previous year to **131 out of 148**, from **129** the previous year", the Bench said.
- Accordingly, the Bench refused to quash the criminal proceedings against the doctor, underlining that "letting infractions slide" would defeat the purpose of the **PCPNDT Act**.

12J6. Should India incentivise bigger families?

- For decades, Indian policymakers have encouraged **population control**, with the familiar slogan of '**Hum Do, Humare Do**' (We two, our two).
- However, the recent drop in India's **Total Fertility Rate (TFR)** — the average number of children a woman would have in her lifetime — has now dropped to **1.9**, below the replacement rate of **2.1**, with some southern States seeing their TFR drop to **1.3**.
- Last month, **Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu** announced cash incentives of **₹30,000** and **₹40,000** to women having their third and fourth child respectively, in a bid to reverse that trend.
- Several other southern States have indicated that they also see the benefits of boosting population growth, though not through a cash payout.
- Should India incentivise **bigger families**?
- **Aparajita Chattopadhyay** and **Neelanjan Sircar** discuss the question in a conversation moderated by **Priscilla Jebaraj**.

Why are policymakers considering a change in the approach to population control?

- **Aparajita Chattopadhyay**: After a long struggle with **family planning** since independence, our fertility has started declining.
- There are State-level variations, but overall fertility now is **1.9**.
- It is fine, and India can grow in this way for maybe **40 to 50 years**.
- But reversal of fertility trends cannot be a **policy driven** thing.



- It is deeply rooted socio-culturally and is an **individualistic choice**.
- You cannot tell a group of women to increase fertility because I am giving you money.
- It has never happened in that way, even in **European** or other **Asian countries**.
- The political implications are the immediate trigger for this policy.

Is the threat of future parliamentary delimitation a reason to reverse fertility decline?

- **Neelanjan Sircar**: There has been a lot of discussion about the growth rate of southern States as **delimitation** is on the horizon.
- But we need to look beyond pure politics because any growth spurred by these incentives is unlikely to help in the short-term.
- The reality is, if there's a delimitation exercise happening in the next couple of years, you're not going to dramatically change the fertility rate by then.
- Another reason this is being considered is because of the **political economy** of States with a working population that may be shrinking.
- But this is a **ham-handed approach**.
- Social and demographic transformations are **complex phenomena**, and go hand in hand with a certain level of economic development.
- Historically, with a certain level of social and economic development, the fertility rate drops.
- Now, there's a **cash incentive** at play to encourage people to have more children.
- For a wealthy family, this incentive is simply not enough to invest in another child.
- But for a poor family, perhaps it is.
- Here, you are not just increasing the fertility rate in a State, you are also changing other social attributes in the population, in terms of who is going to be able to respond to such an incentive and who will not.
- It's not as simple as saying we've created a **working age population** because you've fundamentally changed the composition of the working age population once you've introduced an economic incentive.

What has been the international experience of attempting to boost population growth?

- **AC**: Incentivisation can help relatively **lower income groups**, and this has happened in many **European countries**.
- For example, in **Poland**, there was a short-term boost in birth rate only among the lower income demographics.
- In **Sweden** and **France**, tax incentives changed things for a short span, but it was very difficult to sustain that reversal, and the same thing happened with **Singapore**, **Japan**, **South Korea**.

- Nowadays, the entire world is going through a **polycrisis shock**.
- There is a lot of instability in **geopolitics**, the economy, and the climate.
- Moreover, there are both **altruistic** and **individualistic attitudes** to fertility.
- The younger generation is quite **aspirational**.
- They need their prosperity — a good job and savings.
- So, you cannot ask them to go and have more children.
- Until women confirm that there is **security** in every possible sense, they **will** not reverse the fertility rate because there are plenty of tangible and intangible costs for a **woman** or for the society to have an additional child.
- So at this juncture, I believe that **incentivisation** may not work.
- In India, especially, it is not required because we have a huge **population base**, so there may not actually be a scarcity of working age labourers if you improve their skills, give them better job opportunities, improve the savings and investment scenario, and promote the **silver ageing economy**.

Falling fertility rates are an uneven phenomenon. What does this portend for Indian federalism?

- **NS**: Obviously there are some immediate questions about converting populations into **political representation** through **delimitation**.
- But another variable would be that as we see differences in fertility rates, we're also going to see very different **demographic profiles** of States.
- And we know that the **youth**, the **middle-aged**, and the **elderly** all vote differently.
- They're in different stages of life, so they have different economic preferences in terms of what a government should be investing in, for instance, **pensions** versus **manufacturing jobs** versus **childcare**.
- So we're going to see very different **political economy choices**.
- **AC**: With regard to **Andhra Pradesh**, if you look at the recent **NFHS statistics**, there are a number of areas, instead of cash incentives, where they can spend money in order to get lower middle class people to reproduce more.
- Almost one in four women aged 20 to 24 got married before turning 18.
- Only **30% of households** have women who own any assets, and only **48% of women** work.
- If Andhra Pradesh thinks that they're demographically advanced and can behave like Europe to reverse fertility trends, then the women in the workforce should be at **80%**.
- In **European countries**, the **motherhood penalty** is almost negligible.
- There is enough **parental leave**, and workforce participation is very high.



- So only when your economy and **social security** is perfect can you think of having a reversal of fertility trends.

What are some key findings of the Longitudinal Ageing Study in India?

- **AC:** By 2050, 20% or more of the Indian population will be aged **60 and above**, so we have to prepare ourselves, especially with regard to **healthcare costs**.
- We need tremendous investment in **geriatric care**, basic primary healthcare, better pension schemes, and better savings schemes.
- We also need to have communities for **elderly living**.
- But we still have a huge **population base**.
- Don't mix up the percentage with the number base.
- We can reduce the **working age population** so long as we have a very highly skilled population who earn well and will pay for these costs.

If population growth incentives don't work, then lower-fertility rate States may increase their working age population through migration from other States. What is the political fallout of that?

- **NS:** Demographic anxieties have been showing up in one State after another.
- Even in a poorer State like **West Bengal**, there are demographic anxieties vis-a-vis **Bangladesh**.
- As for why this phenomenon happens, these are **labour market vacancies**.
- These are populations which have achieved a certain level of development, and yet the economy requires some people willing to do manual work, at a lower wage, in the sun.
- This is not a problem that can be solved by simply having more children.
- It is unlikely that demographic anxieties can be reduced as a function of the economic structure.
- **Migration** is an economic phenomenon that is almost independent of the fertility rate, given what the economic condition of these States might be.
- The people who are being birthed there are very unlikely to be willing to do those jobs that people coming from north India are doing today in south India.
- It boggles the mind that somebody is trying to reverse what is a very standard social phenomenon and demographic trend at this stage of development.
- I understand that there are challenges in **Europe** where countries are well below **replacement rates**.
- But this entire debate is bizarre for the very simple reason that there are so many things the government could be spending this kind of money on which would actually address the

needs of an **ageing population** and an **underemployed population**.

- This is a very peculiar **policy decision**.

09J6. SC says pre-marital relationship is not a blot on character

- The **Supreme Court** has held that a **consensual premarital relationship** cannot, by itself, be viewed as a blemish on a person's character, observing that authorities must be "**sensitive**" to changing social norms.
- A Bench of **Justices Manoj Misra and Manmohan** observed that while character verification remains an integral aspect of recruitment to disciplined forces, premarital relationships are common in contemporary society and cannot be used as a pretext to cast aspersions on a person's character.
- "...authorities would have to be sensitive to the changing times in the context of premarital relationships."
- "Such premarital relationships are common today."
- "Moreover, physical relationship between two consenting unmarried adults cannot and should not by itself be a ground to draw an adverse impression about the character of the persons in that relationship."
- "There is no law which prohibits two consenting unmarried adults from having a relationship of their choice," the Bench said.
- The ruling came in a case concerning a **police constable candidate** whose selection was cancelled by the **Telangana State Level Police Recruitment Board** on account of his involvement in a criminal case arising from a failed romantic relationship.
- Allowing his appeal, the top court restored an earlier order of a single judge of the **Telangana High Court** directing his appointment and set aside a contrary judgment of a Division Bench.
- The judgment further underlined that it is a well-settled principle of **criminal jurisprudence** that unless a charge is proved in a court of law, there is a **presumption of innocence**.
- While recognising that employers are entitled to scrutinise the criminal antecedents of a candidate even after an acquittal, the court held that any adverse decision must rest on objective material indicating both the commission of an offence and the candidate's involvement in it.

09J6. Why Census 2027 matters for development, democracy and representation

- **Census 2027**, the world's largest count of people within a national geography, is an overdue exercise with **far-reaching implications**; an **accurate** and **comprehensive**



count will ensure that no one is left behind and that **policies, entitlements, and resources** are guided by **reliable data**.

- **Record turnouts in the recently concluded Assembly elections have brought satisfaction to all those who believe in the ultimate say of numbers and counts in a democracy.**
- The only concern amid this celebration is whether everyone who needs to be counted has actually been included.
- This sense of urgency should equally drive the ongoing **Census**, the mother of all counts.
- The world's largest-ever count of people within a national geography got underway on **April 1**, with the commencement of the first of the two phases of **Census 2027**.
- The first phase will gather nationwide information on the conditions, amenities, and assets of every household.
- The second will collect critical demographic and socio-economic information, including details on education, migration, fertility, and, of course, caste.

Seriously overdue

- The eighth Census since Independence comes after a gap of **15 years** instead of the usual **10 years**, owing first to the COVID-19 disruption and later to the Lok Sabha elections.
- India has certainly been missing an updated demographic database.
- Public and private planning alike have had to rely either on the **2011 Census** or on informed extrapolations from it.
- There are other credible surveys, including five rounds of the **National Family Health Survey**, but these largely focus on health and nutrition.
- The **World Bank** and various **United Nations agencies** have also periodically conducted studies in their areas of interest.
- The **United Nations Population Fund** estimates India's population in 2025 at more than **146 crore**.
- The population count in 2011 stood at **121 crore**, marking a growth of **17.7%** over the 2001 Census.
- **Census 2027** is expected to record an increase of **25-30 crore**.
- That makes the case for an accurate, secure, and comprehensive national census even more urgent.
- The purpose of the Census in colonial India was to help the rulers govern more efficiently and sustain the regime.
- In post-Independence India, the Census has served a different purpose: improving governance and speeding up multidimensional and inclusive development.

- The **1951 Census**, expectedly, revealed dismal levels of literacy, poverty, and life expectancy in a country depleted by colonial rule.
- India in **2026-27** stands on a completely different footing in terms of mobility, connectivity, infrastructure, education, healthcare and other indicators of living standards, which await measurement.

Contested demography

- The season of **demographic politics** is here.
- **Special Intensive Revision (SIR)** is a rebuilding of India's electoral rolls; the process has also prompted citizens to ensure that they are counted and that their names remain on the rolls.
- One act was played in Parliament in mid-April when **women's reservation** became a casualty of the fear of 'biased' delimitation of constituencies.
- New electoral boundaries will ordinarily be anchored in Census data, and the **33% reserved seats for women** in the legislature will be tied to it.
- This way, the Census exercise will have elaborate implications for the country's representative democracy.
- Another standout feature of **Census 2027** is the inclusion of the caste question for the first time.
- The matter has been on the political agenda for years now, often dragged into elections.
- The direction of the debate after the release of the data will be closely watched.
- Existing reservations for **Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes** will also have the new Census as a reference.
- Instead of belligerent battles fought over caste, class, and community interests in the electoral cauldron, getting duly counted along these divisions could be a constructive presentation of the case.
- **Affirmative action** for marginalised groups, provided under India's legal and constitutional framework and considered as the fountainhead of social justice, depends on systematic data drawn from the Census.

Roti, kapda, makaan

- The Census may appear not to offer any individual profit, but most certainly it does.
- Access to jobs, food, housing, cooking gas, clean drinking water, safe sanitation, schools, and hospitals are among the expectations citizens have of an elected government.
- Accurately identifying needs and deprivations through reliable databases provides the basis for targeted delivery of these welfare measures and public services.
- Demographic profiles also inform the **Finance Commission's** devolution of funds to States



and local bodies and even guide private-sector investments in identified areas.

- Public policy and service delivery can falter when residents are not properly counted under various buckets.
- Digital data collection, being done for the first time, could provide deeper and more segregated identification of issues in localities.
- Viewed from another perspective, departmental dashboards for social and infrastructural provisions could face reality checks post-Census, against their claims.

Guardrails of individual rights

- Online self-enumeration, available for **15 days**, preceding the survey and already completed by over **one crore households**, is an additional facilitation, but not mandatory.
- Self-enumeration blends digital empowerment with the right to privacy and accuracy of personal data.
- Inclusion is ensured by retaining the manual option and language choices.
- Census authorities loudly assure that 'an enumerator will definitely visit your home.'
- The **Census Act, 1948**, ensures the protection of individual data in the face of a malevolent and interconnected world.
- In contemporary elections, population groups look out for targeted benefits, often casting votes in return.
- The ethical and economic prudence of this bargain is widely questioned.
- But a good Census delivers the same without moral or fiscal damage.
- While the government has pitched the Census as an instrument of development, citizens must proactively grab the chance of getting counted.
- Census in 2011 had the tagline 'Our Census, Our Future'; in 2027, it is 'Our Census, Our Development'.
- One could hasten to add, 'my census, my right.'

Everyone's task, everyone's gain

- High profile enumeration of the top brass in the national and State capitals carries great symbolism.
- But the true mandate of the Census is to ensure that no one is left behind and that no facts — or even factoids — from the remotest hamlet or the most crowded urban slum, regardless of people's circumstances, are excluded from this long-overdue exercise.
- Over **three million census staffers** will have to overcome topographical and social barriers as they go door to door to complete this onerous task.
- Although participation in the Census is mandatory, public cooperation must be driven by a heightened awareness of self-interest

rather than the apathy that often characterises urban life.

- '**Pragati**' and '**Vikas**', the mascots of Census 2027, are statements not only of the purpose, but of equal role for men and women.
- Millions of voters stood in line at polling booths over the past two months because they recognised the importance of their vote, even though voting remains optional.
- In an ocean of census operations, every individual count matters, just as every single vote matters in a large election.

08J6.A targeting in the name of demography

- It is no wonder that the **committee does not have a single demographer** to guide its work.
- Its chairperson is a retired **Supreme Court of India judge**; it has a retired **IAS officer** and a retired **IPS officer**, the **Census Commissioner** and an **economist**.
- According to **World Bank** data, **Bangladesh's per capita income** (in nominal dollar terms) grew faster than **India** during **2005-23 (10.4% versus 7.70% compound annual growth rate)**; it now has roughly the same income as India's.
- In **purchasing power parity** terms, India's growth is slightly higher.
- Both countries presently have roughly the same **per capita income** however measured, and both now have the same levels of **human development**, according to the **UNDP's Human Development Index**.
- Yes, the share of **Muslims in India's population** has risen from **10% in 1951 to 14% in 2011**, at the time of the last **Census**.
- Yes, in the past, the **Muslim community** on a whole has shown a higher **fertility** than the **Hindus** and other religious denominations.
- However, **fertility among Muslim women** has begun falling rapidly, with the result that the gap between **Muslims and Hindus** has narrowed and will soon disappear.
- On the **desired number of children** that women want to have, there is now almost no difference between **Hindus and Muslims**.
- And to repeat what is well-known, the best example of why **religion** is not the determinant of **fertility behaviour**: **Muslim women in Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Jammu and Kashmir** exhibit lower fertility than the **Hindu women of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh**.
- **Poverty and education matter more**.
- So when the **Demographic Change Committee** is asked "to recommend a streamlined and permanent operational mechanism for the legal, fair, and time-bound identification, detention, and deportation of illegal immigrants already residing in the



country", there is a chilling similarity between the language of this "permanent operational mechanism" and the "Final Solution" practised in 1940s Europe.

08J6. A movement losing momentum and daughters

- Launched by PM Modi in Panipat in 2015, the **Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao** campaign initially delivered strong results.
- **Haryana's Sex Ratio at Birth** rose from 838 in 2010 to 923 by 2019, driven by strict raids on pre-natal testing centres, inter-State crackdowns, monthly video conference reviews, and fixed accountability.
- However, data for the first four months of 2026 show that the number of girl babies born has dipped below 900, sparking fears that the programme is losing focus and momentum, reports Ashok Kumar.
- A sex-determination test, illegal in India, costs ₹50,000-60,000 on the black market.

01J6. Towards a dialogue on adolescent sexuality

- A recent judgment of the Supreme Court of India, allowing the **medical termination of pregnancy at 28 weeks**, has received significant media attention.
- However, since a **28-week fetus** is at a more advanced stage of gestation, two things change about the claim.
- First, doctors are better able to predict both the fetus' chances of survival and the medical complications it may face, making concerns about neo-natal care and future health more concrete.

- The immense trauma endured by the unwed minor, the predicament of the unborn but viable fetus, and the ethical burden of the doctors are all symptomatic of a deeper structural issue.
- This is because the **Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act**, as amended in 2021, does not allow abortions beyond 24 weeks even in exceptional circumstances.
- Studies from the U.S. have shown that abstinence-only policies fail to prevent adolescents from having sex.
- Empirical studies on the **Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 (POCSO)** in India have also repeatedly shown that nearly 10-15% of all cases before the POCSO special courts involve de-facto consensual relationships, and there is nothing to suggest that the law manages to deter such sex amongst adolescents.
- Policies such as the ban on condom advertisements between 6.00 a.m. and 10.00 p.m., and a generally repressive culture around sex brush questions of sex and sexuality under the carpet.
- Instead of teaching adolescents the essentials of safe sex, menstruation, sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy, the answer to all questions around sex and sexuality is reduced to a simplistic "don't do it".
- However, preventing cases such as this is more likely to require comprehensive sex education and an emphasis on safe sexual practices.

The way forward

- Such policies require a more nuanced conversation around adolescent sexuality, in which we are willing to acknowledge that de-facto consensual sexual interactions involving adolescents exist and should not be conflated with instances of child rape and exploitation.



PATRIOTIC IAS

MONTHLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

GENERAL STUDIES PAPER I

SUBJECT: GEOGRAPHY

JUNE 2026

TOPICS COVERED

26J6	188 dead, 1,500 injured in Venezuela earthquakes	15J6	fire
26J6	3 States close ranks on Tungabhadra basin	11J6	3 children and man drown as boat capsizes in Krishna river in A.P.
25J6	Rasimanal in T.N. a good alternative site to Mekedatu project	10J6	Amnesty accuses Israel of 'ethnic cleansing' of West Bank Bedouins
25J6	House panel seeks Ministry report on Great Nicobar Project	09J6	Philippines slams China's floating 'structure' on disputed waters
25J6	Razor's edge	09J6	QUIZ
24J6	T.N. raises concerns over Centre's norms on projects in Cauvery basin	09J6	Mauritius rejects reported move by Trump to buy Chagos Islands
24J6	QUIZ	09J6	Houthi's claim missile attack, declare 'total ban' on Israeli ships in Red Sea
21J6	Ready for talks with T.N. on Mekedatu project: Karnataka	08J6	Missed call
20J6	T.N. House unanimously opposes Karnataka govt.'s Mekedatu dam proposal	07J6	Industrial salt pans threaten Sambhar Lake's survival
20J6	Four glacial lakes in Arunachal have expanded in a decade: study	06J6.	Five Azerbaijanis killed in Azov Sea drone attack: Baku
18J6	QUIZ	04J6	Cabinet gives its nod for new coastal highway in Odisha
18J6	South Korea to ease civilian curbs along border with North Korea	04J6	QUIZ
17J6	India's rainfall deficit 35% as monsoon stalls	04J6	Iran strikes Kuwait's main airport, Bahrain base after U.S. hits Qeshm
16J6	When a small town sends one of its own to Raisina Hill	04J6	Romania wants to boost air defence after drone strike blamed on Russia
16J6	Russian strikes across Ukraine kill 11, famed monastery in Kyiv catches	03J6	Blue Moon
		03J6	IMD revises its forecast for the onset of monsoon over Kerala to 'around



- June 4'**
- 03J6** India losing ability to build its own instruments: climate science report
- 03J6** Bolides: fireballs going boom
- 03J6** Benin president visits Niger, a first since 2023 coup sparked tensions
- 02J6** Fearsome dinosaur-era reptile was T. rex of the sea

01J6
01J6
01J6

Padma Barrage: another barrier
QUIZ
Ukraine hits Russian energy sites, denies striking nuclear plant

PICTURE OF THE WEEK
 A swirling vortex in the wild



Spinning top: A rare tornado-like funnel cloud formed amid a sudden downpour near Pudukottai and Vaagaikulam in Thoothukudi district, Tamil Nadu on June 21. The tornado ripped off the roof of a few structures in the mini theme park near the Vaagaikulam toll plaza. However, no fatalities were reported. PM

Spinning top: A rare **tornado-like funnel cloud** formed amid a sudden downpour near Pudukottai and Vaagaikulam in Thoothukudi district, Tamil Nadu on June 21. The tornado ripped on the roof of a few structures in the mini theme park near the Vaagaikulam toll plaza. However, no fatalities were reported.

188 dead, 1,500 injured in Venezuela earthquakes

- **'doublet earthquake** with the initial 7.2 magnitude quake was closely followed by a stronger 7.5 one.
- Aid on the way from U.S., European countries, UN, says interim leader; India, China offer help.
- Tremors from the strongest earthquake to hit Venezuela in 126 years felt in Colombia, Brazil.
- A pair of powerful **earthquakes** that rocked **Venezuela** have killed at least **188 people** and left more than **1,500** hurt, officials said on Thursday.
- Residents searched for loved ones trapped under **rubble** after many **buildings** were flattened within minutes.
- An international outpouring of **aid** quickly followed the tremors on Wednesday evening, which the **United States Geological Survey**

- (USGS) measured as magnitude **7.2** and **7.5**, centred west of the capital **Caracas**.
- **Tremors** from the earthquakes were also felt in neighbouring **Colombia** and **Brazil**.
 - **Interim President Delcy Rodriguez** said that intense **rescue efforts** were going on, noting that the **State of La Guaira** was hit hard.
 - "Dozens of **buildings** have collapsed, and we are currently carrying out very intense **rescue efforts** to save as many lives as God allows us to save," Ms. Rodriguez said on state television on Thursday.
 - "**La Guaira State** is a true tragedy, and has become a **disaster zone**."
 - The first **earthquake**, with an **epicentre** 21 kilometres west of the coastal town of **Moron**, occurred at **6.04 p.m.** local time on Wednesday, the **USGS** said.
 - Within a minute, a **7.5-magnitude earthquake** struck about **45 kilometres** away.
 - They struck at depths of **22 kilometres** and **10 kilometres**, respectively.
 - Scores of **rescuers** from the **U.S.** and several **European countries** and **UN specialists** were on their way to help search for **survivors**, Ms. Rodriguez said.
 - Nations including **China**, **India**, **Brazil**, and war-battered **Iran** offered help.
 - However, threatening to complicate the **relief effort**, the **international airport** near **Caracas** was closed due to "serious damage," she said.
 - **Social media videos** showed the terminal's **ceiling** collapsing over travellers.
 - Officials were trying to make the most of the **daylight hours** to rescue people believed to be trapped under the **rubble**, the **Interim President** said.

'Big logistical role'

- "Deeply saddened by the **devastation** caused by the severe **earthquakes** in **Venezuela**," **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** said in a statement.
- "We pray for the speedy recovery of those injured and stand in solidarity with all those affected... **India** stands ready to extend all possible assistance," he said.
- The **U.S.** "stands ready, willing, and able to help," **President Donald Trump** said in a social media post.

- “We have a **whole-of-government** response.
- It will be big, it will be fast, and it will be effective,” **U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio** told reporters during a visit to **Bahrain**, saying his country’s **military** would play a “**big logistical role**”.
- **Washington** is closely involved in **oil-rich Venezuela** after **U.S. forces** captured **President Nicolas Maduro** in January.
- The strongest **earthquake** to hit **Venezuela** in **126 years** will require “**massive collective efforts**”, the **United Nations’ aid chief Tom Fletcher** said in a statement.
- He said the **UN** was “**fully mobilised**” to send aid.
- Parts of the capital **Caracas** lost **power** and **cellphone coverage** while **subway services** were suspended and **natural gas** shut off, the **interim President** said.
- Classes will also be canceled for several days, and the **Ministry of Education** said some **school buildings** would be used as **shelters** and **donation centers**.
- On Thursday, the **UN human rights mission** in **Venezuela** called on the government to lift local restrictions on **social media**.
- “In the coming hours and days, timely access to reliable **information** and **communication channels** will be essential for the protection of the lives, safety, and well-being of the population,” the mission said in a statement.
- The strongest **tremors** in earthquake-prone **Venezuela’s** recent history occurred in the northeast in **1997**, killing **73 people**, and in **Caracas** in **1967**, when **236 people** died.
- (With inputs from **AP** and **Reuters**)

3 States close ranks on Tungabhadra basin

- **Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana** on Thursday signalled a “**historic**” broader **political** and **administrative consensus** on protecting the interests of **farmers** in the **Tungabhadra basin** and pursuing **long-term solutions** to **irrigation** and **water-sharing** issues.
- At an event organised by the **Karnataka government** and the **Tungabhadra Board** in **Koppal district** to mark the inauguration of the newly installed **33 spillway gates** of the **reservoir** in **Vijayanagara**, **Karnataka Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar** and his **Telangana** and **Andhra Pradesh** counterparts, **A. Revanth Reddy** and **N. Chandrababu Naidu**, stressed the need for **cooperation** in addressing the concerns of **lakhs of farmers** dependent on the **inter-State project**.
- The **Chief Ministers** said the three **States** have arrived at a **historic consensus** to safeguard the interests of **farmers** in the **Tungabhadra basin**.

Tungabhadra desilting

- Ahead of the inauguration, the three **Chief Ministers** held a nearly **hour-long meeting** with **Union Jal Shakti Minister C.R. Patil** to discuss key **irrigation issues** concerning the three **States**.
- **Desilting** of the **Tungabhadra reservoir**, where an estimated **33 tmcft** of **silt** has accumulated over the years significantly affecting its **storage capacity**, was discussed.
- Mr. **Patil** said the **Union government** will first **dredge** the **Tungabhadra dam** as part of its larger plan to **desilt major reservoirs**.
- He said the **Chief Ministers** had expressed their commitment to extend full **cooperation** in the exercise.
- Pointing out that **silt accumulation** had reduced the **storage capacity** of many **dams**, including the **Tungabhadra**, Mr. **Patil** said that, as per the proposed programme, the **Centre** will provide the **technical support**, and the **dredging** would be completed at the earliest possible time with the involvement of the three **States**.
- Calling the replacement of all the **33 spillway gates** of the **Tungabhadra dam** “**historic**”, Mr. **Shivakumar** said it was done in the larger interest of **farmers** and the **long-term safety** of the **reservoir**.



Shaking a leg: People from Malawi, a country in southeastern Africa, dance in front of St. Peter's basilica on Wednesday, the day Pope Leo holds the weekly general audience in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican. REUTERS

Shaking a leg: People from **Malawi**, a country in southeastern Africa, dance in front of **St. Peter's basilica** on Wednesday, the day Pope Leo holds the weekly general audience in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican.

25J6. Rasimanal in T.N. a good alternative site to Mokedatu project

- A former **engineer** from **Tamil Nadu** has mooted a proposal to build a **dam in Rasimanal in Krishnagiri district** as an alternative to the contentious **Mokedatu drinking water-cum-balancing reservoir project**.



- Envisaged with a capacity of **66 thousand million cubic feet (tmc ft)**, the proposed dam will be upstream of the **Mettur dam** in **Salem district**.
- It can generate **360 megawatt (MW)** of electricity, and its operation can be handled by the **Water Resources Department of Tamil Nadu**.
- The total area of **submergence** will be around **106 sq. km**, about a third of which will lie in **Karnataka**.
- Giving one more reason why **Rasimanal**, and not **Mekedatu**, should be preferred, the former **Chief Engineer** explains that the **submersible area** for the **Mekedatu project** falls under the **Cauvery wildlife sanctuary** with numerous **elephant corridors**.

25J6. House panel seeks Ministry report on Great Nicobar Project

- He further pointed out, sources said, that the **naval base INS Baaz** was not given additional land for its expansion; and the government was exploiting this fragile ecology for commercial activities.

25J6. Razor's edge

- The **El Niño** suppresses the **vertical air movement** needed for **rainclouds** to form while a warming **Pacific** is weakening the **trade winds** that bring **moisture** to the **subcontinent**.
- The **Madden-Julian Oscillation** is also in an **unfavourable phase** and the **Indian Ocean Dipole** currently cannot offer a buffer.
- Second, the **government** should consider a new **authority** to coordinate **inter-State water use** and **cropping changes** based on extended **El Niño forecasts**, eliminating the **cropping governance** currently fragmented between the **Agriculture Ministry**, the **Jal Shakti Ministry**, and the **India Meteorological Department**.

period. The **Prakasam Barrage** is in the background. K.V.S.

24J6. T.N. raises concerns over Centre's norms on projects in Cauvery basin

- Tamil Nadu** is deeply concerned about the latest guidelines of the **Union Ministry of Jal Shakti** and the **Central Water Commission** with regard to appraisal of water resources projects in the **Cauvery basin**.
- The Centre's norms assume relevance amid the controversy over the **Mekedatu drinking water-cum-balancing reservoir project** mooted by **Karnataka**.
- The opposition to the guidelines is fundamental, as **Tamil Nadu** is of the view that the **Cauvery basin** is a **deficit basin**, the position of which has been stated in the final award of the **Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal**, and by the **Supreme Court** in a **February 2018 judgment**.
- Besides, there is a provision in the guidelines for **presumptive concurrence** with the stand of the **Central Water Commission (CWC)** for a project, if the **Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA)** fails to convey its views within six months, or if the CWMA returns the project proposal without offering its views regarding conformity or otherwise of the proposed water utilisation with the **Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal** award.
- As per the guidelines, **detailed project reports** will have to be submitted to the **Central Water Commission for medium and major irrigation projects, multi-purpose projects, drinking water projects, and industrial use projects**.

24J6. QUIZ

1. Which country established the first permanent research station in Antarctica, Orcadas Base, which has operated continuously since 1904?

Answer: Argentina

- Argentina** established and has continuously operated **Orcadas Base** on Laurie Island in the South Orkney Islands since **22 February 1904**.
- The station originated from the **Scottish National Antarctic Expedition** and was transferred to **Argentina in 1904**.
- It is recognized as the **oldest continuously operating Antarctic research station** and represents the longest uninterrupted human presence in Antarctica.

2. The **Antarctic Treaty** applies to all territory south of which latitude?

Parched river



Labourers mix concrete and sand on the exposed Krishna riverbed in Vijayawada, for routine maintenance work during the seasonal low-flow period. The **Prakasam Barrage** is in the background. K.V.S. 088

Labourers mix concrete and sand on the exposed Krishna riverbed in Vijayawada, for routine maintenance work during the seasonal low-flow



Answer: 60° South Latitude

- The **Antarctic Treaty**, signed in 1959 and effective from 1961, applies to all land, ice shelves, and surrounding waters **south of 60° South latitude**.
- This geographical boundary was chosen to define the Antarctic region for peaceful scientific cooperation and environmental protection.
- Within this area, military activities, nuclear testing, and disposal of radioactive waste are prohibited.

3. Which major scientific event of 1957–58 provided the immediate impetus for negotiating the Antarctic Treaty?

Answer: The International Geophysical Year (IGY)

- The **International Geophysical Year (IGY) of 1957–58** was a global scientific initiative involving researchers from dozens of countries studying Earth systems, including Antarctica.
- During the IGY, nations established research stations and collaborated extensively in Antarctic science.
- The success of this cooperation demonstrated that Antarctica could serve as a platform for peaceful international scientific activity.
- This positive experience directly encouraged negotiations that culminated in the **Antarctic Treaty of 1959**, which institutionalized scientific collaboration and peaceful use of the continent.

4. Which seven countries had overlapping territorial claims in Antarctica when the Treaty was signed?

- **Answer: Argentina, Australia, Chile, France, New Zealand, Norway and the United Kingdom**
 At the time of the Antarctic Treaty's signing, **seven countries** had formal territorial claims in Antarctica: **Argentina, Australia, Chile, France, New Zealand, Norway, and the United Kingdom**.
- Some of these claims, particularly those of Argentina, Chile, and the United Kingdom in the Antarctic Peninsula region, overlapped significantly.
- Rather than resolving sovereignty disputes, the Antarctic Treaty effectively **froze territorial claims**, allowing countries to cooperate scientifically without abandoning or recognizing competing claims.

5. How many countries currently have Consultative Party status, giving them voting rights in Antarctic Treaty decision-making?

- As of **2026**, there are **29 Consultative Parties** to the Antarctic Treaty.
- These countries possess decision-making and voting rights at the **Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meetings (ATCMs)** because they conduct substantial scientific research activities in Antarctica.
- The group includes the twelve original signatories and additional countries that later demonstrated significant scientific engagement.
- Although the Treaty has **58 Parties** in total, only the Consultative Parties participate in consensus-based decision-making on Antarctic governance, environmental protection, and scientific cooperation.

India's Antarctic Journey

- India acceded to the **Antarctic Treaty** in **1983**.
- In the same year (1983), India was granted **Consultative Party Status** because of its active scientific research programme in Antarctica.

23J6. No longer temporary hideouts, Sahel forests becoming jihadist strongholds

- In Mali, jihadists from **JNIM, Al-Qaeda's Sahel branch**, operate from the vast **80,000-hectare Faya forest**, located a quick drive from the capital, **Bamako**, from which they carry out attacks against toll stations, public transportation and freight trucks.
- Mali's decision is part of a series of security measures taken after large-scale jihadist attacks by **JNIM** and its ethnic **Tuareg separatist allies** in late April, which notably killed the country's **Defence Minister**.
- The forests and parks covered by the decree stretch in a wide arc across the southern section of the country from the **Senegal and Mauritania border** in the west to **Guinea and Ivory Coast** in the east.
- "This transformation was driven by sustained military pressure in urban areas, and tactical advantages offered by forests like **protection from aerial surveillance**", he told AFP.
- The forests also give jihadists a chance to "exploit local informal economies such as **mining, grazing, smuggling and poaching**," he added.



Sahel and Sahara Region of Africa

- The **Sahara is the world's largest hot desert**, covering a vast part of **North Africa**. It extends roughly **4,800 km from west to east** and covers about **8.6 million sq. km**.
- The **Sahel is a semi-arid transition region** located immediately **south of the Sahara**. It extends broadly from **Senegal in the west to Sudan in the east**.
- The **Sahel is affected by Saharan dust storms, drought, desertification, water scarcity, migration, and pastoral movement**.
- In social terms, both regions are connected through **nomadic pastoralism, trans-Saharan trade, migration routes, cultural exchange, and resource conflicts**.

Society in the Sahara Region

- Sahara society has traditionally depended on nomadic pastoralism, oasis farming, caravan trade, and desert survival skills.**
- Communities such as the **Tuareg, Berbers, Arabs, and other desert groups** have historically used **camels for mobility, trade, and pastoral life**.
- Oases are important social centres because they provide **water, date palms, settlement space, and trade halts**.
- The Sahara historically connected **North Africa, West Africa, and the Mediterranean world** through trans-Saharan trade routes.

Society in the Sahel Region

- Sahelian society is mainly based on pastoralism, rain-fed agriculture, livestock rearing, millet cultivation, sorghum cultivation, and seasonal migration.**
- When rainfall fails, society faces **crop loss, livestock death, food insecurity, and forced migration**.
- The Sahel is socially sensitive because land, water, grazing routes, and farming areas are under pressure from **population growth, climate change, and conflict**.

Major Social Problems in the Sahel

- Desertification does not mean that the Sahara moves like a solid wall. It means that productive dryland becomes less fertile and less capable of supporting life.**
- Great Green Wall Initiative**
- The **Great Green Wall Initiative** is an African-led programme to restore degraded land and improve **livelihoods across the Sahel**.
- Its major targets are to restore **100 million hectares** of degraded land, sequester **250 million tonnes of carbon**, and create **10 million green jobs by 2030**.
- This initiative is socially important because it aims to improve **food security, rural employment, climate resilience, women's livelihood, and community stability**.

People gather at the ancient stone circle Stonehenge at sunrise to celebrate the **Summer Solstice**, the longest day of the year, near Salisbury, England on Sunday

BIG SHOT



People gather at the ancient stone circle Stonehenge at sunrise to celebrate the Summer Solstice, the longest day of the year, near Salisbury, England on Sunday. AP

A new dawn: Aymara Indigenous people raise their hands to receive the first rays of sunlight during celebrations of the Andean New Year,

which marks the Southern Hemisphere's **winter solstice**, in El Alto, Bolivia, on Sunday.

22J6. Over 200 teak trees illegally axed in Chalakudy

Teak Trees (Tectona grandis)

- Teak is a characteristic tree of **Tropical Deciduous Forests (Monsoon Forests)**.
- More specifically, it is commonly found in **Tropical Moist Deciduous Forests**, though it can also occur in some dry deciduous areas.
- These forests shed their leaves during the dry season to conserve water.
- Climatic Conditions Required**
- Rainfall: 75–200 cm annually.**



- **Temperature: 20°C–35°C.**
- **Well-drained fertile soils, especially black cotton soil, red soils, and alluvial soils.**
- Distinct wet and dry seasons.
- **Distribution in India**
- Teak is mainly found in:
- **Madhya Pradesh (largest teak-producing state).**
- **Maharashtra.**
- **Chhattisgarh.**
- **Odisha.**
- **Telangana.**
- **Andhra Pradesh.**
- **Karnataka.**
- **Tamil Nadu.**
- **Kerala.**
- Parts of **Gujarat** and **Uttar Pradesh.**

Tree Forest Type

Teak	Tropical Deciduous Forest
Sal	Tropical Moist Deciduous Forest
Sundari	Mangrove Forest
Deodar	Himalayan Coniferous Forest

21J6. Ready for talks with T.N. on Mekedatu project: Karnataka

- **The Irrigation Minister** says the proposed dam will not reduce **Tamil Nadu's** share of **Cauvery water**; his statement comes a day after **T.N.** **The Assembly** unanimously adopted a resolution against the project.
- **Karnataka** is willing to hold a bilateral dialogue with **Tamil Nadu** on the **Mekedatu balancing reservoir project** on the **Cauvery** if the neighbouring State comes forward for discussions, **Major Irrigation Minister Ramalinga Reddy** said on Saturday.
- Stressing that the proposed project would not adversely affect **Tamil Nadu's share of Cauvery water**, Mr. Reddy said the reservoir would, in fact, help regulate river flow, and ensure more efficient release to the downstream State.
- On Friday, the **Tamil Nadu Assembly** unanimously adopted a resolution moved by **Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay** opposing the Karnataka government's proposal to construct a balancing reservoir at **Mekedatu**.

Tug-of-war

- Mr. Reddy said **Karnataka** has proposed the **Mekedatu project** within its territory across the **Cauvery river** primarily to meet the drinking water requirements of the **Bengaluru region**, regulate release to **Tamil Nadu** at **Biligundlu**, and generate **400 MW of hydroelectric power**.

- **Tamil Nadu** had approached the **Supreme Court** through a miscellaneous application in **2018** questioning Karnataka's right to proceed with the project.
- In its judgment delivered on **November 13, 2025**, the apex court rejected the plea, holding that the **Central Water Commission (CWC)** and the **Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA)** were the competent expert bodies to examine such matters.
- The court also observed that no State could interfere with the use of water allocated to another State unless such action reduced the quantity of water allotted to it.
- A review petition filed by **Tamil Nadu** was subsequently dismissed on **April 15, 2026**, the Minister noted.
- The Minister reiterated that **Karnataka** remained bound by the **Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal award**, as modified by the **Supreme Court** in **2018**, to ensure annual release of **177.25 tmcft** of water to **Tamil Nadu** at **Biligundlu** in a normal water year.

Still waters, calm minds



A yoga session is under way on Pokhribal Lake in Srinagar on Friday, in the run-up to International Yoga Day observed on June 21.

20J6. T.N. House unanimously opposes Karnataka govt.'s Mekedatu dam proposal

- Resolution moved by **CM** urges **Centre** not to grant any form of approval, including **environmental clearances**, to the project on **Cauvery**, without the concurrence of the basin States concerned.
- The **Tamil Nadu Assembly** on Friday unanimously adopted a resolution moved by Chief Minister **C. Joseph Vijay**, opposing the Karnataka government's proposal to construct a balancing reservoir across the **Cauvery** at **Mekedatu**.
- "This august House records its strong objection to the unilateral attempt of the **Karnataka government** to construct a dam across the **Cauvery** at **Mekedatu** without respecting the final award given by the **Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal (CWDT)** on February 5,



2007, and the **Supreme Court** judgment on February 16, 2018, without obtaining the concurrence of the concerned basin States, and without securing any approval from the **Union government**,” read the resolution.

- The resolution urged the **Union government** not to grant any form of approval, including **environmental clearances**, to the project.

SC judgment

- The **CWDT** and the **Supreme Court** have observed that the **Cauvery basin** is a deficit basin, and the total available water has already been apportioned among the basin States.
- Hence, no new project can be undertaken in the **Cauvery basin**, it said.
- “The **Cauvery issue** is a highly sensitive matter between **Tamil Nadu** and **Karnataka**,” the resolution said.
- It urged the **Centre** to advise the Karnataka government not to build any new water storage project at **Mekedatu** or any location in the **Cauvery basin** without the approval of the other basin States.
- “As requested in the **Tamil Nadu government’s** letter on March 4, 2026, this House urges the **Union government** to constitute a new **Tribunal** under Section 4 of the **Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956**,” the resolution read.

‘Don’t approve DPR’

- The resolution also urged the **Central Water Commission (CWC)** not to examine, process, or grant approval to the **Detailed Project Report (DPR)** submitted by the Karnataka government.

20J6. Four glacial lakes in Arunachal have expanded in a decade: study

- Analysis by a geospatial intelligence firm shows that the ‘**high-risk**’ lakes have increased in area, with one of them growing by **10 hectares**.
- Experts say expansion warrants attention but should not be interpreted as evidence of an impending disaster.
- A satellite-based assessment of **five glacial lakes** in the **Tawang district** of **Arunachal Pradesh** has found that four have expanded over the last decade, with one lake showing rapid growth, adding fresh evidence to concerns over the threat posed by **Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs)** in the eastern Himalaya.
- The analysis — a report and not a peer-reviewed study — conducted by the Noida-based **geospatial intelligence firm Suhora Technologies**, examined five lakes in the **Mago**

Chu basin that have been classified by the **National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)** as “**high-risk**” or “**very high-risk**”.

- The assessment comes amid heightened attention on glacial hazards in the region following a recent risk evaluation by the **Centre for Earth Sciences and Himalayan Studies (CESHS)**, **Arunachal Pradesh**.
- Using imagery from **ICEYE**, **PlanetScope**, and **LISS-IV satellites**, Suhora compared the extent of the lakes between 2016 and June 2026.
- In a press statement, the company said that “four out of five lakes have expanded, reflecting a general trend of **glacial retreat** and **meltwater storage**”.
- However, it cautioned that “lake expansion does not directly indicate a flood event” and said the findings instead highlighted “the importance of regular monitoring and further assessment to better understand future risks”.

High-risk lakes

- Among the lakes analysed, **Sanhapo Lake** showed the most significant growth.
- Suhora estimated its area at **78.07 hectares** in 2019, increasing to **88.81 hectares** by mid-June 2026.
- The company said that while uncertainties remain regarding its historical extent because of ice cover visible in its 2016 imagery, the lake has exhibited sustained expansion in recent years.
- Given its size and continued growth, Suhora identified it as the highest-priority lake among those assessed for detailed hazard modelling, continuous monitoring and possible **early-warning systems**.
- The remaining lakes showed more modest changes.
- Two lakes categorised by the **NDMA** as “**very high risk**” expanded by about a hectare over the decade, while **Dharkha Tso**, listed as “**high risk**”, also recorded gradual growth.
- A fifth lake remained broadly stable over the observation period.
- **Amit Kumar**, co-founder and chief operating officer of **Suhora Technologies**, said satellite observations were increasingly important for monitoring remote mountain regions where field access was often difficult.
- “By comparing satellite imagery across multiple years, it is possible to track changes in glacial lake extent...with the **monsoon season** approaching, continuous observation of glacial lakes becomes increasingly important”, he added.
- **Anil Kulkarni**, glaciologist and distinguished fellow at the **Divecha Centre for Climate Change**, **Indian Institute of Science**, **Bengaluru**, and who wasn’t connected to the study, said the observed expansion warranted



attention but should not be interpreted as evidence of an impending disaster.

- "If lakes are expanding, then it is considered as an unstable lake," he said.
- However, he stressed that the key question was why a lake was growing.
- Lakes impounded by **moraines** — ridges of rock and debris deposited by glaciers — can become hazardous when retreating glaciers increase the volume of water trapped behind them.
- Yet several other factors determine risk, including the possibility of **landslides, avalanches or rockfalls** entering the lake.
- "Mere increase in area, even over a decade, cannot be a single criterion" for judging how dangerous a lake is, Mr. Kulkarni told The Hindu.
- "It can be a concern, but how risky it is, we do not know."

Concerns over floods

- Worries over **Himalayan glacial hazards** have intensified since the **October 2023 disaster in Sikkim**, when a breach associated with **South Lhonak Lake** triggered floods that killed dozens of people and destroyed the **Chungthang hydropower dam**.
- **GLOFs** can occur when natural moraine dams fail or when large avalanches, landslides, or icefalls suddenly displace water and generate destructive waves.
- Mr. Kulkarni said India's ability to identify potentially dangerous glacial lakes had improved considerably through satellite monitoring and modelling.
- However, he argued that translating scientific assessments into practical risk reduction

Business as usual



Striking it rich: Artisanal miners use shovels to extract gold-bearing sand from an open pit in Mongbwalu, Ituri province, on Wednesday. The latest Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, declared on May 15, has mainly affected the remote, conflict-weary northeastern province of Ituri. AFP

remained a major challenge.

Striking it rich: Artisanal miners use shovels to extract gold-bearings from an open pit in Mongbwalu, Ituri province, on Wednesday.

The latest Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, declared on May 15, has mainly affected the remote, conflict-weary northeastern province of Ituri.

18J6. QUIZ

1. Anthropic

- **Anthropic**, the U.S.-based artificial intelligence company behind the Claude AI models, temporarily disabled access to its most advanced models after the U.S. government ordered restrictions on foreign access, citing national security concerns.
- The directive affected the newly launched **Claude Fable 5** and **Claude Mythos 5** models. Anthropic stated that, because it could not selectively block only foreign users, it suspended access more broadly while discussions with U.S. authorities continued.
- This episode highlights the growing importance of AI export controls and technological security in international relations.

2. Britain

- **Britain (United Kingdom)** announced plans to prohibit children under the age of 16 from accessing major social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, and X.
- The proposal, announced by Prime Minister **Keir Starmer**, is aimed at improving online safety, reducing cyberbullying, and protecting children's mental health.
- The government intends to require strict age-verification mechanisms and may implement the policy by 2027.
- The proposal has generated debate, with supporters emphasizing child protection and critics warning about social isolation and enforcement challenges.

3. Bharat Innovates 2026

- **Bharat Innovates 2026** was jointly inaugurated by Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** and French President **Emmanuel Macron** in **Nice, France**, on June 14, 2026.
- The initiative is part of the **India–France Year of Innovation** and seeks to strengthen cooperation in deep technology, startups, artificial intelligence, research, and innovation ecosystems.
- The event brings together entrepreneurs, researchers, investors, policymakers, and industry leaders from both countries.



- It reflects the growing strategic partnership between India and France in emerging technologies and global innovation leadership.

4. Elon Musk became the world's first trillionaire

- Following the reported **SpaceX IPO** and the continued rise in the valuation of his businesses, **Elon Musk** was widely reported to have become the world's first **trillionaire**. Musk's wealth is linked primarily to his stakes in **SpaceX**, **Tesla**, **xAI**, and other technology ventures.
- SpaceX has emerged as a dominant player in commercial space launches, satellite communications through Starlink, and deep-space exploration projects.
- The milestone reflects the increasing influence of technology, space innovation, and artificial intelligence in shaping global wealth creation and economic power.

5. Google Gemini

- Google Gemini**, developed by **Google DeepMind**, powers the rebuilt version of **Apple's Siri** through an external AI partnership. Gemini is a multimodal AI system capable of understanding and generating text, images, code, and other forms of data.
- Apple has increasingly focused on integrating advanced AI capabilities into its ecosystem while maintaining privacy and security standards.
- The collaboration allows Siri to provide more natural conversations, better contextual understanding, and improved task execution, reflecting the broader trend of partnerships between major technology firms in the rapidly evolving AI sector.

6. Razorpay

- Razorpay**, one of India's leading fintech companies, reportedly filed confidential documents for an Initial Public Offering (IPO) valued at around **\$600 million**.
- Founded in 2014, Razorpay provides digital payment solutions, payment gateways, banking services, and financial management tools for businesses.
- The company has played a major role in India's digital payments revolution, which has been accelerated by initiatives such as **Digital India**, **UPI**, and increasing internet penetration.
- A successful IPO would further strengthen India's growing fintech ecosystem and attract global investor interest.

7. Byju Raveendran

- Byju Raveendran**, founder of the edtech company **BYJU'S**, received temporary relief from a Singapore court in a contempt-related legal matter.
- BYJU'S, once one of the world's most valuable edtech startups, has faced financial, governance, and legal challenges in recent years.
- The Singapore proceedings are linked to disputes involving lenders and restructuring efforts.
- The court's decision does not conclude the broader legal issues but provides interim relief while proceedings continue.
- The case remains significant because it highlights corporate governance, startup financing, and regulatory challenges within the global edtech industry.

18J6. South Korea to ease civilian curbs along border with North Korea

- Civilians in **South Korea** will be able to get several kilometres nearer **North Korea** under new rules broadening public access to the highly militarised border zone, **Seoul's Defence Ministry** said on Wednesday.
- The **Civilian Control Line** will be shrunk to an average of **six km** starting **2027**, **Defence Minister Ahn Gyu-back** said.

17J6. India's rainfall deficit 35% as monsoon stalls

- The **shortfall in rainfall is concentrated in the regions the monsoon has failed to cover — Maharashtra, the Konkan coast, and the adjoining regions of central India** — where its northward progress has been stalled for several days.
- India Meteorological Department (IMD)** statistics show that apart from **northwest India**, which has received **5% more rain than normal** for this time of the year, all other regions are in the red.
- This includes **east and northeast India (-43%)**, **central India (-61%)**, and the **southern peninsula (-14%)**.
- The **Union government** has placed **150 to 200 districts** under priority monitoring, ordered weekly **El Niño** reviews, and is **encouraging a shift towards cotton and pulses**.

'Better placed'

- While a **rainfall deficit** in **June**, the first of the monsoon months, is not unusual, it assumes additional significance in a year that **forecasters globally have warned will likely be a 'Super El Niño' year**.



- An **El Niño event** — the periodic warming of the **central and eastern Pacific Ocean** that tends to suppress the **Indian monsoon** — establishes itself only in the spring and exerts its influence mainly in the middle and later part of the season.
- The **Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO)**, a travelling band of atmospheric activity that can strengthen or weaken the monsoon, is currently in an **“unfavourable phase”**.
- This implies that the onset over **Mumbai** is likely to be delayed by a further **five to six days**, until the next pulse strengthens, **possibly aided by a low-pressure system forming over the Bay of Bengal**, he reckoned.
- The **U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)** issued an **El Niño advisory** on **June 11**, confirming the event had formed and placing the odds of it becoming **“very strong”** by winter at **63%**.
- The **World Meteorological Organization (WMO)** had earlier put the probability of **El Niño** emerging between **June and August** at **80%**.
- **IMD’s first-stage forecast** in **April** pegged **seasonal rainfall** at **92% of the long-period average**.
- Its **May-end update** lowered this to **90%** and assigned a **60% probability** to a **deficient year** — the agency’s most pessimistic **pre-season forecast** since **2015**.

16J6. When a small town sends one of its own to Raisina Hill

- If even a fraction of the projects lined up materialise, **Rairangpur** in **Odisha**, the hometown of President **Droupadi Murmu**, will have a compelling story to tell.
- Her tribal-dominated **Mayurbhanj district** is also set to receive a share of the investments.
- The Odisha government has accorded approval for the establishment of a second campus of the **Indian Institute of Forest Management** at **Rairangpur**.
- A **Central Tribal University** has also been proposed for **Rairangpur**.
- The **Principal Chief Conservator of Forests** has been requested to involve the **Wildlife Institute of India** in preparing a dossier for the nomination of **Similipal National Park** as a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**.

16J6. Russian strikes across Ukraine kill 11, famed monastery in Kyiv catches fire

- **Moscow** fires hundreds of drones and dozens of missiles in overnight barrage; **Zelenskyy** calls for increased pressure from **G7** leaders and global partners after air assault; **Ukrainian** drone strike kills three people in **Russia’s Tula region**, officials say

- The violence killed five people and wounded 34 in the capital as a fire broke out on the grounds of the **Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra UNESCO World Heritage Site**, setting ablaze the roof of its **Dormition Cathedral**.
- **Russia’s military** said it had carried out a “massive strike” on military sites in **Kyiv**, as well as the **Kharkiv** and **Dnipro** regions, but denied targeting the **Lavra**, saying it was hit by an outdated **U.S. Patriot air defence missile**.
- Founded in the **11th century**, the site holds huge significance for **Orthodox believers** in both **Ukraine** and **Russia**.
- **15J6. 3 children and man drown as boat capsizes in Krishna river in A.P.**
- The **Krishna River** originates near **Mahabaleshwar** in the **Western Ghats** of **Maharashtra**.
- It flows through the states of **Maharashtra, Karnataka, Telangana, and Andhra Pradesh**, and finally empties into the **Bay of Bengal** at **Hamsaladevi** in **Andhra Pradesh**.
- The river stretches about **1400 kilometers**, making it the **third-longest** river in India.
- **Tributaries**
- **Left-Hand Tributaries:** Include the **Bhima, Musi, Munneru, Dindi, Kolamba, and Peddavagu** rivers.
- **Right-Hand Tributaries:** Comprise the **Ghataprabha, Malaprabha, Tungabhadra, Koyna, Panchganga, and Dudhaganga** rivers.
- **Economic and Cultural Significance**
- The **Prakasam Barrage**, designed by **Sir Arthur Cotton** and completed in **1957**, spans the **Krishna River**, facilitating **irrigation** for over **5.8 lakh acres** of land in **Andhra Pradesh**.
- The river supports several **major irrigation projects** and is vital for **agriculture** in the region.

Amnesty accuses Israel of ‘ethnic cleansing’ of West Bank Bedouins

- “**Israeli authorities** are accelerating annexation through a state-driven campaign of ethnic cleansing targeting **Palestinian Bedouin and herding communities**” of the **West Bank**, said the report released on Wednesday.

Palestinian Bedouins

- The **Bedouins** are traditionally **nomadic or semi-nomadic Arab pastoral communities** whose way of life is closely linked to livestock rearing, especially sheep, goats, and camels.
- The term **“Bedouin”** comes from the Arabic word **“Badawi”**, meaning **desert dweller**.
- **Palestinian Bedouin communities** mainly live in the **Jordan Valley**, the **eastern slopes of the West Bank**, and areas around **Jerusalem**.



- Many of these communities trace their origins to tribes that historically moved across the deserts of the **Arabian Peninsula**, **Sinai**, and the **Levant**.

10J6. Philippines slams China's floating 'structure' on disputed waters

- The **Philippines** has protested **China's** deployment of a floating "**structure**" with personnel at the disputed **Scarborough Shoal**.

- The average ocean salinity is about **35 parts per thousand (35‰)**.
- Salinity influences ocean circulation, marine biodiversity, climate systems, and the distribution of marine organisms across different ocean regions.

4. If the average global temperature rises by **1.5°C**, the estimated loss of which remarkable biodiverse natural feature is **70–90%**?

09J6. QUIZ

1. Why was June 8 chosen for World Oceans Day and when was it first observed?

- Answer:** June 8 was chosen because the concept of **World Oceans Day** was first proposed on **8 June 1992** at the **Earth Summit (UNCED)** in **Rio de Janeiro, Brazil** by the **Oceans Institute of Canada** and the **International Centre for Ocean Development**.
- The United Nations officially designated 8 June as World Oceans Day in 2008, and the first official UN observance took place in **2009**.
- The day aims to raise awareness about ocean conservation, sustainable use of marine resources, and the ocean's role in climate regulation and human livelihoods.

2. How many oceans are officially recognised and which is the smallest?

- Answer:** There are **five officially recognised oceans**: the **Pacific Ocean**, **Atlantic Ocean**, **Indian Ocean**, **Southern Ocean**, and **Arctic Ocean**.
- The **Arctic Ocean** is the smallest and shallowest of them, covering about **14 million square kilometres**.
- Located around the North Pole, it is largely covered by sea ice throughout the year.
- Despite its size, the Arctic Ocean plays a crucial role in regulating Earth's climate, influencing ocean currents, and supporting unique marine ecosystems adapted to extreme cold conditions.

3. Which distinct characteristic of oceans is because of mineral runoff from land and hydrothermal activity on the seafloor?

- Answer:** The characteristic is **saltness (salinity)**. Ocean water contains dissolved salts primarily because rivers carry minerals weathered from rocks on land into the sea.
- Additionally, hydrothermal vents on the seafloor release minerals from Earth's interior into ocean waters. Sodium and chloride are the most abundant ions, giving seawater its salty taste.

- Answer:** The feature is **coral reefs**. According to scientific assessments of the **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)**, a global temperature increase of **1.5°C** could lead to the loss of **70–90% of the world's coral reefs**.
- Coral reefs support nearly **25% of all marine species**, despite covering less than 1% of the ocean floor. Rising sea temperatures cause coral bleaching, where corals expel the algae essential for their survival.
- Coral reef decline threatens biodiversity, fisheries, coastal protection, and the livelihoods of millions of people worldwide.

5. The Aral Sea dramatically shrank because of massive water diversion projects in the 1960s on two major rivers. Name the rivers.

- Answer:** The two rivers are the **Amu Darya** and the **Syr Darya**. During the 1960s, large-scale irrigation projects in the former Soviet Union diverted water from these rivers to support cotton cultivation in Central Asia.
- As a result, the Aral Sea lost most of its inflow and shrank dramatically, becoming one of the world's worst environmental disasters.
- The shrinking sea caused ecological degradation, increased salinity, collapse of fisheries, dust storms carrying toxic sediments, and severe health and economic impacts on local communities.

6. What is a 'seamount'?

- Answer:** A **seamount** is an underwater volcanic mountain that rises at least **1,000 metres above the surrounding deep-sea floor** but does not reach the ocean surface. Most seamounts are formed by volcanic activity associated with tectonic plate movements or hotspots.
- They are important marine habitats because ocean currents interacting with seamounts bring nutrients to the surface, supporting rich biodiversity.
- Many fish species, corals, and marine mammals depend on these ecosystems. Scientists also study seamounts to understand



Earth's geological history and deep-sea ecological processes.

7. What body of water separates Madagascar from the African continent?

- **Answer:** The **Mozambique Channel** separates **Madagascar** from mainland Africa, specifically from **Mozambique**. It is the longest channel in the world, extending approximately **1,600 kilometres**.
- The channel forms an important part of the western Indian Ocean and serves as a major route for marine transportation and ocean circulation.
- Its warm currents influence regional climate patterns and support rich marine biodiversity, including whales, dolphins, sea turtles, and coral ecosystems.
- The channel also holds significance for fisheries and maritime trade in eastern Africa.

8. Which 'colourful' sea's name is a direct translation of its ancient Greek name *Erythra Thalassa*?

- **Answer:** The answer is the **Red Sea**. The ancient Greek name "**Erythra Thalassa**" literally translates to "**Red Sea**." Located between northeastern Africa and the Arabian Peninsula, the Red Sea is one of the saltiest bodies of seawater connected to an ocean.
- Its name may have originated from seasonal blooms of reddish-coloured cyanobacteria (*Trichodesmium erythraeum*) or from the surrounding reddish mountains.
- The sea is renowned for its exceptional coral reefs, rich marine biodiversity, and strategic importance for global shipping through the **Suez Canal**.

09J6. Mauritius rejects reported move by Trump to buy Chagos Islands

- **Mauritius** said on Monday that it had not received any proposal from the **[Donald] Trump administration** on the **Chagos Islands**, after the Telegraph reported that the **White House** was planning to buy the islands.
- "**Mauritius's** position remains unchanged: its **sovereignty** over the **Chagos** is non-negotiable," it said.

09J6. Houthis claim missile attack, declare 'total ban' on Israeli ships in Red Sea

- **Yemen-based Iran-aligned group** launches air attack on **Israel**, says **Israel-affiliated ships** would again become a target in the **Red Sea**; the escalation comes as the **Strait of Hormuz**

remains blockaded by **Iran** due to the war in **West Asia** with the **U.S.**

- **Iran-aligned Houthi rebels** in **Yemen** announced a missile attack on **Israel** on Monday and declared a ban on Israeli shipping in the **Red Sea**, raising the spectre of a return to major disruption on the key route.
- The **Houthis' attack** came as **Israel** and **Iran** traded fire on Monday, putting the ceasefire under renewed strain and threatening hopes for a peace deal.
- The **Houthis** made a similar threat and targeted cargo ships in the vital seaway during the **Israel-Hamas war**, forcing many companies into a lengthy detour around the tip of southern Africa.
- The assaults upended shipping in the **Red Sea**, through which about **\$1 trillion** of goods passed each year before the war.
- Their threat comes as the **Strait of Hormuz**, the gateway to the **Gulf sea** and its energy exporters, remains blockaded by **Iran** as a result of the war in **West Asia** with the **U.S.** and **Israel**.

'Legitimate targets'

- "We declare a complete and total ban on **Israeli maritime navigation** in the **Red Sea**," said a statement from the **Houthis' armed forces**.
- "We consider all enemy movements to be legitimate military targets for our armed forces from the moment this statement is issued."
- The statement from **Brigadier General Yahya Saree** was broadcast on the Houthis' **al-Masirah satellite news channel**.
- The **Houthis**, who joined the war in support of **Iran** in March, had not announced a missile attack on **Israel** since a fragile ceasefire began on April 8.
- The **Houthis** have fired missiles at **Israel** during the **Israel-Hamas war** and later, but haven't been fully involved in the **Iran war**.
- They said they "launched a missile barrage targeting sensitive Israeli enemy targets", claiming the strikes "achieved their objectives with precision".
- The **Israeli military** earlier wrote on **Telegram** that it "has identified the launch of a missile from **Yemen** toward Israeli territory, aerial defence systems are operating to intercept the threat".
- An **Israeli military official** said two missiles were fired by the **Houthis** since Sunday evening.
- The **Houthis** and **Lebanon-based Hezbollah** form part of the "**Axis of Resistance**" grouping of pro-**Iran** forces opposed to **Israel** and the **United States**.

08J6. Missed call

- India must brace itself for a **deficient southwest monsoon**.



- Only the **northeast** is expected to see normal rain; the **northwest, central India, the peninsula** and the **monsoon core zone** that waters most of the country's rain-fed farmland are all forecast to fall short.
- With **El Niño** now near-certain through the heart of the season, the government must not count on a late, redeeming swing of the **Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD)**.
- That means activating the **Agriculture Ministry, Jal Shakti Ministry and Consumer Affairs Ministry** on a war footing along with the disaster management authorities.
- Disciplined **groundwater and reservoir management** are necessary and **crop insurance** and relief provisioning must be readied.

07J6. Industrial salt pans threaten Sambhar Lake's survival

- **Sambhar Lake** is **India's largest inland saltwater wetland**.
- The authors said efforts to conserve the lake must **separate industrial salt pans** and the **wetland environment**, including **natural saline land**.

06J6. Five Azerbaijanis killed in Azov Sea drone attack: Baku

- Five **Azerbaijanis** were killed and three wounded in a **drone attack** on Friday on two foreign cargo ships in the **Sea of Azov**, **Azerbaijan's Foreign Ministry** said.
- **Russia** said **Ukraine** carried out the attack.
- The commander of **Ukraine's unmanned systems forces** said Kyiv had struck "loitering vessels" transporting illegal cargo in the area, without commenting on the statements by **Baku** and **Moscow** or the reports of crew killed.

04J6. Cabinet gives its nod for new coastal highway in Odisha

- The **Union Cabinet** on Wednesday approved the construction of a new **coastal highway** from **Rameshwar to Paradeep** in **Odisha** at a total project cost of **₹8,300.79 crore**.
- The widening of the **Armoor-Jagtial-Mancherial Section of NH-63** will be on a **hybrid annuity model**.
- The **Jagtial-Karimnagar Section of NH-563** will be carried out on a **build-operate-transfer model** to the **four-lane standard** in **Telangana**.

04J6. QUIZ

1. Khatanga Gulf – End of the Longest Unobstructed Sea Route

- **Khatanga Gulf** is located on the northern coast of Siberia in Arctic Russia, where the **Khatanga River** flows into the **Laptev Sea**, a marginal sea of the Arctic Ocean.
- It gained attention in geographical studies because it lies near one end of the world's longest theoretically unobstructed straight-line sea route, stretching across vast oceanic expanses without intersecting land.
- The region is characterized by extreme Arctic conditions, seasonal sea ice, and strategic importance for Russia's Northern Sea Route, which is becoming increasingly significant due to Arctic warming and expanding maritime navigation opportunities.

2. Continental Pole of Inaccessibility – Farthest Point from Any Coastline

- The **Continental Pole of Inaccessibility** refers to the location on Earth that is farthest from any ocean or coastline.
- It is situated in northwestern China, near the border region of the **Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region** and Kazakhstan.
- This point lies approximately **2,645 kilometres** from the nearest coastline, making it the most inland location on the planet.
- The concept is widely used in geography to study **continentality, climate, and remoteness**.
- Due to its great distance from oceans, the region experiences extreme temperature variations and a highly continental climate.

3. Bouvet Island – The World's Most Remote Island

- **Bouvet Island** is an uninhabited volcanic island located in the South Atlantic Ocean and is administered as a dependent territory of **Norway**.
- Situated roughly midway between Antarctica and southern Africa, it is often regarded as the **most remote island in the world because no permanently inhabited landmass exists within thousands of kilometres**.
- About 93 percent of the island is covered by **glaciers**, making human settlement extremely difficult.
- Owing to its ecological significance and pristine environment, Bouvet Island has been designated as a **protected nature reserve by Norway**.

4. SOFAR Channel – Nature's Underwater Sound Highway

- The **SOFAR (Sound Fixing and Ranging) Channel** is a **horizontal layer in the ocean**



where sound waves can travel extremely long distances with minimal energy loss.

- This phenomenon occurs **because variations in water temperature and pressure** create a **zone of minimum sound velocity, causing sound waves to refract back toward the channel's centre.**
- The **SOFAR Channel** plays a crucial role in oceanographic research, submarine communication, marine mammal studies, and underwater monitoring systems.
- Scientists use it to track underwater events, including earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and whale migrations across vast ocean basins.

5. Thermal Equator – Belt of Highest Mean Surface Temperature

- The **Thermal Equator** is an imaginary line connecting places that experience the highest average annual temperatures on Earth.
- Unlike the geographic equator, it shifts northward and southward with seasonal changes in solar heating and land–sea distribution.
- It generally lies north of the geographic equator because the Northern Hemisphere contains larger landmasses that heat more rapidly than oceans.
- The thermal equator explains global temperature patterns, pressure belts, monsoon circulation, and the seasonal migration of climatic zones.

04J6. Iran strikes Kuwait's main airport, Bahrain base after U.S. hits Qeshm

- The **U.S.** targeted Iran's ground control station on **Qeshm Island**.

04J6. Romania wants to boost air defence after drone strike blamed on Russia

- She added that **NATO** and **EU** member Romania had a long border with **Ukraine** that stretched along the **Danube River** and out into the **Black Sea**.

Blue Moon

- A blue moon, the second full moon in a calendar month, rises behind the ancient Greek temple of Poseidon at Cape Sounion south of Athens, on May 31.
- A **Blue Moon** is a special term used for an unusually timed full moon. Despite its name, the Moon does **not actually appear blue** in most cases.

Monthly Blue Moon

- When **two full moons occur in the same calendar month**, the second full moon is called a **Blue Moon**.
- This happens because:
 - A full moon occurs roughly every **29.5 days**.
 - Some months are **31 days long**.
 - Therefore, occasionally a month can contain two full moons.
- Example: If a full moon occurs on **1st August** and another on **31st August**, the second one is called a Blue Moon.
- This type of Blue Moon occurs roughly once every: **2.5 to 3 years**.

03J6. India losing ability to build its own instruments: climate science report

- The warning appeared in the **Mega Science Vision-2035 (MSV) report on Climate Research**.
- A road map prepared by the Indian climate research community with the **Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru**, as the nodal institution.
- To boost domestic manufacturing, the **Government e-Marketplace (GeM)** portal was made mandatory for public scientific institutions.
- India has pledged **500 GW of non-fossil capacity by 2030**.
- And crossed the halfway mark on installed electricity capacity from non-fossil sources in **2025**.

Mega projects

- The report called for an **indigenous Earth System Model** built "from first principles".
- Spanning observatories, satellites, in-situ networks, field campaigns, indigenous sensors, carbon-neutrality research and adaptation science.

03J6. Bolides: fireballs going boom

- On **May 30**, a meteor exploded over northeastern **U.S.** while producing loud booming noises.
- **NASA** scientists said the object broke apart around **64 km** above the ground as it was falling at more than **1,20,000 km/hr**.
- The energy the explosion released was estimated to be equivalent to around **300 tonnes of TNT**.
- Experts often call these objects **bolides**.
- A **bolide** is an exceptionally bright meteor that breaks apart or explodes in the earth's atmosphere.
- These objects are originally small pieces of rock or metal in space that, after a close encounter with the earth, enter the atmosphere as meteors.

- As such a meteor falls, the air in front becomes compressed and heated, causing it to glow and produce a bright streak of light across the sky.
- Most meteors are very small and burn up completely before reaching the ground.
- If they become bright enough, they become **fireballs**.
- And if they fragment violently and release a large amount of energy, astronomers often call them **bolides**.
- The rock or metal is usually some small fragment left behind by **asteroids** or, less often, **comets**.
- They orbit the sun until their paths intersect with that of the earth.
- When they enter the atmosphere, they can travel tens of kilometres every second.
- The loud booms are the resulting shockwaves.
- A famous example is the **Chelyabinsk bolide**, which exploded over **Russia** in **2013**, generating a powerful shockwave that damaged buildings and injured more than a thousand people.

03J6. Benin president visits Niger, a first since 2023 coup sparked tensions

- **Benin's** new leader was in **Niger** on Tuesday, state TV showed.
- Niger's military leaders, who broke off ties with traditional ally **France**, closed the border with Benin.
- After accusing the country of harbouring "**French bases**" bent on destabilising Niger.
- "For Benin to come out and say that it has nothing to do with France's interests."
- "That Benin is not facilitating France's presence on its territory in order to attack its neighbours."
- Niger regularly accuses Benin of harbouring **French military bases**.
- Which it says are training jihadists.

02J6. Fearsome dinosaur-era reptile was T. rex of the sea

- **Tyrannosaurus rex** was a huge land predator during the twilight of the age of dinosaurs.
- But it was not the only T. rex that terrorised the **Cretaceous Period**.
- There also was a marine reptile named **Tylosaurus rex** — the T. rex of the sea — that rivalled its land counterpart in size and ferocity.
- Roughly 66 million years ago, **Tyrannosaurus rex** roamed the land in **Western North America**.
- The largest **Tylosaurus rex** specimen, nicknamed **Bunker** and held at the **University of Kansas Biodiversity Institute and Natural History Museum**, is about 13.2 m long.
- **Tylosaurus rex** is a member of a group of marine reptiles with a global distribution called **mosasaurs** that evolved from land-living lizards

to become apex marine predators during the • nal roughly 30 million years of the age of dinosaurs.

- Today's monitor lizards, including the **Komodo dragon** — the largest present-day lizard at up to 3 m long — are perhaps among the closest living relatives of **Tylosaurus rex**.
- The two T. rexes were not contemporaries, though forerunners of the giant dinosaur lived at the same time as the giant mosasaur.
- **Tylosaurus rex** was among the largest of the mosasaurs, alongside the likes of **Mosasaurus hoffmanni**.

Water being released from the **Euphrates Dam in Tabqain Syria's Raqa province**. The floods in the north and east are the result of rain levels that were higher than usual this year prompting authorities to open some of the gates at the Euphrates Dam to reduce pressure on it. Flooding has been rare in the country since Turkey built dams decades ago that control the flow of the Euphrates into Syria and Iraq.

Euphrates on the rise



Water being released from the Euphrates Dam in Tabqa in Syria's Raqa province. The floods in the north and east are the result of rain levels that were higher than usual this year prompting authorities to open some of the gates at the Euphrates Dam to reduce pressure on it. Flooding has been rare in the country since Turkey built dams decades ago that control the flow of the Euphrates into Syria and Iraq. AFP

01J6. Padma Barrage: another barrier

- Bangladesh has approved a large river engineering project called the **Padma barrage**, on the **Padma river**, which is **Bangladesh's stretch of the Ganga**, in **Rajbari district**.
- The **barrage will be 2.1-km-long** and have **78 spillway gates**, undersluices, navigation locks, fish passages, and associated embankments.
- According to Bangladesh, the **project will affect roughly 37% of the country's land area** and irrigate around **2.88 million ha** of farmland.
- While the barrage's supporters see a long-delayed national water security project in the **Padma barrage**, critics have said **mega-barrages often underperform**, alter sediment flows in unpredictable ways, and can create new ecological problems, such as water-logging and damage to fisheries.

- As **Meheeb Sahana** at the **University of Manchester** and **Bayes Ahmed** at **University College London** have argued, the **project** highlights how **South Asian countries** are building more barriers to rivers rather than removing them.
- The **regional turn** towards **unilateral river engineering** is at odds with **Europe** and **North America** tearing down obsolete dams and culverts to restore rivers' free flow.
- In **2025** alone, **21 European countries** removed a record **603 barriers**.

01J6. QUIZ: Mount Everest

1. Chomolungma — Mother Goddess of the Earth

- Tibetans** and **Sherpas** traditionally call **Mount Everest** "Chomolungma" or "Qomolangma".
- The **term** means "**Mother Goddess of the Earth**" in the **Tibetan language**.
- The name reflects the spiritual and sacred significance of the mountain in **Himalayan Buddhist culture**.
- Sherpa communities** living in **Nepal** and **Tibet** worship the mountain as a divine entity and perform rituals before expeditions.
- In **Nepal**, **Mount Everest** is also known as **Sagarmatha**, meaning "Forehead of the Sky".
The mountain lies in the **Mahalangur Himal** sub-range of the **Himalayas** on the **Nepal–China border**.
According to the latest **Nepal-China joint announcement** of **2020**, **Everest's official height** is **8,848.86 metres**.

2. The Death Zone

- The "**Death Zone**" refers to altitudes **above approximately 8,000 metres** on mountains such as **Mount Everest**.
- At this **height**, **atmospheric oxygen levels** are **extremely low**, containing nearly one-third of the oxygen available at **sea level**.
- Human bodies** cannot **acclimatise** permanently under such conditions.
- Climbers** experience severe risks such as **hypoxia**, **cerebral oedema**, **pulmonary oedema**, **frostbite**, and **exhaustion**.

3. Kanchenjunga and Sikkim's Ban on Expeditions

- Before the **Great Trigonometrical Survey of India**, many geographers considered **Kanchenjunga** the highest mountain in the world.

- Kanchenjunga** has a height of **8,586 metres** and is currently the **third-highest mountain globally**.
- It is located on the border between **India's Sikkim State** and **Nepal**.
- The **Great Trigonometrical Survey** later scientifically established **Mount Everest** as the world's highest peak.
- Kanchenjunga** is considered sacred by the people of **Sikkim**, especially the **Lepcha** and **Buddhist communities**.
- Because of its religious importance, the **Government of Sikkim** prohibits mountaineers from stepping on the actual summit from the **Indian side**.
- Climbers** traditionally stop a few feet below the peak to respect local beliefs.
- The **Kanchenjunga landscape** is also protected through the **Khangchendzonga National Park**, a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**.

4. Junko Tabei — First Woman to Summit Everest

- Junko Tabei** of **Japan** became the first woman to successfully summit **Mount Everest** on **May 16, 1975**.
- Junko Tabei** later climbed the highest peaks on all seven continents, completing the "**Seven Summits**".
- A mountain range on the dwarf planet **Pluto** has been named "**Tabei Montes**" in her honour by the **International Astronomical Union**.

5. Mariana Trench — Deepest Point on Earth

- The **Mariana Trench** is the deepest known point on **Earth's oceans**.
- It is located in the **western Pacific Ocean** near the **Mariana Islands**.
- Its deepest section is called the **Challenger Deep**, which reaches nearly **10,900 to 11,000 metres** below sea level according to modern oceanographic studies.
- Scientific expeditions** have discovered **microplastics** and **human-generated pollutants** even at this extreme depth.
- Studies published** in **marine science journals** show that **plastic contamination** has spread across the entire planet.
- Microplastics** have also been found on **Mount Everest**, proving the **global reach of pollution**.
- The **Mariana Trench** was formed due to the **subduction of the Pacific Plate** beneath the **Mariana Plate**.

6. George Everest — Surveyor General of India

- Sir George Everest** served as the **Surveyor General of India** from **1830 to 1843**.



- He played an important role in the **Great Trigonometrical Survey of India**, one of the most ambitious scientific surveys of the nineteenth century.
- The survey aimed to accurately measure the Indian subcontinent and Himalayan peaks.
- Interestingly, George Everest himself never saw Mount Everest.
- After his tenure, the mountain known earlier as "Peak XV" was identified as the world's highest peak by surveyor **Radhanath Sikdar** in 1852.
- In 1865, the Royal Geographical Society officially named the mountain "Mount Everest" in George Everest's honour.

- Modern satellite and GPS technology have greatly improved mountain measurements compared to nineteenth-century survey methods.

01J6. Ukraine hits Russian energy sites, denies striking nuclear plant

- Kyiv denied a Russian claim that a Ukrainian drone struck the **Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant**, Europe's largest.
- Russia's state nuclear energy company, **Rosatom**.

PATRIOTIC IAS



PATRIOTIC IAS

MONTHLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

GENERAL STUDIES PAPER II

SUBJECT: POLITY

TOPICS COVERED

- | | | | |
|------|---|------|---|
| 25J6 | BJP councillors retake oath after court order | 11J6 | Panel recommends targeted splitting of seats for next delimitation exercise |
| 25J6 | Passport is a travel document, not proof of citizenship | 11J6 | SC invokes Article 142 to quash POCSO conviction |
| 24J6 | Is RSS a legal person? | 10J6 | Congress's RS nomination rejected during scrutiny; chaos in M.P. house |
| 22J6 | Voting should be recognised as a fundamental right, says Ramesh | 10J6 | A State without an Opposition |
| 20J6 | Walking on footpath is a fundamental right, says SC | 08J6 | The Ordinance question before the SC |
| 19J6 | Telegram challenge once again puts spotlight on Section 69A of IT Act | 07J6 | SC balances child's right to know paternity, father's right to privacy |
| 18J6 | Rajya Sabha Chairman refers BJP MPs' notice against Cong. chief to Privileges Committee | 05J6 | Draft SC rules prohibit use of AI for judicial outcomes, witness profiling |
| 18J6 | Nicobarese tribal councils oppose draft election rules | 04J6 | Why judicial holidays are necessary |
| 17J6 | Courts must weigh civil disputes before criminal prosecution: HC | 02J6 | Centre clears five new judges for SC; strength rises to 37 |
| 17J6 | What does the Tenth Schedule provide on party mergers? | 02J6 | Delhi HC recognises 'right to be forgotten', lays down rules for de-indexing judicial records |
| 16J6 | SC seeks govt. response to plea on RTE quota in Punjab | 01J6 | The apex court rings its own chain |
| 15J6 | 20 rebel Trinamool MPs seek to merge with NCPI | | |
| 12J6 | Lows of the land | | |
| 12J6 | Fair and square | | |



25J6. Symbolism over substance? Public health officials slam T.N. govt.'s gold ring scheme

- Every year, the **Tamil Nadu government** will spend **₹755.83 crore** on gifting **one-gram gold rings** to roughly **4.42 lakh babies** born in **government hospitals** under its new scheme, **Thaimaaman Thanga Mothiram Thittam**.
- The **gold ring** may be intended as a celebration of birth, but for many within the **public health sector**, the more pressing need is investment in the **workforce** and **infrastructure** that makes safe deliveries possible.
- Already, the **Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy Maternity Benefit Scheme** provides maternal assistance of **₹14,000** in cash support and **two nutritional kits** valued at **₹4,000**.

25J6. SC had agreed that right to associate is no carte blanche for foreign funds

- The **Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Rules, 2026**, notified by the **Union Home Ministry** on **June 22**, has introduced tougher limits on **NGOs** to receive **foreign donations**.
- These amendments, and the ones before them, source their legality from the **Centre's** argument in the **Supreme Court** that the freedom to form **associations** or engage in the **"business" of charity** does not include a right to receive unbridled foreign funds or to use the money outside **"permissible activities"**.
- Among other changes, **Rule 9(1B)** mandates that **certificates of registration** of **NGOs** must specify the **"purpose or purposes and the States or Union Territories"**.
- The **Rules** limit **NGOs** to specific and stated spheres of activity, which exclude **proselytisation**, and geographical bounds.

SC judgments

The government's sweeping powers to regulate **foreign donations** have been blessed by the **Supreme Court** in multiple judgments.

- A **three-judge Bench** in **Noel Harper versus Union of India** in **April 2022** declared that "no one can be heard to claim a vested right to accept foreign donation, much less an absolute right".
- The court had disapproved of the tendency to seek funds abroad, saying it gave an impression that the nation was incapable of looking after its own needs.
- A **March 2020** decision of the **Supreme Court** in **Indian Social Action Forum (INSAF)**

versus Union of India had agreed with the **Centre** that the **"regulation of acceptance and utilisation of foreign contribution is for the purpose of protecting national interest"**.

- The court had, however, in this case, called for a **"balance"** between the law's objective and the rights of the **voluntary organisations** to access **foreign funds**.
- The **INSAF** judgment declared that only **associations** which play a role in **active or party politics** were barred from accessing **foreign funds**.
- It has argued that the regulatory regime did not hurt the **fundamental rights** of individuals to form **associations** or practice a profession or carry on an occupation, trade or business under **Article 19(1)(c)** and **Article 19(1)(g)**, respectively, of the **Constitution**.
- The **Centre** has referred to **Article 19(4)** to demonstrate that it could frame laws to reasonably restrict the fundamental freedom to form **associations** under **Article 19(1)(c)** in the interest of the **sovereignty and integrity of India** or to protect **public order or morality**.
- Similarly, **Article 19(6)** allowed the government to impose reasonable fetters on the right to trade, business, occupation available under **Article 19(1)(g)** if the State could show these freedoms were against **public interest**.

24J6. Centre tightens norms for foreign donations

- **Non-governmental organisations (NGOs)** wanting to access **foreign funds** must now stick to a list of activities specified by the **Centre**, according to the latest amendment to the **Rules of the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA), 2010**, notified on Monday.
- While NGOs seeking foreign funds are required to register under one of the five permitted categories, namely **social, economic, educational, cultural, and religious**, this is the first time separate activity lists have been laid out for those in each category.
- NGOs must now disclose their activities, the geographical scope of their programmes, their websites, social media accounts, and publications.
- They must pay separate fees for each category and State or Union Territory they operate in, as opposed to the previous single fee for FCRA registrants.
- Any new registration must follow the new norms and existing registrations must comply with the changes within the next year.



- Any violations will be penalised with a minimum fine of **₹1 lakh**, according to another order from the **Union Home Ministry**.
- The Ministry regulates all foreign donations through the **FCRA**.
- Earlier amendments of the Rules only required NGOs to give an undertaking that their acceptance of foreign funds is not likely to affect the sovereignty and integrity of India or impact friendly relations with foreign states or disrupt communal harmony.

Key functionaries

- The amended Rules also broaden the definition of an NGO's **"key functionary"** beyond office-bearers and directors to include trustees, partners, the Karta or head of a Hindu Undivided Family, governing body members, and anyone else controlling or managing the organisation.
- Associations having foreign nationals (other than persons of Indian origin) as key functionaries will ordinarily not be considered eligible for registration or prior permission, unless specifically permitted by the Centre, according to the new Rules.
- NGOs must also declare whether their association or any of their key functionaries brought out any publication during the year, including books, magazines, and newspaper articles.
- A senior government official said that the amendments were effected to bring **uniformity in Foreign Contribution forms** and to avoid duplication.
- The amended Rules state that the certificate of registration or the application form (for fresh registrations) shall specify the purpose or purposes for which registration is granted, chosen only from such list of purposes as specified in the Schedule appended to the Rules.
- And the States or Union Territories in which the NGO proposes to undertake the activities.
- The Rules also impose a fee on NGOs to operate for each specified purpose, and within each State or Union Territory.
- Some categories specifically exclude **political activities**.
- For instance, the **"educational"** purpose lists 22 activities but adds the caveat that "awareness programmes on constitutional rights, fundamental duties, and civic responsibilities" must be "strictly non-political in nature."
- The **"cultural"** purpose lists "promotion of contemporary arts inspired by Indian traditions" among 18 categories, adding the caveat to "exclude political/ideological content."
- There are **16 permitted categories** of religious activities, including "conduct of

religious education, moral instruction, satsangs, discourses, and meditation retreats (excluding proselytisation)", and "burial/cremation ground development and maintenance."

- There are **19 activities** listed under **"economic"** purpose, and **30 items** under the **"social"** category.

Fines for violations

- MHA** notified another order which specifies fines for **FCRA violations** such as excess administrative spending, speculative investments, misuse of funds, unauthorised receipt/use of foreign contributions, and using funds for unapproved purposes or in unapproved States/UTs.
- Any use of funds for purposes other than those for which they were received can attract a penalty of up to **30% of the amount misused or ₹1 lakh**, whichever is higher.
- Similarly, using foreign funds for purposes or in areas not covered under the NGO's approval also invites a fine of **30% of the amount or ₹1 lakh**, whichever is higher.
- In addition, spending beyond the permitted expense limit is penalised with fines calculated as a percentage of the amount involved, subject to a minimum of **₹1 lakh**.

24J6. Reconnect public health with people's needs

- Two recent government initiatives — the **Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centres** and the **Digital Health Mission** — illustrate these inadequacies.

The interpretation

- The **Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centres**, introduced as a policy initiative in 2018, were intended to strengthen **health infrastructure**.
- What eventually happened, however, was that the names and identities of grassroots-level institutions — namely, the **health sub-centres (SCs)**, **primary health centres (PHCs)**, and **community health centres (CHCs)** — were altered by mandatorily adding "Health and Wellness Centre" as a prefix.
- Influenced by these developments, the **World Health Organization (WHO)** defined health as not merely the absence of disease, thereby promoting the notion of positive well-being.
- Over time, wellness expanded beyond physiological health to include **mental, spiritual, social** and **environmental** dimensions, offering a more holistic understanding of health.
- Another major public health policy initiative of recent years is the **Ayushman Bharat Digital**



Health Mission (ABDHM), whose principal objective is to create a digital repository of health information for every individual through a unique health ID, known as the **ABHA card**.

- In addition, the mission seeks to maintain registries of **health facilities, health-care professionals** and information related to **health insurance**.
- However, an information portal containing health records and details of health infrastructure cannot, by itself, address the challenges posed by inadequate access to health care.
- Nor does it justify the annual budget of around **₹300 crore** to the **ABDHM** in the absence of measurable outcomes.

Factors behind inadequate access to care

- It is well established that inadequate access to **health care** in India stems from the **unaffordability of care** in the private sector and the lack of quality **health-care facilities** in the public sector.
- Merely creating databases of individual **health records**, health facilities and **health-care professionals** cannot improve access to health care.
- If the argument is that information is the first step towards strengthening the **health system**, there exists a substantial body of reports and datasets that provide such information.
- The more pertinent question is how information contained in an individual's health record, through an **ABHA card**, can guarantee access to health care when **health-care infrastructure** remains grossly inadequate and unaffordable for large sections of the population.
- Even if every individual in a district possesses an **ABHA card** and all health facilities and health-care professionals are digitally mapped, the delivery of health care still requires a robust **institutional mechanism**.
- It primarily generates information on individuals, facilities and health-care professionals, all of which continue to operate largely in silos.
- For most people, access to **curative care** constitutes an immediate and pressing need.
- Only after these basic health-care requirements are met can individuals meaningfully engage with **preventive and promotive health interventions**.
- When **public health policies** fail to recognise people's felt needs, they risk becoming mere vehicles for advancing the priorities of policymakers and health-care providers rather than addressing the actual concerns of the

population.

Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centres (AB-HWCs) / Ayushman Arogya Mandirs

- **Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centres (AB-HWCs)** were launched as one of the two pillars of the **Ayushman Bharat Programme** in 2018.
- Their objective is to transform existing **Sub-Health Centres (SHCs)** and **Primary Health Centres (PHCs)** into facilities that provide **Comprehensive Primary Health Care (CPHC)** closer to people's homes.
- In recent years, AB-HWCs have been renamed **Ayushman Arogya Mandirs (AAMs)**.
- **Why Were Health and Wellness Centres Needed?**
- Earlier, many government health centres focused mainly on:
 - Maternal and child health.
 - Immunization.
 - Family welfare services.
- However, India was witnessing a rapid rise in:
 - Diabetes.
 - Hypertension.
 - Heart diseases.
 - Cancer.
 - Mental health problems.
 - Elderly care needs.
- Therefore, the government expanded the scope of primary healthcare through Health and Wellness Centres.

Main Objective

- To provide **universal, accessible, affordable and quality primary healthcare**.
- To shift healthcare from a "disease-treatment model" to a **preventive and wellness-based model**
- To reduce the need for patients to travel long distances for basic healthcare services.
- **Services Provided**
- Unlike traditional sub-centres, Health and Wellness Centres provide a much broader range of services.

Maternal and Child Health

- Antenatal care.
- Postnatal care.
- Immunization.
- Nutrition counselling.

Communicable Diseases



- Tuberculosis.
- Malaria.
- Dengue.
- Other infectious diseases.

Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs)

- Hypertension screening.
- Diabetes screening.
- Cancer screening.
- Follow-up treatment and counselling.

Mental Health Services

- Basic counselling.
- Early identification and referral.

Geriatric Care

- Health services for elderly persons.
- **Palliative and Rehabilitative Care**
- Care for chronically ill patients.
- **Emergency Medical Services**
- Basic emergency care and referral support.

Free Medicines and Diagnostics

- Essential drugs.
- Basic laboratory investigations.

Health Team at a Health and Wellness Centre

- A typical centre may include:
- **Community Health Officer (CHO).**
- ANM (Auxiliary Nurse Midwife).
- ASHA worker.
- Multi-purpose health workers.
- The CHO often serves as the primary clinical leader at the facility.

Wellness Activities

- These centres do not focus only on illness.
- They also promote:
- Yoga.
- Meditation.
- Physical activity.
- Healthy lifestyle awareness.
- Nutrition education.
- As of mid-2025, crores of wellness sessions had been conducted across the country.

How It Helps a Common Citizen Example

- Suppose a villager in Uttar Pradesh develops symptoms of diabetes.
- Earlier:
- They might need to travel to a district hospital.
- Spend money on transport.
- Wait for consultation.
- Now:
- Screening can be done at a nearby Health and Wellness Centre.

- Medicines and follow-up care may be available locally.
- Only complicated cases are referred to higher hospitals.
- This reduces both cost and inconvenience.

Achievements

National Scale

- The Government originally planned to establish **1.5 lakh Health and Wellness Centres** across India.
- By **October 2025**, more than **1,80,906 Ayushman Arogya Mandirs** had become operational.
- By **May 2026**, active centres had crossed **1.85 lakh** nationwide.

Disease Screening

- Large-scale screening has been conducted for:
- Hypertension.
- Diabetes.
- Oral cancer.
- Breast cancer.
- Cervical cancer.

Telemedicine

- More than **41 crore teleconsultations** had been delivered through Ayushman Arogya Mandirs by October 2025.
- **Connection with Ayushman Bharat**
- Ayushman Bharat has **two major components**:
- **Component 1**
- **Ayushman Arogya Mandirs (Health & Wellness Centres).**
- Focus on primary healthcare and disease prevention.
- **Component 2**
- **Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY).**
- Provides health insurance coverage for hospitalization and secondary/tertiary care.
- Together they aim to provide a continuum of care from prevention to hospitalization.

AYUSHMAN BHARAT DIGITAL HEALTH MISSION (ABDM)

- The **Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM)** is the Government of India's flagship initiative to create a **national digital health ecosystem**.
- It is implemented by the **National Health Authority (NHA)** under the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**.
- The mission aims to connect patients, hospitals, doctors, laboratories,



pharmacies, and health insurance systems through a secure digital platform.

- ABDM was launched nationally in **September 2021** after being initially introduced as the **National Digital Health Mission (NDHM)**.

Need for ABDM

- India's healthcare system has traditionally relied on paper records.
- Patients often carry prescriptions, reports, and medical files from one hospital to another.
- Medical records are frequently lost, duplicated, or inaccessible. Different hospitals and laboratories often operate separate information systems.
- ABDM seeks to create a unified, interoperable, and consent-based digital health infrastructure.

Objectives of ABDM

- To build an integrated digital health ecosystem.
- To provide every citizen with a unique digital health identity.
- To enable secure sharing of health records with patient consent.
- To improve efficiency, accessibility, affordability, and quality of healthcare.
- To reduce paperwork and duplication of medical tests.

Major Components of ABDM

Ayushman Bharat Health Account (ABHA)

- ABHA is a unique digital health identity for every citizen.
- It serves as a digital gateway to access and manage health records.
- Citizens can create and use an ABHA number to store and share medical records electronically.

Health Facility Registry (HFR)

- A national database of hospitals, clinics, laboratories, and healthcare facilities.
- Helps citizens identify and access verified healthcare institutions.

Healthcare Professionals Registry (HPR)

- A centralized registry of doctors and healthcare professionals.
- Promotes authenticity and trust in healthcare services.

Personal Health Records (PHR)

- Citizens can maintain lifelong digital health records.
- Records remain under the control of the individual and can be shared only with consent.

Scan and Share Facility

- Patients can scan a QR code at hospitals for faster OPD registration.
- Reduces waiting time and paperwork.

24J6. Civil Services Preliminary Examination 2026: tough by design or default?

- The **Civil Services (Preliminary) Examination**, introduced in **1979** following the **Kothari Committee's** recommendations, was designed as a screening mechanism — a **'filter and funnel'** — to shortlist candidates for the descriptive Main examination.
- In its original format, it consisted of two components: an optional subject paper at the graduate level and a General Studies paper, with the optional paper carrying greater weight.
- For many years, this system functioned smoothly with minor changes.
- The **Alagh Committee** set up in **2000** observed that the preliminary exam should have an optional paper to assess the intellectual competence of the aspirant and maintain its connection with the university system.
- It also proposed a **Civil Services Aptitude Test (CSAT)** which would evaluate skills such as general awareness, problem-solving, data analysis and decision-making.
- The committee also recommended that the questions at the preliminary exam should be made challenging and a case-study approach should be adopted.
- In **2009**, the **S.K. Khanna Committee** recommended that the Preliminary Examination should be renamed as the Civil Services Aptitude Test with two common papers at the Preliminary.
- The preliminary exam was reconstituted to comprise two papers — **General Studies Paper-I** and **General Studies Paper-II**.
- The Paper I covers all conventional areas in **Humanities**, while Paper-II has questions on quantitative aptitude, reasoning, comprehension, interpersonal skills and communication, decision-making and problem-solving.
- The components of Paper-II were designed to test whether the aspirant had the ability to imbibe new technologies.
- Both the papers had equal weightage and the combined marks in both the papers were taken to determine merit.
- Against this evolving backdrop, the **Civil Services (Preliminary) Examination** held in **May** has come under widespread criticism for the perceived inequity in the distribution and format of questions.
- Many aspirants found the paper unusually difficult and unpredictable — concerns that were publicly acknowledged by the **UPSC**



Chairman, who expressed empathy with candidates.

- The questions were framed using carefully curated information drawn from government websites.
- Attempting the question paper entailed sifting through **55 pages** and comprehending **40,000 words** in two hours.
- In addition to this, the subject-wise distribution of questions was distorted and the style of questioning underwent a noticeable shift.
- This gap between the preparation and examination, coupled with the element of surprise, prompted the aspirants to voice their concerns.
- The nature of the question paper, thus, appears to be less a matter of a deliberate design and more a consequence of systemic constraints — a by-product of a short-sighted examination pattern established 15 years ago.
- In retrospect, the committee which introduced the pattern overlooked a dictum that is crucial in policy formulation; that anticipation is the highest form of competence.
- It failed to adequately foresee the challenge of balancing the increasing number of aspirants with a relatively static number of vacancies.
- The **UPSC** has been collecting information regarding the socio-economic profile of the aspirants.
- They have information about the distribution of applicants based on place of birth, schools and colleges attended, status of parents etc. as they are collecting this information at the preliminary stage itself.
- The government must undertake reforms both in the examination system and the university framework by introducing '**bridge courses**' along the lines of the recommendations of the **Second Administrative Reforms Commission**.
- Such measures would help restore visible alignment between education and assessment.

24J6. RBI tweaks process to onboard MSMEs on TReDS platform

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** issued its final directions on **Trade Receivables Discounting System (TReDS)** for **MSMEs** to simplify the system.
- The banking regulator fixed a minimum **net worth of ₹25 crore** and certification by a **statutory auditor** to provide discounting services.
- Entities providing the service have been given a deadline of **March 31, 2028** to comply with net worth norm.
- **TReDS** is an online platform which aids small businesses auction invoices or trade

receivables to banks and other financial institutions to unlock **working capital**.

- The move seeks to aid **MSMEs** receive customer payments as they might face issues in converting **trade receivables** to cash.

23J6. No one should own the law: why government standards should be public

- As part of the implementation of the **Jan Vishwas framework**, it has been proposed that all **edicts of the government** be centrally published and that any such **edict** not publicly accessible be treated as **null and void** — a principle that should extend to **public safety standards** as well.
- The principle that rules governing **public life** must be widely accessible is not new to India.
- The first Indian **road safety standard** dates back to **Emperor Ashoka**, who commanded that his edicts of government be broadly disseminated throughout the land.
- The **Seventh Pillar Edict**, now located in **Delhi**, had an extensive section on road safety.
- Today, this work continues under the **auspices of the Indian Roads Congress**.
- While ostensibly a **non-profit association**, it is actually an arm of the government.
- It is subject to the **Right to Information Act**.
- Its website is maintained by the **National Informatics Centre**, and its governing council is predominantly composed of government officials.
- It is a **law-making enterprise** with the force of the state.
- The **Indian Roads Congress** publishes hundreds of standards, guidelines, and specifications relating to road safety and construction.
- These documents cover a wide range of technical matters, including route signage for national highways, vehicle design dimensions and weights, and the design of prestressed concrete road bridges.
- These standards are widely incorporated into government practice, appearing in subordinate legislation as well as in regulations issued by various government bodies.
- In India, this included posting of over **14,000 Indian Standards** issued by the **Bureau of Indian Standards**.
- Like the standards of the **Indian Roads Congress**, these standards are an integral part of public safety.
- These standards cover critical areas including the **National Building Code**, safety requirements for motorcycle helmets and drinking water, procedures for entering sewer systems, operation of agricultural and textile machinery, and construction practices in typhoon-prone regions.



- Like the **Indian Roads Congress**, an elaborate law-making process is followed before an Indian Standard is issued.
- Recently, Parliament passed the **Jan Vishwas Act**, a move intended to “liberate governance from the steel cage”.
- These include regulations, circulars, master circulars, departmental directions, ministerial directions, office memoranda, public notices, general orders, guidance notes, advisories, press releases, schemes, consultation papers, standard operating procedures, policies, notifications, guidelines, government orders, departmental orders, and gazettes.

22J6. The lack of accountability within the NTA

- On **June 21**, more than **22.8 lakh candidates** sat once again for **NEET-UG** after a **paper leak** led to the nationwide cancellation of the earlier exam.
- The response has followed two tracks.
- The first was **prosecutorial**, with the government handing the case to the **Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)** under the **Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024**.

The NTA's responsibility

- The **National Testing Agency (NTA)** was created in **2017** as a registered society under the **Societies Registration Act, 1860** and not through an **Act of Parliament**, which means it operates without a codified **liability standard** toward the candidates it examines.
- While the **Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024** prescribes penalties of up to **10 years imprisonment** and fines up to **one crore rupees** for organised **leak networks**, it establishes no **compensation mechanism** for candidates when an exam is cancelled.

The way ahead

- **Article 14** guarantees everyone **equal protection before the law** and prohibits state action that is **arbitrary in design** and **disproportionate in effect**.
- While **Articles 41 and 46** of the **Directive Principles of State Policy** place a positive obligation on the state to secure **equal opportunity in education** and protect **weaker sections** from structural disadvantage.

22J6. Are footpaths more than safe spaces?

- A Bench of Justices **P.S. Narasimha** and **Atul S. Chandurkar** has, in its judgment (**Maniyar**

Iliyaz @ Shaik Riyaz versus P. Ayyappan), said a **footpath's relevance** is more than that of a narrow strip of land where the 'less-fortunate' ones take cover from being knocked down by vehicles speeding on **multi-lane motorways**.

- **Does the ruling deconnect the footpath from the theme of accidents?**
- Justice **Narasimha's judgment** divorces the **footpath** from the theme of **motor accidents**.
- The sole aim of a **footpath** is not to avoid accidents.
- The pathways have an **identity** and a **purpose** of their own.
- The footpath caters to the most essential, the most fundamental of rights — the **pleasure of walking**.
- The court said the presence of a broad **footpath** is a reflection of **civilisational advancement** and respect for the **freedom to walk**.
- The tracks offer the public access to **urban spaces** through movement by walking.
- The judgment declared that the right to walk on a comfortable and safe **footpath** held “priority over movement by **motor vehicles**”.
- In a way, reasoning of the judgment suggests that **footpaths** suffer from a situation described in **environmental law** as the ‘**tragedy of the commons**’ or the degradation of a precious resource when many individuals use it.
- Safe and broad **footpaths** have become a scarce resource, riddled by **encroachments, garbage** and **pavement trade**.
- Secondly, the court has reasoned that broad **footpaths**, besides amplifying the beauty of cities, must also enable **equitable access** to all.
- Nothing should be done to thwart the public's free access to **common spaces**.
- Justice **Narasimha** has observed that access to **common spaces**, in both urban areas and rural areas, should be distributed in such a way that it was “not a monopoly of the **motorised class** alone”.
- **Article 39(b)** of the Constitution mandates that **material resources** of a community must be distributed so as to sub-serve the **common good**.
- Authorities must consider the **common good** of both **pedestrians** and **motor vehicle owners** while designing a material resource like land to build roadways.
- A wide, well-demarcated and uninterrupted **footpath** could “change the beauty of and equitable access to our cities and towns”.
- **Does walking still hold significance in the Indian imagination?**
- The court said that the act of **walking** has had diverse roles in the **Indian imagination**.



- Walking was a **struggle** for the not-so-unfortunate, a **meditation in motion** for many, **resistance** for others, **discovery** for the inquisitive, a cohesive strategy for sharp **socio-political minds**.
- From the first sparks which ignited the **national struggle for freedom** to the complexities of modern politics, the idea of **walking** as a means of expressing an opinion or drawing public attention remains a constant.
- Walking was not just motion, but embodied the fundamental freedoms of **speech and expression**, of **peaceful protest** and the right to form **associations and unions** for gaining the just rights of workers.

Have the 'duty-bearers' neglected their duty to protect footpaths?

- However, laws like the **Motor Vehicles Act, 1988** paid homage to movement by wheels.
- They even "undermined the precious rights of **walkers**".
- Justice Narasimha** said the tendency to subjugate safe and comfortable **footpaths** to **motor transport** was a **civilisational problem**.
- The **primary "duty-bearers"** responsible for effectively managing **footpaths** are **urban development authorities, municipal corporations, municipalities, and panchayats**.
- Footpaths** are held in **trust** by these bodies for the public's benefit.
- They are the **material resources of the community**.

Is there a need for statutory law and regulator?

- The judgment is not satisfied by merely declaring the right to walk safely on a wide and clearly demarcated **footpath** as a **basic right**, but recommends to the government to implement the **fundamental right** through a **statutory law**, and moreover, establish a **regulator** to hear aggrieved pedestrians.
- The court recalled the positive role played by **Parliament** and **State legislatures** in the past in enabling the effective exercise and enjoyment of **fundamental rights** on the ground.
- It also noted that **modern statutes** have shaped a new framework of **institutional governance** by creating **regulatory bodies**.
- These bodies institutionalise continuity through **perpetual succession** and seal, embed expertise through **specialisation**, promote diversity through their composition, and ensure integrity through mechanisms of **accountability**.
- One of the examples the court drew in this context was the **Right to Education Act**,

which had declared the **fundamental right** to free and compulsory elementary education under **Article 21A** in **Sections 3 to 5**.

- The **National Commission for Protection of Child Rights** was recognised as the **regulator**.
- Justice Narasimha** said a similar **Act** and a **regulatory body** must be devised by the legislature to protect the **fundamental right to walk** on demarcated footpaths.
- The **statutory framework** would not only ensure the working of the **fundamental right** on the ground but also identify the **duty-bearers**.
- The court said such an **Act** must also establish a full-time **regulator** to plan, enforce, and implement this precious right.

20J6. Walking on footpath is a fundamental right, says SC

- The **Supreme Court** on Friday, in a judgment, declared the freedom to walk on **demarcated** and well-maintained **footpaths** a **fundamental right** which has priority over movement by **motorised vehicles**.
- The court highlighted the need to lay down a **statutory framework**, not only for declaring the right to walk a **fundamental right**, but also to recognise the **duty-bearers**.
- "If a road exists, there must then be a duty to ensure that a **footpath** is demarcated and maintained for the walkers.
- This is an **enforceable duty**.
- The **fundamental right** to walk on demarcated footpaths shall override the privilege of a motorised vehicle," Justice **P. S. Narasimha**, who authored the judgment, held.
- The judgment came in a case of the death of a **five-year-old boy** who was crushed to death by a truck while walking to school with his father.
- The court found that the parent was entitled to **compensation** of over **₹11 lakh**.

'Most basic of rights'

- Justice Narasimha said walking safely and carefree along footpaths, without danger lurking at every turn, was the most basic of rights.
- "It is the simplest of human activity, inextricably connected to life."
- The court said the **Constitution** recognised and guaranteed walking as a **fundamental right** in its words, "All citizens shall have the right... to move freely throughout the territory of India".
- But over the years, demands of trade and urbanisation have relegated walking to an inconvenience.



- Governments and local bodies paralleled wide roads and expressways to growth, building motorways while leaving little space for walking, the court said.
- "It could also be elitism to start with, for machines with wheels were only for the rich, but as economies progressed and cheaper motor vehicles were introduced, the entire spectrum of motorised transportation dominated the roads, pushed aside the walkers to the extent that they are treated as a nuisance for the drivers who routinely run over the walkers and their footpaths.
- This should stop from now on as we declare the **fundamental right** to walk on demarcated footpaths alongside motorised roads," the top court said.
- "Walking is a struggle for the not-so-fortunate, meditation in motion for many, resistance for others, discovery for the inquisitive, a cohesive strategy for sharp socio-political minds.
- It certainly did inspire and ignite some of the ideals of the **freedom struggle**...
- In that sense, walking is not just motion, it certainly embodies **expressional, congregational and associational rights** under **Article 19(1)(a), Article 19(1)(b)** and ****Article 19(1)(c),**" Justice Narasimha said.
- Common spaces must not be the monopoly of motorised vehicles.
- The freedom to walk, subject to reasonable restrictions, also deserved ample space.
- "In reality, how much does it take to create a well-demarcated footpath wherever a road exists?
- All that the **fundamental right** to walk demands is a comfortable space for an easy and carefree walk.
- Should this not be the minimum of the minimum duty that a municipal authority owes to the citizens?" the top court asked the government.

Regulatory body

- It said that the **Motor Vehicles Act, 1988**, had never bothered to recognise the **fundamental right** to walk.
- The Supreme Court also highlighted that the proposed Act must protect, enhance, and provide quick remedies for violations, and also establish a full-time **regulator** to plan, enforce, and implement the right to walk.
- "To enhance and effectuate the **fundamental right** to walk on demarcated footpaths, it is necessary to establish a **regulatory body**...
- Institutional expertise is critical, and such a regulator will employ human resources with domain expertise and talent," Justice Narasimha said.
- The court directed its Registry to send a copy of the judgment to the **Ministries of Housing**

and Urban Affairs, Rural Development, Road Transport and Highways, to "reflect on the compelling necessity for initiating the necessary legal framework".

- The Justice also said **Constitutional courts** were also obliged to declare and reiterate the right to walk as a **fundamental right**.

19J6. Telegram challenge once again puts spotlight on Section 69A of IT Act

- The Centre's move to block Telegram has once again drawn attention to **Section 69A of the Information Technology Act, 2000**, a provision that gives the government the power to direct **intermediaries** to block access to online information under specified circumstances.
- **Section 69A of the Information Technology Act** authorises the **Union government** to block public access to any information via any computer resource, including applications and websites, if it is satisfied that such blocking is necessary in the interest of **India's sovereignty and integrity, defence of India, security of the state, friendly relations with foreign states, public order**, or for preventing incitement to the commission of any **cognizable offence**.
- But the restriction may interfere with **Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution**, which protects **freedom of speech and expression**.
- Therefore, the **orders under Section 69A** must be issued with the procedural safeguards established by the **Information Technology (Procedure and Safeguards for Blocking Access to Information by the Public) Rules, 2009**.
- In **Anuradha Bhasin v. Union of India**, the **Supreme Court** examined the validity of the indefinite blanket ban on internet services in the erstwhile State of **Jammu and Kashmir**.
- The court held that **freedom of speech and expression**, as well as freedom to practice any profession or carry on any trade, business, or occupation over the internet, are protected by **Articles 19(1)(a) and 19(1)(g)**.
- The court also concluded that orders restricting internet access must meet the **proportionality test**; they must be required, use the **least restrictive measures** available, and be open to **judicial review**.
- **Article 19(1)(g)** provides the right to practice any profession or to engage in any occupation, trade, or business.
- **Section 79 of the Information Technology Act** also establishes the **intermediary safe harbour provision**, which means platforms are not liable for **third-party content** if they exercise **due diligence**, follow the **Information Technology Rules, 2021**, and



act quickly upon receiving knowledge of illegal content.

17J6. Courts must weigh civil disputes before criminal prosecution: HC

- The Karnataka High Court has said that trial courts cannot ignore the pendency of civil proceedings while **assessing whether criminal prosecution is being used as a weapon of harassment, and are duty-bound to scrutinise, even at the stage of framing of charges, whether the evidence genuinely discloses a strong suspicion and a reasonable prospect of conviction.**
- **"The criminal law cannot be permitted to degenerate into a weapon of oppression in aid of a civil contest,"** it said, citing Supreme Court observations that **criminal law cannot be invoked against citizens, in the absence of legally tenable material, merely because a civil dispute subsists between the parties.**
- **Justice M. Nagaprasanna** made these observations while quashing the criminal cases against several persons and their advocate by the Bengaluru city police in connection with a complaint lodged against them in relation to a dispute over transactions of certain properties, the sale deeds of which were registered two decades ago.
- The criminal justice system, it said, must operate through two filters — first, at the stage of investigation and filing of a chargesheet, and next, at the stage of framing of charge by the trial court.

17J6. What does the Tenth Schedule provide on party mergers?

- This prompted the **52nd Constitutional Amendment** to introduce the **Anti-Defection Law** through the **Tenth Schedule** in **1985**.
- This Schedule provides that a member of a House of **Parliament** or **State Legislature** who voluntarily gives up the membership of their **political party** or votes against the instructions of their party in a House is liable for **disqualification** from such House.
- The **political party** is the entire organisation of a party, while the **legislature party** is all the members of a political party in a House of Parliament or State Legislature.
- The **Tenth Schedule** originally had two exceptions that would not render the members liable for disqualification viz., one-third of members of the **legislature party** splitting to form a separate group (**Paragraph 3**), or a merger of their **political party** with another party that is approved by **two-thirds** of the members of its legislature party (**Paragraph 4**).

- However, considering the need to strengthen the **Anti-Defection Law**, **Paragraph 3** was omitted in **2003**.
- With the deletion of **Paragraph 3**, there have been instances of **two-thirds members** of a legislature party 'practically' defecting but claiming to be the original political party in order to escape disqualification.
- This happened in the case of **Shiv Sena** and **Nationalist Congress Party (NCP)** in **June 2022** and **July 2023** respectively.
- There have also been instances where more than **two-thirds members** of a legislature party in a House have merged themselves with another political party to escape disqualification.
- This happened in **September 2019** in **Rajasthan** when all **6 BSP MLAs** merged themselves with the **Congress** and in **September 2022** in **Goa** when **8 out of 11 Congress MLAs** merged themselves with the **BJP**.
- The **Bombay High Court** upheld the merger of Goa's **Congress Legislature Party** with the **BJP**, though an appeal is pending in the **Supreme Court**.
- A similar move occurred in **April 2026** when **7 of 10 AAP Rajya Sabha MPs** merged with the **BJP**.
- A plain reading of the **Tenth Schedule** allows only for the merger of a **political party** with another party that is approved by **two-thirds** of its legislature party.
- It does not authorise **two-thirds of the legislature party** in a House to merge itself with another political party and claim immunity from defection.
- It is also subject to interpretation whether a merger of an **original political party** can occur only with another political party that already has members in the legislative House.
- The **Supreme Court**, in the **K. M. Singh case (2020)**, recommended that **Parliament** amend the Constitution to vest these powers in an **independent tribunal** headed by judges.
- An authoritative **Supreme Court judgement** on matters of merger and the establishment of an independent tribunal may reduce the ambiguities surrounding the **Tenth Schedule**.
- A stricter measure, as recommended by the **Law Commission (1999)**, could be to amend the **Tenth Schedule** and delete **Paragraph 4**, which provides exemption from disqualification for merger of political parties.

16J6. SC seeks govt. response to plea on RTE quota in Punjab

- The **Supreme Court** on Monday sought responses from the **Centre** and the **Punjab government** on a plea alleging failure to



implement the **Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009** in Punjab, particularly the mandate under **Section 12(1)(c)** requiring private unaided schools to reserve **25% of entry-level seats** for children from weaker sections and disadvantaged groups.

- Second, executive magistrates are part of the State administration and their careers may depend on maintaining 'peace' as the State defines it.

16J6. Peace with peace

- The state has the power to intervene before a crime occurs if it is reasonably apprehensive that a person is a threat to **public order**.
- However, it has acquired a habit of exercising that power routinely, resulting in detentions without any substantive criminal charge.
- The High Court's order was based, the Bench said, on a "highly irresponsible" deprivation of **personal liberties** in Uttar Pradesh, where police officers and executive magistrates were using preventive powers to incarcerate individuals on the basis of arguably minor apprehensions.
- In **Chander Pal Singh** as well, the petitioner, a physically challenged **Dalit advocate**, had been arrested over a petty dispute with a neighbour.
- The Bench said that between May 2025 and April 2026, around 2,500 people were reportedly subjected to preventive detention proceedings in **Ghaziabad**, despite a 2021 State policy to guide the exercise of such powers.
- The guidelines in response are commendable; if implemented appropriately, they could reduce the use of preventive incarceration in neighbourhood and property disputes; require executive magistrates to justify their decisions; encourage constitutional challenges to unlawful preventive detention; and generate appellate scrutiny of the compensation framework.
- They may also snap at the heels of magistrates who cite unspecified "communal tensions" to jail protesters and who impose prohibitively unaffordable bonds for release.
- Further, even if the ruling does not directly impinge on the detention of activist **Sonam Wangchuk** under the **NSA**, it critiques the idea of using the excuse of maintaining peace to silence dissent and reminds the state that it still has a responsibility to maintain peace with peace.
- The ruling may also apply to workers and activists recently detained in **New Delhi** if held under Sections **126** or **170** of the **BNSS** without valid grounds.
- The Bench said that compensation for unlawful detention can be recovered from the salary of the magistrate concerned and/or police officer following a disciplinary hearing.
- However, the executive has been historically reluctant to penalise its personnel.

15J6. 20 rebel Trinamool MPs seek to merge with NCPI

- After days of speculation, 20 rebel Trinamool Congress MPs on Sunday met Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla at his residence in New Delhi and submitted a letter announcing their decision to merge with the National Citizens Party of India (NCPI).
- The decision by the rebels to merge with a registered regional political party rather than form a separate bloc within the Trinamool Congress was to avoid any legal complications under the anti-defection law.
- The law states that when two-thirds of the legislators of a political party decide to merge with another party, neither those who join the new party nor the ones who stay with the original party face disqualification.
- "We will merge with the Nationalist Citizens Party, which is a registered regional party."
- The NCPI was launched as National Citizens Party of India in Tripura in 2015 by a Kolkata-based woman Shewly Kundu.
- Later, the party registered itself as Nationalist Citizens Party of India in February 2, 2023 at Sankrail in Howrah district, data from the Election Commission suggest.

13J6. SC dismisses Congress leader's plea on rejection of Rajya Sabha nomination

- A Bench of Justices **Prashant Kumar Mishra** and **A.S. Chandurkar** observed that in view of **Article 329(b)** of the Constitution, it had no jurisdiction to interfere with the order of the **Returning Officer (RO)** and that an **election petition** was the only remedy available in such cases.
- The provision stipulates that no election to either House of Parliament or a State legislature can be called in question except through an election petition.
- The top court was hearing a plea filed by **Ms. Natarajan**, the **Congress's** sole candidate for one of the three **Rajya Sabha** seats from **Madhya Pradesh**, challenging a **June 9** order of the **RO** and **Madhya Pradesh Assembly Principal Secretary Arvind Sharma** rejecting her nomination on the ground that she had failed to disclose a pending criminal case in **Hyderabad** in her affidavit.
- **BJP** candidates **Tarun Chugh**, **Rajneesh Agrawal** and **Mahesh Kewat** were declared elected unopposed to **Rajya Sabha** on Thursday.



constituencies, following which the election authorities advised the District Election Officers to appoint Returning Officers.

12J6. Lows of the land

- Ms. Natarajan's nomination was rejected by the Returning Officer (RO) following objections that she had failed to disclose a pending criminal case in Hyderabad in her election affidavit.
- As the All-India Congress Committee (AICC) in-charge of Telangana, she was named as one of the respondents in a private complaint filed by a former Telugu Desam Party corporator before the court of the Additional Metropolitan Magistrate, Hyderabad, in 2025.
- The complaint was not even against Ms. Natarajan; it was against another Congress leader for alleged inappropriate behaviour and criminal intimidation, and she was mentioned in the petition for allegedly not taking appropriate action against the leader.
- Unlike a conventional police case, a private complaint originates directly before a court.
- The court had issued notices to the persons named in the complaint, including Ms. Natarajan.
- Section 33A of the Representation of the People Act** requires disclosure only of those cases that carry a punishment of two years or more and, above all, only of those cases in which charges have been framed.
- Framing of charges** is a judicial step, which follows the filing of a charge sheet.
- The RO's position that material facts had been concealed and the nomination papers were incomplete is not merely a misinterpretation of the law, but an insult to common sense.
- The disclosure regime has been designed to ensure transparency regarding candidates' criminal antecedents and pending cases.

12J6. Fair and square

- T.N. The Assembly Speaker is going by the letter and spirit of the Tenth Schedule.
- This is why the Speaker's action pertained only to 21 MLAs, after receiving letters from Mr. Palaniswami stating that he had condoned the dissidents' violation of the party whip.
- As the official group and the rebels reached a truce on May 27, the AIADMK chief decided to condone the dissidents' actions within 15 days from the date of such voting, as prescribed under the Tenth Schedule and the Tamil Nadu Assembly's disqualification rules.
- The discretionary powers enshrined in the Tenth Schedule of the Constitution, which deals with defection, have been used by Speakers in various States for the wrong reasons.
- The Assembly Secretariat also duly notified that vacancies had arisen in the four

11J6. Panel recommends targeted splitting of seats for next delimitation exercise

- The model proposed by EAC-PM allows a 50% rise for all large States; dataset was based on elections to Lok Sabha from 2009 to 2024; it results in increasing the size of Lok Sabha to 824 seats and is broadly in line with what the Centre had suggested when it brought the delimitation-related Bills in April.
- The Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM) has recommended multi-factor criteria for a "targeted" splitting of seats during India's next delimitation of Lok Sabha constituencies.
- A model worked out by the EAC-PM on such criteria entails Kerala's Lok Sabha seats, for instance, rising from 20 to 30, Tamil Nadu's increasing from 39 to 59, and Uttar Pradesh's from 80 to 120 — broadly in line with what the Union government had suggested in April, when it brought the delimitation-related Bills but failed to pass them in Parliament.
- The use of these criteria in the EAC-PM's model further suggested a doubling of the number of LS seats in smaller States and Union Territories such as Mizoram, Puducherry, Sikkim, Ladakh, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Nagaland, Chandigarh, and Lakshadweep.
- The model results in increasing the size of the Lok Sabha to 824 seats.
- As per the Council, this will see the southern States' (Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu) aggregate share of seats in Lok Sabha come to 23.6% compared with the 23.7% currently.
- Meanwhile, the share of the six most populous northern States (Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Bihar, and Maharashtra) will come to 45.2% as per the model, compared with the current 45.6%.
- The existing proportion of seats-per-State was frozen based on the population figures of the 1971 Census.
- The freeze was brought in through a Constitutional Amendment in 1976.

11J6. SC invokes Article 142 to quash POCSO conviction

- The Supreme Court used its powers under Article 142 to overturn a POCSO conviction, noting the victim later married the man as an adult.
- Article 142 enables the court to ensure "complete justice" when existing laws fall short.



- As per the case records, she lodged a **criminal complaint** after he refused to marry her.

10J6. Congress's RS nomination rejected during scrutiny; chaos in M.P. house

- Ms. **Natarajan's** nomination was rejected by **Assembly Secretary Arvind Sharma**, who is the **Returning Officer** for the election, based on an objection raised by the **BJP** candidate for the third seat, **Mahesh Kewat**, and State party general secretary **Rahul Kothari**.

10J6. A State without an Opposition

- In the **2022 Assembly elections**, the **BJP** won **156 of the 182 seats**, marking its strongest performance in the State's electoral history.
- No party crossed the 18-seat threshold required to claim official Opposition status.**
- The **Congress** ended up with just **17 seats** and the **Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)** won **five seats**.
- But now, all **11 Rajya Sabha seats** from **Gujarat** will belong to one party, completing its sweep of the State's **Upper House representation**.
- When Mr. **Gohil** walks out, the only **Opposition voice** left in **Parliament** from **Gujarat** will be **Geniben Thakor**, the MP from **Banaskantha** who in **2024** ended a **10-year Lok Sabha drought** for the Opposition by winning **one of 26 seats**.
- One Lok Sabha MP.**

08J6. The Ordinance question before the SC

- The **Collegium's acceptance** of an **Ordinance** that creates four additional **judges' posts** raises questions about **judicial independence**, **security of tenure** and the appearance of **detachment from the executive**; the court has taken a calculated risk by staking its independence on the **goodwill of the government and Parliament**.
- The **Senate** refused, with **70 members voting against** and **20 in favour**, and the plan was dead.
- Article 124(1)** leaves the number of judges to what **Parliament** may prescribe.
- An **Article 123 Ordinance** carries, for its life, the force of an Act.
- A court that owes three chairs to a **six-week renewable Ordinance** holds them at the executive's sufferance.

A test of principle

- In **2015**, a **Constitution Bench** decided **Supreme Court Advocates-on-Record Association vs Union of India**.
- It struck down the **99th Constitutional Amendment** and the **National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC)**.
- Parliament** had passed it **367 to nil** in the **Lok Sabha**, with the States ratifying it.
- The commission was to have **six members**: the **Chief Justice of India**, the **two senior-most judges** after him, the **Union Law Minister**, and **two eminent persons**.
- The **eminent persons** were to be chosen by a panel of the **Prime Minister**, the **Chief Justice**, and the **Leader of the Opposition**.
- That composition was meant to keep the choice neutral.
- Yet the Act provided that **any two members could veto a name**.
- The court feared that the **Law Minister** and even **one eminent person** could thus block a candidate the judges favoured.
- It held that this destroyed the judiciary's **primacy in its own appointments**.
- Yet the **Supreme Court Collegium** has accepted an **Ordinance** that seats three of its own, despite the uncertainty over its fate.
- Under Article 123**, the **President** may withdraw an Ordinance at any time.
- Both Houses may disapprove it by resolution.
- Otherwise, it ceases to operate **six weeks after Parliament reassembles**.
- In **D.C. Wadhwa vs State of Bihar (1986)**, it called governance by **repromulgated ordinances a fraud on the Constitution**.
- In **Krishna Kumar Singh vs State of Bihar (2017)**, a **seven-judge Bench** ruled against using **ordinance-making power** as a parallel source of legislation.
- Whether a judge appointed to an **Ordinance-created post** can be removed once that post lapses is untested.
- Justice Karol's retirement all but coincides with the Ordinance's likely lapse, six weeks into the **monsoon session**.
- Her position turns precarious only if the Ordinance is rejected or lapses before **August 22**.

07J6. SC balances child's right to know paternity, father's right to privacy

- However, after the Supreme Court's landmark decision of **Justice K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India (2017)** which ruled that the **right to privacy** is a fundamental right under **Article 21 of the Constitution**, the court has continuously ruled that compulsory DNA testing interferes with an individual's right to privacy and bodily autonomy.
- In the present case, **Justice Sanjay Karol** and **Justice N. Kotiswar Singh** upheld the trial



court order directing a DNA test to prove paternity.

- The alleged father and appellant approached the court to overturn the trial order.
- Section 112 of the Evidence Act, 1872 (Section 116 of the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam)** states that a child is presumed to be legitimate unless the party disputing paternity proves that there was non-access for the relevant period of the marriage and it is upon the alleged father to prove the non-access.
- In a series of older cases, the court has pulled back from using the DNA test to prove paternity.
- Especially since the above said section was enacted in 1872, when there was no scientific means to determine paternity.
- However, the **DNA testing method** became commercially available in India by the 1980s.
- In 2014, the Supreme Court gave a wider interpretation in **Nandlal Wasudeo Badwaik v. Lata Nandlal Badwaik** holding that "in our opinion, when there is a conflict between a conclusive proof envisaged under law and a proof based on scientific advancement accepted by the world community to be correct, the latter must prevail over the former".

N.D. Tiwari case

- In the same year, the **N.D. Tiwari paternity row** was highly publicised in which veteran politician **Narayan Dutt Tiwari** was compelled to take a DNA test that proved he was the biological father of **Rohit Shekhar**.
- In the present case, neither the court gave an unrestricted right to the child to demand DNA testing nor abandon the alleged father's right to privacy, but rather held that in the domain of right to privacy, it wants to balance the interests of the alleged father's privacy with that of the child's desire for closure on a question that has loomed large on his life.

05J6. Draft SC rules prohibit use of AI for judicial outcomes, witness profiling

- Prohibiting the use of **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** to determine judicial outcomes, the **Supreme Court AI Committee** has proposed draft regulations that bar **AI-assisted sentencing** without mandatory human oversight, prevent AI systems from profiling parties or witnesses, and disallow the use of **"opaque" or "unexplainable" AI systems** in any court process.
- The proposed regulations come amid concerns expressed by the top court in recent months over the growing reliance on AI by courts in rendering judgments.

- In March, a Bench headed by **Justice P.S. Narasimha** chided a trial court for relying on non-existent judgments generated with the help of AI, observing that it was not merely **"an error in decision-making"** but amounted to judicial **"misconduct"**.
- The preliminary draft of the **'Regulations for Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Courts, 2026'**, made public on Wednesday, underlines that AI systems used in court processes must **"function solely in an assistive capacity"** and remain **"strictly subservient to human judgment and judicial authority"**.
- The committee, chaired by **Justice P.S. Narasimha** and comprising **Justices Sanjeev Sachdeva, Raja Vijayaraghavan V., Anoop Chitkara and Suraj Govindaraj**, has invited comments and suggestions from stakeholders as well as members of the public on the draft regulations before they are finalised.
- The deadline for submitting responses is **June 20**.
- Under the draft regulations, the processing of **personal data** through AI systems shall be governed by the provisions of the **Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023**.
- This includes assessing **flight risk**, predicting **recidivism**, evaluating **bail eligibility**, or determining the credibility of parties or witnesses.
- It also bars authorities from using AI systems for the **surveillance** or continuous monitoring of judicial officers, advocates, litigants and other stakeholders, **"except as may be specifically authorised by applicable law for the time being in force"**.

'Apex body'

- To supervise the adoption of AI in the judiciary and steer standard-setting and policy development, the draft regulations propose the creation of a **full-time "apex body" at the Supreme Court**.
- The apex body, it recommends, would comprise **two Supreme Court judges** nominated by the **Chief Justice of India (CJI)**, one of whom shall serve as the **ex-officio chairperson**.
- It would also include **two High Court Chief Justices** and **two High Court judges** nominated by the CJI.
- One member from an **institution of national importance** or any institution of repute, as nominated by the CJI, would also be part of the body.
- An officer not below the rank of **Joint Secretary** in the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology**, a **finance expert**, and a **cybersecurity expert** nominated by the CJI would also be included, among others.



04J6. Why judicial holidays are necessary

- In his autobiography, **Neither Roses Nor Thorns**, Justice **H.R. Khanna** recalled the night before he delivered his lone dissent in the **ADM Jabalpur case** during the Emergency.
- The following year he was **superseded for the top post by Justice M.H. Beg**, who had ruled with the majority, and resigned soon after.
- His dissent, eventually vindicated when the Supreme Court overruled **ADM Jabalpur** in the **Puttaswamy verdict of 2017**, is now remembered as one of the bravest decisions in Indian judicial history.
- Closer home, Justice **V.R. Krishna Iyer** kept producing books, articles and lectures on jurisprudence long after his retirement from the Supreme Court, almost until his death at **99** in 2014.

02J6. Centre clears five new judges for SC; strength rises to 37

- The Centre on Monday cleared the appointment of five judges to the **Supreme Court**, taking the court's strength to 37, close to its revised sanctioned strength of 38.
- In a post on X, Minister of State for Law and Justice **Arjun Ram Meghwal** said the President had approved the appointments under **Article 124(2)** of the Constitution.
- Those appointed are Justice **Sheel Nagu**, Chief Justice of the **Punjab and Haryana High Court**.
- Justice **Shree Chandrashekhar**, Chief Justice of the **Bombay High Court**.
- Justice **Sanjeev Sachdeva**, Chief Justice of the **Madhya Pradesh High Court**.
- Justice **Arun Palli**, Chief Justice of the **High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh**.
- And senior advocate **V. Mohana**.
- Ms. Mohana was one of the leading counsels in a series of cases highlighting structural career inequalities for women officers in the **armed forces**.
- Currently, the Supreme Court has only one woman judge, Justice **B.V. Nagarathna**, who is also part of the **Supreme Court Collegium**.
- Justice Nagarathna was appointed to the Supreme Court in **August 2021**.
- The development comes weeks after the Centre, on May 5, increased the sanctioned strength of the Supreme Court from 34 to 38 judges through the **Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Ordinance, 2026**.

- The **Delhi High Court** has held that the **"right to be forgotten"** flows from the constitutional right to privacy under **Article 21** and enables individuals to seek removal of personal information from public digital accessibility when it no longer serves a legitimate public purpose.
- Justice **Sachin Datta**, in a 144-page judgment delivered on Friday, laid down a framework governing **de-indexing of judicial records from search engines and masking of personal identifiers from publicly accessible court records**.
- "India presently lacks a **comprehensive statutory framework explicitly governing the right to be forgotten**. However, the absence of specific legislation does not preclude constitutional courts from recognising and enforcing this right," the High Court remarked.
- The court's decision came while hearing over 30 petitions filed by a diverse group of individuals, including persons who had been acquitted of criminal charges, parties to matrimonial disputes, persons whose proceedings had been quashed or settled, and individuals whose names appeared incidentally in judicial records.

'Harm to reputation'

- The petitioners shared a common grievance that the continued availability and name-based searchability of judicial records bearing their names in the digital public domain causes "disproportionate and continuing harm to their reputations, dignity, and life prospects".
- Giving them relief, the court directed search engines, legal database platforms and other intermediaries to de-index specified judgments, orders and related reportage from name-based search results.

01J6. The apex court rings its own chain

- In 1605, on his accession, the **Mughal Emperor Jahangir** fastened a chain outside his palace.
- The latest instance is the court's **suo motu cognisance** of **Twisha Sharma's** death, registered under the title '**In Re Alleged Institutional Bias and Procedural Discrepancies in the Unnatural Death of a Young Girl at Her Matrimonial Home**'.
- Alleged Institutional Bias and Procedural Discrepancies in the Unnatural Death of a**
- The second requires sustained cooperation: with the **High Courts** on case management and supervision under **Article 235 (control over subordinate courts)**, with State governments on funding trial-court infrastructure, with the executive on judicial

02J6. Delhi HC recognises 'right to be forgotten', lays down rules for de-indexing judicial records



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appointments, and with the **National Judicial Academy** on training.

- The apex bench has, in **Sahara India Real Estate Corporation v. SEBI (2012)**, a five-

judge Constitution Bench authority on media trial.

- The **National Crime Records Bureau** recorded **6,450 dowry deaths** in 2022, with convictions in only **11 to 17 per cent** of cases.

PATRIOTIC IAS



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MONTHLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

JUNE 2026

GENERAL STUDIES PAPER II

SUBJECT: GOVERNANCE

TOPICS COVERED

21J6	J&K govt. orders inquiry into 103 heart procedures under PMJAY	17J6	Five solutions Indian cities need, to stop fighting for water week after week
20J6	Right of Way	16J6	Indian seafarers not to be deployed in conflict zones: DGS
19J6	PM to release ₹18,880 crore for farmers tomorrow	16J6	Social media, video platforms surpass traditional outlets as leading news sources: report
19J6	Assam NHM confirms seven Japanese encephalitis deaths	13J6	Minimum one Sanskrit batch required for Classes 6 & 9 in KV schools
19J6	PM to hand over ₹2,400-cr. incentives to employees	13J6	Govt. opens draft telecom rules on TV, radio for feedback
19J6	NFHS-6 reveals progress amid nutrition challenges	13J6	Equality of treatment for Persons with Disabilities
19J6	What is Kerala's risk profile for Nipah?	12J6	FCRA Bill — expanding state control over civil society
18J6	Delhi HC issues notice to govt. on Telegram's plea over suspension	11J6	Experts raise concerns over spike in C-section deliveries in Delhi
18J6	Water security is central for a Viksit Bharat	11J6	74 new land ports proposed along International Border
17J6	MSC Elsa 3 sinking: HC concerned over impact	10J6	₹95,962 crore set aside for VB-GRAM G
17J6	Cough syrup can't be sold without prescription: govt.	10J6	One in every 3 faculty posts
17J6	Supreme Court seeks response from Centre, States on Aadhaar 'misuse'		
17J6	Primed to treat		



vacant in top technical institutes

10J6 Inclusion without abolition in China's hukou system

09J6 Govt. cuts subsidised LPG cylinders under Ujjwala to 4 from 9

09J6 What is lost and gained in NFHS-6

05J6 Minorities enjoy full freedom in India, are able to practise their faith: Rijiju

05J6 Data hygiene

04J6 After a long wait, Tamil Nadu gets a regular DGP

04J6 Is shoot-to-disable the new normal?

03J6 Can CBSE's marking system be reformed for transparency and credibility?

02J6 Joy and pain

01J6 Language decorum

19J6. PM to release ₹18,880 crore for farmers tomorrow

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will release the 23rd instalment of the **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Scheme** on **Saturday** from Tarakeswar, West Bengal.
- Over **9.44 crore eligible farmers** will receive **₹2,000 each**, and **₹18,880 crore** will be transferred directly into **beneficiary accounts**.
- Mr. Modi will also launch the **Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana** and the **Restructured Weather Based Crop Insurance Scheme**.

19J6. PM to hand over ₹2,400-cr. incentives to employees

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will disburse **₹2,400 crore worth incentives** under the **Pradhan Mantri Viksit Bharat Rojgar Yojana (PM-VBRY)** on **Friday**.
- The **total outlay** for the scheme is **₹99,446 crore**, and it is targeted to create **3.5 crore jobs in two years**.
- **Employers** will receive up to **₹3,000 per month per new employee**.
- The scheme is intended to boost **employment in the manufacturing sector**.

19J6. Assam NHM confirms seven Japanese encephalitis deaths

- **Seven people** have died of **Japanese Encephalitis (JE)** in **Assam** since the beginning of the year, while **32 others** have died of **Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES)** as of **June 17**, according to a statement issued by the **State unit of the National Health Mission (NHM)** on Thursday.
- **Almost 62% of all Japanese Encephalitis deaths in India since 2018** have been reported from **Assam**, according to national data.
- **Outbreaks** usually occur between **May and October**, with the peak period being **July and August**.
- Noting that the two distinct conditions are not interchangeable, **Assam NHM Executive Director Abhijit Sarma** clarified that **Japanese Encephalitis** is one cause of **Acute Encephalitis Syndrome**, but not all **AES** cases are caused by **JE**.

19J6. NFHS-6 reveals progress amid nutrition challenges

- **Institutional births** have reached **90%**, with public health facilities accounting for **58%** of births; **91%** of deliveries were attended by skilled medical personnel and **95%** of mothers were visited at least once by health personnel during the antenatal period.
- Equally gratifying is **vaccination coverage** for children — **87%** of children between **12 and 23 months** of age are now fully vaccinated.
- Since **private facilities** account for only about **3%** of vaccinations, the high coverage reflects the strong outreach efforts of frontline workers — **Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA)**, **Anganwadi Workers (AWW)**, and **Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANM)**.

Poor feeding practices



- Despite the high rate of **institutional births**, only about **50%** of newborns are breastfed within the first hour of life, indicating that the health system must intensify efforts to support early initiation of breastfeeding.
- About **60%** of children between the ages of **six to eight months**, receive solid/semi-solid food, while only **15%** between **six to 23 months** receive an adequate diet.
- In India, complementary feeding is closely linked to the **annaprasana ritual**, typically performed between **six and 12 months** — any delay will result in growth faltering.
- NFHS-6 reports that about **30%** of women engaged in paid work during the past 12 months, but this significantly underestimates their overall work burden.
- In many rural areas, in the absence of **crèches**, women leave their infants and young children with older family members or the child's older sibling (usually a girl), impacting both breastfeeding and complementary feeding, when they are out in the fields.

The processed food trap

- The first **1,000 days** — from pregnancy to a child's second birthday — form the most critical window for healthy physical and cognitive development (most brain growth occurs in the first five years).
- The **Prime Minister's Overarching Scheme for Holistic Nourishment (POSHAN) Abhiyaan** programme currently focuses on identification and rehabilitation of severely malnourished children.
- Monthly **anthropometric data** for young children is collected by **AWWs**.
- Behaviour change communication** efforts should be culturally grounded, integrating practices such as **annaprasana** to reinforce timely and appropriate complementary feeding.
- Joint capacity building of **AWWs, ASHAs, and ANMs** in assessing feeding practices and advising families with effective communication materials on improving diets using locally available, affordable foods would

enhance the quality of counselling and reduce the risk of **undernutrition**.

- Multisectoral convergence** is critical to addressing child malnutrition, yet it remains weak.

19J6. What is Kerala's risk profile for Nipah?

- Kerala's first encounter with Nipah virus (NiV)** was in **2018**, which identified **23 cases** (including **18 lab-confirmed** ones).
- The **case fatality rate** was **91%** and there were **two survivors**.

Why is Nipah recurring in Kerala?

- Research has consistently identified the **Indian flying fox bat (Pteropus medius)** or the **fruit bat** as the **natural reservoir of Nipah virus** in Kerala.
- Serological studies** and **viral detection in bats** have shown that the **virus is circulating in bat colonies**, particularly in **northern districts** of the State.
- The **Pteropus species** are found across the State and very near **human settlements**.
- A mapping study of **bat-roosting sites** by Kerala Forest Research Institute's Department of Wildlife Biology had found that almost all of the roosts were near human habitats, increasing the risk of **zoonotic exposure**.
- The **peak Nipah virus spillover risk** in the State is from **April to September**, when the abundance of **seasonal fruit-laden trees**, increased **bat foraging activity**, **bat breeding season** and **viral shedding dynamics** coincide, increasing the risk of human exposure.

What makes Kerala particularly vulnerable to zoonotic diseases?

- Scientific literature links emerging **zoonoses to deforestation, habitat fragmentation, urbanisation and agricultural intensification**.
- When wildlife habitats are disturbed, the animals are forced into closer contact with human settlements and cultivated food sources.



- Scientists also warn that **climate-related ecological disruptions** could be important contributors to future spillover risk in the case of Nipah.
- **Nipah** is just one among Kerala's broader **zoonotic risk profile**, which includes other pathogenic diseases like **Kyasanur Forest Disease, leptospirosis, scrub typhus, Japanese encephalitis, West Nile fever, rabies and avian influenza.**
- The **World Health Organisation (WHO)** has warned Kerala to be on the vigil about some **high threat pathogens (HTPs)** — **Nipah, Avian Influenza (H5N1) and KFD** — which have a high mortality profile and high transmissibility with pandemic potential.
- **Nipah** has been classified by the **World Health Organisation** as a **priority pathogen** because of its **lethality, unpredictability and alarming potential** to cause widespread outbreaks or even the next pandemic.
- With the State harbouring a **natural reservoir of Nipah virus** and a perennial risk of **virus spillovers**, the Health Department's focus has been on creating **community awareness** so that the **bat-human interface** is reduced.
- As part of its **One Health strategy**, it has developed a massive **community-based surveillance network** supported by over **2.5 lakh trained volunteers** at the grassroots.
- In **2023**, the State set up the **One Health Centre for Nipah Research and Resilience** at **Kozhikode**.
- It has documented **every single outbreak** in Kerala and prioritised **Nipah research** for the future, focusing on **disease epidemiology, sero-surveillance studies and host factor research.**
- The State government, along with the **National Institute of Virology**, is also involved in a project to develop **indigenous monoclonal antibodies** against Nipah, specific to the **Bangladesh strain** of the virus circulating in Kerala.

How is Kerala responding to the recurrent threat of zoonotic events like Nipah?

- The recurrent **spillover incidents** in Kerala has primed the **health system** about the importance of **sharp and coordinated disease surveillance, rapid pathogen identification and containment efforts** to ensure that **human-to-human transmission** does not occur, resulting in a wide outbreak.
- All the remaining cases were due to **nosocomial transmission** (the spread of pathogens within healthcare facilities) in three different hospitals.
- Kerala used the **2018 experience** as an opportunity to develop a **clinical algorithm** for all emerging viral infections at tertiary care levels, strengthen **diagnostic and research capacities** and augment **infection control practices** in hospitals.
- The State now has a stringent system for monitoring all **acute encephalitis cases of unknown etiology**, screening of **severe respiratory infections** as well as early **laboratory confirmation** and detection of pathogens through its expanded **Virus Research and Diagnostic Laboratory network** and intensive health emergency management measures.

18J6. Water security is central for a Viksit Bharat

- Did you know that the **Jal Jeevan Mission** is the world's largest rural drinking water supply programme?
- Or that the **Swachh Bharat Mission** is the most significant rural sanitation movement in the world?
- Together, these initiatives represent not merely government schemes, but a re-imagining of how a nation of **1.45 billion people** is building a water-secure future.
- **Few sectors shape human dignity, economic growth, public health, agriculture and environmental sustainability** as profoundly as water.

A complete turnaround

- The most prominent example of this transformation is the **Jal Jeevan Mission**.
- When the programme was launched, only about **3.23 crore rural households**, roughly **17% of rural Indian households**, had tap water connections.



- Today, more than **15.8 crore rural households**, covering over **81% of rural India**, have access to tap water at home.
- India's sanitation movement demonstrated that **behavioural change, public participation and political commitment** can work together at scale.
- According to the **World Health Organization's** assessment of health gains, **स्वच्छ भारत मिशन-ग्रामीण** is estimated to have averted more than **3 lakh diarrhoea deaths** between 2014 and October 2019.
- The construction of household toilets also brought **dignity, privacy and safety** to millions of rural women.
- Beyond making villages **open defecation-free**, the country has moved towards sustainable **solid and liquid waste management** under **Swachh Bharat Mission-Grameen 2.0**.
- India has also undertaken one of the largest **water conservation** and **groundwater recharge** initiatives anywhere in the world.
- Under the **Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari** initiative, more than **1.55 crore rainwater harvesting and groundwater recharge structures** have been created across the country by May 31, 2026.



2026: Governance
 An employee of the Terratis company releases sterile male tiger mosquitoes in Montpellier, southern France, on June 5, 2026. With global warming, 80% of the world's population now runs the risk of being exposed to one or more infectious diseases long considered tropical, which cause more than a million deaths a year, according to the WHO. AP

An employee of the Terratis company releases sterile male **tiger mosquitoes** in Montpellier, southern France, on June 5, 2026. With global warming, 80% of the world's population now runs the risk of being exposed to one or more infectious diseases long considered tropical, which cause more than a million deaths a year, according to the WHO.

TIGER MOSQUITOES

- **Tiger mosquitoes** are mosquitoes belonging mainly to the genus **Aedes**, especially:
- *Aedes aegypti*
- *Aedes albopictus*
- They are called "**tiger mosquitoes**" because of their distinctive **black body with white stripes**, resembling a tiger's markings.

Identification

Aedes aegypti

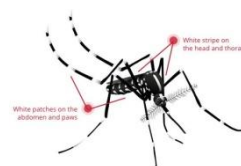
- Black body
- White markings on legs
- Lyre-shaped white pattern on thorax

Aedes albopictus (Asian Tiger Mosquito)

- Black body
- Single white stripe running down the center of the thorax
- Prominent white bands on legs

Why Are They Important?

- Tiger mosquitoes are among the world's most important disease vectors.
- They transmit:



Disease

Pathogen



Disease	Pathogen
Dengue Fever	Dengue virus
Chikungunya	Chikungunya virus
Zika Virus Disease	Zika virus
Yellow Fever	Yellow fever virus
Rift Valley Fever	Rift Valley fever virus

and tablets will still be available over the counter.

17J6. Supreme Court seeks response from Centre, States on Aadhaar 'misuse'

- The Supreme Court on Tuesday sought responses from the Centre and States on a plea alleging misuse of Aadhaar cards issued by the **Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) as proof of citizenship, domicile and residence.**
- The petition contended that the continued use of Aadhaar for purposes beyond **identity verification** is contrary to **Section 9 of the Aadhaar Act, 2016**, which expressly states that Aadhaar is not proof of citizenship or domicile.
- It also relied on an **August 2023 UIDAI notification** clarifying that Aadhaar serves only as proof of identity and cannot be treated as proof of citizenship, residence or date of birth.

Electoral integrity

- The plea also questioned the use of Aadhaar as proof of date of birth and residence in **Form-6**, the application form for fresh voter registration.
- "Aadhaar is not only being used as proof of age, citizenship & domicile for school admission, property purchase, and to obtain birth certificate, ration card, driving licence, but also being used in the application form for new voter registration (Form-6) as proof of date of birth & proof of residence. And thus, infiltrators & illegal immigrants are obtaining various documents using the Aadhaar," the plea stated.
- "Infiltration is a weapon of political parties to subvert the electoral process for their benefit. West Bengal, Assam and other Northeastern States have been afflicted by cheap political tactics. The infiltrators are helped by either the party in power or the Opposition parties, and are also helped with identity documents such as Aadhaar/ration card. Once they have a plethora of documents,

17J6. MSC Elsa 3 sinking: HC concerned over impact

- Expressing serious concern over the absence of an environmental impact assessment (EIA) on the sinking of the ship MSC Elsa 3 off the Alappuzha coast in May 2025, the Kerala High Court on Tuesday sought the response of the Centre and other agencies.
- The court sought the response of the **Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change** and the **Director-General of Shipping** on the marine and coastal ecological impacts caused by the wreckage.
- Many of the containers were carrying **hazardous cargo**, including **339.20 tonnes of calcium carbide.**

17J6. Cough syrup can't be sold without prescription: govt.

- Medicinal syrups, including those used to treat coughs, can no longer be bought without a doctor's prescription, according to a government notification issued on Tuesday.**
- This means that **over-the-counter sales** of these syrups will no longer be allowed.
- The **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** notified the change to the **Drugs Rules, 1945**, which laid out the regulations pertaining to the **Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940.**
- Tuesday's notification directed that the word '**syrups**' be removed from the list of items that had been exempted from the provisions of the Act.
- The rules had earlier specified that "**Syrups, lozenges, pills and tablets for cough**" would be exempted, meaning that **cough lozenges, pills,**



they enrol themselves in the voting list. Thus, the sacrosanct nature of the election process is compromised," the plea stated.

protocols to control further spread and reach all those who need medical assistance.

'Complete overhaul'

- Accordingly, the petition sought a **complete overhaul** of the verification framework used in electoral processes and proposed the establishment of a **high-powered monitoring committee** comprising a retired Supreme Court judge along with cybersecurity and forensic experts to oversee reforms.

Avian Influenza (Bird Flu) and Kyasanur Forest Disease

- These are both **zoonotic diseases** (diseases transmitted from animals to humans), but they differ significantly in their causative agents, reservoirs, transmission, and geographical distribution.

17J6. Primed to treat

- The emergence of a case of the **Nipah virus** in **Kerala** and the subsequent control in the State is indicative of two things: first, Kerala's own mix of **ecological factors** and **anthropogenic activity** that makes it vulnerable every monsoon season to the possibility of Nipah spreading, the hosts being **fruit bats**.
- The **World Health Organization (WHO)** has classified **Nipah** a **priority pathogen**, accounting for its lethality, potential to cause outbreaks, even a pandemic.
- It is just one of several pathogens that **WHO** has flagged for Kerala — including **avian influenza** and **Kyasanur Forest Disease**.
- It is clear that **human activity** on the fringes of **forest zones**, encroaching into traditional habitats of the **fruit bats**, has a central role to play in the transmission of the virus; in time, this originally **zoonotic infection** jumped to humans.
- Repeatedly, the **source of infection** has been traced to consuming **contaminated fruits**, or contact with **water sources** contaminated by bats.
- This also indicates that the overall approach should be from a **One Health perspective**, considering **environmental** and **animal** interplays with humans, and not a mere **health-care** angle.
- Its system has become adept at maintaining a high index of suspicion for cases of **acute encephalitis**; watching out for **clusters**, and with **clinical efficiency**, deploying

17J6. Five solutions Indian cities need, to stop fighting for water week after week

- Water-secure cities** require a combination of clear and transparent **emergency planning**, systematic reduction of **water losses** through **leak repairs**, collective efforts to curb **demand**, strong safeguards to ensure **water quality** during shortages, and better management and reuse of **wastewater**.

Feature	Avian Influenza (Bird Flu)	Kyasanur Forest Disease (KFD)
Causative Agent	Influenza A virus (commonly H5N1, H5N8, H7N9)	Kyasanur Forest Disease Virus (KFDV), a Flavivirus
Disease Type	Viral respiratory disease	Viral hemorrhagic fever
Reservoir	Wild aquatic birds (ducks, geese, migratory birds)	Small mammals, rodents, shrews; monkeys act as amplifying hosts
Vector	No vector; direct transmission from infected birds	Tick-borne disease (mainly <i>Haemaphysalis</i> ticks)



Transmission to Humans	Contact with infected birds, poultry, droppings, contaminated surfaces	Bite of infected ticks or contact with infected animals
Human-to-Human Transmission	Very rare	Not known to occur
Main Symptoms	Fever, cough, sore throat, pneumonia, respiratory distress	High fever, headache, muscle pain, bleeding tendencies, weakness
Mortality	Can be high in severe strains like H5N1	Around 3–10%
Geographical Distribution	Worldwide, especially along migratory bird routes	Endemic mainly in Western Ghats region of India
Vaccine Availability	Poultry vaccines available; limited human vaccines	KFD vaccine available in endemic areas of India

- Fourth, any emergency response must include water quality: rapid testing in high-risk neighbourhoods and tanker water supply, temporary support for basic treatment where problems are found, and simple communication about safe storage.
- Finally, water security cannot be achieved without improving how we manage used-water.
- Quick, low-cost upgrades to used-water treatment plants such as optimising aeration, de-weeding, and desludging, can further reduce pollution and help augment available surface-water and groundwater resources.

13J6. Minimum one Sanskrit batch required for Classes 6 & 9 in KV schools

- Every **Kendriya Vidyalaya (KV)** must maintain a minimum of one dedicated section of students learning **Sanskrit** as a third language in **Classes 6 and 9**, according to a circular issued by **Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS)**, an autonomous body under the **Union Education Ministry**.
- There are currently **1,288 functional KVs** across the country, along with three operating internationally in **Moscow, Kathmandu, and Tehran**.
- The circular, dated **May 29** and accessed by *The Hindu*, is meant for all KVs in India and abroad.
- “KVS has ensured that the policy remains sensitive to its transferable student population by maintaining **Sanskrit** as a common option across all KVs, while offering **regional languages** as an alternative for those who are not subject to frequent transfers,” a senior **KVS official** said, on the condition of anonymity.
- The circular clarifies that the **R3 choice (Sanskrit or a regional or State language)** from the scheduled languages) must be distinct from **R1 (Hindi)** and **R2 (English)**.

Staffing and resources

- The official acknowledged that a few KVs face challenges such as limited **teacher availability** and **resource constraints**, but insisted that the use of **contractual teachers** for regional languages, phased roll-out, and adoption of **SCERT materials** will help mitigate these constraints.

13J6. Govt. opens draft telecom rules on TV, radio for feedback

- The Centre has published the draft **Telecommunications (Television, Radio and Associated Services) Rules, 2026**, for public consultation.
- They have been framed to consolidate the various guidelines issued for **television and radio services** under the erstwhile **Telegraph Act**, within the framework of the newly enacted **Telecommunications Act, 2023**.
- The **Information and Broadcasting Ministry** administers the provisions relating to television, radio, and associated services.



Unified rule-book

- In the draft rules, existing terms and conditions of **authorisation** have been harmonised and rationalised to facilitate continuity, while enabling reforms and provision for a single **regulatory framework** in place of multiple guidelines.
- "With this set of rules, the industry will now have a **unified** and significantly **simplified rule book**."
- These rules are designed to simplify the existing regime while promoting **ease of doing business** in the television and radio broadcasting sector," said the Ministry.
- Once notified, the rules will replace various existing guidelines governing **broadcasting services**.
- Digital implementation** of the authorisation process, simplified authorisation procedures, removal of the requirement for signing **Grant of Permission Agreement**, and provision of transparent **adjudication mechanism** are the other key features.

13J6. Equality of treatment for Persons with Disabilities

- Addressing the **digital divide** through the **Digital India Mission**, India has marched on towards becoming a global "**best practice**" model of a **digital welfare state**.
- Yet, **Persons with Disabilities (PwDs)** remain largely excluded from this promise of universal outreach.
- Disability pensions**, contrary to the very principles underlying disability rights, are determined not by the nature or extent of disability but by **domicile**, the discretionary decisions of **State governments**, and cumbersome bureaucratic processes.
- As a result, a vulnerable section of citizens continues to remain outside the ambit of a welfare architecture that otherwise prides itself on **inclusivity** and **last-mile delivery**.

An inadequate safety net

- The **2011 Census** recorded **2.68 crore PwDs**.
- Today, accounting for population growth and changing disease profiles,

their number is conservatively estimated at **4.5 crore-6 crore**.

- Although the **Supreme Court of India** has recognised the right to live with dignity as a **fundamental right** and the **Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016** provides legal protection, disability benefits — especially pensions — remain fragmented, discretionary, and inadequate.
- As a result, the **Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme** covers only a small fraction of PwDs, while pension amounts in most States range from just **₹300 to ₹500 a month**, with a few offering **₹1,000-₹3,000**.
- India spends barely **0.02% of GDP** on disability welfare including pensions.
- South Africa** spends **0.12%-0.15% of GDP** (six times more); **Brazil** **0.45%-0.50%** (20 times more); **OECD countries** **2.2%** (110 times more) and **Australia** **0.35%-0.40%** (20 times more).
- Beyond politics, sound economics demands the inclusion of **PwDs**.
- The **World Bank** and **UNDP** estimate that low- and middle-income countries lose **3%-7% of GDP** when PwDs are excluded from education, employment, and social security.
- Disability income improves **household stability, rural consumption, and labour participation**.
- Studies show **fiscal multipliers of 1.4-1.6**, while the **2025 Pro Bono Economics report** found that the socio-economic returns from disability pensions exceed their costs by nearly **48%**.
- Far from being a welfare expense, disability pensions are an **investment** and an effective **economic stimulus**.
- India must establish a **Minimum Universal Disability Pension Floor Rate (MUDPFR)** to give effect to the state's constitutional obligation, under **Article 41**, to provide public assistance to persons with disabilities, and to operationalise **Section 24** of the **Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016**, which guarantees adequate social security, including pension benefits.
- Such a measure would translate the promise of **inclusive growth** and "**Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas**" into reality by shifting disability pensions



from a matter of charity and discretion to a matter of **citizenship rights**.

- While ensuring that no disabled person receives less than a minimum pension regardless of where they live, a **MUDPFR** would still allow States to provide additional **top-ups**.
- This is not an unrealistic proposal.
- **South Africa** provides a national **disability grant** with uniform eligibility norms.
- **Brazil's BPC** guarantees a national minimum income.
- **Australia** and **New Zealand** operate nationwide **disability pension systems**.
- Several developing countries, including **Kenya, Rwanda, Thailand and Indonesia**, also provide disability income support at the national level.
- International experience shows that centrally set standards promote **uniformity, universality and portability**.
- A **MUDPFR** of **₹8,000 per month** for **40 lakh beneficiaries** would cost about **₹38,400 crore annually (0.08% of GDP)**.
- While **₹10,000** for **65 lakh beneficiaries** would cost **₹78,000 crore**.
- Even a pension of **₹15,000 per month** would keep expenditure below **0.2% of GDP**.
- Such spending is fiscally manageable when compared with allocations for **food subsidies (₹2.05 lakh crore)**, **rural development (₹1.80 lakh crore)**, **tax concessions and revenue foregone (₹1.72 lakh crore)**, and **infrastructure (₹11.11 lakh crore)**.
- Yet, disability pensions and inclusion continue to receive only a tiny fraction of public expenditure.

From fragmentation to integration

- The current disability pension system, shared between the **Ministry of Rural Development** and the **Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities**, leads to duplication, delays and diffused accountability.
- Countries that have faced similar challenges have addressed them through a **single national authority**.
- **South Africa's SASSA**, **Australia's NDIA**, **Brazil's INSS** and **Ireland's**

Department of Social Protection are examples.

- India too needs a **National Disability Pension Authority** to oversee eligibility norms, a national registry, portability, digital integration, grievance redress and State-wise performance monitoring — **one standard, one system, one nation**.
- Implementing a robust disability pension system would strengthen India's bid for a **UN Security Council** seat by translating its commitments into action under **Article 28 of the UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities**, **ILO Recommendation No. 202**, **SDG 1.3**, and the **G-20 New Delhi Leaders' Declaration**.
- All of these endorse **social protection** as a cornerstone of inclusive development.
- Combining pensions with **employment support** can move persons with disabilities from mere survival to productive participation.
- A **MUDPFR** could also yield economic benefits.
- Countries such as **Singapore, South Korea, South Africa and Brazil** integrate disability pensions with employment and social security systems.
- India should similarly strengthen its fragmented **Disability Employment Incentive Scheme**.
- Models abroad include **employer tax incentives** in **Nigeria**, the **Access to Work programme** in the **United Kingdom**, and **wage subsidies** in **Australia**.
- Existing schemes such as **PM-DAKSH**, **NAPS** and **State-level employer incentives** provide a foundation for expansion.

Constitutional imperative

- A **MUDPFR** would give effect to the Constitution's guarantees of **equality, equal protection, dignity** and the **right to life**.
- India has already standardised major welfare programmes — from **food security and health care** to **PM-KISAN** and **pensions** — and delivers benefits at scale through **DBT** and **UPI**.
- The capacity and technology exist.



- What is needed is the political will to prioritise **dignity**.
- **Disability pensions** remain one of the few entitlements determined by where a person lives.
- If dignity is a constitutional right, geography cannot decide the minimum support for survival.
- More than an economic or administrative reform, a **MUDPFR** is a moral one.
- It affirms that **persons with disabilities** are **rights-bearing citizens**, not recipients of charity.
- By transforming the state from a benevolent provider into a constitutional guarantor, it strengthens **dignity, inclusion** and **citizenship**.
- Should India continue with a system in which disability pensions vary according to **State budgets, political priorities** and **bureaucratic complexities**, leaving persons with disabilities vulnerable to hardship?
- Or should the Republic guarantee a minimum level of support for all?
- A **Viksit Bharat** cannot leave its most vulnerable citizens at the mercy of a **postcode lottery**.
- **Federalism** cannot be a justification for **inequality**.
- A **MUDPFR** is the next logical step in India's welfare architecture, building on **rights-based entitlements** enabled by **digital inclusion** and **DBT**.
- It would humanise the state, uphold the dignity of **persons with disabilities** and strengthen the Republic.
- Over the past **75 years**, India has steadily expanded its welfare state in pursuit of **social justice**.
- With the necessary platforms and delivery systems now in place, the time has come to secure the foundation.
- The real question is whether India recognises **dignity for persons with disabilities** as a **constitutional right** and a **collective obligation**.
- That promise is long overdue, and a **MUDPFR** offers a way to fulfil it.

12J6. FCRA Bill — expanding state control over civil society

- The **Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment (FCRA)**

Bill, 2026, introduced in the **Lok Sabha** on March 25, 2026, is far more than a routine regulatory measure.

- While presented as a step towards greater **transparency** and **national security**, it significantly increases **executive power**, transforming the FCRA from a law regulating foreign funding into one that enables extensive state control over **non-governmental organisations (NGOs)**, charitable trusts, and educational and religious institutions.

From oversight to overreach

- The current **FCRA regime** was already among the most stringent regulations governing civil society in any democracy.
- The 2020 amendments imposed strict restrictions: requiring all foreign contributions to pass through a single bank branch (**State Bank of India**) in New Delhi, reducing administrative expenditure limits from 50% to 20%, banning sub-granting to smaller organisations, and expanding suspension powers.
- These measures alone devastated thousands of NGOs, particularly smaller faith-based and charitable bodies serving marginalised groups.
- The 2026 Bill goes much further.
- By introducing a new **Chapter IIIA** (and removing the previous **Section 15**) and replacing existing asset-management provisions, it creates a framework for the government to seamlessly vest organisational assets and properties without compensation or management.
- Its most troubling provision is the proposed **Section 14B**, which introduces automatic "cessation" of FCRA registration.
- An organisation could lose its registration not only if renewal is denied but also if it fails to apply on time or if renewal remains pending.
- This effectively allows institutions to be paralysed through procedural delays rather than proven misconduct, weakening **due process** and increasing executive discretion.
- The gravest concern is **Section 16A** under the new Chapter IIIA.
- It states that when an FCRA registration is cancelled, surrendered,



or deemed to have ceased, all foreign contributions and assets derived from them automatically “provisionally vest” in a **government-designated authority**, without prior judicial review or independent adjudication.

- This means that a simple administrative decision can strip organisations of control over their funds and property.
- As cancellation under **Section 14** can be based on broad and subjective grounds such as “public interest,” organisations risk losing control of their assets even for minor, procedural, or disputed violations.
- Because cancellation under Section 14 triggers the application of Section 16A, organisations risk losing assets even for procedural, minor, or disputed breaches.
- The designated authority would then be empowered to manage, transfer, or dispose of these assets, with sale proceeds credited to the **Consolidated Fund of India**.
- The provision is particularly sweeping because it may cover assets funded both domestically and from abroad—potentially bringing schools, hospitals, orphanages, religious institutions, charitable organisations, and places of worship such as churches, mosques, and temples built over decades under government control.
- The powers granted to the **Designated Authority** are extraordinary.
- It can take control of assets, manage institutions, oversee finances, and alter operations in the vaguely defined “public interest,” giving the executive wide discretion.
- If an organisation fails to secure restoration or re-registration within the prescribed period, the vesting becomes permanent.
- The Authority may then transfer or sell the assets, with the proceeds credited to the **Consolidated Fund of India** — effectively enabling executive confiscation through legal process.
- This endangers not only the survival of **organisations** but also the essential services and infrastructure upon which communities depend.
- **FCRA assets** include land, buildings, vehicles, equipment, and unspent funds, raising the real possibility that

institutions could be effectively shut down.

- Foreign donors primarily support Indian charitable organisations to aid **vulnerable communities**, promote education, improve public health, and advance other public-interest goals.
- These contributions help organisations deliver tangible societal benefits.
- Seizing such funds into the **Consolidated Fund of India** based on weak or disputed allegations defeats the very purpose of these donations.
- The new provisions thus expose Indian organisations to the constant risk of **state expropriation**, endangering both donated funds and the assets they support.
- This framework establishes sweeping procedures for “**provisional vesting**” and “**permanent vesting**” of assets in a government-appointed **Designated Authority**.
- The amendments also deepen **executive control** during suspension and investigation.
- The amended **Section 13** bars organisations from managing their assets without prior approval during suspension, effectively paralysing their operations.
- The revised **Section 43** centralises enforcement by requiring Union government approval before any state agency can investigate FCRA violations.
- Combined with broader definitions of “**key functionaries**” and increased personal liability for office-bearers, the Bill risks creating a climate of fear that discourages civil society participation.

Limited accountability

- The 2026 Bill proposes abolishing **Section 22**, which currently deals with the disposal of assets of defunct or non-operational organisations.
- The law also lacks clear timelines for approving or rejecting FCRA licences, permissions, registrations, and renewals, leading to uncertainty and delays that can hinder projects dependent on foreign funding and disproportionately impact vulnerable communities.
- Often, reasons for cancellation are not publicly disclosed due to **national**



security concerns, making it difficult for organisations to challenge such decisions.

- Cancellations or suspensions might occur due to procedural lapses, risking the shutdown of organisations serving communities.
- The impact on **minority communities**, especially Christians, is particularly worrying.
- Christian organisations run thousands of schools, colleges, hospitals, orphanages, tribal welfare bodies, and charitable trusts—many supported by ongoing funding from churches, diaspora groups, and humanitarian agencies.
- There are many such institutions in **Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Nagaland, Mizoram, and Meghalaya**.
- It is a fact that minorities operate charitable organisations that mainly benefit the majority.
- Under **Section 16A**, these could face government takeover if their registration lapses, renewal is delayed, or cancellation procedures are initiated.
- Institutions such as long-established convent schools, colleges, mission hospitals, and orphanages face the risk of coming under government control simply due to procedural non-compliance.
- But the fact remains that the government is systematically targeting organisations one after another, and between 2014 and 2026, about **22,000 FCRA licences** have been cancelled for no valid or credible reasons.
- It could be stated with concern that the government appears to be eyeing the properties of minorities, which in reality benefits the majority.
- Cancellations of **FCRA licences** threaten ongoing efforts in **child protection**, immunisation, neonatal health, nutrition, early childhood education, parental involvement, youth skills development, and access to government schemes in affected regions.
- The sector contributes significantly to the economy—around **2% of GDP**—with roughly four lakh to eight lakh individuals per organisation losing access to vital services due to revoked licences.

- According to the **2014 Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation report**, civil society organisations generate **27 lakh jobs** and 34 lakh full-time volunteers, surpassing public sector employment.
- A separate survey of 515 NGOs found that 47% are the main source of employment in more than half the localities where they operate.
- These amendments threaten not only the existence of organisations but also the infrastructure and community resources relied upon by millions.

Constitutional rights under threat

- Critics view the Bill as a serious threat to **civil society** and **minority institutions**.
- Its vague “**public interest**” standard could be used against organisations working on minority rights, tribal welfare, environmental protection, human rights, or public advocacy.
- The result may be a **chilling effect**, discouraging donors, trustees, and volunteers from supporting such organisations.
- The Bill also raises constitutional concerns under **Articles 14, 19(1)(c), 25, 26, 29, 30, and 300A**.
- By concentrating broad powers in the **executive**, it risks undermining **freedom of association**, the autonomy of religious and educational institutions, and **property rights**.
- Any regulation of **foreign contributions** must be accompanied by **due process**, independent oversight, and safeguards against arbitrary state action.
- Without such protections, the Bill risks becoming one of the most oppressive laws affecting **civil society** in modern India.

11J6. Experts raise concerns over spike in C-section deliveries in Delhi

- **Delhi has seen a sharp rise in caesarean section (C-section) deliveries, increasing from 23.6% in 2019–21 to 27.4% in 2023–24, according to National Family Health Survey (NFHS) data.**
- **Experts and doctors attribute the trend to factors such as preference for painless childbirth and medical**



conditions like **obesity** and **diabetes**, among others.

- However, they have also expressed concern over the rising rate, noting that **C-sections** also carry medical risks.
- Delhi's trend mirrors the national pattern, where the **C-section rate** rose from **21.5%** to **27.2%** during the same period.
- The data also show a wide gap between sectors: **50.9%** of births in **private facilities** were by C-section, compared with **19.6%** in **public facilities**, raising concerns about possible overuse in the private sector.

Cause for concern

- The **World Health Organization (WHO)** says that while caesarean sections are safe when medically justified, they carry short and long-term risks, including for future pregnancies, especially in settings with limited obstetric care.
- Doctors attribute the rise to a mix of **medical and social factors**.
- Dr. **Tripti Raheja**, Director, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, **CK Birla Hospital**, said delayed pregnancies are a key driver, with **more women conceiving in their 30s** and facing complications such as **obesity, gestational diabetes, and hypertension** that often require surgical delivery.
- Dr. **Manju Puri**, formerly an obstetrician and gynaecologist at **Lady Hardinge Medical College** and now at **SGT College, Gurugram**, said patient preference is also contributing.
- "More patients are requesting **C-sections** for painless delivery, and doctors may not always strongly discourage this due to concerns about complications and potential liability," she said.
- She added that **vaginal delivery** is generally safer when there is no medical indication for surgery.
- "It becomes a concern when such demand spreads to areas with weaker health infrastructure," she said, noting recent reports of **maternal deaths linked to C-sections** in parts of the country, including **Kota, Rajasthan**.
- Doctors also flagged **environmental factors**.
- Dr. **Payal Chaudhary**, Obstetrician and Gynaecologist, said that while there is no direct causal link, **poor air**

quality is associated with adverse pregnancy outcomes such as **preterm birth, foetal growth restriction, and hypertensive disorders**, which may increase the likelihood of **C-sections**.

Increasing demand

- **Praveen K. Pathak**, professor at the **Delhi School of Economics**, called the trend alarming, noting that the **WHO recommends C-section rates** stay around **10%** due to risks to both mother and infant.
- He added that **higher rates in private hospitals** could point to **profit-driven practices**.
- Researchers say the key issue is whether every **C-section** is medically necessary, which is not always the case.
- "NFHS shows the trend, not the medical reasons behind each delivery. The rise is a signal for **deeper investigation through audits, public-private comparisons, and studies on patient and provider choices**," said **Apoorva Sharma**, a researcher in medical and biological anthropology.
- Experts say the way forward lies in **improving accountability and patient awareness**.
- Ms. Sharma called for **better documentation of medical indications, stronger labour support, pain relief access, second opinions before non-emergency C-sections, and greater transparency in private facilities**.
- They emphasised the focus should be on **appropriate use of the procedure, not restricting necessary care**.

74 new land ports proposed along International Border

- India proposes to **build 74 additional land ports along the International Border** in the coming years, which include three land ports along the China border and six along the Pakistan border, according to **Land Ports Authority of India (LPAI) Chairperson Jayant Singh**.
- The new land ports are expected to strengthen **trade** and seamless movement of people with the neighbouring countries.
- The **land ports along the China border** are proposed at **Namgia in Himachal Pradesh, Gunji in**



Uttarakhand, and Nathu La in Sikkim.

- India does not have any other land port operational along the China border.
- According to the **External Affairs Ministry**, three points are designated for conducting border trade between India and China — **Lipulekh Pass in Uttarakhand (since 1992)**, **Shipki La Pass in Himachal Pradesh (since 1995)**, and **Nathu La Pass in Sikkim (since July 2006)** but post-COVID pandemic in 2020, all trade is suspended.
- Trade points and land borders are different as the latter integrates immigration, customs and movement of large goods vehicles too.
- The land ports planned along the **Pakistan border** are at **Teetwal, Adusa, and Chakan Da Bagh in Jammu and Kashmir**, **Attari railway station and Hussainiwala in Punjab**, and **Munabao railway station in Rajasthan**.
- At present, there is just one operational land port at **Attari in Punjab** and trade from the two **Facilitation Centres** located at **Salamabad, Uri, Baramulla district and Chakkan-da-Bagh, Poonch district** along **Line of Control** in Jammu and Kashmir remained suspended since the **Pulwama attack**.
- Under **Phase II**, **13 land ports** are proposed along the **Nepal border**, **12 along the Bangladesh border**, **four along Bhutan** and **two along the Myanmar border**, the presentation said.

Land Port

- A land port is a border-crossing facility established at an international land boundary to facilitate regulated movement of people and cargo.
- It performs functions similar to those of a seaport or airport, but for land-based transportation.

Functions of a Land Port

- Customs clearance of goods.
- Immigration clearance of passengers.
- Quarantine and health checks.
- Security screening.
- Warehousing and logistics support.
- Banking and communication services.

Land Ports Authority of India (LPAI)

- The **Land Ports Authority of India (LPAI)** was established under the **Land Ports Authority of India Act, 2010**.
- The Act came into force in **March 2012**.
- Administrative Ministry:** LPAI functions under the **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), Government of India**.
- Headquarters:** Headquarters located in **New Delhi**.

Objectives of LPAI

- Infrastructure Development:** Develop world-class Integrated Check Posts along India's international borders.
- Trade Facilitation:** Promote efficient cross-border trade and transit.
- Passenger Convenience:** Provide modern facilities for travelers.
- Security Enhancement:** Strengthen border management and surveillance.
- Regional Connectivity:** Support India's neighborhood connectivity initiatives.

10J6. ₹95,962 crore set aside for VB-GRAM G

- Union Rural Development Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan** on Tuesday announced an interim allocation of **₹95,962 crore** for the new rural employment scheme, the **Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission Gramin (VB-G RAM G)**.
- This sum does not include the **State governments' share** and most States will have to contribute an additional **40%** of the sum allocated to them.
- The combined outlay for the scheme will be **₹1.25 lakh crore**.
- Uttar Pradesh** has got the highest of **₹9,721.48 crore**, followed by **West Bengal (₹8,508 crore)**, **Tamil Nadu (₹7,585.49 crore)**, **Rajasthan (₹7,581.87 crore)**, **Andhra Pradesh (₹7,707.21 crore)** and **Bihar (₹6,715.83 crore)**.
- Prior to the implementation of the **VB-G RAM G** scheme, the States have to frame rules, complete **e-KYC** of



beneficiaries, fix the **blackout period** according to their agricultural cycles, and carry out **capacity-building exercises** at the district and block levels.

10J6. One in every 3 faculty posts vacant in top technical institutes

- While the Education Ministry said recruitments were happening across Centrally Funded Technical Institutes, RTI data show **35.2% of posts remain vacant**
- Over 15 lakh students appeared for the high-stakes Joint Entrance Examination this year to secure a seat in the country's premier technical institutions.
- The competition has always been gruelling, particularly for the **Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs)**, with roughly **80 students competing for every undergraduate seat in the 23 IITs**.
- A total of **7,132 of the 20,279 sanctioned faculty positions** were vacant in these 79 institutions, which is **35.2%**, or roughly **one in every three posts**.
- **Sixteen institutions** had more than **50%** of their posts vacant, while another **14** had vacancies exceeding **40%**.
- The share of vacant posts exceeded **50%** in **IIT Kharagpur**.
- The institute has a sanctioned strength of **1,600 teaching posts** — the highest among the 20 IITs; **824** of these remained vacant.
- According to a reply given in **Parliament** by the **MoE** last year, the sanctioning of faculty posts for **NITs** and **IITs** is a dynamic process, subject to periodic review in accordance with institutional requirements and a **faculty-to-student ratio of 1:12 for NITs and 1:10 for IITs**.
- **IIM Mumbai** had **59%** of its posts vacant, with **77 of 130 vacancies** unfilled.

10J6. Inclusion without abolition in China's hukou system

- **Hukou reform pushes inclusion of migrants in public services while retaining structural controls**

- **China's State Council, on May 22, issued guidelines to 'promote basic public services at people's place of residence,' regardless of hukou, or residence registration status.**
- These guidelines direct local governments — more specifically, **megacity administrations** — to improve and enhance their delivery measures in the domains of **education, public rental housing, social and medical insurance**, and a range of **social assistance measures** for the entire resident population within their administrative jurisdictions.

Hukou reforms since 2014

- **Hukou** is an instrument of social control by the ruling party-state, originating in the **1950s**, that distinguishes people as belonging to rural and urban areas based on the official registration of their place of residence.
- In the **Mao era**, the system was intended to limit internal migration and manage resource allocation under the prioritisation of rural development.
- The economic reforms after **1978** loosened restrictions to allow labour mobility to industrial regions and urban centres, while retaining the institution of **Hukou**.
- It functions as an **internal passport**, as access to social services and government provisions is tied to residential registration.
- Now included in the new **15th Five-Year Plan**, the concept is a new development orientation to raise knowledge and skills to transform '**human resources into human capital**' and move from '**a demographic dividend**' to a '**talent dividend**'.
- **People-centred urbanisation**, through the inclusion of long-term residents by relaxing household registration rules, is a critical component of this framework.

09J6. What is lost and gained in NFHS-6

- **NFHS-6** records gains in **child nutrition, maternal care, institutional births** and **women's**



Internet use, while also introducing new questions on **digital literacy** and **direct benefit transfers**; but the survey's preliminary **fact sheet** is thinner than the last round, dropping key indicators such as **anaemia**, **mortality**, **sex ratio at birth**.

- India's latest National Family Health Survey (NFHS-6) records **gains in child nutrition, maternal care, institutional births and women's Internet use**.
- But its preliminary fact sheet is also thinner than the last round, with **101 indicators** compared with **131 in NFHS-5**.

Which indicators were removed from NFHS-6?

- Key indicators such as **anaemia**, **mortality**, **sex ratio at birth**, **sanitation**, and **clean cooking fuel** have been removed from the survey.
- The Union Health Ministry released the fact sheets of **NFHS-6** on May 29, covering **2023-24**.
- The survey recorded data from nearly **6.8 lakh households** across every State and Union Territory except **Manipur**.
- Preliminary findings report clear gains on several measures, including mothers getting at least **four antenatal check-ups**, up about seven percentage points from NFHS-5, an increase in institutional births and women's Internet usage.
- It also points to **declines in several metrics**, such as **exclusive breastfeeding of infants under six months**, down nearly eight percentage points, and the use of **modern contraception**, down to **52.7% from 56.4%**.
- The NFHS is commissioned by the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**, which designates the **International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS)** to conduct the survey.
- **NFHS-6 also added new questions on direct benefit transfers, self-help group memberships, digital literacy and financial transactions**.
- It also includes testing for **Hepatitis-B and Hepatitis-C** among women and men, as well as dried blood spot collection from children aged 4-5 for Hepatitis-B testing.

- But for the first time, the survey has also subtracted overall, showing a **net reduction of 30 indicators** in the preliminary results.
- Among the dropped indicators, the most notable ones, such as **anaemia**, **infant and child mortality**, **sex ratio at birth**, **clean cooking fuel use**, and **sanitation**, have all appeared since at least NFHS-4.

Why was anaemia dropped?

- The case for removing anaemia is related to how it was measured.
- The indicator had long shown a worsening picture.
- Between **NFHS-4 in 2015-16** and **NFHS-5 in 2019-21**, anaemia rose across the board.
- Among children, anaemia prevalence went up from **58.6% to 67.1%**.
- Among women aged **15-49**, it rose from **53.1% to 57%**.
- Among pregnant women, anaemia rose from **50.4% to 52.2%**.
- The rise in anaemia was near-universal across the country, with child anaemia increasing in **28 States and Union Territories**.
- In some cases the increase was by big leaps, from **35.7% to 68.4% in Assam** and **19.3% to 46.4% in Mizoram**.
- Such deterioration was reported despite the government launching the **Anaemia Mukt Bharat campaign in 2018**, aimed at tackling anaemia.
- The reason for dropping it as an indicator then boiled down to how the data were being collected.
- NFHS measured haemoglobin from a finger-prick blood sample read on a portable analyser, which several nutrition researchers contend overstated anaemia compared to the venous blood drawn by other surveys.
- **International Institute for Population Sciences** dropped the anaemia questionnaire when NFHS-6 fieldwork began in 2023.
- The **official position** is that the condition will now be tracked separately, through a dedicated **Diet and Biomarkers Survey** under the **National Institute of Nutrition** using a method its proponents consider more accurate.



08J6. 'Detailed NFHS report will provide a broader picture'

- Union Health Ministry sources addressed criticism directed at "missing" indicators, such as **anaemia, sanitation, and coverage of clean cooking fuel**, in the **National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-6 factsheets** saying those are being monitored through dedicated national surveys and administrative databases, and were not "duplicated" in the preliminary release.
- Responding to "commentary in sections of the media regarding the absence of certain indicators", official sources said the factsheets represent the first stage of dissemination and cover **101 major indicators** intended to provide a concise snapshot of India's most critical **health and demographic trends**.
- **Sanitation and clean cooking fuel coverage**, for instance, are tracked through specialised surveys and administrative platforms such as **Swachh Survekshan Grameen** and the **Statistics and Programme Implementation Ministry's surveys**, making duplication within the factsheets unnecessary, they said.
- Key statistics relating to **mortality, birth registration and population characteristics** continue to be generated through systems such as the **Sample Registration System, Civil Registration System and Census framework**.
- On the absence of **anaemia estimates** in the factsheets, they said that **haemoglobin testing** was not undertaken in **NFHS-6** due to concerns surrounding the **capillary blood sampling methodology** used in previous rounds.

08J6. How ICMR is rewiring the health ecosystem

- As the nation advances toward the vision of **Viksit Bharat 2047**, the question is not only about how to treat disease, but how one builds a **health system that is anticipatory, equitable, and innovation-driven**.
- Building on the hard-earned lessons of the **COVID-19 pandemic**, the **Indian Council of Medical Research**

(ICMR), India's apex body for biomedical research, has undertaken a series of forward-looking reforms.

- This shift reflects a deliberate move towards **integrated, institute-led research** aligned with national priorities, where science is designed not just to generate knowledge, but to solve pressing public health challenges.

A strategic reorientation

- Recent reforms have expanded the mandates of several institutes, repositioning them as **interdisciplinary hubs** rather than narrowly defined entities.
- The **evolution of institutes toward domains such as digital health and data science, child health, and women's health** reflect the changing contours of India's disease burden and technological capabilities.
- Another important step is the creation of a network of regional **National Institutes of Health Research** across the country, from **Dibrugarh** in the Northeast to **Jodhpur** in the west.
- These changes signal a strategic reorientation toward **future-ready science**, where **AI, genomics, and real-time data systems** are integral to public health decision-making.
- It is further reinforced by the **National Health Research Programme (NHRP)**, which has identified **13 priority areas** ranging from **antimicrobial resistance and tuberculosis to mental health, nutrition, and emergency care**.

Towards universal access

- **AI-enabled tools** for **tuberculosis and diabetic retinopathy screening** are already supporting frontline health workers, while innovations such as **AI-driven nutritional monitoring** are improving program delivery at scale.
- The **i-Drone initiative**, which began with vaccine delivery and has expanded to transport critical medical supplies, exemplifies how cutting-edge technology can overcome geographic barriers and bring care closer to communities.
- At the frontier of science, advances across the **medtech gamut**, from



medical devices and diagnostics to next-generation vaccines and therapeutics, are enabling more targeted, patient-centric interventions.

- In parallel, the integration of **traditional knowledge systems** through innovative, evidence-based models is gaining global recognition.
- Schemes such as **First in the World Challenge** complemented with platforms such as **MedTechMitra** and the **Medical Innovations-Patent Mitra initiative** are accelerating the journey from research to commercialisation, ensuring that publicly funded science translates into affordable, accessible technologies for the people.

Towards universal access

- The true measure of these reforms, however, lies in their impact on **public health**.
- Initiatives such as the **India Hypertension Control Initiative** have demonstrated how evidence-based strategies can transform chronic disease management at scale.
- These efforts are closely aligned with the **National Health Policy 2017**, which emphasises **preventive and promotive healthcare, universal access, and quality of care**.
- As we look to the future, the vision is clear.
- The roadmap to 2047 will be shaped by advances in **digital health, bio-manufacturing, and sustainable development**, with a strong emphasis on **capacity building and global collaboration**.

08J6. India's pension scheme lags in terms of coverage, contribution

- The **Centre's contribution** to India's flagship pension scheme has remained the same while the **add-on contributions by State governments** have increased.

Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS)

- The **Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS)** — the Government of India's flagship **cash assistance scheme** for the elderly

under its **National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP)** — is in dire need of a revamp as it remains frozen in time, since **2007**, both in terms of the sum of **₹200 per person per month** and the roughly **2.2 crore beneficiaries** it covers.

- The **States and Union Territories (UTs)** add their own contributions, ranging from **₹150 to ₹2,000**, on top of the ₹200 offered by the Union government for the **60-plus age group** or the ₹500 it offers for the **80-plus category**.
- **Chart 1** shows how the Union government's contribution for this **centrally-sponsored scheme** has remained the same while the add-on contributions by State governments have increased between **2012 and 2023**.
- The call for increasing the **quantum of assistance, number of beneficiaries** and linking the assistance with **inflation**, as it is done for the payment of **Dearness Allowance (DA)** to government employees, has been made at least since **2013**, when the task force constituted by the **Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD)** first made such recommendations.
- The **evaluation report** said that the real value of the assistance fixed at **₹200** has "significantly eroded due to inflation, and that the amount should be increased to **₹353** to retain its original purchasing power".
- An analysis by **The Hindu** based on the changes in the **Consumer Food Price Index (CFPI)** (base year **2012**) at the all-India level showed that since **2013**, the value of **₹200** has eroded to just around **₹99**.

08J6. The retirement trap India is walking into unprepared

- As per the **United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)**, almost one of five Indians will be over the age of 60 by 2050.
- The **elderly population in India** is likely to rise from about **15 crore** today to more than **34 crore** over the next three decades.
- Instruments such as the **National Pension System (NPS)** encourage sustained retirement planning via



regulated and relatively low-cost structure.

- Its flexibility across **equity, government securities and debt allocation** allows investors to gradually align risk with age and retirement goals.
- India is witnessing a rapid rise in chronic conditions such as **diabetes, hypertension and cardiac disorders** which are long-duration illnesses requiring continuous medication, diagnostics, follow-up care and, in many cases, repeated hospitalisation.

07J6. The Gen Z trio that took on the CBSE

- **Vedant Shrivastava, Nisarga Adhikary and Sarthak Sidhant**

'Ethical hacker'

- **Nisarga Adhikary**, a West Bengal-based "ethical hacker", exposed "critical vulnerabilities" in the **CBSE's OSM portal**, including leaking sensitive student information.
- "I don't see a point in putting effort for an institute (**Indian Institutes of Technology**) when they are not even in top 100 ranking institutes across the world," he told The Hindu.
- Life came full circle for Nisarga when an expert **IIT** team invited him to fix the vulnerabilities in the **CBSE's IT ecosystem**.
- Asked why the students have been forced to take matters into their own hands, Nisarga says: "**Gen Z** holding people accountable is the way to go as some people in high places are full of ego."
- At age **19**, when most students are busy with regular schooling, Nisarga had already started interning in tech companies.
- He primarily identifies as a **software engineer** and has worked on digitising restaurant menus for a Mumbai-based tech company **Skann** before dabbling into an internship with Singapore-based crypto giant **Cypherock** and then interning with Bengaluru-based tech company **Wavelength**.
- Hacking into **CBSE** portals was his first brush with social activism, he says.

- Nisarga says he has multiple job offers from **Silicon Valley** in **California**, and he does not want to 'waste his time going to college'.
- "In case I take up an offer in the **U.S.**, I will aim to apply for an **extraordinary talent visa (U.S. O-1 nonimmigrant visa)**, which allows individuals who have reached the top of their fields to live and work in the **U.S.**," he says.
- "However, I will stay back in India if I get a good research opportunity to work in **IITs**."
- Nisarga believes in combining **computer programming** with activism to champion public rights causes around **data privacy**.
- The teen 'ethical hacker' has also publicly stated that he is 'queer,' and is concerned about the **LGBTQ rights** in India.
- "I want to build an inclusive society where people are more accepting of each other."
- Religion is a coping mechanism whereas we need more scientific thought over religion to build an inclusive society," he says.

Seeds of rationality

- **Ranchi-based Sarthak Sidhant** is being chased by journalists since he alleged through comparison of public documents that the **CBSE** had diluted requirements to favour technology vendor **COEMPT Eduteck** in the **OSM portal** issue.
- Sarthak became what is likely the youngest person to depose in front of a **Parliamentary Panel**.
- After his deposition on **June 2**, he has not been able to return home, because he says he feels 'unsafe'.
- He felt compelled to shift to an undisclosed location after journalists reached his accommodation in **New Delhi**.
- "In Ranchi, I gather there are journalists waiting for me outside my house."
- I don't want to go back home, so I am staying put at an undisclosed location," he says.
- Sarthak says he is of a curious nature and he likes spending most of his time on his computer "digging into new things".



- “I do not like watching movies or web shows.
- What I like, however, is old songs with meaningful lyrics playing in the background while I work on my computer.”
- Sarthak is a fan of progressive Indian poet **Sahir Ludhianvi**.
- Sarthak says his parents had an **intercaste marriage** and they have an evolutionary and pragmatic perspective, which sowed seeds of rationality and logic in him since a young age.
- “After my father passed away due to **cardiac arrest** two years ago, I started questioning concepts like religion, philosophy and faith.”
- Sarthak wants to pursue **engineering** and go on to blend technology with social welfare for bettering lives.
- He looks up to **Dinkar’s poetry** and cites the poet’s famous work: ‘**Lohe ke ped hare honge**,’ (Dried out trees will become green).
- “The sole message of this poetry is that one should keep asking questions and put in constant efforts to seek answers,” he says.

- He noted while flexibility in pack sizes was intended to give industry greater freedom, it had led to a proliferation of **non-standard packs** and widespread market confusion.

05J6. Minorities enjoy full freedom in India, are able to practise their faith: Rijiju

- But he said that details of nearly **45% of Waqf properties** are yet to be uploaded on the **UMEED portal** and that issues on **scholarship** remain unresolved.
- **UMEED** is a centralised digital platform for **real-time uploading, verification, and monitoring of Waqf properties**.
- It was launched on **June 6, 2025**, with an initial **six-month deadline** to register around **nine lakh properties** spread across India.

‘Labour-heavy process’

- “We are continuously organising workshops and sessions to help **Mutawallis** register the **Waqf properties**.”

07J6. Govt. standardises edible oil pack sizes for price comparison

- The **Department of Consumer Affairs** has prescribed **standard pack sizes** for edible oils under the **Legal Metrology** framework to help consumers compare prices across brands and make informed purchasing decisions.
- The revised **SoP** prescribes **nine standard pack sizes** — 200 ml/g, 500 ml/g, 1 litre/kg, 2 litre/kg, 3 litre/kg, 4 litre/kg, 5 litre/kg, 15 litre/kg and 20 litre/kg — for major edible oils.
- These include **palm, soybean, sunflower, mustard, groundnut, sesame, rice bran, cottonseed and corn oil**, as well as **blended oils**.

Volume declaration

- The new rules also mandate declaration of both **volume** and **equivalent weight** on packs to improve transparency.

05J6. Data hygiene

- It is disturbing that some **Census 2027 enumerators** in States such as **Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh** are facing issues for extremely unusual reasons.
- In these two States where the first phase of the Census — **Houselisting and Housing Census (HLO)** — is under way, they have been advised to “revisit households and correct the data discrepancies” and “not to select options that may show the government in a poor light”.
- **Reverification** is a legitimate part of any study or survey but this must be done to reflect reality accurately, not to manage perceptions.
- In **Rajasthan**, the issue arises from a circular of the **Director of Census Operations** to district-level officials regarding discrepancies identified in field data.
- Apparently, the **objective is to ensure** that data are accurately recorded, using appropriate options in the questionnaire.



- However, in some cases, enumerators have been told to record data based on assumptions.
- For example, if some households do not have toilets, enumerators have been told to check whether toilets are available nearby, on the basis of which the entry can be changed from “open defecation” to “[having] access to latrine”.
- In Uttar Pradesh, the message seems to be not to present facts as they are, raising concerns about data integrity and reliability for a crucial and sensitive exercise.
- The present episode brings to the fore the efficacy of programmes such as the country’s long-running campaign against open defecation.
- For administrative purposes, including funding, it is reasonable to classify cities and villages on the basis of certain parameters as Open Defecation Free (ODF), ODF Plus and ODF Plus Model.
- It is the responsibility of policymakers to ensure that Census data are accurate and credible.
- They must also sensitise people to provide correct information, as public policies and welfare schemes are formulated on the basis of these data and ultimately benefit them.
- It should not only be conscious of the financial outlay involved — about ₹11,718 crore for the entire country — but also of the need to make reliable data publicly available for purposes such as targeted and inclusive policymaking.
- The government should send a clear message that data sanitisation must not be undertaken under the guise of re-verification.

- An ODF Plus village is defined as a village which sustain its Open Defecation Free (ODF) Status, ensures solid and liquid waste management and is visually clean. There are 3 progressive stages of ODF Plus villages:
- **ODF Plus Aspiring:** A Village which is sustaining its ODF status and has arrangements for Solid Waste Management OR Liquid Waste Management
- **ODF Plus Rising:** A village which is

sustaining its ODF status and has arrangements for BOTH Solid Waste Management and Liquid Waste Management

- **ODF Plus Model:** A village which is sustaining its ODF status and has arrangements for both Solid Waste Management and Liquid Waste Management; observes visual cleanliness, i.e., minimal litter, minimal stagnant wastewater, no plastic waste dump in public places; and displays ODF Plus Information, Education & Communication (IEC) messages

04J6. After a long wait, Tamil Nadu gets a regular DGP

- With about six years of service left, Dr. Aggarwal is the youngest police officer to occupy the top post, and will have a minimum tenure of two years under the Supreme Court’s guidelines in the Prakash Singh case.
- There is, however, no bar on his continuing in the post until superannuation.
- Going by the Supreme Court guidelines, the State government is required to initiate the selection process well in advance, and forward a list of eligible DGP-rank officers to the UPSC at least six months before the vacancy arises.

04J6. Is shoot-to-disable the new normal?

- Between 2017 and 2025, the State Police recorded over 16,000 encounter operations.
- In about 97% of cases, the accused survived with a bullet wound to the leg.
- At this scale, the question is no longer whether something unusual happened, but what it means when the unusual becomes routine.

What is Operation Langda?

- Prior to 2017, conviction rates in several categories of violent crimes were below 20%, while investigative capacity lagged far behind caseloads.



- In this environment, **'half-encounters'** present a pragmatic alternative.
- Crucially, shooting to disable rather than kill makes the practice more legally defensible.
- The accused survives to be produced in court, the officer can claim **self-defence**, and the state records an arrest rather than a death.
- State data show declines in crimes such as **dacoity** and **robbery**, but these gains do not address concerns over **due process** and the erosion of the **rule of law**.

Policing performance and judicial standards

- Uttar Pradesh publicly treats encounter statistics as indicators of law-and-order achievements.
- In **People's Union for Civil Liberties v. State of Maharashtra (2014)**, the Supreme Court laid down **sixteen principles** and mandated an independent inquiry in every case.
- While these remain the legal benchmark, they have not been systematically applied in the State.

03J6. Can CBSE's marking system be reformed for transparency and credibility?

- **Portal glitches**, blurred scans, and **evaluation anomalies** exposed weaknesses in the rollout of the **OSM system**.
- The **Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)**, responding to long-standing demands for greater transparency in evaluation, introduced the **on-screen marking (OSM) system** to standardise answer-script assessment through digital technology.
- Under this framework, answer books are scanned into secure digital files and evaluated online through a cyber-secure platform enabling digital monitoring, random allocation of scripts, centralised moderation, and automated verification checks.
- The initiative sought to improve transparency, accuracy, confidentiality, and uniformity in marking.
- However, it soon faced controversies over server failures, portal glitches,

blurred or incomplete scanned scripts, unchecked responses, inconsistent step-marking, evaluation discrepancies, payment gateway issues, and concerns about the reliability and verifiability of the digital evaluation process.

- It also raises a fundamental question: why should students be charged to access and verify answer scripts that are largely their own intellectual work and have already been digitised as part of the evaluation process?

The evaluation system

- Evaluation remains the most consequential component of the **Teaching–Learning–Evaluation (TLE)** framework because it directly influences students' academic progression, college admissions, scholarships, and career opportunities, particularly for **Class XII** students.
- After years of preparation and intense competition, students have a legitimate right to know how their answers were assessed, how step-marking was applied, and where marks were deducted.
- Unlike **multiple-choice-question (MCQ)**-based examinations, where evaluation through optical mark recognition (**OMR**) sheets and answer keys is objective and machine-verifiable, descriptive examinations involve subjective assessment across multiple steps, methods, and interpretations.

OSM rollout and challenges

- However, the rollout reportedly suffered from hurried implementation, weak digital infrastructure, poor-quality scanning systems, limited examiner training, and inadequate operational protocols.
- The experience highlighted that digital evaluation is not merely a software transition but a complex academic and technological ecosystem that requires robust **SOPs**, secure infrastructure, examiner preparedness, audit mechanisms, and strong cybersecurity safeguards to ensure transparency, consistency, and accountability.

Scope for reforms in the OSM system



- CBSE should securely deliver encrypted digital copies within a fixed timeline through authenticated portals, email, or secure mobile platforms.
- Such a framework would make evaluation more transparent, traceable, scalable, and verifiable while reducing server congestion, manual intervention, and access-related disputes.
- The CBSE should establish high-resolution scanning systems, encrypted archival and backup facilities, high-capacity cloud servers, and strong cybersecurity safeguards against unauthorised access or data manipulation.
- The complete workflow — including scanning, indexing, storage, evaluator access, digital delivery, and audit logging — should undergo repeated pilot testing and full-load simulations through local and pre-board examinations before nationwide rollout.
- Evaluators, moderators, scanning staff, and administrators should undergo structured training in digital evaluation procedures, screen-based moderation, stepwise marking, and handling of scanned scripts.
- Students should use only black pens and standardised answer-writing formats to ensure clear scanning and readability of answer books and supplementary sheets.
- Detailed subject-wise marking schemes, including step-marks and acceptable alternative methods, should be released within a week after the examinations.
- Additionally, within two to three weeks after examinations, encrypted digital answer scripts should be securely delivered to students and parents through authenticated portals, email, or registered mobile applications integrated with secure cloud and **messaging APIs**.
- Students or parents should confirm within 24 hours of receipt that the scripts are complete, readable, correctly indexed, and genuinely their own, including all supplementary sheets.
- The evaluation should begin only after script verification is completed.
- Examiners must assess scripts strictly in accordance with approved stepwise marking schemes.
- Additional digital oversight tools, such as audit trails, online moderation, automated totaling checks, anomaly-detection systems, and random quality audits, should continuously monitor consistency, completeness, and adherence to SOPs.
- Since students and parents would already possess both their answer scripts and official marking schemes, they can independently estimate their likely scores before the declaration of results.

The way forward

- A reliable **Digital OSM system** requires robust scanning infrastructure, secure archival systems, high-capacity servers, and strong cybersecurity safeguards.
- By proactively sharing scanned answer scripts with all students, enabling verification of script completeness and authenticity, ensuring transparent matching of awarded marks against approved marking schemes, and correcting evaluations where the prescribed marking scheme has not been properly followed, the CBSE can quickly restore confidence in the OSM process and regain much of the credibility lost during the rollout.

02J6. Joy and pain

- The greatest of the gains came in the sector of child health — stunting is down by 17%; severe wasting is down 32%; institutional deliveries are at over 90%; and full immunisation coverage for children aged 12-23 months rose to over 87%.
- Additionally, the figures show that India's **Total Fertility Rate (TFR)** had stabilised at 2.0, below the replacement level of 2.1.
- **NFHS-6** indicates a 'dual public health burden' — obesity (in three years, it had grown from 22.9% to 27.3% among men, while among women, from 24% to 30.7%) remains problematic while some level of malnutrition continues, besides the onslaught of lifestyle diseases.
- The survey also showed a decline in exclusive breastfeeding among children under six months, from 63.7% in **NFHS-5** to 55.8% in **NFHS-6**.



- Breast feeding is essential to prevent infant malnutrition.
- The **NFHS**, one of the largest cross-sectional household surveys in the world, could easily be considered the primary tool to define public policy, and evidence-based governance, besides tracking development indicators.
- The data it generates are crucial.
- Setting up comprehensive screening programmes for **NCDs**, stressing on nation-wide behaviour change communication on diet and exercise, and ensuring higher taxes on sugared beverages and packaged foods are all techniques that will help reduce, and limit the burden, of **NCDs**.

01J6. Language decorum

School education should not be the site of a cultural battle.

- The **Supreme Court of India** has issued notices to the Union Government, the **CBSE**, and the **NCERT**, directing them to file a comprehensive report on their logistical preparedness to implement a **three-language formula** in all **CBSE** schools for Class 9 students from July 1, 2026.
- On May 15, the **CBSE** had issued a circular mandating the study of three languages for Class 9 students from July 1, citing alignment with the **NEP 2020** and the **National Curriculum**

Framework for School Education 2023.

- At least two of the three must be native Indian languages.
- Foreign languages such as French or German could only be taken as a third language if the first two were Indian, or alternatively as an optional fourth subject.
- In a meagre effort to camouflage the hardship unleashed on the students, the **CBSE** exempted the third language from the Class 10 Board examination, which would instead be assessed through school-based internal evaluations, though the marks would still appear on the final certificate.
- The petitioners argue that language is a matter of personal choice and cannot be imposed by the state.
- It is also being pointed out that the **NEP 2020**, in whose name the mandate is being enforced, promises flexibility and guarantees that no language shall be imposed on any student or State.
- The petitioners also argue that the **CBSE**, as an executive body, lacks the authority to impose such a sweeping educational mandate without backing from parliamentary legislation, regardless of what the **NEP** says, being an executive policy intent and not a statute.
- School administrators have flagged a shortage of trained language teachers and the unavailability of appropriate textbooks.



PATRIOTIC IAS

MONTHLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

JUNE 2026

GENERAL STUDIES PAPER II

SUBJECT: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

TOPICS COVERED

- | | | | |
|------|--|------|---|
| 26J6 | Should Indian Seafarers Stop Serving on Sanctioned Ships? | 18J6 | Oil prices tumble on likely U.S.-Iran deal |
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| 25J6 | PACOM, the deeper meaning behind a dropped prefix | 18J6 | U.S.-Iran deal could remove restrictions on tankers; unlock banking, insurance access |
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| 18J6 | Rubio's remarks and the limits of strategic empathy | 15J6 | Modi, Macron talks stress economic security |
| 18J6 | What does the India-Russia logistics agreement allow? | 14J6 | Attacks on vessels with Indian seafarers likely to feature in IORA meet |
| | | 14J6 | Why are there protests in PoK? |



- 14J6 PM Modi's Europe visit begins in Nice, with tech, bilateral relations in focus
- 11J6 UN nuclear watchdog Board demands Iran cooperation
- 09J6 The Oman CEPA, a new gateway for India's exports
- 09J6 The trust deficit in India-Bangladesh ties
- 09J6 Trump's \$100,000 fee for H-1B visa fee is unlawful, court rules
- 09J6 Germany's standing in international order under scrutiny after UNSC loss
- 08J6 Not seeking mediation on border: Nepal FM
- 08J6 Bolivian Congress gives Paz power to use troops against crippling protests
- 05J6 Energy tie-up tops bilateral agenda as Modi meets Delcy
- 05J6 BRICS experts discuss asset recovery challenges
- 05J6 Mali bans the use of motorcycles outside major cities, urban areas
- 05J6 Chinese spies pose as recruiters to glean state secrets, warn agencies
- 05J6 'Sudan, DR Congo, Colombia top in neglected displacement crises'
- 05J6 How ISWAP emerged as the dominant jihadist force in Africa's Lake Chad basin
- 03J6 The 'harvest' China wants is one India

- cannot afford
- 03J6 Euro zone inflation jump reinforces rate hike case
- 03J6 Bangladeshi FM Rahman elected president of UN General Assembly
- 03J6 EU moves policy for deportations and detention centres in third countries
- 03J6 The 'harvest' China wants is one India cannot afford
- 02J6 No room for anti-India elements in Myanmar, says visiting President
- 02J6 Ethical use of AI in cultural space to be a key focus area at BRICS culture meetings
- 02J6 IMEC is caught between commerce and geopolitics
- 02J6 EU's engagement with West Balkan countries is real: Costa
- 02J6 Court rejects Rwanda's £100 mn claim against U.K. over migrant deal
- 01J6 Nepal PM sparks row, says his country has encroached upon Indian territory
- 01J6 Shaping the next chapter in India-Canada relations
- 01J6 Romania identifies drone behind apartment block strike as Russian
- 01J6 Israel captures Beaufort castle in Lebanon in its deepest incursion
- 01J6 Russia may use Belarus as launchpad for new Ukrainian offensive: experts

26J6. Should Indian Seafarers Stop Serving on Sanctioned Ships?

- **BG:** India should focus on **diplomatic engagement**.
- International platforms such as **UNCLOS (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea)** provide a space where countries can negotiate and raise concerns.
- The **International Labour Organization** is also important because **seafarer welfare** and **rights** are discussed there.

But should the government tell Indian seafarers not to join these ships?

- Recruitment in **India** happens through agencies licensed by the **Directorate General of Shipping**, and any directions issued by the **DG Shipping** are binding on them.
- The government could maintain a dynamic list of **sanctioned** or **high-risk vessels** and require recruitment agencies to exercise caution while placing seafarers on them.

- In many cases, vulnerable **seafarers** — those struggling to find **employment** or facing **certification** and **documentation** issues — are being targeted by agents and drawn into risky jobs.

25J6. Minister sees vast scope for BRICS nations in space sector

- Union Minister of State for Science and Technology **Jitendra Singh** on Wednesday pitched for a '**BRICS Space Economy**'.
- Participating in the valedictory session of the **BRICS Heads of Space Agencies (HOSA) meeting in Bengaluru**, he called for **collective action** among **BRICS member-nations** to unlock new opportunities in **innovation, investment, entrepreneurship** and **sustainable development**.
- "The future of the **space economy** will not be shaped by nations working in isolation.
- It will be **shaped by partnerships, shared innovation and collective ambition**.



- **BRICS countries** have the potential to become one of the **strongest pillars** of this emerging **global space ecosystem**,” Dr. Singh said.
- Hosted by the **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** under **India’s BRICS Chairship 2026**, the **two-day meeting** was attended by **heads of space agencies** and **senior officials** from **Brazil, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iran, Russia, South Africa**, and the **United Arab Emirates**.
- The meeting also reviewed the progress in **BRICS space cooperation** and deliberated on key issues including **space sustainability, debris-free missions** and strengthening the **BRICS remote sensing satellite constellation**.

25J6. PACOM, the deeper meaning behind a dropped prefix

- The decision by the **United States military** to change the name of its **naval command** in the region from **“US INDOPACOM”** to **“US PACOM”** — **United States Indo-Pacific Command** to **United States Pacific Command** — reverting to its original name that was changed in **2018** can be dismissed as **superficial**, even **trivial**.
- In **2018**, **U.S. Defence Secretary Jim Mattis** said that the name **INDOPACOM** was a recognition of the **“growing significance”** of the **Indian Ocean**, the **Indian subcontinent**, and **India** itself, and the **U.S.** dropped the term **“Asia-Pacific”** to **“Indo-Pacific”**.
- Current **U.S. Secretary of War Pete Hegseth** gave the signal, on **May 30**, that this understanding has now changed, at his speech at the annual **Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore** — compared to more than **30 references** to the **“Indo-Pacific”** in his speech in **2025**, his speech this year contained not a single reference to the **Indo-Pacific region** or **strategy**.
- Given the centre stage that the **U.S.’s Indo-Pacific policy** has had in **India’s strategic calculus** since **2018**, it is necessary, therefore, to go beyond the superficial to the subterranean or submarine, in this case.

U.S.-China ties and the Quad

- The first, is the **U.S.’s outreach to China**, and concurrently diminishing salience of the **Quad (India, Japan, Australia, the U.S.)**, which **Beijing** has always protested as an **“exclusive clique”** or derisively as **“ocean foam”**.
- In the long term, the **U.S.** and **China** cannot shy away from the fierce **rivalry** between them, but it is clear that in the immediate term, **Trump 2.0** has decided to play nice.
- **Mr. Trump’s** references to a **“G-2”**, including during a press availability with **Mr. Modi** on the sidelines of the **52nd G-7 summit in France (June 15 to 17)**, are an early warning of a plan to recast the world into **“spheres of influence”**,

where **China** would be the predominant power in the continent, not as one pole in a **multipolar Asia**, as **India** envisions.

- As a result, the **Quad**, rebuilt in **Trump 1.0** as a counter to **China** in the region, appears to be floundering.
- The **U.S.’s National Defense Strategy** released in **January 2026** does not mention the **Quad** even once.
- In terms of substance, the **Quad’s** combined agenda has been pared down to four areas of cooperation — **maritime security, economic prosperity, critical and emerging minerals technology** and **disaster responses**.
- Despite **Quad countries** signing on to **Pax Silica**, and **Critical Minerals Initiative Framework** with the **U.S.**, the **Trump administration** ordered **Anthropic** to end access to its latest models for all **non-Americans**.
- During **U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio’s** visit to **Delhi** in **May 2026**, he offered no firm commitment that **Mr. Trump** would visit **Delhi** this year, amid indications that the **Quad** may be relegated to a **Foreign Ministers’** level grouping.
- In **July**, when he hosts **Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi** and travels to **Indonesia, Australia** and **New Zealand**, **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** must discuss alternative **maritime coalitions** and revive the **Australia-India-Japan trilateral**.

The U.S.-Iran MoU and West Asia

- Paragraph **four** states that the **U.S.** commits to “remove its forces from the proximity of the **Islamic Republic of Iran**” within **30 days** after the final deal.
- Paragraph **five** says that, after the **Hormuz Strait** is demined, **Iran** and **Oman** will define the Strait’s future administration in consultation with **Persian Gulf littoral states**.
- Paragraph **6** stipulates that the **U.S.**, along with **regional allies**, will provide at least **300 billion dollars** for **Iran’s reconstruction**.
- **Oman** and **Qatar** are now closer to **Iran** than before and have been part of the **Pakistan-led mediation process**, while countries such as **Saudi Arabia** are seeking new **security arrangements** with **Türkiye, Pakistan**, and **Ukraine**.
- **India’s** policy towards the region requires a rapid revision in light of the **post-war, post-deal power structure**.
- What was once a finely balanced approach now appears tilted towards **Israel** and the **United Arab Emirates**.

The U.S. and South Asia



- Finally, **India** must study the implications of **U.S. foreign policy** decisions in its **neighbourhood**.
- The appointment of **Sergio Gor** as both **U.S. Ambassador to India** and **Special Envoy for South and Central Asia** signals **Washington's** growing **regional ambitions**.
- Mr. Gor's** recent travels to **Kathmandu, Thimphu, Dhaka** and **Colombo** indicate that the **U.S.** is keen to broaden its efforts across the region.
- In the absence of effective **pan-regional frameworks** such as the **South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation** and the **Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation** — both are constrained by **New Delhi's** political tensions with **Islamabad** and **Dhaka** — it is clear that the **U.S.** is entering into competition with **China** for influence in **South Asia**.
- India**, as chair of the **Indian Ocean Rim Association**, and with **Mr. Modi** due to attend the planned **BIMSTEC summit** in **Bangladesh** and the **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation** summit in **Pakistan** next year, has an opportunity to reassert its **regional leadership**.
- Given the opportunities, a revival of the **SAARC** grouping and other **pan-regional initiatives** must be considered.

25J6. Inspections in Iran will go ahead, working on modalities, says Grossi

- The **UN nuclear watchdog** will carry out **inspections** in **Iran** soon following an interim **peace accord** between the **United States** and **Iran**, but modalities have yet to be finalised, the agency's chief **Rafael Grossi** said on Wednesday.
- The two sides signed a **14-point memorandum of understanding** last week setting out broad agreements in principle to end the war.
- Iran** has not let the **IAEA**, which polices its **nuclear programme**, return to its most sensitive **nuclear sites** since the **United States** and **Israel** bombed them in June last year.
- The **IAEA** has inspected other sites, but inspections were suspended after the **U.S.-Israeli** attacks on **Iran** on **February 28**.
- A central issue in talks is **what will happen to Iran's highly enriched uranium**, including material enriched to up to **60% purity**, a short step from the roughly **90% of weapons grade**.
- The **IAEA** estimates **Iran** had **440.9 kg of uranium** enriched to up to **60%** before **Israel** launched the first attack on **June 13** of last year.
- If enriched further, that would be enough for **10 nuclear weapons**, according to an **IAEA** yardstick.

23J6. Trump ally defeats leftist rival in Colombian Presidential election

- An **U.S.-backed lawyer** won **Colombia's presidential run-off** on Sunday, swinging the country hard right and sparking **protests**.
- Abelardo de la Espriella** (pictured on the right) held **49.66% vote** against leftist Senator **Ivan Cepeda's 48.70%**.
- U.S. President Donald Trump** cheered the result, exclaiming "He Won, **BIG!**"

22J6. Albania's 'flamingo revolution' gathers steam over Trump family-linked project

- Albania's 'flamingo revolution' gathers steam over Trump family-linked project**
- A coastal development project in **Albania** linked to **Donald Trump's** son-in-law **Jared Kushner** is facing growing opposition from **environmental advocates** and has triggered daily protests in the capital, **Tirana**.

19J6. U.S. lifts blockade of Iranian ports after Trump, Pezeshkian sign peace accord

- Mr. Trump** and **Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian** signed a deal on Wednesday meant to end the war, with **Tehran** agreeing to dilute its **enriched uranium** in return for **large-scale economic relief**.
- It remained unclear if the two sides, who have had no diplomatic relations following the **1979 Islamic Revolution**, would hold a signing ceremony and talks in Switzerland on Friday as announced.
- The **U.S. forces** lifted their parallel **naval blockade of Iranian ports** that had prevented ships from sailing to or from the Islamic republic, the U.S. military said, noting that its warships "will remain in the general area".
- Earlier on Wednesday, Mr. Trump put his signature to the **memorandum of understanding** during a candle-lit dinner at the **Palace of Versailles** following a **G7 Summit**, as host **French President Emmanuel Macron** and other guests applauded, a video posted by a Trump aide showed.
- Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif of Pakistan**, who mediated the agreement, said on X that it "shall enter into force with immediate effect".

18J6. Dhaka's new Padma barrage will reshape water power in the region

- The new **barrage** will lie just **180 km downstream** of the **Farakka barrage** in **Bengal** — which **Bangladesh** has blamed for its periodic **water scarcity**; the **Farakka**, one of **India's** largest with a **feeder canal**, was built to divert water from the **Ganga** to the **Bhagirathi-Hoogly**, and flush the **Kolkata Port**.



- Bangladesh recently signed off on the new Padma barrage to control the Padma river, which is the Ganga in Bangladesh, and abate the country's seasonal water scarcity.
- The 2.1-km-long structure will store 2,900 million cu. m of water to serve 6.5 crore people across southwestern and northern Bangladesh.
- It is estimated to cost Tk 50,443 crore (Rs 39,170 crore) over seven years.
- The barrage will lie just 180 km downstream of the Farakka barrage in West Bengal — which Bangladesh has increasingly viewed as an impediment.
- Under the 1996 Ganges Water Treaty, Bangladesh will receive half the water from the Farakka barrage when the flow is under 70,000 cusecs.
- But during the dry season between March and May, each country has to receive at least 35,000 cusecs of water in three alternating 10-day periods.

Treaties past and future

- A 2019 review by a team of experts in Water Policy found that there were “repeated occurrences of low flow at Farakka during the drier years in the post-Treaty period,” including in 1997, 2008, 2010 and 2016.
- They concluded that the 1996 Treaty couldn't account for rising unpredictability in the flows.
- The agreement is set to expire in December 2026.
- But Dhaka has also said the Farakka barrage is responsible for the country's periodic water scarcity.
- To add to the anxiety, several river-sharing agreements between India and Bangladesh also remain unsigned, including the Teesta River Treaty.
- According to S. Janakarajan, president of the South Asia Consortium for Interdisciplinary Water Resources Studies, “All transboundary water issues centre around the lack of timely flow of water,” implying the barrage will be a way for the lower riparian state to exert some control over its water resources.
- But this equity will come at a considerable environmental cost.

Effects of Farakka barrage

- The Farakka barrage has altered the Ganga river's character and ecology in Bangladesh.
- About a third of the country's population relies on the Ganga basin, mostly to irrigate crops.
- But by redirecting the river and reducing flow, the barrage has diminished groundwater recharge, reduced the extent of waterways for navigation, increased salinity, eroded

riverbanks, and has left less freshwater flowing to the Sundarbans.

- According to Mr. Janakarajan, “a substantial part of Bangladesh” is less than 10 m above sea level.
- “In the near future, sea-level rise will lead to the disappearance of 17% of the territory of Bangladesh,” researchers wrote in the Journal of Marine Science and Engineering in 2022.
- This, they added, will “create 20 million refugees, and 2,20,000 km² of land will be submerged following a projected sea-level rise of 1,500 mm to take place within 150 years.”
- Bangladesh also drew around 520 litres of groundwater per person per day in 2008 (the latest year for which the UN FAO Aquastat database provides national figures for withdrawals by source).
- While this is not particularly high, the country's dependence on groundwater is a matter of concern.
- Because the Farakka barrage also reduces flow in the Padma, the Padma is less able to transport silt, which sinks to the riverbed and piles up.
- When the monsoons arrive, the river overflows quickly and floods.
- The sediments are also crucial to maintaining ecosystems and the livelihoods that depend on them.
- For example, the Sundarbans region hosts the world's largest contiguous mangrove forest and depends on water from the Ganga, Brahmaputra, and Meghna rivers.
- Mr. Janakarajan said less sediment and freshwater flowing from these barrages will cause water in the Sundarbans to become saline whereas the ecosystem requires brackish water, which is less salty.
- These changes will also lead to fewer fish, affecting the lives and livelihoods of fisherfolk in the area.

Fondness for concrete

- South Asia is currently on a dam-building spree.
- There are more than 160 hydroelectric power projects underway in the region, per a 2023 review in Water.
- China is also building what will be the world's largest dam over the upper course of the Brahmaputra, just before the river enters India.
- In response, India has initiated a Rs 6.4 lakh crore hydroelectric power project, including building over 200 dams in its Northeast.
- Dams — of which barrages are a type — are generally designed to operate for a century.
- Climate change is breaking this guarantee.
- To ensure a barrage doesn't overflow under heavy bursts of rain, for instance, engineers have to drain water from behind it using canals,



Omar Ahmad, former South Asia managing editor at **Dialogue Earth**, said.

- However, this will require building extensive **water diversion infrastructure** that would likely be made of **cement**.
- “Creating greater pondage here in a cement thing means water is not going into your **groundwater**. It cannot,” Mr. Ahmad said.
- “It is robbing a much larger area around that barrage of the regular flow of water that would seep in from a **river basin**.”
- Given the adverse **environmental consequences**, experts said building another barrage is not the most rational choice.
- “We think **big projects** will actually manage [water] despite historical evidence that they do not,” Mr. Ahmad said.
- “It is rare for big projects to be able to manage this because **ecosystems** are a bit too complex.”
- Mr. Ahmad and Mr. Janakarajan also suggested that **instead of one large barrage**, Bangladesh should consider building a series of smaller **check-dams**, which don’t dramatically alter a river’s flow.
- **Dhaka** has said its relationship with India depends on what they agree about sharing the **Ganga’s waters** — and **New Delhi** that all river-sharing issues will be handled within the existing **bilateral framework**.
- The treaty’s **renewal process** is underway.

18J6. Rubio’s remarks and the limits of strategic empathy

- India’s predicament is particularly stark because it supplies roughly a **fifth of the world’s maritime workforce** but possesses few realistic means of ensuring the safety of its seafarers.
- The **Indian Navy’s escort operations** in the Gulf are valuable but necessarily limited.
- **They cannot protect the more than 18,000 Indian sailors** in the region, many of whom serve aboard vessels registered under **flags of convenience** such as **Palau, Guinea-Bissau and the Marshall Islands**.
- Such flags offer little meaningful diplomatic protection in times of crisis.
- When things go wrong, Indian sailors are often left effectively stateless from a protection standpoint.
- The **three deaths aboard the MT Settebello** have exposed a structural vulnerability that New Delhi has long recognised but never adequately addressed.
- Whether or not this will fundamentally alter the trajectory of **India-U.S. relations** is hard to say.
- The **bilateral relationship possesses too many load-bearing elements — defence cooperation, critical technologies, the Indo-Pacific and the Quad** — for one incident to trigger a rupture.

- Even so, **Marco Rubio’s remarks** seem to have done real damage at the level of trust and political optics.
- New Delhi’s summoning of the **U.S. Chargé d’Affaires** twice within three days last week signals genuine anger.
- Many in India view Washington’s response not as an aberration but as evidence of a deeper pattern: when the interests of partner states conflict with American strategic objectives, the U.S. invariably chooses itself.

Seeking accountability and answers

- From an Indian standpoint, accountability for the incident has yet to be established.
- India must push for a credible, independent **fact-finding investigation** into the circumstances surrounding the strike.
- Beyond bilateral protest, New Delhi should consider taking the issue to multilateral forums, including the **International Maritime Organization** and consultations with other crewing and flag states.

18J6. What does the India-Russia logistics agreement allow?

India-Russia Logistics Support Agreement (RELOS)

- The **India-Russia bilateral Logistics Support Agreement**, termed the **Reciprocal Exchange of Logistics Agreement**, which had been dragging on for several years, was operationalised in January this year.
- There was a flutter on social media recently with claims that it allows the stationing of **3,000 Russian troops** on Indian soil or vice versa, painting it as a military alliance.
- However, it is like any Logistics Support Agreement, the likes of which India has signed with other countries.

What are Logistics Support Agreements?

- A logistics agreement is a foundational military cooperation agreement between countries for administrative purposes that enables the reciprocal use of each other’s bases and ports for supplies, repair, and fuel.
- The agreement also stipulates the occasions on which this can be utilised, generally for exercises, joint training, port calls, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief situations.
- As defence cooperation and military-to-military engagement become vital in international relations, the agreement simplifies essential administrative procedures and reduces bureaucracy.



- For instance, the agreement with the **United States**, called the **Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement**, signed in 2016, was the first such arrangement.
- It provides a framework for reciprocal provision of logistic support, supplies and services for activities such as joint exercises, training, or humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.
- "It does not provide for the establishment of any bases or basing arrangements," Minister of State for Defence **Subhash Bhamre** said in a written reply in Parliament in February 2017.
- If the hyperbole is to be believed, India and Russia can station troops on each other's territory, then by convention, it also means that India and the United States can do the same under the logistics exchange agreement.
- But that is grossly incorrect, as clarified by the Minister, and is so for any logistics support agreement.

What are the existing agreements?

- India has signed a series of logistics support agreements since the logistics exchange agreement in 2016.
- Currently, India has similar agreements with **the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Vietnam, Japan, Australia, Singapore, and Russia**.
- These agreements provide logistics support and technical assistance.
- The basic template and purpose for all these remain the same.
- There is also one with **Oman** covered under the overarching defence cooperation agreement.

What is the agreement with Russia?

- Like other agreements, the **Reciprocal Exchange of Logistics Agreement** defines procedures for supporting military formations, port calls of warships, and the use of airspace and airfield facilities by military aircraft of both countries.
- It also covers logistics and technical support for warships, military aircraft, and other defence equipment.
- The agreement was signed in **Moscow** on **February 18, 2025**, and **President Vladimir Putin** signed the federal law ratifying it on **December 15, 2025**.
- According to the Kremlin, the purpose of the agreement is to define procedures for the deployment of military formations, port calls by warships, and the use of airspace and airfield infrastructure by military aircraft of the two countries.
- Broadly, the agreement covers **joint military exercises, training, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief missions, port and repair services, medical support, food supplies,**

technical resources, and reciprocal access to military facilities.

- The agreement stipulates a maximum of **3,000 troops**, representing a broad upper limit that takes into account the size of contingents and the number of ships or aircraft that may visit during mutually agreed engagements.
- It is valid for a period of **five years**, allowing for revisions later to reflect changing circumstances and requirements.
- The time frame for positioning of assets and personnel would be subject to visits mutually agreed upon by both parties.
- In fact, the scale of bilateral and multilateral relations between India and other countries is much larger.
- Indian armed forces now conduct exercises with the United States as well.
- Also, the agreement does not confer any provision for **permanent basing of assets**.
- The agreement shall be exercised during joint exercises, port calls, or visits mutually agreed upon by both nations.
- Officials clarified that **no permanent or long-term stationing has been agreed upon as part of the agreement**.
- One important aspect is that the agreement gives access to **Russian military facilities in the Arctic** as both countries expand cooperation there, especially as new navigation routes open due to **global warming**.

17J6. Limits of America

- **Israel** and the **U.S.** launched their war on **Iran** on February 28 to bring about **regime change** in **Tehran**, destroy its **nuclear** and **missile capabilities** and end its support for **non-state actors** such as **Hamas, Hezbollah** and **Houthis**.
- **More than 100 days** later, on June 15, the **U.S.** reached a **memorandum of understanding (MoU)** with **Iran** to end fighting, lift the blockades in the **Strait of Hormuz** and the **Gulf of Oman** — disruptions that did not exist before the war — and pave the way for more substantive talks on the **nuclear question**, while **Israel**, frustrated and isolated, is watching from the sidelines.
- **Iranian officials** say the arrangement would include the release of some **frozen assets** and **reparations for Tehran** as part of a broader regional **ceasefire agreement**.
- **Washington** underestimated **Iran's** resolve, strategic depth and geographical advantages.
- As **Henry Kissinger** put it, "**the guerrilla wins if he does not lose**".
- **Iran** won this war by not losing while the **U.S.**, the most powerful country, lost it by failing to achieve its goals.



- One potential disruptor, however, could be **Israel**, which has said it would not withdraw from occupied **Southern Lebanon**.
- **Iran** and the **U.S.** should rein in their respective allies, **Hezbollah** and **Israel**; **Tehran** should also take measures to instil confidence in the process.
- It has already demonstrated its **deterrence** by taking control of the **Strait of Hormuz**.

17J6. A nation determined to endure and overcome

- It is a land of great contrasts both in **climate** and **geography** and is inhabited by, in the words of an ancient historian, "a poor people with a proud spirit."
- Under the **Qajar** and **Pahlavi dynasties**, it sought for an emulation of all things Western until the **Islamic Revolution of 1979** reversed the trend and brought forth a new prototype.

The decline of the Shah

- The **discovery of oil** in the country in **1901** had led to the formation of the **Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC)** with the **British government** holding almost half its shares.
- However, post **World War II**, its **nationalisation** in **1953** resulted in tensions with **Western powers**, which led to the active involvement of the **CIA (Central Intelligence Agency)** in overthrowing the then **Mosaddeq government**.
- The **U.S.** then became the deciding factor in resolving the **Anglo-Iranian nationalisation dispute**.
- This resulted in poorly conceived and badly implemented programmes of **socio-economic** and **military modernisation** by the **Shah**; his so-called **White Revolution** (a series of reforms to modernise Iran) and '**Great Civilisation**' projects (highlighted by the 2,500th anniversary of the Iranian monarchy) were not successful and were widely resented within Iran.
- The **major sources** of opposition were **political organisations** from both the left and the right; **pro-democracy reformists**; **merchants and bazaaris**; and the **ulema** (recognised scholars of Islam).
- In the **1970s**, according to a contemporary observer, "the **political culture** of the Shah's regime both became more **repressive** and hardened on the one hand, and more remote and attenuated on the other."
- The subsequent 'progress' in **U.S.-Iran relations** emanated from wrong policies, misunderstandings and **cultural misperceptions**.
- These together contributed to the **U.S.** becoming in the eyes of **Iran**, the '**Great Satan**'.
- Also in the **1970s**, the **U.S.** encouraged **Iran** to develop **nuclear power** arguing that the country would eventually run out of oil.
- The **Shah** also periodically hinted that he wanted **Iran** to build **nuclear weapons** and, in response to official denials, said Iran "has no intention of acquiring [them] but if small states began building them, then Iran might reconsider its policy."
- **U.S. documents** of that period suggest that it was in the **U.S.'s national interest**, both with respect to the **economy** and **security**, to have **Iran acquire nuclear power**.
- However, by the end of **1977**, the **Shah** had alienated the **ulema**, estranged the **merchants**, and created a poor and **deracinated working class in Tehran**.
- As alternatives, radical intellectuals such as **Ali Shariati** propagated the ideology of '**Red Shiism**' (a reinterpretation of **Shi'a Islam** as an active, classless movement for **social justice**).
- But separately, and with greater impact and influence, **Ayatollah Khomeini** was advocating for the **Vilayat-e-Faqih (Regency of the Islamic Jurist)**.
- The **revolution of 1979** was not primarily a religious event though it drew strength from its **Shia** form.
- It was sustained by **middle-class disillusionment** with **corruption** and **economic stagnation**.
- The process of **Islamisation** of the state and society commenced with a **national referendum** in **March 1979** and gradually enveloped the institutions and practices of the state.
- **Regional tranquillity** was further shattered when **Iraq** disowned the **1975 Algiers Treaty** and invaded **Iran** in **1980** at different points of their common border.
- The seven-year war, from **1980 to 1987**, unleashed by **Iraq** became for **Iran** a defence of its national territory.
- It transformed from a **border war** on Iran's western borders in the first two years to becoming a **full-fledged war** extending into the interior cities.
- It became an inescapable fact of life in **Iran** and merged into the consciousness of the public.
- **Iraq** was assisted in the war by most **Arab countries** as well as by the **U.S.**
- Each had its own reasons to be apprehensive of **Iran's revolutionary agenda** emphasised in **Khomeini's** pronouncement that "there is only one way to save this revolution and that is to rapidly **export the revolution**, mobilise the world's **Muslims** and, later on all **oppressed masses** against the oppressors and governments related to them."



- Israel covertly assisted Iran, viewing Iraqi President Saddam Hussein as the more severe, existential threat.
- This pragmatism overrode the ideological hostility against the newly established Islamic Republic and resulted in a crucial, multi-faceted role for Israel.
- The country became one of Iran's primary sources of military equipment, covertly providing desperately needed spare parts, ammunition, and heavy weapons.
- In 1980, it secretly supplied Iran with hundreds of spare tires to keep its grounded American-made F-4 Phantom fighter jets operational.
- In exchange for covert arms sales, Israel received Iranian crude oil.
- This helped Israel bypass the severe energy shortages caused by the 1979 oil crisis, while allowing Iran to sustain its war effort.
- It also provided Israel's domestic defence industry with valuable combat-testing data for its weapons.
- Israeli policymakers believed that a strong and well-supplied Iran would successfully bog down Saddam Hussein's military, preventing Iraq from posing a threat to its neighbours or Israel itself.
- By ensuring that the two most hostile regional powers spent eight years depleting each other's military, economic, and human resources, the conflict provided Israel with a highly valuable "strategic breather".
- It also, at times, helped facilitate the safe and unhindered emigration of the Persian Jewish community out of Iran.
- The war gave the revolutionary authorities of Iran an opportunity to weaken the Iranian national army of the Shah's period and to create instead the 'Sepahe-e-Pasdaran' or the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).
- It went from strength to strength during the war, numbering around 1 million while the regular armed forces numbered around 3,55,000.
- It reduced the import of non-essentials and managed to keep its oil flowing despite periodic air attacks.
- It diversified sources of arms supply and capitalised on the support of the masses for the war while squeezing the well-to-do and the bazaaris.

17J6. Why was Trump's H-1B fee struck down?

- The H-1B visa, created by the Immigration Act of 1990, is the backbone of the United States' high-skilled immigration architecture.
- Building on the broader framework of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 (INA), which established the "H" category of

temporary worker visas, the 1990 law carved out a distinct H-1B classification for highly educated professionals.

- It permits U.S. employers to hire foreign nationals in "specialty occupations", which require (i) theoretical and practical application of a body of specialised knowledge and (ii) at least a bachelor's degree in a relevant field, typically in sectors such as technology, engineering, healthcare, research, finance, and higher education.
- Notably, H-1B workers can generally remain in the U.S. for up to six years and often use the visa as a pathway to permanent residency.
- To balance employers' demand for skilled talent with protection of the domestic workforce, Congress capped H-1B approvals for most private employers at 65,000 visas annually, with an additional 20,000 visas reserved for holders of advanced degrees.
- However, universities, affiliated non-profit entities, and governmental or non-profit research organisations are exempt from these numerical limits.

Why did Trump impose a \$100,000 fee?

- On September 19, 2025, Donald Trump signed Proclamation 10973, requiring a \$100,000 supplemental payment for all H-1B visa petitions — a substantial increase over the pre-existing filing costs of roughly \$960 to \$7,595.
- The proclamation reasoned that the H-1B programme had been "deliberately exploited to replace, rather than supplement, American workers" with lower-paid foreign labour, harming U.S. economic and national security interests, particularly in critical STEM sectors.
- Mr. Trump's proclamation relied on Sections 212(f) and 215(a) of the INA.
- Section 212(f) empowers the President to restrict or suspend the entry of any class of aliens (non-citizens) when he finds their entry "would be detrimental to the interests of the United States."
- Additionally, Section 215(a), which also concerns the President's authority to regulate entry into the U.S., allows him to subject alien entry to "such reasonable rules, regulations, and orders, and such limitations and exceptions as the President may prescribe."
- While alleging that the proclamation violated the 'separation-of-powers' principle as it "usurps Congress's exclusive constitutional authority to set immigration policy and to levy taxes", the plaintiff States argued before the U.S. District Court that the \$100,000 H-1B fee would undermine their ability to recruit and retain essential skilled workers.
- They argued it would worsen teacher shortages, hamper hiring in higher education, disrupt research, and deepen healthcare



staffing gaps — raising costs and straining public systems.

- Simultaneously, the measure also carried significant implications for **India**.
- **Indians** account for roughly **70% of H-1B visa approvals**, followed by **Chinese nationals** at about **12%**, and are heavily represented in the **STEM professions** targeted by the proclamation.
- By raising the cost of an **H-1B petition**, the policy effectively created a prohibitive barrier for thousands of Indian **software engineers, doctors, researchers**, and other **skilled professionals**, many of whom already face years-long **green card backlogs**.

Did the President have the power to impose the fee?

- The threshold issue before the **court** was whether the **\$100,000 charge** was a **'tax'** or a **'penalty'**, because only **Congress** possesses the constitutional power to "lay and collect **Taxes, Duties, Imposts, and Excises**" under **Article I, Section 8** of the **U.S. Constitution**, unless it clearly delegates that authority to the executive.
- To answer this question, the judge, an appointee of President **Barack Obama**, relied on two landmark **Supreme Court precedents**.
- In **Bailey v. Drexel Furniture Co. (1922)**, the court invalidated the **Child Labour Tax Law**, holding that its "heavy exaction" was a **'penalty'** rather than a **'tax'** because it was designed to prohibit the employment of **child labour**.
- By contrast, in **National Federation of Independent Business v. Sebelius (2012)**, the court found that the **Affordable Care Act's** requirement that individuals pay an additional fee to the **Internal Revenue Service (IRS)** for not obtaining health insurance amounted to a **'tax'**, not a **'penalty'**, explaining that a penalty ordinarily constitutes "punishment for an unlawful act or omission."
- Applying this framework, **Judge Sorokin** concluded that the **\$100,000 H-1B charge** was a **'tax'**, as hiring workers under the **H-1B programme** is plainly lawful, and the payment did not operate as punishment for any unlawful conduct.
- Further, the court examined whether **Congress** had delegated **taxing authority** to the President through **Sections 212(f) and 215(a)** of the **INA**.
- It found no such delegation.
- While those provisions empower the President to impose **"restrictions", "rules", "regulations", "orders", "limitations",** and **"exceptions"** governing the entry of non-citizens, **Judge Sorokin** held that their ordinary meaning does not encompass the power over the **public purse**.

- The court also found multiple violations of the **Administrative Procedure Act**.
- Accordingly, **Judge Sorokin** ruled that "the **Policy** implementing the **Proclamation** is declared unlawful and is vacated in its entirety".

17J6. '1.1 billion children exposed to three or more climate risks'

- They are **coastal flooding, river flooding, drought, tropical storms, heat waves, extreme heat, wildfires, and sandstorms**.
- The report primarily focuses on the **1.1 billion children** who are exposed to at least **three risks**, with the most common combination being **drought, extreme heat (above 35 degrees Celsius) and heat waves**.
- That combination affects some **296 million children**, including **74 million in Nigeria, 34 million in Pakistan, and 32 million in India**.
- Countries with large populations of children, including **Bangladesh, India, Nigeria, and Pakistan**, are at the top of the list for the number of children exposed to at least **three hazards**.

17J6. How Herat defied the Taliban regime, chanting 'women, work and freedom'

- The protests in the Afghan city in the first week of June were triggered by the enforcement of a **dress code**, which requires women to wear **burqa** in public.
- Many women, including those wearing traditional Afghan wear of **manto**, were arrested, but released later as entire communities protested.
- Women, and this time, men too, marched through the streets chanting **"Women, Work and Freedom"**, a slogan probably inspired by Iran's 2022 **"Woman, Life and Freedom"** movement that emerged after the death of the 22-year-old **Mahsa Amini**.
- "Dozens more women reportedly received verbal warnings," **United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)** said.
- Under Taliban regulations, women should cover their entire bodies, usually with a **burqa**, and are prohibited from wearing **perfume** or anything capable of 'attracting' public attention.
- While **Afghanistan** has historically followed the **Hanafi school** of Sunni jurisprudence (fiqh), often regarded as one of the more flexible traditions within Sunni Islam, the Taliban has adopted a far stricter, **Deobandi-influenced** interpretation.
- Under this system, women face extensive restrictions on **education, employment, and public life**.



- Girls are barred from secondary and higher education.
- Women face severe limitations on work opportunities and are often required to travel with a male guardian.
- Even ordinary social interactions and movement outside the home are heavily scrutinised.
- The **United Nations**, along with **UN Women** and the **UNAMA**, expressed concern over detentions, restrictions on freedom of expression, and the use of 'excessive force' against demonstrators.

16J6. India and Slovakia expand ties with a series of MoUs from defence to education

- India and **Slovakia** on Monday expanded their bilateral relationship with **memoranda of understanding (MoUs)** across defence, labour mobility, education, digital tech, and other sectors, officially branding their relationship a '**Comprehensive Partnership**'.
- "Held an excellent meeting with Prime Minister **Robert Fico**. This is indeed a very special moment for the **India-Slovakia friendship**," Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** said following bilateral talks in the Slovakian capital of **Bratislava**.
- The Prime Minister is here for a little over 24 hours — the first visit by an Indian Prime Minister since the founding of **Slovakia** in 1993.
- "Our talks covered cooperation in sectors like automobiles, railways, advanced manufacturing, and green technology."
- "The **India-EU Free Trade Agreement** will also add momentum to our partnership," the Prime Minister said.
- The countries committed to significantly boost two-way trade and investment across areas such as the automotive, electronic, and advanced manufacturing industries.
- The labour migration **MoU** signed seeks to facilitate mobility and the exchange of information between the authorities in both countries, as per the joint statement.
- The two sides also agreed to conclude a **social security agreement** in this regard.
- An **MoU** between the Higher Education Ministries of the two countries to facilitate academic and institutional linkages was also signed.
- Mr. Modi and Mr. Fico agreed to promote the mobility of students and researchers — especially in **STEM fields** and humanities.

Action Against Terrorists

- The formation of a **Joint Working Group on Terrorism** was agreed by Mr. Modi and Mr. Fico, with the two leaders "strongly" condemning the April 2025 terror attacks in **Pahalgam**.

- They agreed to work towards the adoption of the **Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism** within the **United Nations** framework.
- The two leaders called for action against terrorists, including those in the **UN Security Council 1267 Sanctions Committee** list and the sponsors of terrorism.
- The two sides reaffirmed their support for **multilateralism** and called for **UN reform**, including the **UN Security Council (UNSC)**, with an expansion of the permanent and non-permanent seats on the Council.
- Slovakia has continued to support India's quest for a permanent seat on the **UNSC** and "reaffirmed its constructive approach" to India's membership of the **Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG)**, as per the joint statement.

Defence and Security Cooperation

- Defence and security cooperation would be "one of the key pillars" of the **India-Slovakia relationship**, as per the joint statement.
- The two sides signed a **Letter of Intent** to promote defence cooperation — a move welcomed by Mr. Modi and Mr. Fico in their press statements.
- Through this framework, the governments would seek to collaborate more in defence technologies, defence industrial cooperation, capacity building, and research and development.
- The two governments signed an **MoU on digital technologies** to provide structure to their digital cooperation, as they committed to deepening collaboration in **Artificial Intelligence (AI)**, semiconductors and start-ups.
- They also agreed to explore cooperation in emerging fields, including the **Internet of Things (IoT)** and **6G standardisation**.

15J6. Modi, Macron talks stress economic security

- **India and France adopted an 'Innovation Roadmap 2030'** and established a Dialogue on Economic Security during bilateral talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron held in Nice on Sunday.
- A press release from the government outlined a number of themes — including calling for the fast adoption of the **India-EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA)**.
- Earlier this year, the two countries had renamed their partnership a '**Special Global Strategic Partnership**' to reflect an enhanced level of cooperation.
- "Recognising the key role of innovation and technology in the bilateral relationship, both sides adopted an '**Innovation Roadmap 2030**'



to give the partnership a long-term direction," the press release said, with the two leaders agreeing to create a **Joint India-France AI Working Group** to expand cooperation in AI.

- Calling for the early implementation of the **India-EU FTA**, which was signed in February this year, the two sides agreed to set up a **High-Level Mechanism** to double trade in five years.
- The two leaders discussed private sector collaboration in the **space sector** and the **SHANTI Act's** implications in India.

14J6. Attacks on vessels with Indian seafarers likely to feature in IORA meet

- Speaking to **The Hindu** at **10th Indian Ocean Conference in Mauritius on April 11, 2026**, **Mauritius' Foreign Minister Dhananjay Ramful** had said the idea of the Indian Ocean as a **"zone of peace"** had been negated as the **"war has come"** to the ocean.
- While denouncing the **U.S. torpedo attack on Iranian ship IRIS Dena** in the Indian Ocean, killing more than **80 sailors** in **March 2026**, he also expressed his concerns over retaliatory attacks by Iran on the **U.S. 's Diego Garcia military base**.

14J6. PM Modi's Europe visit begins in Nice, with tech, bilateral relations in focus

- India and France had formally elevated their partnership to a 'Special Global Strategic Partnership' in February this year and announced that 2026 was the India-France Year of Innovation.
- Mr. Modi will travel to Slovakia on Sunday evening and return to France for the G7 Summit in the alpine resort of Évian-les-Bains.
- India has been invited as an outreach partner, along with other countries.
- At Évian, there is a possibility of a bilateral meeting with Mr. Trump.
- Following the G7 Summit, Mr. Modi will arrive in Paris for another tech focused event, VivaTech on June 18.
- India is the AI Country Partner for the event which is held annually.

11J6. UN nuclear watchdog Board demands Iran cooperation

- The UN atomic watchdog's board on Wednesday demanded that Iran fully cooperate with the agency, provide complete information about its **stockpile of near weapons-grade nuclear material** and grant its inspectors access to Iranian nuclear sites.
- A resolution passed by the **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)** board also said that giving information and access are **"essential and urgent"** in order to enable

verification that there's no **"diversion of nuclear material"**.

- **Twenty-one countries on the IAEA's 35-member Board of Governors** voted for the resolution at **IAEA headquarters in Vienna**.
- According to the IAEA, Iran maintains a stockpile of **440.9 kg of uranium enriched up to 60% purity** — a short, technical step away from **weapons-grade levels of 90%**.
- That stockpile could allow Iran to build as many as **10 nuclear bombs**, should it decide to weaponise its program.

09J6. The Oman CEPA, a new gateway for India's exports

- India and Oman share one of the oldest trading relationships, with commercial and maritime links dating back thousands of years.
- From the movement of spices, textiles and frankincense to enduring people-to-people ties, trade has long been a cornerstone of this partnership.
- The **India-Oman Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)**, which came into force on June 1, 2026, reaffirms and strengthens this historic relationship by providing a modern framework to deepen trade, investment and economic cooperation for the future.
- India is amongst the top suppliers for Oman and bilateral trade has grown from **\$8.94 billion** in FY2023-24 to **\$11.18 billion** in FY2025-26, reflecting the growing complementarities between the two economies.

An expansion of India's trade ties

- The CEPA comes at a time when India is actively diversifying its trade partnerships and integrating more deeply with global value chains.
- Following agreements with the **United Arab Emirates, Australia, the European Free Trade Association, the United Kingdom, New Zealand and the European Union**, the Oman CEPA further strengthens India's presence in a region that is central to its energy security, trade and strategic interests.
- The CEPA offers significant opportunities for Indian exporters.
- Oman has offered **duty-free access on 98.08% of its tariff lines**, covering **99.38% of India's exports by value**.
- Before the agreement, only **15.33% of India's exports** entered Oman at zero duty under the Most Favoured Nation regime.
- The CEPA, therefore, provides an immediate competitiveness boost across a broad range of sectors.



- In **textiles and apparel**, India already commands a **43% share** of Oman's woven apparel imports and **31% share** of knitted apparel imports.
- The removal of the existing **5% tariff** will strengthen the competitiveness of Indian manufacturers against China, which is the other dominant supplier in this market.
- In the case of **chemicals**, India already supplies nearly **39%** of Oman's inorganic chemical imports, making it one of the leading players in the market.
- Tariff-free access will only amplify this further.
- Likewise, **engineering goods** will also benefit.
- Oman imports over **\$3.7 billion worth of mechanical machinery** and **\$3.3 billion worth of automobiles** annually, where India's market share is only **5% and 2%**, respectively.
- Preferential market access under the CEPA can help Indian exports of engineering goods expand significantly and deepen their presence in Oman's infrastructure, construction and industrial sectors.
- In **pharmaceuticals**, where India holds around **10% market share**, the agreement's value lies not in tariff reductions but in regulatory facilitation.
- Products approved by leading international regulators will benefit from **fast-tracked approvals**, reducing compliance costs and accelerating market entry.
- As Oman's pharmaceutical market continues to expand, Indian companies will be well-positioned to capture a larger share.
- Duty-free access for products such as **meat, eggs, honey, butter and processed foods** will further strengthen India's already strong position.
- At the same time, sensitive sectors such as **dairy, cereals, edible oils and several agricultural commodities** have been kept outside tariff concessions, ensuring that domestic producers remain protected.

Streamlining procedures

- Significant **trade facilitation measures** have been introduced.
- Oman will accept certificates issued by India's **Export Inspection Council**, eliminating duplicative testing and inspections, while also recognising India's organic and halal certification systems.
- There are dedicated **sanitary and phytosanitary provisions and technical barriers to trade provisions**, which will enhance regulatory transparency and cooperation.
- Streamlined customs clearance, including fast-track processing for perishables, will reduce costs and improve export efficiency.

- Another forward-looking aspect of the CEPA is its strong focus on **services and professional mobility**.
- Bilateral services trade stood at **\$863 million** in 2024, with India enjoying a surplus of nearly **\$447 million**.
- Yet, India's share in Oman's global services imports remains just over **5%**, indicating substantial untapped potential.
- Oman has undertaken binding commitments covering professionals in sectors such as **accounting, engineering, information technology, health care, education and consulting**.
- Oman also raises the quotas for **intra-corporate transferees**, facilitating greater mobility of Indian professionals and specialists.
- Provisions relating to **AYUSH and traditional medicine** further create opportunities for Indian health care and wellness services in the Gulf.

Strategic location advantage

- Beyond trade statistics, the CEPA has a larger strategic significance.
- Oman occupies a unique position at the crossroads of the **Gulf, the Indian Ocean and East Africa**.
- Its ports at **Sohar, Duqm and Salalah** are emerging as major logistics and industrial hubs.
- For Indian businesses, Oman can serve not only as a destination market but also as a gateway to the wider **Gulf Cooperation Council region** and East African economies.
- The India-Oman CEPA once again demonstrates the evolution of India's trade policy from tariff negotiations to comprehensive economic partnerships encompassing goods, services, investment, mobility and regulatory cooperation.
- Its benefits will extend from textile clusters in **Tamil Nadu** and the gems and jewellery industry in **Gujarat** to engineering hubs in **Maharashtra and Punjab**.
- It will also benefit pharmaceutical manufacturers in **Telangana** and seafood exporters in **Andhra Pradesh and Kerala**.
- The real test will now lie in implementation and utilisation.
- If businesses actively leverage the opportunities created by the agreement, the CEPA can significantly expand India's export footprint, strengthen economic integration with the Gulf, and support the country's broader ambition of becoming a globally competitive manufacturing and services powerhouse.
- For India, the agreement opens not only the Omani market but also a broader gateway to the Gulf and beyond.



09J6. The trust deficit in India-Bangladesh ties

- More than hundred days have passed since the **Tarique Rahman** government took charge in Bangladesh.
- However, contrary to early expectations from his leadership, India-Bangladesh relations have remained more or less the same as in the difficult months of the interim government.

Actions, not rhetoric

- India reached out twice before Mr. Rahman became the Bangladesh Prime Minister.
- The first outreach was by External Affairs Minister **S. Jaishankar** who visited Dhaka on December 31, 2025 to condole the passing of Mr. Rahman's mother, former Prime Minister **Khaleda Zia**.
- The second time was through Foreign Secretary **Vikram Misri**, who carried Prime Minister **Narendra Modi's** invitation letter, and Lok Sabha Speaker **Om Birla** who on February 17 participated in the swearing-in ceremony of Mr. Rahman.
- But sources in the ruling **Bangladesh Nationalist Party** say such gestures in themselves are insufficient.
- An influential segment within the BNP feel that as a goodwill gesture towards the new government, India should have reversed some of the retributory steps that it had taken during the interim government's rule under **Muhammad Yunus**.
- These steps included the restarting of transshipments for goods from Bangladesh, full restoration of visa services including business and medical visas, and stopping the restrictive market access for Bangladeshi goods.
- None of these measures have been implemented so far, as per Dhaka.
- They argue that, by not reversing these decisions, India has not delivered any advance incentives to Mr. Rahman who will have to engage with the **Jamaat-e-Islami** and several anti-India student outfits before normalising ties with India.
- On its part, the BNP's veteran leaders have tried to smoothen the relationship by creating greater public acceptability of the position that the presence of the deposed Prime Minister **Sheikh Hasina** in India will not hold ties back.
- This is a departure from the hardline stance that the interim government had taken.
- Here also, Dhaka feels that such attempts have not found appreciation from the Indian side.
- As proof they refer to the aggressive use of **illegal immigration** in official communication from Delhi following the victory of the **Bharatiya Janata Party** in West Bengal and Assam.

- Bangladeshi diplomats have pointed out that Dhaka expected less rhetoric on sensitive issues such as illegal immigration, and more focus on issues such as visa restoration and the renewal of the **1996 Ganga Water Treaty**.
- Dhaka had sent Foreign Minister **Khalilur Rahman** to Delhi on April 7-8 for a brief visit, to test the waters, where he met National Security Adviser **Ajit Doval** and Mr. Jaishankar.
- However, the election campaign in Assam and West Bengal around Bangladesh-related issues and a flurry of interviews by exiled Prime Minister **Sheikh Hasina** have displayed that Mr. Rahman's BNP, despite winning a landslide majority in Bangladesh, has not managed to impress India.
- While a senior diplomat in Dhaka said that Bangladesh was assured that the language around State elections would not reflect New Delhi's foreign policy, the Ministry of External Affairs' strident position on illegal immigration have generated a "sense of betrayal" in Dhaka's secretariat.
- According to reports, **Mr. Rahman**, sensing that the window for restoration of ties with India is not opening as per expectations, is in the final stages of considering visits to **Malaysia** and **China** that are likely to take place in the last week of June.

Bangladesh's dilemma

- This turn to **China** however cannot hide the fact that it is incumbent on Bangladesh, as much as it is on India, to repair bilateral ties.
- Bangladesh's ties with India remain broken because of the **2024 uprising** and the subsequent interim rule whereas its ties with China, the U.S. and other players have prospered since August 2024.
- Further, a pragmatic assessment shows that without steady assurance from India on the main river **Padma (Ganga)**, Bangladesh's other plans are not expected to proceed smoothly beyond 2026.
- River affairs expert **Ainun Nishat** has stated that a delay in the renewal of the **30-year-old Ganga treaty** will put the **Ganges-Kobadak irrigation project** in a challenging situation affecting vast portions of western and central Bangladesh.
- The lack of predictable water supply will affect the upcoming sowing seasons, hurting Bangladesh's economy that is already dealing with the crippling effects of the energy crisis because of the **U.S.-Israel war on Iran**.
- The compounded effect of these disruptive forces will increase pressure on the **Tarique Rahman government** that is already under criticism for its inept handling of the worst measles outbreak in the country that has claimed the lives of at least **600 infants**.



- Critics have targeted the government for its weak handling of the health crisis as well as the growing incidents of sexual violence, which is a symptom of the breakdown of law and order in the country that is yet to make a recovery since the protests of August 2024.
- Rivals, including **Sheikh Hasina's Awami League** that are mobilising on the ground despite a ban, will be strengthened if Mr. Rahman fails to renew the **Ganga river agreement** with Delhi before the deadline of **December 31, 2026**.
- Such material factors on the ground call for pragmatism in both the capitals as the challenges will soon overwhelm Bangladesh, reverting it to instability, which again is not in India's immediate or long-term interests.

Trump's \$100,000 fee for H-1B visa fee is unlawful, court rules

- A federal judge on Monday struck down a **\$100,000 fee** that U.S. President **Donald Trump** imposed on new **H-1B visas** for highly skilled foreign workers, concluding that it constituted an unlawful tax that Congress never authorised.
- **U.S. District Judge Leo Sorokin** in Boston issued the ruling in a lawsuit filed by **20 Democratic State Attorneys General** challenging a fee Mr. Trump announced in September that raised the cost of obtaining **H-1B visas**.
- The **H-1B program** offers **65,000 visas annually**, with another **20,000 visas** for workers with advanced degrees, approved for three to six years.
- Employers seeking a visa for a foreign worker before Mr. Trump's proclamation paid about **\$2,000 to \$5,000** in fees.
- The increase in fees has discouraged **H-1B visa requests**, according to court filings.

09J6. Germany's standing in international order under scrutiny after UNSC loss

- Germany's standing in international order under scrutiny after UNSC loss.
- The country has failed to win a non-permanent seat on the UNSC for the first time.
- Its selective application of international law vis-a-vis **Ukraine** and **Iran**, and its cautious and often wavering approach towards **Israel** might have led smaller nations, especially of the **Global South**, to lose faith in it.
- On June 3, for the first time, Germany failed to win a non-permanent seat on the **United Nations Security Council (UNSC)**.
- The largest economy in the **European Union (EU)** won just 104 votes, well below the required 127 votes, and lost to the other two contenders

in the race, **Portugal**, which won 134 votes, and **Austria** which got 131 votes.

- The UNSC has five permanent members and 10 non-permanent members who rotate every two years.
- Out of these 10 seats, two are reserved for the regional grouping of **'Western European and other States'** which includes Germany.
- Members for these 10 seats are elected by the **UN General Assembly (UNGA)**, with a contesting nation needing at least two-thirds of the vote to win a place on the UNSC.
- Germany has been re-elected six times; whenever it has contested. Up until now.

Steadfast with Ukraine

- The loss in the UNSC election is being seen as a major foreign policy defeat for the **Christian Democratic Union (CDU)**-led federal government of Germany and its head, **Chancellor Friedrich Merz**, who had, after coming to power last year, stated his desire to restore Germany's place on the world map.
- Opposition parties in the **Bundestag**, including the **Greens** as well as the far-right **AfD** party, called it an "embarrassing defeat".
- Foreign Minister **Johann Wadephul**, who had extensively lobbied for Germany's candidacy in the UNGA, stated that the loss could have been due to the fact that Germany takes a clear stance on issues that not all member states share.
- "There is our firm support for **Ukraine**; the fact that **Russia** does not want such a voice at the Security Council," said Mr. Wadephul.
- He also acknowledged that, "the fact that Germany must always assume a special responsibility for **Israel** in the Middle East conflict may also have cost votes."
- With respect to Ukraine, the **EU** and Germany specifically have emerged as the war-torn nation's most steadfast supporters even in the face of the **U.S.**' changed attitude towards the country after **Donald Trump** became President for a second term.
- Under Mr. Merz, Germany has increased its military assistance for Ukraine.
- Moreover, in light of Russia's aggression and the U.S.' increasingly belligerent rhetoric towards the EU and **NATO**, Mr. Merz has advocated for increased budget for the domestic military while also calling for stronger European defence capabilities.
- Mr. Merz also became a part of the **'coalition of the willing'**, along with **France** and the **U.K.**, in order to facilitate support for Ukraine.
- Russia's "special military operation" in Ukraine has been condemned by almost the entire international order, with the U.S. and the EU invoking sanctions on the country.



- Portugal and Austria, in line with the EU's position, have also been strong supporters of Ukraine's right to sovereignty.
- Moreover, they have been consistently registering their interest in the UNSC seat for over 10 years.
- Austria has also been one of the strongest allies of Israel in Europe but its long-standing policy of military neutrality makes it much less of a player in matters of international conflict.
- But for Germany, the question of Israel and Palestine has been more complicated.

Ambiguity with Israel

- Ever since the breakout of the **Israel-Hamas** conflict in October 2023, Germany has steadfastly upheld Israel's right to defend itself.
- Since October 2023, the UNGA has adopted at least six major resolutions regarding the conflict and Israel's subsequent genocide in the **Gaza Strip**.
- Berlin abstained from three of them, including the most immediate ones in 2023 calling for a ceasefire and for enhanced UN rights for Palestine.
- Even as international condemnation for Israel increased due to rising casualties in the Gaza Strip, especially of children, Germany has been walking a tightrope with regards to its relation with Israel.
- When Mr. Merz was elected Chancellor in early 2025, he spoke to Israel Prime Minister **Benjamin Netanyahu** over the phone and said that he would "find ways and means for him to visit Germany and also to be able to leave again without being arrested in Germany".
- This was in defiance of the arrest warrant issued by the **International Criminal Court (ICC)** against Mr. Netanyahu on November 21, 2024, for alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in the Gaza Strip.
- While Chancellor Merz has since then criticised Israel for its excessive campaign in the Gaza Strip, even moving to restrict arms sales to the country in August 2025, which he lifted in November 2025 after the signing of a ceasefire, he visited Israel in December 2025 and held talks with Mr. Netanyahu where he reaffirmed support to Israel.
- He also refused to join an initiative by western allies to recognise the state of Palestine.
- Germany's relationship with Israel is complicated by, as Mr. Wadehul mentioned, its "special responsibility" — the political doctrine of Germany to back Israel's security in the light of **Nazi Germany's** crimes against Jews during the Holocaust in World War II.

Conflicting stances

- Germany's standing as an upholder of international law has also taken a hit in the context of the ongoing **Iran-Israel-U.S.** war in **West Asia** which began on February 28, 2026.
- Mr. Merz refused to condemn the move as a violation of international law and stated that along with the U.S. and Israel, "we share the goal of ending the terror of these regimes".
- However, his initial support soon turned into criticism as the war progressed.
- The effects of the war have been increasingly hitting the German economy, with oil and gas prices rising sharply.
- The energy sector in Germany is already stressed as the nation has drastically reduced its dependence on Russia, which was its main source for energy, in light of the Ukraine war.
- By the end of April, Mr. Merz made scathing remarks against the U.S. and said that Iran's leadership was "humiliating" Washington.
- Germany's selective application of international law vis-a-vis Ukraine and Iran, and its cautious and often wavering approach towards Israel might have led smaller nations, especially of the Global South, to lose faith in it and regard smaller European states as safer bets.
- It would be wise for Germany to re-evaluate its standing in the international order if it wishes to regain its position as an upholder of the **United Nations** and international law.

08J6. Not seeking mediation on border: Nepal FM

- **Claim to the Kalapani-Lipulekh-Limpiyadhura trijunction is Kathmandu's focus, says Khanal**
- "We want to solve our disputes through diplomatic processes. We just want to see if we can access some of the documents that might be in libraries or museums in the **U.K.** Our position was not that we were asking for mediation," Mr. Khanal said, elaborating on Mr. Shah's remarks that **Nepal was in contact with China and the U.K. on the Kalapani-Lipulekh-Limpiyadhura dispute with India.**
- The **Ministry of External Affairs** announced that the pilgrimage would be conducted "in coordination with the Government of the **People's Republic of China**" through the **Lipulekh pass** that is claimed by Nepal, and the **Nathu La pass** in Sikkim.

08J6. Bolivian Congress gives Paz power to use troops against crippling protests

- **Bolivia's legislature** gave the green light on Sunday for President **Rodrigo Paz** to use the military to clear roadblocks that have crippled key cities for weeks.



- A month of heated demonstrations calling for the **centre-right Paz** to step down have paralysed the **Andean nation**, with blockades causing severe food and medicine shortages.
- The town is in the **Santa Cruz region** — an agricultural breadbasket supplying food to the country's western areas.

08J6. Weighing ties with Russia and West, conflicted, cornered Armenia votes

- With mounting pressure from **Russia** against **Armenia** joining the **European Union** and a vocally pro-Russian Opposition, Prime Minister **Nikol Pashinyan** and his ruling **Civil Contract** party, which advocates balanced ties with **U.S., Europe and Moscow**, are seeking a strong mandate in parliamentary polls.
- **Armenians** will vote Sunday in parliamentary elections as the incumbent government, under mounting Russian pressure, seeks to loosen ties with Moscow and deepen cooperation with the West.
- Mr. Pashinyan has spoken on several occasions about the need for a balanced foreign policy ensuring **Armenia** maintains good relations with the **United States, Europe and Russia**, as well as regional powers such as **Turkey and Iran**.
- Mr. Putin also has stressed that Armenia cannot join the **EU** and remain within the **Eurasian Economic Union**, a Russian-led customs bloc.
- "Being in a customs union with the **European Union** and the **Eurasian Economic Union** is impossible," Mr. Putin said.

06J6. Pressure to limit India-Russia ties will hurt global stability, says Putin

Su-57 on offer

- The President also offered Russia's **fifth-generation stealth aircraft Su-57** to India and suggested that the combat jet could be jointly built in India.

06J6. Leaders gather for summit on the EU's enlargement into the Western Balkans

- **Montenegro** is considered a front-runner among the region's other candidate nations.
- The **EU-Western Balkans summit**, being held in the Adriatic Sea coastal town of **Tivat**, brings together EU leaders including President **Emmanuel Macron** of France and German Chancellor **Friedrich Merz**.
- "Enlargement means that we can win economically, become stronger politically, and provide more security to our citizens," said **European Parliament President Roberta Metsola**.

- During a tour of countries in the Western Balkans this week, **European Council President Antonio Costa**, who is hosting the summit, emphasised how serious the bloc is about enlarging.
- Speaking in **Serbia** on Thursday after meeting with **Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic**, Mr. Costa said the EU would look for new ways to speed up the membership process.

'28 by 28'

- **Montenegro**, a small mountainous country that was once part of **Yugoslavia**, this week marked the **20th anniversary** of its independence from a union with neighbouring **Serbia**.
- The country is considered a front-runner ahead of other candidate countries including **Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo and North Macedonia**.
- All **27 EU members** must agree before each chapter can be opened, and then again for it to be closed.
- **Ukraine and Moldova** are also among about **10 countries** aspiring to join the bloc.
- He pointed to **Ukraine's accession bid** as well as nations in the **Western Balkans** like **Serbia and Kosovo**.

05J6. Energy tie-up tops bilateral agenda as Modi meets Delcy

India-Venezuela Partnership and Global South Cooperation

- India's partnership with **Venezuela** is of "immense importance" for the **Global South**, Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** said on Thursday, welcoming **Delcy Rodriguez**, the Acting President of Venezuela, even as the South American country called "**energy security**" a fundamental pillar of the bilateral relationship.
- The leader, who arrived here on Wednesday, is on a **five-day visit**.
- "We had extensive discussions on expanding our cooperation in **energy, critical minerals, technology, agriculture, health and people-to-people ties**."
- Ms. Rodriguez, who was accompanied by Ministers of **Economy, Foreign Affairs, Science and Technology, and Transport and Communications**, conducted a "**comprehensive review of the mutual cooperation map**", the press note said.

05J6. BRICS experts discuss asset recovery challenges

- The **Enforcement Directorate (ED)** on **June 2** organised the inaugural meeting of the **BRICS Expert Network on Asset Recovery**, marking



a significant milestone within the **Anti-Corruption Working Group** under **India's 2026 BRICS Presidency**, the agency said on Thursday.

- The Chair called for stricter alignment with the **Financial Action Task Force (FATF)** guidance for **asset recovery** and **inter-agency cooperation**.

05J6. Mali bans the use of motorcycles outside major cities, urban areas

- Mali** has banned the use of **motorcycles** with engines of **125 cc or above** outside of **major cities** and **urban locales** as the country battles a **jihadi insurgency**, according to a government order.
- Motorcycles** are the preferred means of transport for **jihadist groups** in **Mali**, which has been plunged into a **security crisis**.

05J6. Chinese spies pose as recruiters to glean state secrets, warn agencies

- Chinese spies** are posing as **job recruiters** to trick staff in **western governments** into disclosing **sensitive information**, the **Five Eyes alliance** of security agencies has warned.

05J6. 'Sudan, DR Congo, Colombia top in neglected displacement crises'

- Sudan**, the **Democratic Republic of Congo** and **Colombia** top the list of the world's most neglected **displacement crises**, **Norwegian Refugee Council**, a prominent **Norwegian aid group** said on Thursday, noting that **nationalism** and **rearmament campaigns** grabbed attention in wealthy countries.

05J6. How ISWAP emerged as the dominant jihadist force in Africa's Lake Chad basin

- The **Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP)** steadily eclipsed **Boko Haram** to become the most powerful militant organisation in the region; with a structured command system and strong territorial presence, what began as a local insurgency in Nigeria is now one of Africa's major transnational security threats.
- A joint operation by **Nigerian forces** and **U.S. African Command** that killed 175 Islamic militants has drawn attention to the complex security situation in **Lake Chad basin**.
- According to the **UNICEF**, between 2014 and 2016, nearly 20% of Boko Haram's suicide bombers were children, three quarters of whom were girls.
- Amid growing disagreements, **ISIS** appointed **Abu Musab-Al-Barnawi** as the head of its West African affiliate, sidelining Shekau.

- In response **Nigeria, Niger, Chad, Cameroon and Benin** have formed the **Multinational Joint Task Force** to coordinate counter-terrorism efforts.
- They leveraged the **porous borders** between **Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Cameroon** as well as gaps in regional security cooperation to operate across national boundaries.

- The **Lake Chad** is freshwater lakes.
- The basin is shared by four main countries: **Chad, Nigeria, Niger, and Cameroon**.

03J6. The 'harvest' China wants is one India cannot afford

- Diplomacy that trades long-term strategic interests for short-term optics is self-defeating.

New Delhi must be cautious

- The readout issued by the **Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)** on the **24th round of the Special Representatives' Dialogue on the Boundary Question** between India and China (on **August 19, 2025**) between **National Security Adviser Ajit Doval** and Chinese Foreign Minister **Wang Yi** recorded India's agreement to "set up an Expert Group ... to explore an early harvest in boundary delimitation in the India-China border areas".
- China's own readout was more pointed: it used the term "demarcation" rather than "delimitation" and spoke of "launching boundary demarcation negotiations in sectors where conditions are ripe."
- The MEA press release on the **35th Meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs**, held in **Beijing** on **May 27, 2026**, mentions that the **two sides** "discussed issues pertaining to delimitation, border management, mechanism building and cross-border cooperation" and "agreed to work together to make substantive preparation" for the next SRs' meeting.
- The **cornerstone of Special Representative negotiations** is the **Agreement on Political Parameters and Guiding Principles**, signed on **April 11, 2005**.
- Article III explicitly envisages "a package settlement" covering all sectors of the India-China boundary.
- It establishes a three-step process: first political parameters, then a framework for a final settlement, then delineation and demarcation.
- Demarcation** — placing physical markers on the ground — comes last, not first.
- China's proposal to begin demarcation in a single "ripe" sector inverts this sequence and, in effect, asks India to abandon the package



architecture in exchange for the appearance of progress.

- Because the four sectors of the India-China boundary are strategically interlinked, requiring give and take across sectors.
- It also guards against China extracting concessions sector by sector.
- An early harvest in **Sikkim**, where India holds comparative geographical advantage, would let **Beijing** bank a settlement on its preferred terms while leaving the other three sectors unresolved.

The Sikkim stakes

- The **Sikkim Sector boundary** is not, as sometimes claimed, a simple matter.
- Clashes at **Nathu La** and **Cho La** in 1967, with heavy casualties, showed how sharp these differences are.
- Article I of the 1890 Great Britain-China Convention identifies "Mount Gipmochi on the Bhutan frontier" as the starting point of the Sikkim-Tibet boundary, but it is preceded by an assertion that the boundary "shall be the crest of the mountain range separating the waters flowing into the Sikkim Teesta and its affluents from the waters flowing into the Tibetan Mochu".
- China reads the article as placing the trijunction at **Gipmochi**.
- India and **Bhutan** hold that the trijunction lies at **Batang La**, some 6.5 kilometres to the north, on the watershed — which is the operative geographical principle in Article I.
- **Zompelri (or Jampheri) Ridge** adjoining **Geymochen** commands a direct view of the **Siliguri Corridor**, the narrow strip connecting mainland India to its northeastern States.
- Any settlement implicitly endorsing the **Gipmochi trijunction** would hand China a legal instrument to press its claim to the very edge of the Himalayas, exposing the Corridor.
- The Chinese objective is to deepen and widen its **Chumbi Valley** and increase pressure on India's most acute territorial vulnerability.
- The **Doklam** dimension reinforces this concern.
- Since 2017, China has systematically consolidated its position in western Bhutan — building roads and military facilities, constructing villages including **Pangda** on the **Amo Chu river**, and developing routes to the **Jampheri Ridge** that bypass the 2017 Doklam standoff site.
- A Sikkim settlement would immediately be leveraged by **Beijing** to step up pressure on a vulnerable Bhutan to settle its boundary with China.
- India and China have agreed that trijunction points must be finalised in trilateral consultation with all countries concerned.
- Since the **Eastern Ladakh transgressions of 2020**, China has pursued multiple pressure tracks simultaneously: military consolidation

along the **Line of Actual Control (LAC)**, steady resurrection of the "**Zangnan**" (South Tibet) narrative to describe **Arunachal Pradesh**, renaming of places in Arunachal Pradesh, and expansion of "border defence villages" close to India-China LAC.

- The **2005 Agreement** recognised this: it called for a political settlement that would "safeguard the vital interests of both countries" and set out principles such as the two sides "safeguard(ing) due interests of their settled populations in the border areas".

03J6. Euro zone inflation jump reinforces rate hike case

- **Euro zone** inflation accelerated further last month, driven by **energy** and **services**, bolstering the already strong case for a small **European Central Bank (ECB)** interest rate hike later this month, **Eurostat** data showed on Tuesday.

03J6. Bangladeshi FM Rahman elected president of UN General Assembly

- **Bangladesh's Foreign Minister** was elected president of the **81st UN General Assembly** on Tuesday in a vote that, unusually, featured more than one candidate.
- **Khalilur Rahman** won **99 votes** in the secret ballot compared to **91** for Cypriot diplomat **Andreas Kakouris**.
- He will succeed the outgoing president in **September**.

03J6. EU moves policy for deportations and detention centres in third countries

- Activists decry the "**ICE-inspired**" move over potential harm to human rights.
- The deal was struck between the **EU's three main institutions** — the **European Commission**, the **European Council**, and the **European Parliament**.
- The **United Kingdom** also planned to deport migrants to **Rwanda**.
- But the plan was bogged down in legal red tape and the new government dropped the plan as soon as it came to power.
- At least five EU nations — **Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, Denmark, and Greece** — are already in talks with third countries.
- Mostly in **Africa**, to host "return hubs" on the model of **Italy's** detention deal with **Albania**.
- The EU has continually tightened migration policies after right-wing parties took power in some countries in 2024.
- **European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen** has said that the new measures will



prevent a repeat of the **2015 crisis** caused by Syria's civil war.

- When about **one million people** arrived to seek asylum.
- Fueled by people fleeing conflict and poverty across **Africa** and **West Asia**, the **2015 refugee crisis** and successive years of irregular migration to Europe have driven a rightward shift in the bloc's politics.
- Not unlike the anti-immigrant sentiment that buoyed a "**red wave**" in the **2024 U.S. election**.

02J6. No room for anti-India elements in Myanmar, says visiting President

- Visiting Myanmar President **Min Aung Hlaing** has assured India that he will not allow use of his country's territory by groups that pose a security threat to Indian interests.
- Foreign Secretary **Vikram Misri** said the discussion included the issue of detention of former leader and **Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi**.
- The visit of Mr. Hlaing is being viewed as a pragmatic engagement of Myanmar by India despite the conflict situation that prevails in that country since the **February 2021 coup** that deposed the **National League for Democracy (NLD)** government of Ms. Suu Kyi.
- He further informed that the two sides discussed infrastructure projects like the **Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project** and the **trilateral Moreh-Mae Sot highway** that was to connect India's northeast with Myanmar via Thailand – both of which have been "delayed" by the conflict in Myanmar.
- "Right now, the obstacle that faces both of these projects is the security situation in Myanmar," said Mr. Misri, adding that there are "active hostilities" currently under way in the **Kaladan highway between the Myanmar Army and the ethnic armed organisations in the Rakhine State**.

Defence cooperation

- Mr. Misri further said that the two sides discussed defence cooperation that will **cover training of Myanmar troops for United Nations peacekeeping**.
- Mr. Misri also said that the defence cooperation also included concerns related to security and safety of the **India-Myanmar border** spanning **1,643 km**.
- He also informed that the discussion covered **critical minerals** as Myanmar has major deposits in the **Kachin State** that borders both India and China.

- The discussion also included the issue of the existence of **cyber scam centres** in southeast Myanmar bordering Thailand.
- Mr. Misri recollected that **India has airlifted at least 2,411 workers** from cyber scam compounds in Myanmar so far.

02J6. Ethical use of AI in cultural space to be a key focus area at BRICS culture meetings

- The ethical use of **artificial intelligence** in the cultural space will be one of the focus areas for discussion during the **BRICS culture working group meetings** beginning from Thursday, the Union Culture Ministry said on Monday.
- **Creative economy**, culture climate and sustainable development and cultural and creative industries are some of the other areas of deliberation, Union Culture Secretary **Vivek Agrawal** said at a press conference in which he unveiled the comprehensive road map and calendar for the **2026 BRICS Culture Track**.
- **Varanasi** is set to host second **Culture Working Group Meeting**, following the successful completion of the 1st Culture Working Group (CWG) meeting held virtually on April 29–30.
- "As one of the world's oldest living cities, Varanasi will serve as the backdrop for five critical thematic panel discussions aimed at shaping the final outcome document," Mr. Agrawal said.
- The five themes are: creative economy and people-to-people cooperation.
- Copyright and ethical AI in the creative economy.
- Cultural heritage protection and return of cultural property.
- Collaborative approaches to safeguarding shared heritage.
- And culture as a driver of sustainable development.
- The culture track will feature a total of four official meetings alongside major public festivals, bringing together the **11 member nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Indonesia)** along with 10 newly joined partner countries.
- After **Varanasi**, the third BRICS CWG meeting would be held in **Bhopal** followed by the **BRICS Culture Festival** and the **BRICS Culture Minister's meeting**.
- A **BRICS theatre festival** would be held in **Delhi** in October.

02J6.IMEC is caught between commerce and geopolitics



- A recent **U.S. Congressional Research Service** report has noted that 42 U.S. aircraft have been lost or damaged so far during **“Operation Epic Fury” — the war with Iran** — which includes fifth generation stealth fighters such as the **F-35**.
- Plus, the ability to intercept Iranian missiles and drones has been severely degraded as more than half the total inventory of **Patriot, Tomahawk and Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD)** missiles have been expended.
- **New routes and corridors must be developed that avoid the two ‘C’s — conflict zones and choke points.**
- However, this realisation is neither new nor have countries been idle in pursuing solutions.
- Transnational connectivity projects such as the **International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)** and the **Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)** were conceived precisely for this purpose.
- The **INSTC** was designed to bypass the **Suez Canal** choke point, while the overland component of the **BRI** across Asia and Europe seeks to reduce dependence on both the **Malacca Strait** and the **Suez Canal**.
- Another major connectivity project is the **India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)**.
- What is **IMEC**?
- The **IMEC** is a transformative and ambitious connectivity initiative that was officially announced at the **G-20 Summit in New Delhi** in September 2023.
- It seeks to connect **India** with **Europe** across the Arabian Peninsula, bypassing the traditional choke point of the **Suez Canal**.
- The project envisions a multimodal economic corridor integrating railways, ports, highways, energy networks and digital infrastructure to enhance trade, investment and connectivity.
- Unlike conventional transport corridors, **IMEC** is conceived as a holistic and multidimensional infrastructure project encompassing sea routes, rail networks, pipelines, undersea high-speed data links, green hydrogen corridors and transnational energy transmission grids.
- The central section consists of an overland route across **West Asia**, traversing the **UAE, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Israel**, and culminating at the port of **Haifa** on Israel's Mediterranean coast.
- The western leg of the corridor is sea-based, connecting **Haifa** to various European ports, beyond which the continent's extensive transportation network takes over.
- What has happened due to the war?
- Major areas of the originally envisioned corridor, particularly those involving **Israel** and the port of **Haifa**, were directly affected by the conflict.
- Key ports in the **UAE**, particularly **Jebel Ali** and **Fujairah**, have been repeatedly targeted by Iran, while disruptions in the **Strait of Hormuz** have exposed the geographical vulnerabilities of these ports.
- **Saudi Arabia** and the **UAE** in the war both countries are key partners in **IMEC**, and any adversarial posture between them could prove to be a major setback for the corridor, whose success depends on smooth coordination and seamless connectivity across the region.
- The **UAE's** April 2026 announcement that it was opting out of the global oil grouping, the **Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)**, and reports of its growing strategic coordination with **Israel**, including the deployment of Israeli defence systems such as the **Iron Beam**, risk widening differences between **Riyadh** and **Abu Dhabi**.
- However, for such initiatives to succeed, they must also navigate the region's geopolitical complexities, including the rapidly evolving dynamics among key partners such as **Saudi Arabia** and the **UAE**.
- To this end, the option of developing key ports in **Oman** — such as **Salalah, Duqm and Muscat** — as eastern entry points could be explored, as they are located well away from the conflict-prone **Strait of Hormuz**.
- Similarly, on the western end, until the port of **Haifa** becomes a secure transit hub, a western spur passing through **Egypt** and terminating at one of its major Mediterranean ports could offer a viable alternative.
- **Egypt** already possesses the logistics ecosystem required to support **IMEC**, including the **Suez Canal Economic Zone**, six operational ports and four industrial zones specialising in green hydrogen, liquefied natural gas, shipbuilding and other future-oriented sectors.
- European countries such as **Italy** and **France**, which are positioning themselves as key champions of **IMEC** in Europe, will also need to play an active role.
- While elevating their bilateral ties to a **Special Strategic Partnership, India and Italy** reaffirmed their commitment to cooperate on **IMEC**, recognising its transformative potential to reshape and promote global trade, connectivity and prosperity.

02J6. EU's engagement with West Balkan countries is real: Costa

- **European Council President António Costa** said on Monday that this week's **European Union summit** with **Western Balkan** candidate nations aims to show that the opportunity for enlargement is real.



- “This tour is a clear sign that the commitment of the **European Union** to the **Western Balkans** is real.”
- “As real as the opportunity for enlargement.”
- Mr. Costa will co-chair the summit in **Montenegro** on Friday that will gather EU leaders and top officials from **Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Kosovo, Serbia and Montenegro**.
- The **six nations** are each at a different stage of the accession process with **Montenegro** and **Albania** leading the way.
- The EU has recently sought to encourage reform in the candidate nations fearing growing influence of **Russia** and **China**.
- **Ukraine** and **Moldova** are also among about ten countries aspiring to join the bloc.
- Candidate countries must bring their laws into line in **35 policy areas**, or “chapters,” ranging from justice standards to farm and fishing rules.
- **All 27 EU members** must agree before each chapter can be opened, and then again for it to be closed.
- Friday’s event in the **Adriatic Sea** resort of **Tivat** will be “a clear demonstration of our determination to bring forward our cooperation and build on the momentum of the European Union’s enlargement,” Mr. Costa said.
- **Bosnia** has lagged behind, still deeply divided along ethnic lines long after the **1992-95 war** that killed more than **100,000 people** and displaced millions.

02J6. Court rejects Rwanda’s £100 mn claim against U.K. over migrant deal

- An international court on Monday rejected a claim by **Rwanda** for **Britain** to pay more than **£100 million** it said London still owed from a scrapped deal to deport migrants.
- Judges from the **Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA)** in **The Hague** ruled that Britain was not liable for two years of outstanding costs from the scheme that was shelved in 2024.
- In 2022, former U.K. Prime Minister **Boris Johnson** sealed a deal with **Kigali** to send to Rwanda migrants arriving in Britain via “dangerous or illegal journeys” in small boats or lorries.
- But Kigali argued in its pre-hearing submissions to the PCA that two annual payments of **£50 million** were still outstanding.
- But the **PCA**, set up in 1899 to settle contractual disputes between nations, rejected by majority a **£50 million** claim for one year and unanimously rejected the same amount for the second.

01J6. Nepal PM sparks row, says his country has encroached upon Indian territory

- **Nepal Prime Minister Balendra Shah** said on Sunday that Nepal too had encroached upon Indian territory, in what is considered to be the first such public statement by a head of government of the neighbouring country.
- Mr. Shah was responding to a question in Parliament regarding the **Kalapani region**, which remains disputed between Nepal and India.
- “You might find it strange, but I also learned only recently — after becoming Prime Minister — that it is not just India but Nepal too has encroached upon Indian territories in many places,” Mr. Shah said, prompting an uproar in Parliament as the Opposition objected to the statement.

Kailash Yatra

- **Nepal and India** have a long-pending boundary dispute over **Lipulekh, Limpiyadhura, and Kalapani** and the dispute resurfaced recently when India announced the revival of the **Kailash Manasarovar Yatra** pilgrimage via the Lipulekh route.
- **Nepal** then sent diplomatic notes to both **India** and **China**.
- **India** maintains that the territories are part of **Uttarakhand**.

01J6. Shaping the next chapter in India-Canada relations

- **India and Canada** are turning the page together, opening a vibrant new chapter as **two democratic, multicultural, and innovation-driven nations**.
- Both governments are signalling a fresh resolve to deepen cooperation and pursue common goals.
- Canadian Prime Minister **Mark Carney’s** recent trip to India (February 27-March 2, 2026) and the just-concluded visit of India’s Commerce and Industry Minister, **Piyush Goyal**, to Canada highlight the importance both nations attach to their relationship in an evolving global order.
- Mr. Carney’s visit also reignited talks for a **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)**, and both nations’ determination to finalise it by the end of 2026, along with the ambitious target of reaching **\$50 billion** in bilateral trade by 2030, signals a new era of economic confidence.

The view from Ottawa



TELEGRAM CHANNEL: <https://t.me/patrioticIAS>

YOUTUBE CHANNEL: <https://www.youtube.com/@PatrioticIAS>

CONTACT: 9971932488



- Equally important, it seeks to deepen business-to-business linkages, enhance investor confidence, and encourage industry on both sides to translate strategic intent into tangible commercial partnerships and long-term economic collaboration.
- Indian companies have invested significantly in Canada and created thousands of jobs across the country, in sectors ranging from technology and life sciences to manufacturing and mining, highlighting the depth and diversification of bilateral business relations.

The diaspora link

- Indian-origin entrepreneurs, professionals, academics, students, and community leaders have left an incredible mark on Canada's economic and social landscape.
- **Strengthening Indo-Pacific cooperation**
- India's drive for growth, energy transformation, and manufacturing expansion opens a wealth of opportunities for Canadian businesses and investors.
- This is the moment to transform goodwill into action and promise into partnership.

01J6. Romania identifies drone behind apartment block strike as Russian

- Further analysis of a drone that smashed into a **Romanian** apartment building, sparking furious condemnation of **Russia**, has shown that it undoubtedly came from **Moscow's** forces, **Bucharest** said on Sunday.

01J6. Israel captures Beaufort castle in Lebanon in its deepest incursion

- The 12th century Crusader-built castle overlooks **Litani river** and has long-standing strategic importance.
- The capture of **Beaufort castle**, near the city of **Nabatiyeh**, came after days of air strikes and intense fighting in nearby villages where Israeli troops fought **Hezbollah** members in the rugged area.

01J6. Russia may use Belarus as launchpad for new Ukrainian offensive: experts

- Over four years ago, Belarusian President **Alexander Lukashenko** allowed longtime ally Russia to use his territory to invade Ukraine.
- Belarus, which also borders **NATO** members Latvia, Lithuania and Poland, has hosted some of Russia's tactical nuclear weapons.
- In December, Russia announced that its latest intermediate range nuclear-capable **Oreshnik** missile system entered service in Belarus.



PATRIOTIC IAS

MONTHLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

JUNE 2026

GENERAL STUDIES PAPER III

SUBJECT: ECONOMY

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05J6	India to drop capital gains tax for foreign investors in govt. bonds	02J6	As rare earths become strategic assets, China trains youth with specialised courses
04J6	U.S. moots 12.5% tariff on India for failure to enforce 'forced labour' regulations		

26J6. India's shipbuilding ambitions can set sail with Korea

- There must be a focus on **human capital development, policy and fiscal support**, and bringing in **ancillary industries**.
- India's Maritime Vision 2030** and **Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047** clearly state the objective of being among the **top 10**

shipbuilding nations by 2030 and in the **top five by 2047**.

- Complementing initiatives such as the **Maritime Development Fund, Shipbuilding Development Scheme, and Shipbuilding Financial Assistance Policy** make it clearer that **India** is serious about attracting **foreign investment** in the shipping and shipbuilding sector.
- However, **policy** and **operational gaps** persist.



- To rectify these gaps, **India** will have to focus on implementing a series of reforms related to **regulatory consistency** and **legal predictability** and also providing access to **low-cost** and **long-term capital**.
- Steps such as the creation of the **Sagarmala Finance Corporation Limited (SFCL)**, India's first **non-banking financial company** for the maritime sector, are a positive and welcome development.
- However, the greater challenge will be establishing a comprehensive **industrial ecosystem** for shipbuilding.

25J6. ₹405-cr. gold mining facility opens in A.P.

- Andhra Pradesh** Chief Minister **N. Chandrababu Naidu** inaugurated the **first unit** of a **gold mining project** at **Jonnagiri** in **Kurnool district** on Wednesday.
- The **₹405-crore** plant was established by **Geomysore Services India Pvt. Limited (GMSI)**.
- Mr. **Naidu** also laid the **foundation stone** for the **second unit**.
- Marking the commencement of **sales**, he then handed over **gold** produced at the unit to **jewellery firms** in the State.
- Addressing a **public meeting** later, the **Chief Minister** said: "**Jonnagiri**, once known as **Suvarnagiri**, will emerge as a **model growth centre** for **Andhra Pradesh**."
- Karnataka's Kolar Gold Fields (KGF)** had once dominated the national scene, but now "**Jonnagiri unit** is the **cynosure of all eyes**".
- "The **plant** will have an **annual capacity** of **400 kg of gold**," he said.

25J6. Goyal to visit U.K. to review preparedness for trade deal roll-out

- Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal** will travel to the **United Kingdom** from **June 25-27** to meet his **U.K. counterpart** and review the preparedness of both countries for the implementation of the **India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA)** and its companion **Double Contribution Convention (DCC)** on **July 15**

25J6. BHIM UPI to offer financial products

- From **credit cards**, **loans**, **investments** and **over time insurance**, a **bouquet of financial products** is planned to be offered on **BHIM payments app**, **NPCI BHIM Services (NBSL)** **MD-CEO Lalitha Nataraj** said.
- "We have partnered with **multiple banks** to distribute **credit cards** and working with some of the **NBFCs** [for loans]."

- Also working with banks for **national pension schemes**.
- Insurance** and **investments** [offerings] will follow little later," she told the media.
- Since its introduction in **2016** the app has undergone **revamps** and sported **new features**, **BHIM 3.0** roll out in **2025** being the last, **Ms. Nataraj** said.
- It has made a beginning with **Canara Bank** and is in talks with at least one more **public sector lender** as well as a **private bank**, she said.

24J6. Evident distress

- The latest data on the **Index of Eight Core Industries** show that **these sectors** cumulatively grew just **0.5%** in **May 2026**, the second-lowest in **21 months**.
- It would have been easy to pass this off as a war-related impact, but the data also show that the index grew by an **almost equally anaemic 1.1%** over the course of the entire financial year **2025-26**.
- What remains a concern is that the **domestic crude oil** and **natural gas** sectors continued their **multi-year streaks** of contractions in **May** as well.
- While imported oil can be used to meet demand, domestic production should nevertheless be ramped up to fill **strategic reserves**.
- In any case, what impact the **'super El Niño'** will have on fertilizer demand is still uncertain.
- Coal production**, too, contracted by the most in nearly a year.
- The latest **Goods and Services Tax (GST) revenue** data too show that domestic economic activity seems to be slowing.
- Revenues from domestic transactions contracted **2.6%** in **May 2026**.

24J6. India's next challenge — from invention to global scale

- India established the **Semiconductor Complex Limited (SCL)** in the **1970s** — when semiconductors were still an emerging industry — recognising early that integrated circuits would become the foundation of the digital age.
- Yet, while **Taiwan** built **TSMC** and **South Korea** developed **Samsung's semiconductor empire**, India failed to translate its early lead into a globally competitive manufacturing ecosystem.
- The problem was not vision or scientific capability, but limited capital, inadequate scale, inconsistent policy support and an inward-looking public sector approach.
- A similar story can be told about **ECIL**.
- Established in **1967**, it developed indigenous computers, control systems and strategic electronics when India faced severe technology embargoes.



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- **ECIL** played a vital role in building technological self-reliance.
- The **Simputer** followed a similar trajectory.
- Conceived in 1998 by Indian technologists, it anticipated many features that would later define smartphones and tablets.
- Yet, despite its innovation, the supporting ecosystem was absent.
- **Venture capital**, software platforms, component supply chains and consumer markets were not mature enough to help it achieve global scale.
- India's **pharmaceutical industry** evolved into a globally competitive manufacturing powerhouse, making the country the **pharmacy of the world** and a leading **vaccine producer**.
- India also developed indigenous **supercomputing** capabilities through the **PARAM programme**.
- More recently, **Aadhaar** and **UPI** have shown how technology platforms designed for scale can transform a nation.
- Scale creates **ecosystems**, ecosystems create industries, and industries create **global leadership**.
- Today, India stands at another technological inflection point.
- **AI, quantum computing** and **space technologies** are likely to shape the next half-century, just as semiconductors and software shaped the last.
- We should ask bold questions about **orbital computing infrastructure**, **space-based AI platforms** or even **data centres** and **quantum communication networks**.
- These ideas may seem futuristic today.
- But so did semiconductors, smartphones and AI when they first emerged.

Stopping too soon

- The deeper lesson from **SCL**, **ECIL** and **Simputer** is not that India failed, but that it often stopped too soon.
- We celebrated **technological capability** before building the ecosystems needed for global scale.

23J6. Jairam writes to Sonowal, seeks clarity on Nicobar transshipment port project

- "I take it that these competing well-established ports are **Colombo, Singapore and Port Klang**.

23J6. Reclaiming T.N.'s fiscal autonomy

- **Tamil Nadu's** problem today is not **fiscal profligacy** or **corruption**; the pressing problem is its model of **inclusive growth** itself; the real challenge is **getting investment**, generating

decent jobs, improving **wages**, while actively renegotiating **fiscal space** with the **Centre**.

- It indeed offers an honest account of what went wrong with **tax collection**: a shrinking base and leakages embedded in both **revenue collection** and **expenditure patterns**.

Collapse of revenue generation

- About **70%** of its expenditure came from its own tax revenue in sharp contrast to States such as **Bihar** and **Uttar Pradesh**, which largely rely on the Centre's transfers.
- With the introduction of the **Goods and Services Tax in 2017**, States have lost their autonomy on taxation.
- **Tamil Nadu** suffered the most.
- The **State's Own Tax Revenue to Gross State Domestic Product ratio**, which was **7.92%** in **2011-12**, has been steadily declining, and was down to **5.93%** in **2021-22** and further down to **5.45%** in **2025-26**.
- While the white paper clearly shows that the decline is spread across all major tax heads — **GST, petroleum VAT, State excise, stamp duty and motor vehicle tax** — the **GST** alone accounts for about **53%** of total tax revenue.
- Despite having the second largest economy with a size of **₹35.29 lakh crore** of Gross State Domestic Product, its GST collection was **₹72,008 crore** lower than that of **Karnataka** and **₹80,823 crore** lower than that of **Gujarat**.

Revenue leakages, sectoral debt

- Similarly, **motor vehicle tax** collection has lagged since the number of vehicles registered in the State has not kept pace.
- Not to mention **stamp duties** in rent-seeking sectors such as **real estate**, which is known for undervaluation of property at registration and excessive leakages and corruption.
- Even **mining revenue** is among the most striking examples of stagnation in non-tax income.
- Besides corruption in valuation, leakage in the assessment of **minor mineral extraction** also contributed to the decline.
- The key sectors that drive the State into this **debt trap** are the **power sector** and **transport sector**.
- The **power sector** alone carries **₹2.47 lakh crore** of debt.

Revenue leakages, sectoral debt

- For instance, **Union tax devolution** and **grants-in-aid** together constituted about **34.95%** of Total Revenue Receipts in **2021-22** and declined to **25.5%** in **2025-26**.
- Again, this decline precedes a decade.



- The State's share in total transfer was **5.305%** in the **Twelfth Finance Commission** period, but it came down to **4.969%** in the **Thirteenth Finance Commission** period and fell to **4.023%** under the **Sixteenth Finance Commission**.
- This declining share is due to the formula adopted by the successive **Finance Commissions**.
- The **high weightage** given to the **per capita income distance**, combined with population, works to the State's disadvantage.
- Even the **weight assigned to Gross Domestic Product contribution** by the **Sixteenth Finance Commission** did not help as the formula remains unfavourable.
- Nor have **criteria such as area and forest cover** worked in the State's favour.
- In that sense, the State is a victim of both **vertical** and **horizontal distribution**.

Debt, demography and scissors effect

- The ability to repay the debt is limited, the paper argues, because a **shrinking working-age population** means a **shrinking tax base**.
- It also means the need for higher **social expenditure** as the share of the elderly population goes up.
- The interaction between a rising **debt stock** and a shrinking working-age population can create conditions for a debt trap which demographers call the '**scissors effect**'.
- It refers to the widening gap between **revenue capacity** and **expenditure obligations**.

23J6. Net FDI jumped to \$6.6 bn in April, highest in nearly 5 years

- **Net FDI** rose to **\$6.6 billion** in April 2026, its highest level in nearly **five years**, driven by a **65% surge in gross inflows**, an analysis of official data shows.
- In other words, the **data released by the Reserve Bank of India** on Monday shows that the total amount of **direct investment** that entered the country in April 2026 exceeded the amount leaving it by **\$6.6 billion**.
- The corresponding figure in March 2026 was **\$917 million**.
- April's **net FDI** figure was the highest since **May 2021**.
- The surge in **gross inflows** even overshadowed the fact that **outward FDI** by Indian companies also rose to a **historic high** in April 2026.
- "Source wise, more than **75%** of the **FDI flows** came from **Japan, Singapore and Mauritius**," the RBI said in its monthly bulletin report.

Slower outflow growth

- **Gross outflows** rose, too, but at a significantly slower pace, to **\$8.7 billion** in April 2026 from **\$7.7 billion** in April last year — a growth of **13.7%**.
- "As regards **outward FDI**, around **80%** of the flows were directed to the **U.S.** and the **Cayman Islands**," the RBI said.

23J6. Cred founder Kunal Shah named WhatsApp chief

- **WhatsApp** will be headed by **Cred founder Kunal Shah**, starting as early as this week, the messaging platform announced, marking the elevation of the **serial fintech entrepreneur** to the leadership of the world's largest messaging platform.
- **WhatsApp** parent **Meta**, which also owns **Instagram** and **Facebook**, will invest **\$900 million** (about **₹8,550 crore**) in Cred as a part of this hire, enabling Cred to move forward with **ESOP buybacks**.
- As Cred's **CEO**, a post to be held on an interim basis by senior executive **Miten Sampat**, Mr. Shah oversaw the service's growth to a user base that covered over a third of India's **credit card bill payments**, targeting the most affluent Indians.
- Before founding Cred, Mr. Shah founded startups such as **PaisaBack**, focused on **cashbacks** in 2009 and **FreeCharge**, a mobile wallet acquired by **Snapdeal** in 2015.
- He was an **angel investor** on the back of the ballooning valuations of his past ventures and had taken stakes in firms across the **fintech ecosystem**.

23J6. EU courts Brazil as strategic partner in global race for critical minerals

- Mr. Sikela said the **European approach** emphasises **sustainable business** and local **rare earth processing**, aligning with Brazil's push to export higher-value processed minerals instead of raw materials from a sector in which it holds the **world's second-largest critical mineral reserves**.
- Viridis' pilot mining project in **Minas Gerais**, inaugurated in **May**, can process **100 kilograms of ore per hour** and produce up to **2.92 kg of mixed rare earth carbonate (MREC)** annually.

22J6. The curious case of Kerala's committed expenditure

- Despite grave concerns raised in the white paper, Kerala's budget was silent on measures to bring down the committed expenditure



- The white paper, '**Kerala's Fiscal Health — A Status Report**', released by the new **United Democratic Front (UDF)** government ahead of its maiden budget, raised serious concerns over the State's rising **debt burden**.
- The report in particular underscored the huge share of the State's **committed expenditure** — which includes **salaries, pensions and interest payments**.
- It emphasised that nearly **78% share** of committed expenditure in the total **revenue receipts** left little to no room for **capital expenditure** and contributed to mounting **revenue deficits**.
- Kerala's spending on **salaries and pensions**, as a share of its revenue receipts, is the highest among all States and its share of **committed expenditure** the second-highest.
- The trend has more or less remained the same over the years.
- Noting that the State spends "almost **80%**" of its revenue on committed expenditure, the white paper said, "The most direct structural explanation for Kerala's **treasury stress** is the share of its revenue that is pre-empted before any discretionary decision."
- "Now is the time for **hard political decisions**," it said, adding that measures such as increasing the **retirement age** and making **pay commission revisions** decennial should be considered.
- Yet, the budget was conspicuously silent on any such measures, barring the exception that the **National Pension System (NPS)** would be revamped.
- The silence is perhaps an acknowledgement of not just the difficulty in tackling this **structural problem**, but the importance of high spending on salaries and pensions in achieving the progress the State has made on **human development indicators**.
- Economist **R. Ramakumar** said retaining the idea of a **welfare state** requires welfare workers and pointed out that Kerala employs significantly more **teachers, healthcare professionals** and other **public-sector workers**.
- "Kerala's achievements are due to this particular kind of salaries that you end up paying," he added.
- Moreover, he said that while the figure of over **75%** highlighted prominently in the white paper has "**shock value**", a better parameter would be the committed expenditure's share in the total **revenue expenditure** and not **revenue receipts**, which would bring the share down to about **58-60%**.
- Economist **Lekha Chakraborty**, meanwhile, said the trend reflected **public expenditure rigidity**.
- "All that we can do is an episodic expenditure (**sectoral**) compression, given the committed nature of spending. While the state has shown

revenue buoyancy, without meaningful **public expenditure reforms**, this pattern risks perpetuating **revenue deficits** and constraining Kerala's ability to sustain its **social model**," she said.

- Kerala's **State's Own Tax Revenue (SOTR)** and overall **revenue receipts** have shown notable growth, but the **tax buoyancy** has dropped in recent years.
- Moreover, their respective **Compound Annual Growth Rates (CAGRs)** between **2015-16** and **2026-27** (budget estimates) show that the **committed expenditure** has grown faster.
- The budget, presented on Thursday, estimates the **debt-to-GSDP ratio** to come down marginally to **33.5%** in **2026-27**, compared with **34.87% (2024-25)** or **34.26% (2025-26)**, even though it projects the total **outstanding debt** to rise by **11.6%**.
- These optimistic projections show that the new government is relying on a swift turnaround in **tax buoyancy** and **GSDP growth**.
- It estimates the **GSDP** to grow nominally by **14.15%** and **revenue receipts** by **23.8%**, while recognising that expenditure on **salaries and pensions** cannot be brought down, at least in the near future.

19J6. Govt. ratifies 8.25% EPF interest rate for FY26

- The government has ratified an **8.25% rate of interest** on **Employees' Provident Fund (EPF)** deposits for the financial year **2025-26**, which is likely to be credited to more than **seven crore contributing members** this month.
- The **Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO)** provides the rate of interest on EPF after it is ratified by the government through the **Finance Ministry**.
- The **Finance Ministry** has given its concurrence to the **8.25% interest rate** fixed by the **Central Board of Trustees (CBT)**, the apex decision-making body of the EPFO.
- On **March 2**, the **Central Board of Trustees**, in a meeting chaired by **Union Labour Minister Mansukh Mandaviya**, had decided to fix the **8.25% interest rate** for financial year **2025-26**.
- This marks the **third consecutive year** that the same rate of interest has been maintained.
- Under the **new ecosystem** developed by the **EPFO**, the interest on EPF deposits will be credited into subscribers' accounts immediately.

19J6. Essential upgrades

- The updates to **India's statistical system** are welcome, albeit **long overdue**.
- The government has, in recent months, implemented several long-overdue but welcome upgrades to India's **statistical databases**.



- Wide-ranging, they cover the way the country measures **Gross Domestic Product (GDP)**, industrial production, and price changes at the retail, wholesale, and producer levels.
- These updates have not only made India's key economic statistics more representative of reality, but have also brought them in line with international best practices.
- The most basic change across all indices has been the updating of **base years**.
- Until recently, the **base years for GDP, the Consumer Price Index (CPI), Wholesale Price Index (WPI), and Index of Industrial Production (IIP)** were either 2011 or 2012.
- As such, these measures were significantly outdated and less reflective of reality with each passing year.
- In February, the **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)** released the new series of national accounts data, including **GDP**, with a base year of **2022-23**.
- The new series incorporates methodological improvements and new data sources, making it more granular and robust.
- Some of these, such as the **double-deflator approach**, have long been demanded by statisticians and international bodies, including the **IMF**.
- Similarly, **MoSPI** had in February also released the new series of the **CPI** with an updated base year of **2024**, a more inclusive basket of items measured, and more accurate weightages.
- This has enabled a more realistic reading of retail inflation, a key metric in interest-rate decisions.
- In early June, **MoSPI** then released the new series of the **IIP** as well.
- The base year was updated to **2022-23** and the index's data collection was strengthened.
- This, too, eventually feeds into more accurate **GDP** data.
- The other factor to be highlighted is that the data upgrades have not been limited to just **MoSPI**.
- The **Ministry of Commerce and Industry** also updated its **WPI**, releasing the new series on Monday.
- A more accurate **WPI** and **CPI** yield a more accurate **GDP deflator**, which strengthens the way that statisticians derive real GDP growth after having adjusted for inflation.
- The **Commerce Ministry** also released a new **Producer Price Index (PPI)**, which is to replace the **WPI** in five years.
- A **PPI** is the standard among developed economies and provides more information about both goods and service price levels at the producer stage.
- With all these, the **IMF** is sure to improve the recurring 'C' grade it has given India's national accounts data.

19J6. The real barriers to trade are no longer tariffs

- Recently, the CEO of a large multinational called to ask whether the upcoming visit of the **United States Trade Representative** to India could result in **tariff rates returning to around 18% or settling at a different level**.
- The **U.S. reciprocal rate cut to 18%**.
- But the White House fact sheet buried the more consequential admission — that **both sides needed to negotiate the removal of non-tariff barriers**.
- The **U.S. deploys its own formidable non-tariff barriers arsenal while India has its quality regulations**.
- The tariff headline was the press release.
- The **real obstacles** are faced in the laboratory and the law offices through **NTBs**.
- **NTBs** are the regulations, certifications, licensing rules, and product requirements that goods must meet before entering a market.
- They include technical regulations, environmental rules, health and safety requirements, packaging standards and testing procedures.
- Unlike tariffs, which are transparent and easy to measure, these regulatory hurdles operate within the system and exert a far-reaching influence on trade.

NTBs, the quiet trade weapon

- Since the establishment of the **World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1995**, average tariff rates among its members have fallen by nearly half, yet governments have not abandoned protectionism.
- **As tariffs declined, NTBs surged**.
- Today, they affect around 90% of global trade — a sixfold increase over the past three decades.
- The regulatory landscape has expanded just as rapidly.
- More than half of the 20,000 global product and safety regulations introduced over the past 70 years have emerged since 2000, creating a dense web of overlapping rules that complicates cross-border commerce and raises compliance costs, particularly for smaller exporters.
- The WTO itself reflects this shift.
- **In 2025 alone, governments submitted over 7,700 notifications of NTBs and health-related trade measures, 10 times more than in 1995**.
- Among major economies, the **European Union (EU)** is the most extensive user of these regulatory tools.
- According to the World Trade Organization and World Bank data, **non-tariff measures cover roughly about 94% of imports entering the EU**,



compared with about 77% in the U.S. and nearly 45% in India.

- Each major economy deploys these barriers differently.
- The EU has built the world's most expansive regulatory architecture for trade, with NTBs concentrated in environmental rules, chemical safety regulations, product standards, packaging requirements and climate-related policies such as the **Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism** and the **EU Deforestation Regulation**.
- The American NTBs are driven by strategic competition, security concerns and technological dominance.
- Export controls, entity lists and restrictions on semiconductors, AI chips and advanced computing hardware increasingly limit rivals' access to critical technology supply chains.
- India has traditionally relied more on tariffs, but this is changing.

The Indian experience

- The **Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)-India agreement** has been in force since 2010, yet preferential tariff utilisation among Indian businesses remains below 50%, largely because **non-tariff barriers** make claiming these benefits commercially impractical.
- Overall, India's **FTA utilisation rate** is about 25%, compared with 70%-80% for developed economies.
- The agreements existed on paper; the barriers remained in practice.

The next frontier of trade

- The **United Arab Emirates Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement** explicitly mandates automatic recognition of medicines approved by major global regulators, and requires mutual acceptance of laboratory testing that eliminates duplicate compliance costs.
- The **India-European Free Trade Association Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement**, in force since October 2025, goes further with mutual recognition of standards, streamlined conformity assessment, and a dedicated sub-committee mandated to address **non-tariff barriers** on an ongoing basis.
- For the first time, **NTB reduction** is a legally binding obligation.
- The politics of trade still talks about tariffs.
- The economics of trade has already moved on.

19J6. Is India producing more graduates than what the economy can absorb?

- In engineering alone, the number of graduates has risen sharply over the past few years while job creation has not kept pace.
- Earlier, the **IT services sector** was the principal employer of engineering graduates.
- Today, hiring by IT services firms has slowed considerably, even though sectors such as banking and financial services, manufacturing, defence and space technologies have expanded their recruitment.
- The challenge is that these new opportunities have not grown fast enough to absorb the increasing number of graduates entering the labour market.
- Much of the recent investment in sectors such as semiconductors, advanced manufacturing and technology has been capital-intensive rather than labour-intensive.

Has AI made the problem worse?

- Companies now want graduates who can work with AI systems, validate AI-generated outputs, understand responsible and ethical AI use, and solve complex problems using technology.
- Four years ago, when many of today's graduates entered college, these skills were not widely discussed.
- Universities cannot redesign programmes overnight, and students cannot acquire entirely new competencies instantly.
- As a result, many graduates are entering a labour market that demands skills different from those they were trained for.

Is employability more important than just job creation?

- The problem is often a mismatch between what is taught and what the industry requires.
- Students may graduate with strong academic credentials but have limited exposure to laboratories, manufacturing environments, teamwork and real-world problem-solving.
- When they enter the industry, employers frequently find that they need substantial additional training in order to contribute effectively.
- Companies run their own training programmes to bridge this gap.
- This was far less common a few decades ago.

Has manufacturing failed to create enough opportunities?

- People often focus on the impact of AI on software jobs, but manufacturing is also being transformed by automation, robotics, and Industry 4.0 systems.
- Digital manufacturing systems require fewer people to oversee production processes.



- Even as factories expand output, they often require fewer workers and supervisors than before.

residual quotas and access under an Authorised Use Scheme (AUS).

Industrial Revolution	Key Feature
Industry 1.0	Mechanization using steam power
Industry 2.0	Mass production using electricity
Industry 3.0	Automation using computers and electronics
Industry 4.0	Smart, connected, data-driven systems

18J6. India, U.K. announce July 15 as trade deal implementation date

- India and the United Kingdom have overcome last-minute differences over **steel import duties** to finally announce **July 15** as the implementation date for the trade deal between the two countries, the two governments announced on Wednesday.
- The **Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA)** was signed by the two countries in **July 2025** and was all set to be implemented by April or early May 2026.
- However, a fresh regulation by the **U.K.** announced in May and applicable to all countries cut the quota for **duty-free steel imports** by **60%** and doubled the tariff on above-quota imports to **50%**.
- These new rules are to come into effect from **July 1, 2026**.
- These tariffs and quotas were not part of the trade deal negotiations and suddenly halted the implementation process.
- According to **Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal**, a team from India has been in the U.K. over the last few days to move things along.
- "Delighted to note that the **India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement** will enter into force on **15th July 2026**," **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** posted on X following the announcement.
- "This agreement will significantly boost our bilateral trade and investment."
- The implementation of the trade deal, under which the **U.K.** will remove tariffs on **99% of its product lines**, will be accompanied by the implementation of the **Agreement on Social Security**, also referred to as the **Double Contribution Convention (DCC)**, on **July 15**.
- It further said that such protections would be through a mix of **country-specific quotas**,

'Landmark consensus'

- "Demonstrating the collaborative strength of the **India-U.K. Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CETA)**, India and the United Kingdom have successfully reached a **landmark consensus** to safeguard and promote bilateral steel trade," the **Ministry of Commerce and Industry** said in a release.
- Without revealing details on what exactly the solution to the **U.K. steel tariff issue** would entail, the release added that "both sides mutually agreed to protect commercial interests, minimise market disruptions, and ensure an overall balanced and stable trading environment for exporters".

17J6. Central banks to raise gold reserves over one year: WGC

- The **World Gold Council's (WGC) 2026 Central Bank Gold Reserves (CBGR) survey** indicates that the **central banks** around the world will accumulate more **gold** in the future.
- Central banks have accumulated an average of **1,000 tonne of gold** over the past four years, which is significantly higher from the **500 tonne average** over the preceding decade.

17J6. U.P., Gujarat, Jharkhand log FY25 revenue surplus: CAG

- **Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Manipur** and 9 other States recorded **surplus revenue** in **2024-25**, while the remaining 15 States had a **deficit**.
- Eighteen States targeted **revenue surplus**, three States targeted **revenue deficit** and seven targeted **zero revenue deficit** in **FY 2024-25**, according to a report on '**State Finances 2024-25**' released by **Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) K. Sanjay Murthy** on Tuesday.
- "In **FY 2024-25**, 15 States were **revenue-deficient** while the rest 13 States were **revenue surplus**," the report said.

17J6. Beyond the 270 GW peak power demand there is a need for prioritising quality and reliability

- The recent achievement of **record-breaking peak demand exceeding 270 GW** marks a historic moment for the **Indian power sector**.
- From the pre-independence era of privately owned decentralised electricity systems to post-



independence focus on 'pumpset energisation' and basic lighting through "Kutir Jyoti" Scheme, the sector has evolved significantly, particularly after the passage of the Electricity Act, 2003.

- Through massive infrastructure initiatives like the Deen Dayal Upadhyay Gram Jyoti Yojana (DDUGJY) and the SAUBHAGYA Scheme, the physical framework for last-mile connectivity has covered nearly 100% households.
- However, as the nation moves toward its 2047 target of approximately 4,000 kWh of per capita electricity consumption, a significant leap from the current level of 1,600 kWh, the definition of success must be rewritten beyond access and availability to include the reliability and quality of every kilowatt-hour delivered.
- For a consumer base that now includes lighting load to advanced semiconductor manufacturing to cold storage facilities and productive use of electricity to public infrastructure like smart classrooms and medical clinics, the supply of electricity is no longer sufficient.
- Power quality, characterised by precise voltage stability, frequency control and the absence of waveform distortion, is a necessity.
- Even a short fluctuation in power supply can stop machines, damage electronic equipment, and disrupt industrial operations.
- While the average supply hours in rural areas have reached an impressive 22 hours in most states, the lack of predictability is a significant hurdle.
- To address the above issues, the Government of India launched the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS) in 2021 for a period of five years.
- Under the scheme, around 54% of the total sanctioned amount has been allocated for loss reduction infrastructure works, and 46% earmarked for smart metering.
- The Draft National Electricity Policy 2026 emphasises setting benchmarks for supply quality through reliability indices such as SAIDI, SAIFI, and CAIDI, along with regular reporting and public disclosure to ensure transparency and accountability.
- However, these indices are currently monitored only at the sub-transmission level.
- They should be extended to the transformer and low-tension network level for more accurate assessment of consumer experience.

16J6. Centre hikes windfall tax on diesel, aviation fuel exports

Government Hikes Windfall Gains Tax on Diesel and ATF Exports

- The government on Monday hiked windfall gains tax on exports of diesel and aviation turbine fuel (ATF), while retaining the levy on petrol for the fortnight beginning June 16.
- The rate of Special Additional Excise Duty (SAED) on export of diesel will be ₹14 per litre, up from ₹13.5 per litre at present.
- The SAED on export of ATF will be ₹12.5 per litre, up from ₹9.5 per litre.
- There is no change in the rate of duty on exports of petrol and it continues to be at ₹1.5 per litre.
- The Finance Ministry, in a notification, said the duty hikes would be effective from June 16.
- Also, there is no change in the existing duty rates on petrol and diesel cleared for domestic consumption.

15J6. Vaishnaw expects more companies to produce memory chips in India

- New companies are likely to invest in India to manufacture memory chips while existing investors will scale up production to address the demand-supply gap in the segment, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said.
- He said the India Semicon Mission (ISM) 1.0 could get about 48 startups to work on the tech products.
- "In ISM 2.0, that will be the topmost priority, design will be the topmost priority. The second biggest priority will be machines, which are used in the manufacturing of semiconductors," Mr. Vaishnaw said.

15J6. Fuller expression

- India's May retail inflation at 3.93%, the highest in the current CPI series and roughly a 15-month high if compared with the previous series, has begun to reflect the pass-through effects of surging food and fuel costs more clearly than in previous months.
- However, last month's wholesale inflation numbers, the first under the new WPI series and due later this month alongside India's first Producer Price Index (PPI), should reveal how much of the price shock producers and wholesalers continue to absorb.
- Significantly, the sharp rise in commercial LPG prices — by about ₹1,300 per 19-kg cylinder, representing an increase of over 75% since February — appears to be reflected in inflation in the restaurants and accommodation services category, which stood at 5.75%, the second-highest division after personal care and miscellaneous goods and services.
- Although May's inflation remains below the RBI's 4% target and within its 2%-6% tolerance band, the RBI retained its neutral stance at its latest monetary policy review,



signalling concern over the possibility of further price pressures.

- Its intervention in the **foreign exchange market** through dollar sales has meanwhile helped shore up the **rupee**, Asia's worst-performing currency since the **U.S.-Israeli conflict with Iran** escalated.
- The Centre may nevertheless draw some comfort from the fact that **core inflation**, which excludes food and fuel, remained relatively contained at around **3.8%-3.9%** in May, largely unchanged from recent months.
- This coincides with signs of a **U.S.-Iran rapprochement** and uninterrupted shipping through the **Hormuz**.

15J6. Towards a fair, efficient insolvency regime

- The outline of **India's Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC)** has long been demarcated by an innate stiffness between the inevitability to **preserve distraught companies and the necessity to safeguard the interests of creditors**.
- This contradiction is often cited as the '**Chakravyuha Challenge**'— a structural paradox by which the economy eases a company's entry into the system but forms formidable formal fences when it wishes to exit.
- From the **Sick Industrial Companies Act**, which demonstrated a debtor-in-possession model and had been plagued by promoter misuse, to the creditor-in-control model of the IBC, the historical flight of such laws reflects an incessant effort to improve the balance.
- Though the **IBC aimed at providing time-bound resolutions**, it has fallen short due to protracted litigation and procedural lapses.
- In light of this, the **2026 Amendment** to the IBC presents the **Creditor-Initiated Insolvency Resolution Process (CIIRP)**, a hybrid apparatus attempting to espouse debtor-in-possession topographies with the creditor-in-control model.
- Nevertheless, the amendment's restrictive framework bounds initiation rights to only a fine class of financial creditors belonging to "**notified financial institutions**", thereby inviting constitutional contests and economic ineptitude.

Swift yet stringent alternative

- The CIIRP is a clever attempt to address financial crisis without the value-destroying disruption of typical liquidation proceedings by allowing the current management to maintain control over activities under the supervision of a resolution specialist.

- In order to reduce judicial intervention and procedural delays, the IBC established the CIIRP procedure by adding **Sections 54C to 54P**.
- The **National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT)** was formerly given discretionary authority via the interpretation of "may" in Section 7(5)(a), which permitted it to postpone or reject admission even in cases where debt and default were proven.
- This has now been replaced by the required "**shall**" via the 2026 amendment, thereby compelling the NCLT to accept cases based on information utility records.
- However, by limiting the ability to start the CIIRP only for "**notified financial institutions**," the Act creates an arbitrary hierarchy within the class of financial creditors.
- Although the distinction between financial and operational creditors was previously maintained in **Swiss Ribbons** via the "**intelligible differentia**" standard of **Article 14**, this sub-classification is essentially different.
- The government's argument that "**notified institutions** have special knowledge is out of date; sophisticated investors with the ability to perform in-depth restructuring analysis can be found in today's financial markets.
- The Act runs the danger of being overturned as arbitrary since it does not explain why these excluded parties are less able to promote resolutions that maximise value.
- Operational and smaller **financial creditors** are significantly disenfranchised under the current arrangement as they are already at the bottom of the repayment priority list.
- It compels non-notified creditors to undertake the more aggressive and disruptive **Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP)** just to protect their financial interests.
- The **U.S.' Chapter 11** and the **U.K.'s Part 26A restructuring plans** base their access on objective financial conditions rather than the regulatory identity of the creditor.
- Any financial creditor could start the process as long as they get the support of creditors holding at least **51% of the total financial debt**.
- India can make an efficient insolvency system that benefits everyone by using a universal CIIRP model based on financial interest instead of institutional identity.

15J6. Making sense of the biggest IPO in history

- **SpaceX's** grand entry has raised concerns over the **relaxation of rules** enabling **wealth concentration** in the hands of a few.
- **Technopreneur Elon Musk, who was already the planet's richest person, became the world's first trillionaire with his company**



SpaceX's stock market debut on June 12, 2026.

- The company saw the biggest-ever **initial public offering (IPO)** in history.
- However, SpaceX's entry has also raised concerns over the company's valuation; the relaxation of rules that enables the company to enter indices like the **Nasdaq-100**; and the increasing concentration of wealth among a few.
- **SpaceX's market capitalisation**, now estimated over **\$2 trillion**, is less than the **Gross Domestic Product** of only **11 countries** in the world, an indication of the unequal distribution of wealth.
- Additionally, Mr. Musk had merged his companies **Starlink** and **xAI** (which includes X) with SpaceX before he planned the IPO.
- As of Friday, SpaceX was the sixth largest company in terms of market capitalisation.
- However, as the table shows, it is the only loss-making company in the list.
- Among the three companies that are part of SpaceX, **Starlink** is the only company that has reported profits last year, leading many to express concerns that Mr. Musk has managed to sell the potential of his company, which includes building data centres, instead of its actual track record.
- If one were to place SpaceX's IPO in Indian terms, the initial offering of all the top 100 IPOs in India would not match the **\$75 billion** raised by the U.S. giant on Friday.

15J6. What is drop shipping, and what are the risks for online shoppers?

- **Drop shipping** allows **online individuals or agents** who do not hold any products to take **customer orders** and pass them on to other **makers or sellers**, inserting themselves into the transaction as **middlemen**.
- While **legal** in most jurisdictions, the practice can expose **customers** to several **risks**.
- While scrolling through Instagram Reels, you naturally pause when an attractive product catches your eye: **a sleek laptop bag for travel, a cheap set of popular novels, an ultra-fast wireless charger on sale, beautifully embroidered linen shirts, or leather-bound notebooks with custom gold foil inscriptions**.
- Before you know it, you are entering your credit card number or UPI PIN.
- Caught up in your shopping spree, you may not have checked the true origin of the product or other customers' reviews of the seller.
- What's more, you may not even realise that the "company" you paid is just a decorated webpage created with AI and owned by a person who does not hold a single product.

- This is the economy of **drop shipping**: the business practice that allows almost anyone with an internet connection to sell products that come from others.

What is drop shipping?

- This is a business practice where an online individual or agent — who does not hold any product — takes orders from customers and passes them on to another maker/seller who actually holds the product.
- The product is then delivered to the customers, either by the original maker/seller or a third-party delivery service.
- To put it simply, the drop shipper inserts itself into the transaction as a middleman.
- One or even multiple drop shippers might stand between buyers and the original makers of the product they want.
- The success of **Amazon**, the largest e-commerce retailer in the world, can be credited at least in part to drop shipping practices.
- In its earliest days, Amazon did not commandeer giant international warehouses packed with products; rather, the company was a web-based middleman that fulfilled many customers' orders by sourcing the books they wanted.
- Though Amazon's product delivery model has drastically evolved, the company allows drop shipping to take place via its platform.
- Other channels, such as **Shopify**, also enable drop shipping and help users manage the logistics.
- Alternatively, drop shipping might take place through channels such as **WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook**, and lesser-known websites.
- In essence, if you have ever bought any product online, there's a chance that you placed your order through a drop shipper rather than the original seller.

How does drop shipping work?

- Drop shippers can work with both domestic and international manufacturers and customers.
- Some try to fill an existing gap in their local market, some capitalise on market trends, and others build hype around rarer products.
- In addition to promoting products and setting up online storefronts, drop shippers may also buy/sell courses that reveal current market trends, customer interests, trusted wholesalers, and useful AI tools, in order to generate further profits.
- They also may not know if the original seller is legitimate, or might be unable to communicate with them due to a language barrier.



- However, placing orders through a vetted **drop shipper** with a user-friendly web page eases some of these worries.
- What's more, legitimate drop shippers regularly carry out quality assurance tests of their own, and should ideally become a customer support layer of sorts in order to resolve any complaints.

Is drop shipping legal?

- Drop shipping is legal in most jurisdictions, as long as the participants involved ensure transparency and comply with their region's tax laws.
- In case buyers are being directed to another website, the user must provide the domain through which they sell, and their channels must represent the shop associated with the domain.
- But now that it is possible to create entire shopfronts and e-commerce websites in minutes with just some cheap domains and a few AI coding prompts, Instagram drop shippers can easily present themselves as original sellers and offload customer orders to other sellers.

15J6. India's maritime sector growth gets a push as DG Shipping issues first ship recycling credit note

- India's ambitions for **sustainable maritime sector** growth have taken off with the sector regulator issuing the **first ship recycling credit note**.
- On May 28, the **Directorate General of Shipping** issued the credit note to a Liberia-based shipping firm under a scheme to promote safe recycling and shipbuilding.
- India is a global leader in the **ship recycling industry** handling around 30% of dismantled vessels.
- Ship owners will get a credit note equivalent to **40% of scrap value** upon recycling in certified facilities.
- The note will be valid for **three years** and can be redeemed up to **five per cent** of the fair price of a new vessel built in an Indian shipyard.
- Its launch also aligns with the implementation of the **Hong Kong International Convention for Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships**.
- The convention is a binding global treaty which mandates environmentally sound recycling practices that minimise health risks for yard workers and prevents pollution from its activities.
- The convention came into force last June.

Ensuring compliance

- "India currently has **111 ship recycling yards** compliant with the **Hong Kong International Convention (HKC)**, located at **Alang, Gujarat**.

- This represents one of the largest concentrations of HKC-compliant ship recycling facilities anywhere in the world," said Director General of Shipping **Shyam Jagannathan**.
- Under the convention, recycling yards are required to implement **occupational health and safety measures**, maintain environmental protection systems and ensure proper management of hazardous materials and waste.
- Facilities are also required to maintain worker training programmes, emergency preparedness procedures and environmental monitoring mechanisms.
- Mr. Jagannathan said the **directorate in coordination with state authorities and recognised organisations** undertakes periodic inspections, audits and certification activities to ensure continued compliance.
- According to **Ship Recycling Industries Association (India)** a total of **119 ships** were recycled in India in FY 2026 amounting to **1.08 million light displacement tons** — an industry metric that measures the quantity of recyclable material available for processing.
- The first credit note valued **₹29 crore** was issued for recycling of a **St. Kitts and Nevis** flagged capsized vessel called **Kosta**.
- "All ships recycled at **Hong Kong Convention compliant yards** in India are eligible for the credit note, subject to adherence to the scheme's prescribed conditions and procedures," he said.
- A unified **ship recycling portal** enables seamless applications, processing, tracking and issuance of digitally signed credit notes bringing together the Directorate, state maritime boards and recycling yards on a single platform, he added.
- A crucial test would also be the Indian shipyard's ability to deliver vessels on time.
- While India is a leader in ship recycling, it is a laggard in **shipbuilding**.
- A **S&P Global Commodity Insights** report last year said the Indian shipbuilding industry accounts for less than **one per cent** of the global market while **China** holds **60 per cent** share.
- Last year the government unveiled a **₹70,000 crore package** to boost shipbuilding and maritime sector in the country.
- The credit note scheme was a part of the package.
- A pre-approval mechanism could also help owners find out in advance the eligibility and discounts available through credit note mechanism.
- Over the years the skilled Indian workforce has moved to shipyards overseas for better career prospects.
- The government should launch a targeted programme to attract this experienced workforce through incentives, relocation support, skill



recognition and long term employment opportunities, he added.

15J6. In Zojila, light at the end of the tunnel

- It is in these conditions that **1,200 people**, working from a camp site, have been building the **Zojila Tunnel**, which will connect **Baltal** in **Kashmir's Ganderbal district** and **Minamarg** in **Ladakh's Drass**, on **National Highway-1**.

14J6. Why is the Zojila tunnel a game changer?

What makes the Zojila tunnel an engineering marvel?

- The world's longest **high-altitude tunnel**, spanning **13.14 kilometres** at an altitude of **11,578 feet**, achieved a breakthrough on **June 9, 2026**.
- Built at a cost of **₹6,800 crore**, the **Zojila tunnel** will provide all-weather connectivity between the **Kashmir Valley** and **Ladakh**, traversing a region that was long considered to be formidable in the Himalayas.
- Union Minister for **Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari**, who pressed the blast button for the **2.5 metre-long last leg**, termed the breakthrough "a historic day for India's infrastructure development and a milestone in India's technical expertise, engineering prowess, and indomitable resolve".
- Zojila tunnel** is India's first longest **single-tube bi-directional tunnel** and an engineering marvel for several reasons.
- The underground works were highly challenging due to the difficult terrain.
- The western **Himalayan range** around the **Zojila Pass** has been daunting for engineers and planners, with the fragile geology, sensitive rock formations, avalanche-prone terrain, and harsh winter conditions all complicating the execution of the project.
- The **Zojila tunnel** connects **Sonamarg's Baltal** in central Kashmir's **Ganderbal district** with **Meenamarg** in Ladakh's **Drass district**.
- To ensure safe passage up to the mouth of the **Zojila tunnel** at Baltal, additional roadways, **three bridges**, and **two tunnels** were constructed over a stretch of **31 km** in Sonamarg.
- These were designed to withstand the vagaries of winter, as avalanches and snow slides are often reported in the area.
- It is a combined system of tunnels and roadways that forms a comprehensive corridor between the **Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh**.
- The tunnel is equipped with **catch dams**, **protection walls**, and **deflector dams** over a **6-km stretch** for protection from snowstorms.

- It will have **automatic and emergency lighting**, **emergency phone**, **message signalling**, and **radio** to ensure travellers' safety.

Why is this a memorable project for engineers?

- The tunnel was dug in **extreme weather conditions**, with temperatures dropping to **minus 20 degrees Celsius** on the Kashmir side and **minus 30 degrees Celsius** on the Drass side.
- Official estimates suggested that extreme weather conditions were prevalent for nearly **100 days a year**.
- Then, there were **avalanche risks**: five major avalanches left **two workers dead** and over **172 workers stranded and later rescued**.
- Snow accumulation was dealt with by a fleet of small and large **snow blowers**.
- Officials said the **rock classification** also changed **67 times** across the **13-km stretch**, "shifting constantly between good and poor formations."

Why is the tunnel significant for strategic connectivity?

- India** has witnessed repeated military confrontations with **China** and **Pakistan** since **1947**, particularly in the regions of **Ladakh** and **Kashmir**, most notably in **1962** and **1999**.
- India's full-scale military response was always hampered by lack of connectivity and poor mobility of men and material in the region, both along the **Line of Control (LoC)** in the west and the **Line of Actual Control (LAC)** in the east.
- Officials believe that restricted movement of military vehicles led to delays.
- The **Zojila tunnel** is now expected to provide year-long transportation access to the Indian forces stationed in **Ladakh**, significantly improving mobility, logistics reliability, and strategic access in the border region.
- This is why Mr. **Gadkari** described it as "a game changer from a security perspective and the perspective of national integration".

What does it mean for locals?

- Ladakh** has always been cut off from the **Kashmir Valley** during winters.
- Heavy snow and landslides would often close the **Zojila Pass** for **4-6 months**.
- There have also been frequent reports of commuter deaths on the **Zojila Pass** due to landslides triggered by rains and avalanches occurring during sunny winters.
- All this resulted in severe hardships for patients and students in the **Kargil-Drass** range.
- Stocks would deplete, but the problem could not be attended to because of road closure.



- Locals relied on **sun-dried vegetables and cereals** during winters.
- Now, there is expected to be movement of people and goods and no more weather-related isolation for the region.
- Additionally, the tunnel will put a spotlight on activities such as **adventure tourism** and **skiing** in **Drass**, which will contribute to the economy.

When will the tunnel open for civilians?

- In spite of the breakthrough, the tunnel is likely to take **two years** to be fully functional.
- Water seepage, benching, and electronic layouts** are still being worked out.
- However, officials said the tunnel could be thrown open in case of emergencies, especially to **security forces**.
- The tunnel will also help pilgrims on the **Amarnath Yatra**, whose base camp is in **Baltal**.
- Officials said vehicles can travel at a speed of **80 km per hour** through the tunnel.
- Earlier, drivers could not drive more than **30-40 km per hour** on the **Zojila Pass**, because of steep roads and hair-pin curves.
- Officials said the project is moving closer to its long-envisioned goal of **seamless all-weather connectivity** that will spur long-term benefits in terms of **mobility, economic integration, and strategic resilience**.

13J6. The 8th CPC — a chance to reform pay commissions

- As India moves toward the **8th Central Pay Commission (CPC)**, public discussion has largely centred on familiar themes — **fitment factors, salary revisions and arrears**.
- Yet, the larger question may not be how much compensation should increase, but whether the framework for determining public compensation remains **coherent, equitable, and fiscally sustainable**.
- This is not merely an administrative matter.
- The manner in which the state structures **salaries, allowances and pensions** reflects broader institutional priorities and influences public confidence in governance.

The framework deficit

- Over the decades, **Pay Commissions** have become far more than wage-revision exercises.
- Their recommendations shape **inter-service parity, long-term fiscal commitments** and the **institutional balance** within the state.
- Yet, the process remains narrow, with a small, time-bound body tasked with evaluating a diverse ecosystem of **civil, military** and

technical services, largely on the basis of representations from the services themselves.

- A key challenge is the absence of a common **evaluative framework**.
- Services operate under different structures, career trajectories and working conditions, but there is no universally accepted method for comparing **risk, responsibility, technical complexity** or **career progression**.
- As a result, the system often seeks **parity** without clearly defining its basis.
- This challenge is most visible in questions of **parity**.
- Officers across services with very different career paths and responsibilities may, at certain stages, receive comparable compensation.
- The issue is not one of competition between services but **institutional coherence**.
- If parity is to be maintained, the principles governing it must be **transparent, consistent** and **objectively justified**.
- The comparison between **civilian services** and the **armed forces** illustrates this complexity.
- Military careers follow a sharply **pyramidal structure**, with limited promotional opportunities and earlier retirement.
- Civilian services generally offer broader avenues for advancement and longer careers.
- Aligning compensation across such different systems requires careful consideration of these **structural differences**.
- Another significant trend is the reduction in **experience** required for senior administrative positions.
- While faster career progression may reflect changing governance needs, complex policy challenges still demand **institutional memory** and **seasoned judgment**.
- Efficiency is important, but it cannot fully substitute for experience.
- Questions also arise over **allowances**.
- While they are intended to compensate for **hardship, remoteness** or **operational risk**, there is no uniform and transparent framework for assessing such conditions across services.
- This can create disparities that are difficult to justify and may foster perceptions of inconsistency.
- Non-Functional Upgradation (NFU)** raises a related concern.
- By allowing financial advancement without a corresponding increase in responsibility, it weakens the link between **role, accountability** and **compensation**.
- Though introduced to address slower promotion avenues, the **NFU** continues to generate debate over **equity** and **institutional rationale**.

The pension challenge

- Pensions** add another layer of complexity.



- India currently operates multiple **pension systems**, including legacy **defined-benefit schemes**, **contributory plans** for newer entrants, and separate arrangements for **elected representatives**.
- According to the **Reserve Bank of India's State Finances Report (2023)**, **salaries**, **pensions** and **interest payments** consume a large share of State expenditure, limiting fiscal space for development.
- As a result, concerns about **sustainability** and **inter-generational equity** are becoming increasingly important.
- Taken together, these issues highlight the need for a more **coherent approach** to public compensation.
- At present, pay frameworks for the **executive**, **legislature** and **judiciary** evolve through different processes.
- While constitutionally distinct, this fragmentation can create inconsistencies and reduce transparency in compensation decisions.
- Public trust depends not only on **fairness**, but also on **transparency** and **explainability**.

A new compensation architecture

- Many countries have gradually moved towards continuous and institutionalised mechanisms for reviewing **public sector compensation**.
- **Independent authorities**, clearly defined **benchmarks** and periodic review mechanisms have replaced infrequent, large-scale revisions.
- India's **decadal Pay Commission model** may therefore warrant reconsideration.
- A more durable framework — whether a **National Compensation Authority** or a specialised public service body — could bring greater consistency to public sector pay.
- Rather than be a centralising authority, it could establish common principles for assessing **responsibility**, **experience** and **hardship** while preserving flexibility for different services and States.
- Importantly, any such reform must respect India's **federal structure**.
- States should retain autonomy over implementation while operating within a broader framework of **transparency**, **comparability** and **fiscal discipline**.
- Greater coherence across branches of government, without affecting **constitutional independence**, would strengthen both credibility and public confidence.
- Ultimately, public compensation is not simply about **salaries** and **pensions**.
- It is part of the larger relationship between the **state** and the **citizen**.
- In a democratic system, compensation structures must not only be financially sustainable, but also publicly explainable.

- The **8th Pay Commission** presents an opportunity to move beyond periodic revision and engage with these deeper structural questions.
- Whether that opportunity is utilised meaningfully may shape public trust in **institutional governance** for years to come.

12J6. Homemakers are 'nation builders', their work is worth at least ₹30,000 a month, says SC

- Observing that **homemakers** deserve to be recognised as "**nation builders**", the **Supreme Court** on Thursday ruled that the **unpaid domestic work performed by them must be monetised at a minimum of ₹30,000 per month** while calculating compensation for deaths in road accidents.
- The ruling came in an appeal arising from a **motor accident claim** in **Punjab** where a woman named **Reshma** died in a road accident in **November 2001**.
- Her husband and three children approached the **Motor Accident Claims Tribunal** seeking compensation.
- While the tribunal awarded compensation in **2003**, they approached the **High Court** to enhance the amount.
- On appeal, the High Court enhanced the compensation to **₹8.43 lakh** with **7.5% interest**, providing for a higher rate of interest in case of delay in payment.
- A Division Bench of **Justice Sanjay Karol** and **Justice N.K. Singh** said the contribution of a homemaker extended beyond the household and played a vital role in **nation-building**.
- "We are of the view that the housewife contributes to the growth of the human being and the nation," said the Bench.

Shift to 'homemaker'

- Justice Karol stated that "**loss of domestic care**" would be an additional ground to the heads of damages previously recognised by the court.
- The top court also noted the need to shift from the stereotypical terminology of daily usage from "**housewife**" to "**homemaker**".
- The court said motor accident compensation claims should ordinarily be decided within **one year**.
- "Such cases should be decided within a year usually," the Bench said.
- Recognising all aspects of being a homemaker and the **unpaid labour** that a homemaker undertakes, the court directed the **Motor Accidents Claim Tribunal (MACT)** to award a separate compensation of **₹30,000 per month**



under the head of “domestic care” in cases involving death of a homemaker.

- It clarified that this amount would be treated as the **minimum value** of a homemaker's unpaid work and would increase by **10% every three years**.
- If the homemaker also had a **paid job**, this amount would be awarded in addition to her income.
- However, the court resorted to the application of homemaker to the traditional image of woman.
- The court said, “As a result of one circumstance or another, sometimes unfortunate sometimes not, a man may too need to don the role of a **homemaker**.”
- “It is not to take away from the efforts of these men who also deserve recognition and acknowledgment, but for the purposes of the present case and more particularly the quantification of domestic efforts, we limit its application to the quintessential and traditional image, that of a woman.”

12J6. Implementation complete, but workers still vulnerable

- The codes are **The Code on Wages, 2019, The Industrial Relations Code, 2020, The Code on Social Security, 2020 and The Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020**.

Critical gaps

- **Rules essentially lay down the standard operating procedures (SoPs) for implementing an Act or Code.**
- While they cannot contradict the provisions of the parent legislation, they become crucial where the law is broad or open-ended.
- Given the sustained opposition to several provisions in the four labour codes, it was expected that the rules would help moderate some of the contentious aspects.
- However, those expectations appear to have been belied.
- The **Industrial Relations Code, 2020** formally introduced the concept of **Fixed-Term Employment (FTE)** into India's labour law framework, although such employment arrangements have been widely used for decades.
- **However, the Code does not specify a minimum tenure or limit the number of contract renewals.**

12J6. Indian textile sector witnessing revival of investments

- For the **textile and clothing industry**, the last quarter of **FY26** and the first quarter of the current financial year have seen growth in

demand, triggering **investments**, according to industry officials.

- “After **2022**, the industry saw demand picking up across the **textile value chain** from January to mid-May. There is a slowdown in demand now after withdrawal of the **import duty on cotton**. We hope the situation will stabilize in a month or so,” said **K. Selvaraju**, secretary general, the **Southern India Mills Association**.
- “All the good performers are investing now, expanding capacities. Investments are not decided based on the performance of two or three months. For larger industries, the investments were planned at least seven or eight months before. They are looking at **long-term growth**,” added **Chandrima Chatterjee**, Secretary General, **Confederation of Indian Textile Industry**.

Higher yarn exports

- **Yarn exports** from October **2025** to March **2026** were higher compared with the same period the previous year in quantity. Export of fabrics picked up and then saw a slow down. Similarly, yarn price spike did have an impact on garments and made-ups for a few weeks. Now, fall in **cotton prices** again led to demand drop, Mr. Selvaraju said.
- “When the market revives, it takes about three months for the entire **supply chain** to benefit. **Cotton imports** have crossed **40 lakh bales** between October **2025** and May **2026**. Another **15-20 lakh bales** are expected to come in by the end of September. Cotton prices crossed **₹75,000 a candy** and are dropping now. This has led to demand slowdown. Everyone is waiting to see how much the prices will fall. The situation will be clear in the next few weeks,” added Mr. Selvaraju.
- Meanwhile, **textile mills** are said to be investing in both **modernisation** and **expansion projects** though the exact investment data is not available.

More automation

- Some of the mills are investing to make **value-added yarns** and some others modernising and adopting more **automation**, said industry sources.
- Implementation of the **Free Trade Agreement** with the **U.K.** is expected to bring in more orders for garments and made-ups.
- Another **\$10 billion** increase in exports will support the entire **textile value chain**.
- However, the **West Asia war** and uncertainties in the **U.S. tariff** are of concern, sources said.

12J6. RIL, Vedanta, Adani said to join hands to cut China rare earth reliance



- Indian industrial groups **Reliance, Vedanta** and **Adani** have shown interest in developing facilities to process **Andhra Pradesh** state's significant reserves of increasingly important **rare-earth minerals**, according to two sources with knowledge of the matter.
- With **New Delhi** seeking to cut India's dependence on **China** for rare earths, the three companies are among about **10** who have expressed interest in setting up rare earth facilities in the southern state, one of the sources said.
- The sources declined to be identified as they were not authorised to speak to the media.
- Andhra Pradesh** holds **211 million metric tonne** of beach sand mineral resources, including rare earths, across **16 identified coastal deposits**, as per a draft document.
- India has **482.6 million tonne** of rare earth ore resources, according to the **Geological Survey of India**.
- The interest comes as **New Delhi** steps up efforts to build domestic rare earth mining, processing and **magnet manufacturing capacity**, while **Andhra Pradesh** aims to attract **₹50,000 crore (\$5.2 billion)** in rare earth and titanium investments over the next decade.
- The plans were set out in a draft government document.
- The **Andhra Pradesh** government, **Reliance Industries Ltd. (RIL)**, **Vedanta Ltd.** and **Adani Enterprises Ltd.** did not respond to Reuters emails seeking comments.

12J6. Once an Arab oil embargo victim, U.S. now becomes world's top oil exporter

- U.S. exports** of crude and fuel climbed to about **10.5 million barrels per day** in May as **Saudi** and **Russian exports** were disrupted by conflict and sanctions.
- EU officials** warn of risks in growing dependence on **U.S. energy supplies**.
- The **U.S. oil boom** is driven by private firms, contrasting with state-led output in rivals.
- The **United States** has become the world's largest oil exporter, upending a decades-old order long dominated by **Saudi Arabia** and **Russia**, a shift that tightens American companies' grip on energy markets as **Washington's war with Iran** reshapes global energy trade.
- America's ascendancy to the top spot marks a stunning reversal for a country that was dependent on **Middle Eastern oil** for decades and suffered from an **oil embargo** imposed by some **OPEC** members in **1973** to retaliate against U.S. support for Israel.

Change in fortune

- U.S. fortunes began to change after **2010**, when oil and gas output from its **shale formations** soared, first making it the world's top gas and then the world's top oil producer.
- With the **U.S.-Iran war** disrupting Saudi oil exports since **February 2026** and Russian oil exports suffering from **Ukrainian drone attacks** and **U.S. sanctions** on Moscow for the invasion of Ukraine, the U.S. has become the world's leading oil exporter.
- U.S. exports of crude and fuel climbed to about **10.5 million barrels per day** in May on the back of high output and the release of **strategic reserves**, data from ship tracking services **Vortexa** showed, making the U.S. the top global exporter for the third month in a row.
- Russian exports stood at **7 million bpd** in May, according to Reuters' calculations, while **Saudi Arabia's exports** stood at **5.9 million bpd**, according to Vortexa.
- In comparison, **Saudi Arabia** exported about **8.1 million bpd** in 2025, while the **United States** shipped out **6.6 million bpd**, and Russian exports stood at about **5.8 million bpd**, according to Vortexa data.
- "**Washington** has a new tool they didn't realise they had before the Iran war — **energy exports**," said **Michelle Brouhard**, head of policy at ship tracking firm **Kpler**.

OPEC price weakening

- The new U.S. dominance could weaken the pricing power that the **Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)** and its allies have historically held over oil markets.
- U.S. President Donald Trump** has long criticised OPEC for manipulating the markets.
- The group also suffered a blow in May when one of its biggest members, the **United Arab Emirates**, left the organization after nearly **60 years**.
- The biggest oil exporter spot will give **Washington** a powerful new lever in talks with allies and rivals in addition to its global military supremacy and its dominance of financial markets thanks to the **U.S. dollar's** role as the world's reserve currency.

U.S. leverage

- "You can see now the leverage the **United States** has over some of these countries because they are dependent on the U.S. for their oil or gas," Brouhard said, adding that the U.S. was the largest provider of crude to **Europe** and the second-largest provider of distillates.
- EU officials**, who initially welcomed the U.S. oil and gas boom as an alternative to Russian and Middle Eastern supply, have grown more



skeptical and warned of risks of becoming too dependent on American companies.

Oil, tariffs

- The warning coincided with the **EU** clashing with the **U.S. administration** over trade tariffs and green regulations.
- **Moscow** is also finding it hard to hide frustration.
- U.S. energy companies were the main beneficiaries of the closure of the **Strait of Hormuz**, **Igor Sechin**, the boss of the Kremlin oil major **Rosneft** and one of the closest allies of President **Vladimir Putin**, said this month.
- But long before the **U.S.-Iran war** started, both **Saudi Arabia** and **Russia** were trailing far behind U.S. companies on production growth.
- Crude and liquids output in the **United States** has nearly tripled to about **22 million bpd** since **2000**.
- Saudi crude and liquids output has largely fluctuated between **10 million** and **12 million bpd** depending on **OPEC quotas** between **2000** and **2026**.
- Russian oil and liquids output soared to **10 million bpd** from **6 million bpd** between **2000** and **2010**, grew by a further **2 million bpd** during the 2010s, but has largely stagnated and declined to below **10 million bpd** since **2020**.
- Global oil demand grew to **104 million bpd** last year from **87 million** in **2010**, meaning the lion's share of the global growth of the past **15 years** has been mostly met by the **U.S. oil boom**.
- In **2015**, the **United States** repealed a **40-year export ban** it had in place since the Arab oil embargo, opening the gates for its oil boom to the wider world.
- Fast forward **10 years**, it has become the biggest oil exporter, proving skeptics wrong that the growth would be short-lived as fields deplete.
- Unlike in **Saudi Arabia** and **Russia**, where governments fully or partially set production and export targets, the **U.S. boom** hinges on private companies' decisions and is primarily driven by profits.
- When oil prices rise, **U.S. firms** will respond by raising production, which will help bring prices down.
- When prices are weak, **U.S. firms** will cut output, which will boost prices, said **Kenneth Medlock III**, a fellow in Energy and Resource Economics at the **Baker Institute for Public Policy**.
- "In many ways, it's kind of a similar role to what **OPEC** and **Saudi Arabia** have been doing with spare production capacity, but it's more of a market mechanism than a strategic device," he said.

- **India's net foreign direct investment (FDI) has declined drastically in recent years.**
- Critics see the weak net flows as a sign of weakness, while the Chief Economic Adviser points to the **large inflows and rising manufacturing FDI** as evidence of strength.
- He links **weak net flows** to **profit repatriation and outward investment** by Indian companies.
- However, this debate overlooks a major issue.
- By focusing on overall numbers, both sides ignore the **changing composition of international capital** and the **Balance of Payments (BoP)** mechanisms that govern inflows and outflows.
- For BoP purposes, net FDI is calculated as the difference between inflows and outflows after adjusting for the repatriation of capital.
- From the peak of **\$44.0 billion** in 2020-21, net FDI fell to less than **\$1 billion** in 2024-25.
- It recovered to **\$7.6 billion** in 2025-26.
- The corresponding gross inflow was **\$94.6 billion**.
- It is necessary to note that India's liberal FDI policy, introduced in 1991, initially emphasised technology acquisition, export promotion, and foreign exchange conservation.
- Over time, policy increasingly prioritised attracting larger inflows, while concerns regarding future external payment obligations and investment quality receded.

Three types of FDI

- FDI is often viewed as a uniform, long-term commitment that brings technology and management skills to the host country.
- FDI can fall into three different investor classes, each with distinct capabilities, strategies, and exit timelines.
- The **first category is real FDI (RFDI)**, consisting of traditional multinational enterprises with the technology, brands, and capabilities to establish production and services.
- These generally represent **long-term commitments**.
- The second category comprises financial investors, including private equity funds, venture capital firms, sovereign wealth funds, and asset managers.
- Their main goal is capital growth and planned exits.
- The **third category includes diaspora investments and special purpose vehicles (SPVs)**.
- These involve capital raised abroad and funneled through offshore financial centres, sometimes including the **round-tripping of Indian funds**.
- Total recorded disinvestment in **CY 2025** was **\$52 billion**, with **45 major foreign private equity and venture capital exits** accounting for **\$29 billion** in outflows.

11J6. The reality behind falling net FDI



- Based on an analysis of effective inflows, **FDI in India's manufacturing sector** has declined across three consecutive four-year periods.

Not fresh capital

- A major blind spot in gross FDI figures is the mixing of new capital injections with corporate accounting changes, such as intra-group ownership reorganisations, mergers, share swaps, and the conversion of earlier non-equity instruments such as **external commercial borrowings (ECBs)** and convertible debentures.
- Approximately **\$40 billion** of the **\$560 billion** in equity inflows to India from **2014-15 to 2025-26** (up to December) fall into this category.
- Under **BoP** conventions, profits sent as dividends are recorded as investment income in the current account.
- They increase the **current account deficit (CAD)** but do not change the reported net FDI flows.
- Instead, the primary reason for weak net FDI is disinvestment and capital repatriation, which appear in the financial account.
- Likewise, the increase in **Outward Foreign Direct Investment (OFDI)** warrants closer examination rather than being attributed solely to corporate maturity.
- From **2023-24 to 2025-26**, **45%** of India's total outbound investment of **\$65 billion** went into the **financial, insurance, and business services (FIB)** sector.
- Singapore** and the **UAE** accounted for **27%** and **11%** of the total, respectively. **Disinvestment and capital repatriation** (capital account) totalled **\$178.9 billion**, primarily driven by financial investors through secondary and strategic sales, IPO exits, and share buybacks.
- Dividend remittances** (current account) amounted to **\$118.9 billion** in profits paid out by MNE subsidiaries and affiliates, excluding reinvested earnings.

India bond-tax step to up foreign debt inflow, bid for global index inclusion

- India tax breaks, policy steps spark \$1 billion in foreign bond inflows, lower yields; measures to improve India's debt appeal could lower borrowing costs over time.**
- India's decision to exempt foreigners from taxes on **government bonds** and broaden access to the debt market is expected to make the country more attractive to overseas investors, catalyse fresh inflows and strengthen its case for inclusion in global indexes.
- On Friday, policymakers unveiled a wide-ranging set of measures to draw in overseas capital while shoring up the currency and

external balances, which have been strained by higher oil prices.

- They scrapped **withholding and capital gains taxes** on foreign investments in government bonds, broadened the pool of securities that are available without investment limits and introduced incentives to encourage banks to raise foreign currency deposits from **non-resident Indians (NRIs)** and for companies to tap overseas borrowings.
- Yields on government bonds have fallen **10 to 30 basis points** across the curve, with shorter maturities seeing the biggest declines.
- The removal of taxes makes Indian government bonds more attractive on a relative basis, Taylor said, adding that the **measures should boost foreign participation across the yield curve and lower borrowing costs over time.**

More consequential

- Some investors said the reforms could prove more consequential over the longer term by paving the way for India's inclusion in broader global debt benchmarks, which would bring more durable and predictable inflows.
- Niel Clement**, portfolio manager for emerging market fixed income at **BNP Paribas Asset Management**, which manages more than **€1.6 trillion (\$1.85 trillion)** of assets, said the steps would broaden opportunities for overseas investors, redirect flows to the onshore market and provide a constructive boost to India's bid for inclusion in the **Bloomberg Global Aggregate Index**.
- In the weeks before tax cuts were rolled out, India's finance minister met with officials at the central bank to push for entry into the **Bloomberg index**, a government official said.
- "**India is an important part of EM local index so we are always reviewing it as an investment option**," said **Shamaila Khan**, head of fixed income emerging markets and Asia-Pacific at **UBS Asset Management**.
- "The **bigger issue for offshore investors is still the currency**," said **Rong Ren Goh**, head of macro and thematic for Asian fixed income at **Eastspring Investments**, which manages about **\$250 billion**, adding that investors are likely to wait for clearer signs of rupee stability before raising allocations.
- The recent pace of rupee depreciation has dented the carry appeal of Indian debt, while higher energy prices have added to the pressure, he said.
- Economists at Citi** sharply revised India's **balance of payments** forecast for the current fiscal year, a shift they say should underpin the rupee.

11J6. Why SpaceX IPO may spell bad news for crypto

- SpaceX's much-anticipated \$75 billion initial public offering (IPO)**, set to be the largest



ever, will likely keep **cryptocurrency prices in the doldrums** as retail investors attracted to new and **risky artificial intelligence (AI) stocks scramble to get a slice of the action.**

- Celebrity billionaire **Elon Musk's** rocket and satellite communications company — which merged with his AI startup **xAI** earlier this year — is expected to fetch a valuation of around **\$1.75 trillion**, sparking a Wall Street and media frenzy.
- That has helped drive rotation out of risk assets like cryptocurrencies, as retail and other investors free up cash to buy shares in **SpaceX** — as well as hotly anticipated IPOs from **OpenAI** and **Anthropic** that are expected to follow this year, said analysts and crypto executives.

10J6. 'Modi will surpass Nehru's record of being longest-serving PM of India'

- Mr. Shah launched the **Land Port Management System (LPMS-'VINIMAY')** on Tuesday.
- He said the system would provide an **integrated digital platform** for the management of **cargo, passengers and vehicles.**
- It would enhance coordination among various agencies and make **information exchange** seamless.
- The **Single Electronic Window and Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR)-based gate operation system** would result in significant time savings.

LAND PORT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (LPMS – 'VINIMAY')

- **VINIMAY** is the digital **Land Port Management System (LPMS)** developed by the Land Ports Authority of India under the **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).**

Integrated Check Posts (ICPs)

- Integrated Check Posts are border infrastructure facilities established to facilitate:
 - International trade.
 - Passenger movement.
 - Customs clearance.
 - Immigration services.

Security checks.

10J6. Centre publishes rules for setting up coal exchanges

- Paving the way for establishing **coal exchanges** in the country, the government on Tuesday published the **Coal Exchange Rules (2026).**

- The rules also specify the **minimum eligibility requirements** that must be met by an entity to establish the exchange.

10J6. Alberta pitches cheap natural gas for data centres

- **Alberta** is touting its abundant supply of cheap fossil fuels to entice tech companies to build **data centres** for the **AI boom**, a move that would undermine **Canada's** plan to link new data centre development with clean energy expansion.
- **Canada** is the world's **fifth-largest producer of natural gas**, around **60%** of which comes from Alberta.

08J6. Testing times

- The **provisional estimates of GDP growth for 2025-26** have been pegged at **7.7%**, which is marginally higher than the **7.6%** predicted by the government in February.
- Notably, both **Private Final Consumption Expenditure** and **Gross Fixed Capital Formation** — **metrics of household consumption and government and private sector investment activity, respectively** — grew faster in **2025-26** than they did in the previous year.
- This is dire news, given that the **India Meteorological Department (IMD)** has predicted that this year's monsoon will only be **90% of the LPA.**
- That is not counting the **fertilizer supply constraints** that will really be felt in the months ahead.
- The data also show the rising dominance of **services** in the economy, with their share rising to **54.3%** of total **gross value added (GVA)** in **2025-26**, up from **51.9%** in **2022-23.**
- The **agriculture sector**, which continues to employ the largest share of the population by far, saw its share in **GVA** fall to below **20%** from **22.1%** in **2022-23.**

08J6. From borderland to India's strategic resource frontier

The critical mineral push

- **Manipur** was described as a "**quiet mineral frontier**", **Arunachal Pradesh** as a "**resource-rich frontier**", while **Meghalaya** and **Mizoram** were portrayed through comparable narratives that emphasised the hidden wealth beneath their hills.
- **Lithium, cobalt, graphite, nickel and rare earth elements** increasingly shape industrial competition, technological manufacturing and energy transitions.
- **Batteries, semiconductors, renewable technologies and defence systems** depend upon them, and countries have begun



repositioning themselves around access to these resources.

- According to a **Ministry of Mines** reply in **Parliament**, the **Geological Survey of India** undertook **43 critical mineral exploration projects** across northeastern States during the **2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25 field seasons**, covering minerals such as **graphite, vanadium, lithium, rare earth elements, nickel and cobalt**.
- In **Manipur**, projects involving **nickel, cobalt and chromium exploration** have recently been initiated.
- Discussions have centred on **insurgencies, territorial management, connectivity initiatives and geopolitical considerations** involving neighbouring countries, while infrastructure and development were often justified as instruments of strategic access and territorial security.

08J6. Investing in gold and silver

- If so, should you buy **physical or financial asset?**
- Here, we discuss why market timing on **gold and silver exchange traded funds (ETFs)** is optimal.
- An ETF is a basket of securities such as stocks, bonds, commodities, gold, government securities, or a combination of assets.
- One, it is operationally efficient to buy and sell ETFs.
- And two, **gold and silver ETFs** closely track the spot price of the underlying metal.
- True, these ETFs trade at a premium to spot price but you may be able to capture a similar premium when you sell the ETF.
- Selling price of **24-carat physical gold** is typically lower than its spot price.
- Typically, gold and silver form part of **satellite portfolio** within the **core-satellite framework**.
- In this framework, the core portfolio is goal-based and the satellite is trading portfolio, geared to capturing short-term price fluctuations in the market.
- Another choice would be to set up short-term **systematic investment plans (SIPs)** and take profit whenever the investment generates predefined absolute gains.
- **Gold** is typically considered as a safe haven during global crisis (referred to as **flight to quality**).
- Also, **central banks** across the world invest in gold to build reserves.
- **Silver** is primarily an input in manufacturing processes.
- So, their returns and price volatility may not always be similar.

06J6. Growing cracks in the granite trade

- **Telangana's** once-thriving granite industry is showing signs of stress as export markets shrink and input costs soar.
- In **Karimnagar** and **Khammam** districts, quarry owners, factory operators and migrant workers are all feeling the impact of a prolonged downturn, report P. Sridhar and P. Laxma Reddy.
- Karimnagar is renowned for globally recognised varieties such as **Tan Brown, Coffee Brown, Maple Red, Red Rose and Blue Brown**.
- **Khammam** and **Warangal** are known for premium black granite deposits, including the sought-after **Jet Black** variety.
- Processed granite is shipped to markets including **China, Japan, Taiwan, UAE, USA and Europe**.

05J6. Centre's investment body flagged Nicobar port as lacking in 'strategic goals'

Great Nicobar Project and Strategic Status

- The **Public Investment Board (PIB)**, a **Finance Ministry** body that appraises large public investments, had in **August 2024** termed the proposed **International Container Transshipment Port (ICTP)** at **Galathea Bay** in **Great Nicobar Island** as lacking in "**strategic objectives**".
- Following the August meeting, it had advised the **Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW)** to include a strategic case in its proposal.
- The PIB's view surfaces in records of meetings held on **March 17 and 19, 2026**, by another **Finance Ministry** body — the **Public-Private Partnership Appraisal Committee (PPPAC)** — tasked with vetting project proposals worth **₹500 crore and above** involving a partnership with private players.
- The proposal, sponsored by the **MoPSW** with **Kamarajar Port Limited (KPL)** in Chennai as the implementing agency, sought PPPAC clearance to build the port in two phases and, crucially, approval for **₹12,230 crore as Viability Gap Funding (VGF)** to make the commercially marginal project bankable.
- The **ICTP** is a significant component of the much bigger **Great Nicobar Island Development Project** and is a **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** initiative, with the **Andaman and Nicobar Islands Integrated Development Corporation Limited (ANIIDCO)** as the proponent of the overall project and holder of environmental clearance.
- The **2021 documents** that conceived the Great Nicobar programme and the **January 2023 Expression of Interest** for the port described it



as a means of capturing transshipment cargo currently routed through Colombo, Singapore, and Port Klang, with the government estimating annual foreign exchange savings of about \$200 million, cumulatively reaching around \$1 billion by 2047.

05J6. India, U.K. launch observatory to expand critical minerals partnership

- Seeking to expand cooperation and technology-sharing in the realm of critical minerals, India and the United Kingdom on Thursday formally launched the Critical Minerals Global Supply Chain Observatory (GSCO).
- The observatory was first announced during U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer's visit to India in October last year with an objective to "expand mineral coverage, further integrate advanced technologies and unlock new bilateral investment opportunities".
- The platform — to be jointly operated by India's Technology Innovation in Exploration & Mining Foundation (TEXMin), Indian Institute of Technology (ISM) Dhanbad and U.K.'s University of Cambridge — will institute a data-driven platform to monitor and analyse global critical mineral supply chains.
- In a social media post, Union Minister for Mines and Minerals G. Kishan Reddy wrote, "This is a major step towards strengthening critical mineral supply chains, supporting clean energy transitions, and building resilient global supply chains through the India-U.K. partnership."

Minister meets official

- Mr. Jaishankar said both sides "reviewed ongoing progress in our cooperation focusing on trade, technology, supply chains, defence, climate, education and people-to-people ties."
- "Also spoke about new opportunities in clean energy, AI and critical minerals."
- The two sides also exchanged views on global developments including in Ukraine, West Asia and the Indo-Pacific.
- Ms. Cooper emphasised greater access to critical minerals and improved information-sharing would be mutually beneficial to both countries.
- According to the announcement readout, Ms. Cooper stated the observatory could also serve "as a foundation for broader cooperation across the critical minerals sector and related strategic industries."

05J6. House Committee cites CAG report, pulls up govt. over skilling programme

- Parliament's Public Accounts Committee (PAC), headed by senior Congress leader K.C. Venugopal, pulled up the government over its flagship skilling programme, the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY).
- Citing the audit report tabled by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG), the panel said the scheme disproportionately focused on skilling for jobs with low demand, such as retail.
- The PMKVY is the flagship scheme of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), launched in July 2015 with the objective of enabling a large number of youths to take up industry-relevant skill training.
- Citing the findings of the report, panel members noted during the deliberations that there was a mismatch between training and demand.
- They said the skilling efforts were heavily focused on sectors with low demand, such as apparel, electronics, and retail, which together accounted for 40% of trainees.
- In contrast, sectors such as food processing, which require more trained personnel, accounted for only 0.48% of trainees.
- Similarly, only 3.8% of trainees were skilled for the tourism sector.

Lack of Planning

- It was also pointed out that only 41% of trainees were placed.

05J6. India to drop capital gains tax for foreign investors in govt. bonds

- India plans to scrap capital gains tax on foreign portfolio investments in government securities, which could help boost such inflows, a source familiar with the matter said on Thursday.
- Foreign investors are subject to a long-term capital gains tax of 12.5% on listed shares and bonds held longer than 12 months.
- A withholding tax of 20% they pay on interest earned in government bonds may also be removed, the source said.

04J6. U.S. moots 12.5% tariff on India for failure to enforce 'forced labour' regulations

- The U.S. government has proposed to levy a tariff of 12.5% on imports from 54 countries, including India, that it says have "failed to impose and effectively enforce" prohibitions on the import of goods produced using forced labour.
- The office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) had, in March this year, launched an investigation under Section 301 of the U.S. Trade Act of 1974 to look into whether its trade



partners were taking enough steps to stop the import of goods made using **forced labour**.

- According to trade experts, investigations under **Section 301** were seen as a tool for the U.S. to impose tariffs on its imports after the country's **Supreme Court** in **February** struck down the reciprocal tariffs — including the **50%** levied on **India** — that had been imposed by **U.S. President Donald Trump**.
- The proposed tariffs put **India** in the same tariff bracket as several of its competitors, including **Bangladesh, China, Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam**.
- "In the near term, exporters in labour-intensive industries such as **textiles, garments, carpets, leather products, and brassware** could face at least an additional **10% levy** under Section 301, adding to their existing tariff exposure," Mr. Sen said.

04J6. Base and framework

- Earlier this week, the **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation** released the latest **Index of Industrial Production (IIP)**, a key barometer of India's industrial health.
- The **April 2026** print assumes added significance as it is the first release under the new **2022-23 base series** and the second full month following the **U.S.-Israeli war on Iran**.
- Capital goods** output expanded by a robust **16% year-on-year**, reflecting the continuing effects of elevated public capital expenditure and infrastructure spending.
- By contrast, **consumer durables** output grew only **4.3%**, while **consumer non-durables** expanded by a modest **2.8%**, suggesting that rising fuel and energy costs may be exerting pressure on household consumption.
- New products and sectors have been incorporated and several obsolete items dropped.
- A fourth major sector — **water supply, sewerage and waste management** — has been introduced with a weight of **2.02%**.
- The **electricity** category has been expanded into **Electricity and Gas Supply**, with its weight rising to **10.87%** from **7.99%** earlier.
- Manufacturing** remains the dominant component of the index, though its weight has declined marginally to **76.06%** from **77.63%**.
- More notable is the reduction in the weight of **mining and quarrying** to **11.05%** from **14.37%**.
- These shifts suggest that the importance of value-added infrastructure and utility services in gauging industrial activity has expanded, while the relative significance of primary resource extraction has diminished.
- Together, these changes better capture India's emergence as a components and value-added

manufacturing hub integrated into global supply chains.

- Most importantly, the government has indicated its intention to move towards a **chain-linked framework** with more frequent updates to sectoral weights.
- Such a system would allow official statistics to better keep pace with structural changes in the economy, making the IIP a more accurate and timely gauge of industrial health.

04J6. How India scaled its startup industry from 2016 to 2025

- The **Startup India** scheme has been a success due to a supportive **policy environment**, robust **startup growth**, and a positive **investment climate**.
The three traits that make startups different from conventional businesses are an emphasis on **innovation**, the use of **technology**, and **market opportunity**.
- To distinguish startups from other businesses, the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)** started recognising companies that aligned with government guidelines as startups.
- From **288 in 2016**, which was just **3%** of the total startups functioning then, the DPIIT's coverage has increased to **77% in 2025**.
- However, the biggest change happened in 2025, when **Tier 1 cities** accounted for just **18%** of new startups, whereas **Tier 3 towns** made up for **71%**.
- A substantial portion of founders across both genders (approximately **66% male founders** and **59% female founders**) are under 40.
- While women account for about **21%** of the founders in the under-30 age group, they account for **33%** in the 50-plus age group.
- The **Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR)** of women founders stood at **20%**, compared with **14%** for men, underlining the strong trend of women increasingly pursuing entrepreneurship.

The funding landscape

- In 2016, India had **10,000 startups**, of which **2,000 were funded ventures**.
- The numbers have increased dramatically in 2025 with a total of **2,50,000 startups**, of which **75,000 are funded ventures**.
- The decade from **2016 to 2025** has firmly placed India among the **top four startup nations** in the world.

04J6. Cabinet approves ₹10,000 cr. ATF price stabilisation fund



- **One-time budgetary support to oil companies** is aimed at backing airlines in the backdrop of escalating jet fuel prices due to the **West Asia conflict**; fund to be offered as interest-free advances.
- Seeking to cushion airlines in the backdrop of escalating jet fuel prices due to the **West Asia conflict**, the **Union Cabinet** on Wednesday approved a one-time budgetary support of **₹10,000 crore** to **oil-marketing companies (OMCs)** towards a **price stabilisation fund**.
- Union Petroleum Minister **Hardeep Singh Puri** said that the **price stabilisation fund** would help stabilise **aviation turbine fuel (ATF)** prices in the backdrop of the **West Asia conflict**.
- The budgetary support would function like a **self-sustaining revolving fund**.
- The Cabinet has sought that once the international **ATF prices** moderate, the differential amount shall be recovered from the **oil-marketing companies (OMCs)** and returned to the government exchequer.

04J6. Wheat procurement surges 17% to 35 million tonnes, exceeds 2026-27 season goal

- "Wheat procurement crossed **35 million tonnes** so far this season. We have exceeded the target. Procurement in major producing states has been completed," the official said.
- The **Food Corporation of India (FCI)** and **State agencies** procure wheat at the **Minimum Support Price (MSP)** to meet the **National Food Security Act** and other welfare schemes' needs.

Lower mandi rates

- While the **wheat procurement season** runs from **April through March**, much of the procurement is done in the **first few months** itself.

04J6. RBI debunks reports on gold sale, says reserves are 'steady at 880.52 tonnes'

- Debunking reports of **gold sale**, the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** said there is no change in the physical stock of **gold**, which remains unchanged at **880.52 tonne**.
- Once considered among Asia's more stable currencies, the **rupee** has now become one of the worst-performing **emerging market currencies** this year, pressured by a toxic mix of expensive oil, capital outflows, widening trade deficits and a surging **U.S. dollar**.
- India's **forex reserve** stood at **\$686.801 billion** in the week to **January 2, 2026**.

04J6. S. America's stealthy ascent to key crude oil swing supplier

- Led by **Brazil, Guyana and Venezuela**, the region has delivered the largest increase in **oil exports** of any producing bloc so far this year, reshaping global trade patterns and reinforcing the **Atlantic basin's** role in global supply.
- But in aggregate, it is **turning South America** into a **de facto swing supplier** hiding in plain sight.
- Among the 10 nations to increase **crude oil exports** the most so far in **2026**, the **United States** ranks top, registering a nearly **112-million-barrel increase** during January to May compared to the same months in **2025**, according to **Kpler**.
- **Brazil, Guyana and Venezuela** have posted the next largest annual increases in crude shipments this year, collectively adding around **145 million barrels**.
- Including a further **12 million barrels** from **Argentina**, gains from those key nations exceed **157 million barrels** compared to the year before.
- Some small export volume declines this year from **Colombia, Ecuador and Peru** have curbed South America's total expansion to **155 million barrels**, but the total shipped out from the region from January to May remains a record **787 million barrels**.

04J6. AI unlikely to be the demand booster that copper bulls expect

- From the **Bronze Age** to the **AI age**, **copper** is again at the heart of the latest big investment craze.
- **Data centers** need a lot of wiring, cooling and power, which means they need a lot of **copper**.
- A crypto data center requires **21 metric tons of copper per megawatt installed**, while an AI training data center in China has a copper intensity of **47 tons**, according to **S&P Global Market Intelligence**.
- The biggest hurdle is **grid connectivity**.
- A data center can be built in **18 to 24 months** but the average U.S. waiting time for a grid connection was **four years** between **2018 and 2023**.
- **Ireland** built so many data centers that by **2021** the sector's share of national energy consumption had risen to over **20%**, threatening to overwhelm the country's energy system.
- **S&P Global** notes there is already a shift underway from copper to **fiber optics** in the interconnect cabling between processor racks.

Material wars



- There's copper, but also **aluminium, cobalt, nickel, tin, gold, silver, germanium and gallium** and, of course, a smattering of the increasingly ubiquitous **rare earth metals**.
- **Germanium and gallium** are more likely to pose a materials bottleneck than copper.

04J6. Brazil takes a historic HDI leap with focused planning and public spending

- A UN report reveals the country's **cash-transfer scheme** has played a key role in raising its **Human Development Index (HDI)** score from **0.744 in 2012 to 0.805 in 2024**.
- On a scale from **0 to 1**, the score of **0.805** places Brazil in the category of **"very high human development."**
- The index measures indicators related to **health and longevity, education, and income generation**, with results broken down by race, gender, and region at the municipal level across all **26 states of Brazil**.
- When the **UNDP** began calculating the index 30 years ago, Brazil was in the category of **low human development**.
- **Bolsa Família**, launched in **2003** during President **Lula da Silva's** first term, has inspired similar schemes worldwide, including the **National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme** in India in **2006**.
- **Walquiria Rego**, a sociologist who has studied the programme for years, says its success stems from **providing poor families with a regular income**.
- "As families received money every month, their eating habits improved, hunger declined dramatically and Brazil was taken off the **UN hunger map**," she says.

Healthcare guarantee

- With a steady source of income, poor families were able to furnish their homes and live with dignity.
- Besides cash assistance, Brazil's unified health system, or **SUS**, has played a crucial role in its HDI improvement.
- Brazil spends about **9.7% of its GDP of US\$ 2.64 trillion** on health, with **SUS** getting 4% of the amount.
- Guaranteed by the Constitution, Brazil's free and universal public healthcare system has been a major driver of rising life expectancy.
- **Jorge Félix**, a professor of gerontology at the **University of São Paulo**, says the system focused on child health in the early 1990s and eliminated **diseases like measles**.
- He added that vaccination campaigns for children and adults, and access to treatments like cancer have improved life expectancy.

- Both **Bolsa Família** and **SUS** had come under strain between **2018 and 2022** when the government of President **Jair Bolsonaro** imposed deep spending cuts.
- In **2023**, when **Lula** returned to the presidency for his third term, the government restored funding for **SUS** and **Bolsa Família**.
- A key reason for **Bolsa Família's** success is that payments are made directly to women, particularly mothers.
- "Women are now seen as the people responsible for food and healthcare for their children."
- "It also promoted citizenship and dignity for some of the poorest women in Brazil."

Election rhetoric

- Yet studies show that about **61%** of people receiving **Bolsa Família** in **2014** had left the programme by **2025**.

03J6. 'How land pooling solves acquisition woes

- **Rajasthan** has recently announced the State's first **land pooling scheme**.
- The government is optimistic that the scheme will help with land acquisition and deliver the land needed for roads, infrastructure, and development activities.
- This process has become increasingly complex and financially burdensome, particularly after the enactment of the **Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013**.
- The limitations of land acquisition are both structural and procedural.
- Even before the **2013 Act**, acquisition processes were time-consuming and often contested.
- Post-2013, the inclusion of rehabilitation and resettlement provisions have further increased financial obligations, making large-scale acquisitions for urban infrastructure increasingly unviable.

On pooling land

- While States have tried different solutions, land pooling mechanisms, especially **Town Planning (TP) schemes**, have emerged as a viable alternative.
- The **TP scheme**, widely implemented in Gujarat and Maharashtra, is among the most successful land-pooling models in India.
- Under this model, landowners voluntarily contribute about **25-40%** of their land to provide infrastructure such as roads, parks, public amenities, and housing for economically weaker sections.



- The remaining land (60-75%) is returned to them as reconstituted plots that are better shaped, serviced, and more valuable.
- This method integrates land assembly, infrastructure provisions, and cost recovery.
- A key strength of the **TP scheme** is its participatory, people-centric approach.
- It is also financially self-sustaining, as incremental charges from landowners are recovered during development rather than up front.
- In **Rajasthan**, land pooling had already been recognised in statutory provisions since **2016**.
- However, they were handicapped by a lack of experience.
- Now, modifications are being made to the land-value calculations in the State to ensure that the financial burden on landowners remains manageable.

03J6. 'The future of India's chip industry

- A new **NITI Aayog** report says India's **semiconductor ecosystem** is not yet equipped to fully meet domestic demand, while stressing the need to strengthen local manufacturing, as **geopolitical pressures** could potentially disrupt the electronics supply chain.
- **NITI Aayog's Frontier Tech Hub** released a report last week that had two main messages: first, that India faces steep challenges in developing world-class semiconductor manufacturing capabilities, and second, that national interest necessitated pursuing this field doggedly regardless of those difficulties.
- Yet, India does not have a single fabrication unit, with the first expected to open in **Dholera, Gujarat** by **2028**, with a total of ten in various stages of development.
- Multiple semiconductor packaging and testing facilities have been generously subsidised and supported by the Union government (as well as some State governments), through initiatives like the **India Semiconductor Mission (ISM)**.
- The **ISM** is a **₹76,000 crore** corpus, and it is almost fully earmarked to projects across semiconductor fabs, incentives for component manufacturing, and bulk subscriptions to industry-grade semiconductor design applications for students and academia.
- While the most cutting edge and ambitious projects — fabs — have received capital subsidies of upwards of **50%**, other projects have received production- or output-linked incentives.
- "India's local ecosystem is not ready to fully meet domestic demand for semiconductors," the report said.
- But it insisted that there was still a need to manufacture locally, as **geopolitical pressures** like a disaster in **Taiwan** could massively disrupt the electronics supply chain.

- "As many semiconductor parts used in defence systems are produced outside India, deploying them in our aerospace and defence programmes is increasing threats to national security," the report adds.

Fab gestation

- "Typically, fab units require four to five years before commencing production," the report points out.
- "During the gestation phase, these units need to invest in purchasing more than 50 specialised equipment from global players. Even after the production is over, processes like yield optimisation and reliability test take several quarters before chips reach the market."
- The report urges the government to work on "building sovereign design and research capabilities, R&D excellence and harnessing agentic AI for semiconductor engineering," since "building deep capabilities" in materials sciences and silicon designing will "move India from a services-led design base to a creator of differentiated IP, architectures and integration technologies that define next generation systems."

Capital investment

- While the details on the second phase of the **India Semiconductor Mission** are yet to be revealed, the report pegs the necessary capital expenditure from the state at **\$45-60 billion** over a period of ten years.
- This amount should, however, be spent on projects where the risk is less and "bankability" can assure returns to investors, the report warns.
- This translates to a shift away from directing public funds towards frontier chips, whose transistors are the smallest — **3 to 7 nanometres** — and towards "mature, advanced—aligned with strategic relevance—as well as compound nodes," the report says.
- It advocates, for instance, "selective depth, capital efficiency and system-level differentiation, rather than attempting to replicate the full global manufacturing spectrum."
- For instance, **packaging**, which is among the last steps of a chipmaking process, and less expensive and complex than fabrication, is identified as a "core production pillar, not a downstream activity" in the report.

Trusted partners

- In a list of "priority partners," the report highlights the **U.S., Japan, the European Union, and South Korea** as partners with whom to work to get "access to critical tools, equipment servicing



and lifecycle support,” and to take advantage of “India’s market scale, talent base and packaging capacity.”

03J6. ‘The need for strengthening India’s EV supply chains

- Around **2.5 million vehicles** were sold in **FY26**, a significant increase from **FY25**.
- As the sector scales, India is moving away from imported fossil fuels, only to find itself becoming increasingly dependent on imported lithium-ion batteries.
- EV growth must now be judged by three additional metrics: supply chain resilience, strategic autonomy, and long-term sustainability.
- Under the **ACC Battery Production Linked Incentive scheme**, **40 GWh** of capacity has been awarded, but only about **1 GWh** has been installed so far.

Product modifications

- Further, India’s path forward lies in building a structured ‘**EV supply chain alliance**’ with trusted partners, one that spans minerals, manufacturing, technology, and standards.

03J6. ‘Govt. to replace WPI with Producer Price Index, new series from June 15

- The Centre will phase out the **Wholesale Price Index (WPI)** over the next five years.
- While simultaneously introducing a more detailed **Producer Price Index (PPI)**, covering output, input and services prices.
- In a bid to offer a more realistic assessment of inflationary trends in the economy.
- Speaking with reporters, **Praveen Mahto**, Principal Economic Adviser in the **Commerce and Industry Ministry**, said that the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)** will release the revised series of WPI with new base year **2022-23** on **June 15**.
- Which would replace the existing series with base year **2011-12**.
- In addition, the department would release a new series of **PPI** from June 15.
- It will have three indices — **Output PPI, Input PPI and Services PPI**.
- Initially, **Services PPI** will have seven services — **Banking, Securities Transaction, Insurance, Management of Pension Funds, Railways, Air (Passenger), and Telecom**.
- “Considering the wide usage of WPI in price escalation clauses, this index will be released for five years from the date of release of the revised series along with PPI and will be discontinued thereafter,” the ministry said in a statement.

- The transition from **WPI** to **PPI** aligns with global best practices adopted by advanced economies and the recommendations of the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)**.
- The availability of both **Output PPI** and **Input PPI** provides a better understanding of the price movements of output items vis-à-vis the input items used in an industry.
- It also explains how inflation experienced by producers of input items is passed through to the output they produce.
- Mr. Mahto said that the **Service PPIs** for seven services have been compiled in the first phase based on the availability of data from administrative sources/agencies.
- More services are planned to be added to the **PPI basket of services** in subsequent phases, subject to data availability.
- The **DPIIT** informed that **WPI** and **Output PPI** are being compiled on a monthly basis.

03J6. ‘Extreme heat tests India’s record milk production

- The dairy sector accounts for about **5% of India’s GDP** and supports more than **80 million farmers**.
- Rising incomes and population level mean demand for dairy is set to grow.
- The government estimates it could almost double by **2050**.
- But extreme heat means cows eat less, make less milk, struggle to conceive and produce fewer live offspring, experts say.
- India’s milk production reached a record **239 million tonne** in the **2023-24** fiscal year.
- Investing in cooling systems, ventilation and feed management.

03J6. ‘Formalising supply chain integrity a huge challenge for circularity’

- At the **Maharashtra Circular Economy Conclave** held here, large Indian firms spoke about the efforts being taken towards circular economy.
- “The second challenge is transparency and traceability in the system that the material is really good and is going to get recycled back into the system.”

02J6. Vizag data centre is a major challenge

- If India needs Google’s **hyperscale hub**, it is not yet ready for the facility
- **The Google Cloud India AI Hub**, for which the technology giant and **Andhra Pradesh** recently broke ground in **Visakhapatnam**, is a sign that



India is finally moving from providing information technology services and coding to owning infrastructure.

- While the facility is part of a larger digital infrastructure push in **Visakhapatnam**, expected to involve investments running to ₹1.25 lakh crore.
- The facility could strengthen downstream demand for high-end computing hardware, augmenting India's efforts to build semiconductor capacity under **Production Linked Incentive (PLI)** schemes, even if manufacturing viability will still depend on broader ecosystem factors.
- The project has been integrated into the **America-India Connect initiative**, as part of which multiple international subsea cables will land in **Visakhapatnam**, creating India's second major gateway on the eastern seaboard.
- As a result, **Indian data** will have a direct connection from the east coast to **South Africa** and thence to the **U.S.** without first being backhauled to **Cochin**, that too on **Google's** high-capacity cables.
- Likewise, in the east, data from **Visakhapatnam** can reach the **U.S.** via **Singapore** and **Australia**, no longer restricted to the **Chennai-Singapore** connection and thereafter to the **U.S.** on third-party cables.
- As a result, India's dependence on geopolitical stability in the **Red Sea** — through which cables from **Mumbai** pass before reaching **Europe** — will reduce.
- Its expected power demand of **1 GW** makes it a so-called hyperscale hub, with the ability to run powerful artificial intelligence (**AI**) models.

02J6. Remittances anchor the rupee, India's external balances

- The **CA** primarily consists of three components: the trade deficit, the **Net Primary Income (NPI)** deficit and the **Net Secondary Income (NSI)** surplus.
- The **NPI** mainly reflects the net negative balance of investment income earned by Indian residents on foreign assets and paid on India's external liabilities held by foreign counterparts.
- The **NSI** essentially accounts for its huge net positive remittance flows.
- Secondly, net remittances, averaging about 3% of the **Gross Domestic Product (GDP)**, are much higher than the net **FDI** and **FPI** flows.
- Thirdly, unlike, say **FPI**, remittances are not given to sudden halts, for they are largely driven by the income and savings decisions of the Indian diaspora and their respective familial needs back home.
- Fourthly, unlike **FDI** and **FPI**, remittances are transfers and not claims.
- Hence, they do not generate future liability outflows.
- Lastly, remittances have low transaction costs.

02J6. Value of loans sanctioned to MSMEs under ECLGS

- Banks have sanctioned **₹35,000 crore** loans under the **Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS)** to **MSMEs** and industries impacted by the **West Asia conflict**.
- The scheme aimed at providing additional credit flow of **₹2.55 lakh crore** for airlines hit by the ongoing geopolitical crisis.

02J6. AI debt sales reshape global corporate bond markets

- **Google-parent Alphabet** is already one of the biggest outstanding borrowers in the sterling and Swiss franc corporate bond markets.
- Debt issues by so-called "**hyperscalers**" or **Big Tech** companies outside the **United States** are part of a push to diversify their funding early on, bankers said.

02J6. As rare earths become strategic assets, China trains youth with specialised courses

- Every year, several hundred young adults head to the steppes of northern **China** to learn about **rare earths** at schools like the **Inner Mongolia University of Science and Technology**.
- After completing undergraduate study, they may venture a few kilometres up the **six-lane Rare Earths Street** in **Baotou**, where they can work for state-owned refiners that convert the critical minerals into magnets that power jet engines, electric vehicles and wind turbines.
- Or, the graduates may pursue further studies at the nearby **Baotou Rare Earth Research Institute** roughly 150 km from the world's largest rare earths mine.

40 specialist labs

- China has created an ecosystem of more than **40 specialist rare-earth laboratories** that produce cutting-edge research.
- Supplemented by at least **11 universities and technical colleges** that collectively enrol more than **500 students annually** in rare earths degree programmes, a Reuters examination has found.
- That accumulated expertise sustains Beijing's grip on global supplies of refined rare earths.
- **Several U.S. institutions** have begun incorporating more of a focus on rare earths in their curriculum.
- Though Reuters could not identify a school outside **China** that offers a specific undergraduate degree.



- U.S. institutions awarded just over **200 generalist undergraduate mining and metallurgical engineering degrees** in 2023.
- The latest year with nationwide figures available, according to data compiled by the **Colorado-based Society for Mining, Metallurgy and Exploration**.
- “In China, I used to hire kids right out of university and they’re immediately productive,” said **Constantine Karayannopoulos**, former chief executive of rare earths companies **Neo Performance Materials** and **Molycorp**.
- “Anywhere else I need to train them for three years.”
- China’s rare earth industry benefited in the 1980s and 1990s from generous tax incentives and an abundant supply of cheap labour.
- The government and affiliated entities continue to fund research institutes, and state lenders have offered financing on preferential terms to firms that mine critical minerals.
- By the 1990s, the processing industry was “wiped out” in the West, said **Ed Richardson**, chief executive of U.S. magnet producer **Thomas & Skinner**.
- “Therefore, the schools have not been educating mining students for this task.”
- In contrast, researchers, universities, and industry continue to collaborate closely in China.
- Scientists at the **National Engineering Research Center for Rare Earths in Beijing** developed a new technology.
- Which state-owned **Gansu Rare Earth New Materials** adopted in 2023 at a refining facility that can churn out **50,000 metric tonnes** of highly processed rare earths annually.
- That is five times what **Australia’s Lynas Rare Earths**, the largest rare earths company outside China, produced in the 2025 fiscal year.
- China produces over **90%** of the world’s processed rare earths and rare earth magnets.

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MONTHLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

JUNE 2026

GENERAL STUDIES PAPER III

SUBJECT: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

TOPICS COVERED

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- 02J6 The genie of synthetic biology is out, and with it comes power and peril
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- 01J6 'Carrot extract can make fake ghee dodge quality test'
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- 01J6 Webb telescope captures weather on exoplanet 700 lightyears away
- 01J6 Conflict in West Asia spurs interest in European-made sustainable aviation fuels
- 01J6 From students to authors, users turn to AI detectors despite questions over accuracy

24J6. The strange link between AI hallucination and creativity

- A setting called **temperature** governs how adventurous an **LLM's outputs** are: the higher the **temperature**, the more likely the model



reaches for the less likely options and surprises the user; this is the dial that one turns up when seeking a **poem** instead of a **weather report**; the trouble is that the same dial governs **hallucinations**.

- For all their remarkable capabilities, these systems sometimes make things up.
- We call this **hallucination**.
- Ordinarily, a hallucination means to see or hear something that is not there.
- In **artificial intelligence (AI)**, a model hallucinates when it produces an answer that sounds plausible but is factually wrong.
- It may invent a citation, misstate a number, fabricate a legal case, or attribute a quote to the wrong person.
- This is not a minor flaw.
- In **medicine, law, finance, science, and journalism**, hallucinations can be dangerous.
- A medical chatbot that invents advice is not being imaginative but unsafe.
- A legal tool that fabricates case law is being unreliable.
- **Our natural instinct** is to want to eliminate **hallucinations** but this is harder than it appears.
- Large language models (**LLMs**) do not work like databases, storing facts in neat rows and columns, and retrieving the right answer when asked.
- They are trained on enormous collections of text and learn statistical patterns in language.
- When prompted, they generate a response by predicting what will come next, one piece at a time.
- An **LLM** generates text one word at a time, each word a probability drawn from patterns it absorbed during training.
- A setting called the **temperature** governs how adventurous those draws are.
- If the temperature is low, the model will pick the safest, most predictable next word and produce an accurate and dull output.
- If the temperature is higher, the model will reach into the less likely options and begin to surprise you.
- This is the dial you turn up when you want a poem instead of a weather report.
- The trouble is that the same dial governs **hallucinations**.
- A 2025 study reported evidence that **creativity** and **hallucination** tend to increase together as models are encouraged to be more adventurous and explore regions of lower probabilities.
- In other words, the model that dares to write something genuinely new is the same model that dares to make something up.

- A different 2025 study found that the mechanisms that let these systems produce novel, imaginative text by departing from learned patterns are the same mechanisms that open the door to **hallucinations**.
- It is also easier said than done to simply build a better model that does one without the other.
- In September 2025, researchers at **OpenAI** and **Georgia Tech** argued that hallucinations are not bugs to be patched but a statistical inevitability of how these systems are trained and tested.
- Models are rewarded, like students in an exam hall, for guessing rather than admitting ignorance.
- A confident wrong answer may score better than an honest "I don't know".

Scrubbed of surprise

- **Hallucination**, thus seen, is not a flaw in our engineering but a long shadow cast by the limits of computation itself.
- **Penrose** used just this family of ideas to argue that human thinking cannot be reduced to mere computation.
- Human beings also hallucinate in a softer, broader sense all the time.
- We imagine futures.
- We invent stories.
- We see patterns.
- We form hypotheses.
- Much of this is wrong — but some of it becomes **science, art, philosophy, and technology**.
- The difference is that human societies developed methods to discipline imagination.
- **Science** uses experiments.
- **Journalism** uses verification.
- **Philosophy** uses argument.
- Perhaps **AI** needs something similar: not a ban on hallucinations but better institutions of verification around it.

Hallucinations (Medical Context)

- A **hallucination** is a sensory experience in which a person **sees, hears, smells, tastes, or feels something that is not actually present**.
- In simple words:
- A person experiences something as real even though there is no external stimulus causing it.
- The person is often convinced that the experience is real.

Examples of Hallucinations

Auditory Hallucinations (Hearing Things)

- Hearing voices when nobody is speaking.
- Hearing music, sounds, or conversations that are not present.



- **Example:** A person may hear someone calling their name repeatedly when nobody is around.

Visual Hallucinations (Seeing Things)

- Seeing people, animals, lights, or objects that are not actually there.
- **Example:** An elderly person may see a stranger standing in the room when the room is empty.

Olfactory Hallucinations (Smelling Things)

- Smelling odors that do not exist.

Example:

Smelling smoke or burning rubber when nothing is burning.

Gustatory Hallucinations (Tasting Things)

- Experiencing unusual tastes without any food or drink.

Tactile Hallucinations (Feeling Things)

- Feeling insects crawling on the skin.
- Feeling someone touching the body when nobody is present.

Common Medical Causes

Psychiatric Disorders

- Schizophrenia
- Severe depression with psychotic features.
- Bipolar disorder during severe manic or depressive episodes.

Neurological Disorders

- Parkinson's Disease
- Alzheimer's Disease
- Epilepsy.
- Brain tumors.
- Stroke.

Sleep-Related Causes

- Sleep deprivation.
- Hallucinations while falling asleep (hypnagogic hallucinations).
- Hallucinations while waking up (hypnopompic hallucinations).

Substance Use

- Alcohol withdrawal.
- Certain recreational drugs.
- Some medications.

Medical Conditions

- High fever.
- Severe infections.
- Delirium.
- Liver failure.
- Kidney failure.
- Electrolyte imbalances.

Hallucination vs Delusion

- Many people confuse these two terms.

Hallucination	Delusion
False sensory experience	False belief
Person hears, sees, smells, tastes, or feels something unreal	Person strongly believes something untrue
"I hear voices."	"The government is secretly monitoring me."

24J6. Carbon isotopes: clocks of sorts

- **Scientists** studying the comet **3I/ATLAS** have determined that this **interstellar visitor** formed an estimated **12 billion years ago** in a **primordial planetary system**, and has a composition unlike anything in our **solar system**.
- An evaluation of the **chemical make-up of 3I/ATLAS**, only the third **interstellar object** ever spotted in the solar system, provided guidance about the physical and chemical conditions in the planetary system where it formed, the researchers said.
- They added that **3I/ATLAS** appears to have been born in a much colder environment (**-243°C**) than the one in which the **Earth** and other bodies in our solar system formed roughly **4.5 billion years ago**.
- They said it has travelled a vast distance since it was somehow expelled from its home planetary system.
- The researchers measured the **ratio of isotopes** — different versions of chemical elements such as **hydrogen** and **carbon** — observed on **3I/ATLAS** using the **James Webb Space Telescope**.
- Its **hydrogen isotopes** offered evidence about temperature and radiation in the environment in which **3I/ATLAS** formed.
- Its **carbon isotope ratios** offered clues about the composition of the **interstellar gas cloud** that gave rise to **3I/ATLAS** and its home planetary system.
- The **carbon composition** indicated **3I/ATLAS** formed some **12 billion years ago** during a period of intense **star formation** in its region.
- The **universe** is thought to have begun with the **Big Bang** event **13.8 billion years ago**, so **3I/ATLAS** would date to a time when the **cosmos** was only around **13%** of its current age.

23J6. World is moving on from paying publishers — India should too

- Within a span of **18 months**, from late **2024** to mid-**2026**, the **United States** has placed the economics of academic publishing under Congressional scrutiny, **Australia** has mandated immediate open access to all publicly



funded peer-reviewed research, **Europe** has launched a publicly owned publishing platform called **Open Research Europe**, and **China** has begun building an integrated domestic scholarly publishing ecosystem explicitly designed to redirect research prestige and publishing revenue away from foreign publishers.

- **India**, meanwhile, committed **₹6,000 crore** over three years to pay those same publishers for access to knowledge — a considerable part of which was generated by its own researchers.
- The contrast is not incidental.
- It reflects an essential divergence in how the world's major research-producing nations are thinking about **knowledge sovereignty**.
- To that end, **China** is changing research evaluation practices by discouraging metrics like the '**impact factor**', investing in journal infrastructure, instituting a credible peer-review system, and increasing international visibility.
- (A journal's **impact factor** is meant to show its impact on the field based on how much the papers it publishes are cited.)
- The country has also made policy choices to encourage Chinese researchers to publish in domestic journals.
- As a result, it plans to create more than **400 world-class Chinese-owned journals**, capture publishing revenues currently flowing to foreign publishers, and establish Chinese platforms as credible alternatives to the likes of **Nature, Science, and Cell**.
- The **Chinese Academy of Sciences**, which has more than **50,000 researchers** across **100 institutes**, also announced in early **2026** that it would stop paying **article processing charges (APCs)** for more than **30 high-cost international journals**, explicitly including **Nature Communications, Science Advances, and Cell Reports**.
- The **APC** is a fee levied by journals to publish **open-access papers**; the fee is supposed to 'compensate' the revenue the journal will lose since others won't have to buy the paper to read it.

A clear new mandate

- As it happens, **Australia** has moved with the least ambiguity of any major research system.
- The **Australian Research Council (ARC) Open Access Policy**, especially the **v2026.1 update**, takes effect on **July 1, 2026**, and requires journal articles and conference papers arising from **ARC-funded research** to be made openly accessible immediately upon publication, with no exceptions.
- It is also careful to mention **green open access**: once ready, a copy of the paper will be archived in an openly accessible repository.

Publicly owned infrastructure

- **Europe's** approach is also ambitious and relevant to what **India** should be building towards.
- Instead of negotiating with existing publishers — including the '**One Nation One Subscription**' scheme — or requiring researchers to publish their papers to be open access by paying an **APC**, the **European Commission** has concluded that the long-term solution is to create publicly owned publishing infrastructure that removes commercial publishers from the equation entirely.
- **Open Research Europe**, which is the **European Commission's** own publishing platform, is entering a new phase backed by a nearly **€17 million budget** for **2026–2031**, co-funded by the **European Commission** by up to **€10 million**.
- The operating platform will be provided by the **European Organisation for Nuclear Research (CERN)**.
- The platform is expected to begin operating as a collectively supported publishing service later this year.
- Once it is live, researchers from **11 participating national research systems** — **Austria, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland** — will be able to publish without paying.
- In parallel with **Open Research Europe**, Europe has operationalised the **diamond open access model** at scale.
- In this paradigm, a journal publishes open access papers without levying an **APC**; the costs are instead borne by the funders and the research institutions.

What ONOS does and does not do

- India's '**One Nation One Subscription**' (**ONOS**) scheme, which has been operational since **January 2025**, was a genuine step forward in addressing a real and urgent problem.
- **ONOS** provides access to more than **13,000 journals** from **30 publishers** to approximately **6,300 government, academic, and research institutions** at a total committed budget of **₹6,000 crore** over three years (**2025–2027**).
- For researchers at **tier-2 and tier-3 institutions** who have never had access to the journals their fields require, this is transformative.
- However, while **ONOS** solves the reading problem, it does not address the publishing problem.
- **ONOS** comes with an **APC fund of ₹150 crore per year**, replenished from what **India** allocates for research, which is already dwindling.
- Further, with more than half of research worldwide already being freely accessible, a significant proportion of what **ONOS** is paying to access is already available at zero cost.



- That is, **India** is partly paying **₹6,000 crore** to access content that is already free and partly to subsidise a subscription model whose foundations are being dismantled everywhere else in the world.
- **ONOS** is opaque on **publisher pricing**, protection against future cost inflation, investment in Indian journals, and a **post-2027 strategy**.
- **India's** stated ambition to become more self-sufficient is inconsistent with indefinitely subsidising a small group of foreign commercial publishers to access knowledge produced by Indian researchers with Indian public funds.
- A better strategy would be to combine immediate **green open-access mandates** for publicly funded research, **rights retention policies** for researchers, more investments in Indian journals and publishing platforms, transparent **APC expenses**, and participating in international efforts to develop **community-governed publishing infrastructure**.

Window is now

- The direction of change across every major research system is the same: away from **commercial dependencies** and towards **public ownership, public access, and public benefits**.
- **ONOS** has established that the **Government of India** recognises knowledge access as a **public good** worth funding at scale.
- The **Anusandhan National Research Foundation** also has a mandate to reform the conditions in which Indian science reports its findings.

23J6. Laser strums atoms in quest for better computers

- The **world** is constantly looking for **faster** and **more efficient computers**.
- Since the technologies of today have nearly maximised the use of **electric currents** for this purpose, scientists are looking beyond.
- One critical area that may fit our needs is called **strain engineering**.
- It uses **mechanical pressure** at the atomic level to alter a material's properties.
- That is, by physically squeezing or stretching the grid of atoms — called the **lattice** — scientists can change how a material conducts electricity or stores magnetic information.
- To reach the speeds required for **next-generation technology**, however, these mechanical changes must happen trillions of times per second, or at **terahertz frequencies**.
- The main challenge to high-frequency strain engineering in metals is the behaviour of **free electrons**.

- When a metal is struck by a fast **laser pulse**, the electrons absorb the energy.
- In most metals, these electrons move so quickly that they spread the energy across the material before the pulse can exert a localised mechanical force.
- This **delocalisation** prevents the formation of high-frequency strain waves.
- In particular, **terahertz-frequency vibrations** are needed for advanced applications like **spintronics**.
- Spintronics is a field that uses the **magnetic spin of electrons** rather than their charge to store and move data.

'That surprised us'

- The researchers used a **superlattice**: atoms of **platinum** and **copper** arranged in alternating layers, each just a few nanometres thick.
- They chose these metals because of their contrasting **electronic properties**.
- Platinum can hold a large amount of electronic energy while copper allows electrons to move quickly.
- Using **ultrafast X-ray diffraction**, the team observed the atoms moving in real time following a laser pulse.
- Crucially, the team found **electron pressure**, rather than heat, to be the driving force.
- When the laser hit the platinum layers, the electrons gained energy and immediately exerted a physical pressure against the atomic lattice.
- The study showed that **electron pressure** is a dominant and engineerable mechanism that can be used to rapidly 'kick' atoms into motion.

Nanostructured materials

- The **discovery** is an advance in the broader field of **thermoacoustic metamaterials**.
- These are nanostructured materials designed to manipulate **sound** and **heat** in ways that do not occur in nature.
- The study also demonstrated that these effects can be achieved in materials created by **sputtering**.
- Sputtering is a standard industrial process used to coat everything from **microchips** to **glass**.
- That thermoacoustic metamaterials can be produced using **cost-effective** and **scalable manufacturing** suggests the technology could move from the laboratory to the factory floor relatively quickly.

Strain Engineering

- **Strain engineering** means changing the properties of a material by **stretching, compressing, bending, or twisting its atomic lattice**.



- A **lattice** is the regular arrangement of atoms inside a solid material.
- When this lattice is slightly squeezed or stretched, the distance between atoms changes.
- This can change how the material conducts electricity, carries heat, stores magnetic information, or reacts chemically.
- Strain engineering is useful because it can alter material properties without changing the chemical composition of the material.
- It is important for **next-generation computing**, where devices may need to work at extremely high speeds.

Superlattice

- A **superlattice** is an artificial structure made by arranging very thin layers of different materials one above another.
- Atoms of **platinum and copper** were arranged in alternating layers, each only a few nanometres thick.

Ultrafast X-ray Diffraction

- **X-ray diffraction** is a technique used to study the arrangement of atoms in crystals.
- **Ultrafast X-ray diffraction** uses extremely short X-ray pulses to observe how atoms move after being disturbed by light, heat, or pressure.

Thermoacoustic Metamaterials

- **Thermoacoustic metamaterials** are specially designed materials that control sound and heat-related waves in unusual ways.
- A **metamaterial** is not special mainly because of its chemical composition, but because of its designed internal structure.
- Acoustic metamaterials can control, guide, reflect, or absorb sound waves in ways that normal materials cannot.
- In simple words, these materials act like "traffic controllers" for sound and heat waves.

Sputtering

- **Sputtering** is a common industrial process used to deposit a thin film of material on another surface.
- In this process, energetic ions strike a target material and knock atoms out of it.

- These atoms then settle on another surface and form a thin coating.
- It is widely used in **microchips, solar cells, glass coatings, optical devices, and electronic components**.

23J6. Stay with the evidence

- The **Health Ministry's** recent ban on **16 Fixed Dose Combination (FDC) drugs** comes on the evidence that these drug combinations lack therapeutic justification, are '**deemed irrational or unsafe**' and might pose risks to patients.
- The drugs include **dermatological drugs, analgesics and antispasmodics, and antibiotic-based formulations**.
- An **FDC** is a drug containing two or more active pharmacological ingredients, combined in a fixed ratio in a single dosage.
- These were meant to improve treatment compliance in chronic conditions (such as **Tuberculosis**) by reducing the pill burden and, sometimes, by improved therapeutic effectiveness.
- Instructions must also be sent to **manufacturers, importers, distributors, and even individual pharmacies**, to stop stocking and selling the banned FDCs.
- There is enough evidence to show that **irrational antibiotic FDC drug usage leads to or exacerbates the growing antimicrobial resistance** problem in the country.
- While staying solidly on the side of **evidence-based medicine**, the government must also activate its monitoring and supervision arm in order to ensure that the benefits from the ban reach the last mile.

23J6. A Trojan horse has breached the IITs

- For a few decades now, a project called the '**Indian Knowledge System**' (**IKS**) has sought to integrate traditional Indian wisdom into modern educational curricula.
- There is a legitimate quest to reclaim **India's indigenous intellectual history** and to elevate an informal cultural aspiration into a part of education — but the **IKS** of today is not it.
- The real **IKS** might focus on **the linguistics of Panini, the Nyaya school of logic, the Kerala school of mathematics**, the development of **Wootz steel**, and so on.
- But the **IKS** being institutionalised, including under **IIT-Mandi Director Laxmidhar Behera**, is concerned with "**Puranic science**", mythology as history, ritual as technology, and an open contempt for **verifiability**.
- The **more aggressive avatar of IKS** was formalised by the **National Education Policy (NEP), 2020**.



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- It began by documenting breakthroughs in **metallurgy** and **ancient mathematics** before increasingly blurring the lines between historical scholarship and theological revivalism.
- The **Bengal Renaissance** of the **19th century**, including figures such as **Jagadish Chandra Bose** and **Prafulla Chandra Ray**, synthesised Indian identity with rigorous scientific study and proved that decolonisation does not have to open the door to pseudoscience.
- The **IKS centres** intend to embed myth-based inquiries in the framework of the **IITs**, leveraging the institutes' prestige to acquire for their politico-religious dogma a veneer of scientific legitimacy.
- Recently, **IIT-Mandi** and **IIT-Kanpur** hosted a "special session" dedicated to the "**science**" of **reincarnation**.
- The programme proposed using **EEG data** and **astrological birth charts** to track "**past life memories**" in children.
- The '**researchers**' proposed to show the child their "**past-life-related stimuli**", such as photos of a spouse from a '**previous life**', and record the brain's reaction.
- The **University Grants Commission's 2023 guidelines** require all students of higher education to take **IKS courses** for credit.

23J6. Explained: Reliance Communications and Telegram's 'global' blocking

- What is the **Border Gateway Protocol (BGP)**?
- How did it lead to an **accidental blocking of Telegram** in other countries?
- Late June 16, **Telegram CEO Pavel Durov** alleged on X, formerly Twitter, that "Indian telecom Reliance is sabotaging access to Telegram for millions of users OUTSIDE India (including the **UAE**) via a rogue method called **BGP hijacking**," and that this "sabotage seems intentional, as Reliance has ignored multiple reports".

BGP mishap

- Reliance Communications** largely does not exist anymore, and is under an **insolvency process**, as a part of which some of its assets were acquired by **Reliance Jio**.
- BGP** is a protocol used by networks to map out efficient routes to other networks, and propagating incorrect information through BGP to external networks can disrupt access to services whose routing information is contained within such information.
- Flag**, a subsea cable network that was once owned by Reliance Communications and was later spun out as a separate company, likely

maintains "**open filters**," with the latter, **Anurag Bhatia**, an Internet networking expert said.

- "It's common for networks to open filters completely for large customers with the hope and assumption that those customers will not hijack random prefixes," Mr. Bhatia said.
- BGP prefixes** are, roughly speaking, **IP address blocks** that assist in routing.
- Essentially, Reliance Communications' announcement was trusted by the next network in line, and led to a situation where any network that trusted Reliance Communications' BGP announcements carried by Flag would lead people trying to reach Telegram's servers into Reliance Communication servers, where the connection would end with no result.

Impact, mitigation

- However, by then, Mr. Durov complained that **Du**, a telecom operator in the **United Arab Emirates**, where Telegram is headquartered, had ingested the incorrect BGP information, and led to disruptions to the service.
- Resource Public Key Infrastructure Route Origin Validation (RPKI ROV)**, a technology used by large networks to ensure that BGP announcements they receive are legitimate, was able to prevent Reliance's misconfiguration in time.
- Mr. Madory said that further **IP addresses** announced by Telegram were also hijacked throughout the night, worsening the issue.

22J6. Biochar offers a way to turn India's farm smoke into 'black gold'

- When added to poor, degraded soils, **biochar** can increase their ability to store **water** and stimulate the growth of **beneficial microbes**.
- Studies have indicated that it can improve **crop productivity** by **10% to 30%** and **water-holding capacity** by **10% to 25%**, particularly in soils low in **nutrients**.
- India's agriculture faces a serious **paradox**: a large amount of **biomass** that could improve **soil health** is instead being burned.
- This threatens **soil health** and **food security**.
- Punjab and Haryana burn more than **20 million tonnes** of **paddy straw** in their open fields every year.
- At the same time, large tracts of agricultural land, from the **black soils of Maharashtra** to the **red soils of Kerala**, suffer from very low **soil organic carbon**, poor **water-holding capacity**, and rapid loss of **nutrients**, reducing **crop productivity** even with better seeds and irrigation.
- Biochar is made by heating **agricultural waste** in **low-oxygen conditions**.



- What remains is a **carbon-rich material** that breaks down very slowly in the soil, helping to keep **carbon locked away** for long periods of time.
- The benefits extend well beyond **carbon capture**.
- Biochar is highly **porous** and contributes to aggregating **soil particles**, holding **water**, and creating a suitable environment for **microorganisms**.
- When added to poor, degraded soils, it can increase their ability to store **water** and stimulate the growth of beneficial **microbes**.
- Studies have indicated that it can improve **crop productivity** by **10% to 30%** and **water-holding capacity** by **10% to 25%**, particularly in soils low in nutrients.
- Biochar derived from **maize stalks** and applied to **black soils** in **Akola district of Maharashtra** has improved **soil organic carbon content** and overall **soil fertility** in field trials.
- Research from **Kerala** has shown that biochar made from **coconut leaf stalks** increased **soil quality** in different cropping systems, emphasising the need to use local resources effectively.
- By increasing the **water-holding capacity** and the ability to use **nutrients** efficiently, thus, **biochar** can help crops withstand **moisture stress** while reducing dependency on external inputs.
- This is particularly important for **small and marginal farmers** who are often the most exposed to the climate's vagaries.
- Integrating **biochar** into the existing initiatives on **natural farming**, **soil health management**, and **carbon farming** can deliver environmental and economic benefits at scale.
- But they are an important **resource** that can generate additional **income**, create **jobs**, can deliver **environmental benefits**, and could even support **payments for ecosystem services**.

Carbon credits

- As one way forward, the government could package the activities of turning **agricultural waste** into **biochar** and putting it on soil into **carbon credit markets**, creating a strong economic incentive for mass adoption.
- **Biochar carbon** already passes rigorous **stability criteria** for long-term **sequestration**, and it can be classified as a **persistent carbon dioxide removal technology** under internationally accepted accounting standards.
- For instance, **VM0042 agricultural land management methodology** quantifies both **avoided emissions** from residue burning and long-term **carbon sequestration** in soils.
- In this protocol, each tonne of **certified biochar** can generate **2-2.8 t carbon dioxide-equivalent** in **carbon credits**.

- Depending on **carbon market prices**, certified **biochar** can thus provide an additional source of **income** for **project developers**, **farmers**, and **cooperatives**.
- This approach is already being tested in projects such as those using the **KISAN kiln** from **IIT-Kharagpur**, which allows **smallholders** to monetise **farm waste**.
- In **Kenya**, turning **rice husks** into **biochar** has produced thousands of **certified carbon credits** and improved **soil pH** and **phosphorus content**.
- **Thailand** has pushed **biochar use** through national initiatives on **soil rehabilitation** and **carbon management**, and tied certification to access to the national **carbon registry system**, providing a **policy-to-market pipeline**.
- These examples also show that success depends on **integrated strategies** that combine decentralised, appropriately scaled **pyrolysis technology** with strong **measurement, reporting, and verification systems**.

Urban organic waste

- The **feedstock** for **biochar** is also not limited to **agricultural waste** and can encompass **urban organic waste** as well.
- India generates around **62 million tonnes** of **municipal solid garbage** per year and more than **50%** of that is **biodegradable**.
- **Sewage sludge** and **crop residues** can also be converted into **biochar**.
- This is in keeping with the precepts of the **circular economy**, as **organic waste** is diverted from **landfills** that produce **methane** and is converted to a useful product for agriculture.

22J6. No alcohol when it's hot

- It causes the body to produce more **urine**, and thus increases the risk of **dehydration**.
- It impairs the body's ability to regulate **temperature** by dilating **blood vessels** in the skin and suppressing the hormone **vasopressin**.
- And it lowers their awareness of early **warning signs** such as **dizziness** and **nausea** and makes them less likely to seek shade or drink water.
- As **Reuters** reported, "After a crisis meeting, Prime Minister **Sebastien Lecornu** pre-emptively banned alcohol consumption on Sunday at the annual **Fete de la Musique** festivals and other public events" scheduled in the **35 regions** with heat alerts.
- Since the city is a **concrete jungle**, parks could keep people cool at night.



22J6. Kerala's battle with water-borne diseases

- A look at the outbreaks of **Acute Diarrhoeal Diseases (ADD)**, **Hepatitis A**, **shigellosis** and **norovirus** in recent years gives an indication of the impact of **groundwater contamination** on people's health.
- Since the past two decades, **Kerala** has also been experiencing several large and small **Hepatitis A** outbreaks.
- Amoebic meningoencephalitis**, which has also emerged as a significant **public health problem** in **Kerala**, is being linked to the **faecal contamination** in domestic wells, in which **free-living amoeba** thrive.
- The **CAG's 2025 report** stated that at the closure of the **AMRUT Mission**, a Central initiative aimed at ensuring universal access to **safe water** and reliable **sewerage connections** across urban areas, Kerala's overall achievement was just **11.25%** and only **0.13% households** got sewerage connections.
- While Kerala does have high **sanitation coverage** with a significant proportion of households relying on **septic tanks** or **on-site sanitation systems**, these septic tanks are poorly designed and located close to **domestic wells** which lead to **groundwater contamination**.
- Epidemiological investigations** have revealed that water for regional supply systems is often pumped into supply lines without adequate **chlorination or filtration**, and that these lines often run close to **sewage drains** — any breaks in the pipeline can lead to major contamination.

22J6. What is Google's Project Nimbus, and why are students protesting against it?

- The students were protesting against **Google's Project Nimbus**, a tech contract between the search giant and the **Israeli government** that is linked with violence against **Palestinian civilians**.

What is Project Nimbus?

- Project Nimbus** is a technology contract between the **Israeli government** and **Google** and **Amazon**.
- It is worth over **\$1 billion**.
- In May 2021, **Google** said the agreement would deliver **cloud services** to Israeli government entities, including ministries, authorities, and government-owned companies.
- The project was scheduled to run for an initial period of **seven years**, and the Israeli government could extend it for up to **23 years**.
- A month later, **Amazon** said the Israeli government had selected **Amazon Web**

Services (AWS) as its primary cloud provider, under the **Nimbus** contract for government ministries and its subsidiaries.

- In 2024, an investigation by Israeli media outlets **+972 Magazine** and **Local Call** found that the country's army stored information on servers managed by **AWS**.
- That data came from the **surveillance of Palestinians**, as per the investigation.

Why are protesters against Project Nimbus?

- However, **Google** has in the past stressed that **Project Nimbus workloads** are not related to the **military, weapons, or classified intelligence**.
- Amazon** too highlighted its **privacy commitments** to its customers.

Which other tech companies have links to Israel?

- In a conclusion to the **external investigation** that **Microsoft** commissioned after the **Azure surveillance allegations**, the tech giant said it would implement better **review processes**, provide more guidance to employees, and let employees anonymously report potential **policy violations**.
- The **No Azure for Apartheid** group, which is made up of **Microsoft workers**, claimed on **June 6** that Microsoft still allowed the **Israeli military and government** to host other **surveillance projects** on Azure.

22J6. Tales TDS tells

- It flagged the **TDS (Total Dissolved Solids)** range of **1,916 mg/L to 2,450 mg/L** against the norm of under **500 ppm** or not above **1,000 ppm** for percolation ponds.
- It also flagged **BOD (Biological Oxygen Demand)** in the range of **12 mg/L to 78 mg/L**.
- And **COD (Chemical Oxygen Demand)** in the range of **48 mg/L to 160 mg/L**.
- Both values significantly exceeded permissible limits of under **30 mg/L**.
- Conventional trade effluent treatment systems do not fix high **TDS** levels.
- TEPL** is a **Zero Liquid Discharge (ZLD)** unit.
- It uses a **Multiple Effect Evaporator (MEE)** for effluent treatment.
- This makes TEPL a **zero discharge plant**, where no water or waste technically exits the plant.

21J6. The plague was deadly even before farming's rise



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- Scientists have found evidence of **plague outbreaks** among **hunter-gatherers** near **Lake Baikal** in **Siberia** dating back **5,500 years**.
- The findings challenge the old belief that the **plague** only became a major threat once humans began living in dense, crowded **farming communities**.
- The team analysed **ancient DNA** and estimated an **infection rate** of **39%**.
- However, the strains lacked the genes needed to be spread by **flea bites**.
- This suggests they moved directly from **person to person**.

19J6. Telegram has evolved into a new dark web, govt. tells HC

- The **Union government** on Thursday submitted before the **Delhi High Court** that the messaging platform **Telegram** had evolved into the “**new dark web**”, arguing that its architecture and privacy features had made it a preferred tool for **cybercriminals, fraud networks, extremist and terror groups**, and operators involved in **examination paper leaks**.
- The government’s submissions relied heavily on an **Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C)** assessment that the platform was a growing hub for **illicit online activity**.
- “Telegram has become the **new dark web**, linking **threat actors**. Criminals have rapidly adopted Telegram to post links on channels that connect to dark web forums through **deep web links**, making it hard for authorities to track and attribute criminals,” he said.
- **Senior advocate Dhruv Mehta**, appearing for Telegram, said the **government had failed to justify the use of emergency powers** and had not demonstrated why specific content could not be blocked, instead of disabling access to the entire platform.
- “The order says it is in the interest of the **sovereignty and integrity of India**. An examination like **NEET** will affect the sovereignty and integrity of India?” he asked.
- “How can we stop the rights of **150 million people** just because one set of citizens are appearing in examinations?” he said while hearing submissions from both sides.
- It is alleged that **Telegram channels** host marketplaces for **rented and mule bank accounts** used in **money laundering and cyber fraud**.
- Such channels enable criminals to exchange information on **bank accounts, UPI handles, and cryptocurrency conversion mechanisms** while, due to the interface, it remains difficult for the police to track them because new channels emerge continuously.
- Data placed before the court show that complaints on the **National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal** involving Telegram rose from

75,688 in 2023 to 2.75 lakh in 2025, with fraud amounts crossing ₹3,000 crore in 2025.

19J6. Beyond ‘depression’ and ‘anxiety’: how young Adivasis describe distress

- Dumbi, a tall, muscular teenager, walks silently outside his village, which consists of about 70 houses, mostly of the **Adivasi Ho community, in Jharkhand**.
- The burden of caring for the family at the age of **15** made him sullen and withdrawn, and also led to his **habit of drinking locally-brewed liquor, as a coping mechanism**.
- **India has the largest population of indigenous communities in the world.**
- The **2015-16 National Mental Health Survey** estimated that **7%** of adolescents aged **13-17 years**, experience mental health problems, though most are unlikely to receive any formal care.
- A survey among **Adivasi adolescents in Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, and Meghalaya** reported a **16% prevalence** of mental disorders, more than double the national estimate for adolescents.

19J6. Children with vitiligo deserve freedom from stigma and the burden of misinformation

- Yet, for thousands of children living with **vitiligo** – a chronic condition where patches of skin tend to lose pigment – this is a reality.
- **Vitiligo** is a medically harmless, non-contagious condition.
- Misunderstandings and **stigma** about it, however, persist.
- Children suffering from **vitiligo** tend to be very conscious of their appearance at an early age.
- **Adolescents** are significantly more vulnerable as during their teenage years, they are more susceptible to concerns of appearances, belonging and acceptance.

What needs to change

- The condition is often assumed to be caused by poor hygiene or believed to be contagious: neither fact is true.
- Simple initiatives inside the classroom can make a difference, as when children understand that **vitiligo** is an autoimmune disease and poses no health risk to others, the stigma and fear related to it will reduce substantially.
- Teachers and parents play an important role here in identifying signs of emotional distress, declining academic performances or reluctance to attend school.



- The true burden of **vitaligo** is rarely found in the skin itself: it is found in the silent stigma that children face. Our collective goal must be that no child feels different, or less worthy, due to the skin they live in.

Vitaligo

- Vitaligo** is a chronic skin condition in which white patches appear on the skin due to the loss of **melanocytes**, the cells that produce the pigment **melanin** responsible for skin, hair, and eye color.

Why is it Called an Autoimmune Disease?

- In an autoimmune disorder, the body's immune system mistakenly attacks its own healthy cells.
- In vitiligo:
- The immune system wrongly identifies melanocytes as harmful.
- It attacks and destroys these pigment-producing cells.

As melanocytes disappear, the affected areas lose their color and become white.

19J6. Lopsided solution

- In India, **regulatory oversight** for **pharmaceuticals** needs to improve.
- As part of an overarching attempt to restore confidence in India's **pharmaceutical supply chain** after a series of deaths damaged the country's reputation as a drug exporter, the government has required a doctor's prescription for individuals to purchase syrup-based medicines.
- However, while it seems like a credible measure, it is also defensive rather than reformist.
- The **Union Health Ministry** has removed the term "syrup" from **Schedule K of the Drugs Rules 1945**, a change it had signalled when it issued the draft notification in December 2025, thus requiring cough syrups to be sold only with a prescription, through licensed pharmacies.
- These products were singled out after **ethylene glycol (EG)** and **diethylene glycol (DEG)** contamination in India-made cough syrups killed over 300 children across several countries since 2022.
- The **WHO's warnings** in 2022 and 2023 also undermined assumptions that India's export quality controls were effective and functioning independently.
- But beyond contamination, doctors have long raised concerns about how cough syrups are formulated and used.
- Many over-the-counter (OTC) cough syrups are 'cocktails' of **bronchodilators, antihistamines, and decongestants**, which can cause tremors and heart palpitations, extreme sedation or paradoxical agitation in infants, and blood pressure effects.

- The **American Academy of Pediatrics** has said that **cough suppressants are quite ineffective for children under six years and may even be dangerous**, as they can mask underlying conditions such as pneumonia or asthma.
- Yet, India's entrenched **OTC culture** makes pharmacists de facto primary care providers in many rural and semi-urban areas.
- Most importantly, however, the **contamination was the result of failures in manufacturing quality control**, testing of raw materials, and regulatory oversight rather than consumer access.
- Even now, requiring a prescription may reduce inappropriate use and push patients away from self-medication, but it could never prevent contaminated products from reaching the market in the first place.
- The fundamental issue is that the government continues to tolerate the **pharmaceutical lobby's** argument that high-end testing requirements — for stronger quality control and ultimately better drugs — will bankrupt smaller manufacturers.
- Second, while the **Indian Pharmacopoeia** and the **Pharmacopoeia Internationalis** updated their analytical methods to detect **EG/DEG** following the deaths, failures in batch testing and enforcement persist.
- As a result, while India has around three dozen **State drug controllers**, they are chronically understaffed — so without a large increase in the inspectorate, the notification is likely to be ignored sans consequence in rural areas.
- In a globalised economy, subpar enforcement for medicines in even one country is dangerous; that is infinitely more so in a country aspiring to remain the world's pharmacy.

19J6. MSMEs hit by curbs on dispensing diesel

- Micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs)** that consume **200 to 600 litres of high speed diesel (HSD)** a day have been hit by the recently imposed **procurement ceiling**.

HIGH-SPEED DIESEL (HSD)

- High-Speed Diesel (HSD)** is a refined petroleum fuel used in **high-speed diesel engines**, particularly those operating at speeds above about **750 revolutions per minute (RPM)**.
- HSD is used in:
- Trucks and buses
- Cars and SUVs with diesel engines
- Tractors and agricultural machinery
- Diesel generators (DG sets)
- Construction equipment
- Railways (many diesel locomotives)
- Industrial machinery



Why is it Called "High-Speed" Diesel?

- The term refers to the **engine speed**, not the speed of the vehicle.

Example

- A modern truck engine may operate between 1,000 and 2,500 RPM.
- A tractor engine may operate around 1,500–2,000 RPM.
- These are classified as high-speed diesel engines and therefore use HSD.

Characteristics of HSD

- High Energy Content:** Provides substantial power and fuel efficiency.
- Higher Flash Point:** Usually above 35°C. Safer to store and transport than petrol.
- Good Lubricating Properties:** Helps reduce wear and tear in diesel engines.
- Better Fuel Economy:** Diesel engines generally provide higher mileage than petrol engines.

HSD vs Petrol

Feature	HSD	Petrol
Engine Type	Diesel Engine	Petrol Engine
Fuel Efficiency	Higher	Lower
Torque	Higher	Lower
Flash Point	Higher	Lower
Common Use	Trucks, buses, tractors	Cars, motorcycles

HSD vs Light Diesel Oil (LDO)

- Many students confuse HSD and LDO.

Feature	HSD	LDO
Use	Vehicles and high-speed engines	Industrial low-speed engines
Engine Speed	Above ~750 RPM	Below ~750 RPM
Quality	Better	Relatively lower

Environmental Concerns

- Burning HSD releases
- Carbon dioxide (CO₂)
- Nitrogen oxides (NO_x)
- Particulate Matter (PM)
- Sulphur compounds (depending on fuel quality)
- To reduce pollution, India has adopted **BS-VI (Bharat Stage VI)** diesel standards with very low sulphur content.

18J6. The universe's expansion still accelerating: researchers

Universe still expanding at an accelerated rate

- Taking a fresh look at data involving a type of **exploding stars**, a team of researchers says it has confirmed the notion that the **universe is expanding at an accelerated rate** — the very observation that led to the identification in the 1990s of an **enigmatic cosmic force called dark energy**.
- The study's results rebut research published last year that concluded that this **cosmic expansion** is no longer speeding up — a finding that had challenged the basic understanding of the universe.
- "The **universe** is still accelerating," said astrophysicist **Brodie Popovic** of the University of Southampton in England, one of the leaders of the study published this month in the journal **Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society**.
- The study's findings, by a team that included **two Nobel Prize recipients**, were guided by observations in two different datasets of **a type of stellar explosion called a Type Ia supernova** in order to calculate vast cosmic distances.
- These supernovae cause the destruction of an object called a white dwarf**, the dense remnant of a low- to intermediate-mass star at the end of its lifecycle.
- This type of supernova has proven valuable in investigating the universe's structure based on evidence that all of these explosions have roughly the same luminosity.**
- Their observed **brightness** differs depending upon their distance from earth, making them useful as cosmic mile markers.
- By measuring the brightness of these supernovae as seen from earth, scientists can gauge the universe's expansion rate and its change over time.**
- The **Big Bang** event roughly 13.8 billion years ago initiated the universe, and it has been expanding ever since.
- Scientists in 1998 disclosed that this expansion is accelerating, with an invisible force called **dark energy** as the hypothesised reason.
- The universe's contents include **ordinary matter** — stars, planets, gas, dust and all the familiar stuff on earth — and **dark matter** and **dark energy**.
- Ordinary matter represents an estimated **5%** of the contents.
- Dark matter, which is known from its **gravitational influences** on galaxies and stars, makes up an estimated **27%**.
- Dark energy makes up an estimated **68%**.
- The authors of the **2025 study**, which was published in the same journal as the new study, concluded that dark energy is weakening and has stopped accelerating the universe's expansion.



- “Over the past decade, a group at **Yonsei University** has argued that supernova distances should be calibrated differently by accounting for the ages of the stars that eventually explode, and that this ‘**age effect**’ could substantially alter the evidence for acceleration.”
- “In our study, we found no evidence for the claimed ‘age effect’ in the largest calibrated supernova samples used by the cosmology community over the last decade,” astrophysicist **Adam Riess** of Johns Hopkins said.
- Astrophysicist **Young-Wook Lee** of Yonsei University, located in Seoul, was one of the leaders of the 2025 study.
- He defended the findings of his team, and said the main arguments made by the researchers in the new study have “serious **methodological flaws** or lead to conclusions that are internally inconsistent by their own logic.”
- The researchers in the new study expressed confidence in their **methodology** and their conclusions confirming **acceleration**.

18J6. QUIZ

1. Eigengrau: Light you still see in a perfectly dark room

- **Eigengrau**, a German term meaning “intrinsic gray” or “own gray,” refers to the dark gray colour perceived by the human eye in conditions of complete darkness.
- Even when no external light enters the eye, people do not usually see absolute black.
- This phenomenon occurs because retinal cells and neurons in the visual system continue to generate spontaneous electrical activity.
- As a result, the brain interprets these signals as a faint gray shade.
- Eigengrau demonstrates that human vision depends not only on external light but also on internal neural processes within the visual system.



2. Melanosomes: Organelles that synthesise melanin

- **Melanosomes** are specialized organelles found within melanocytes, the cells responsible for producing melanin in the skin, hair, and eyes.
- These membrane-bound structures serve as sites where the pigment melanin is synthesized, stored, and transported.
- **Melanin** plays a crucial role in **determining skin and hair colour** and helps **protect tissues**

from harmful ultraviolet (UV) radiation by absorbing and dispersing solar energy.

- Variations in the size, number, and distribution of melanosomes contribute to differences in pigmentation among individuals. Defects in melanosome formation can lead to pigmentation disorders such as **albinism**.

3. Carbon Nanotubes: Structural components of Vantablack

- **Vantablack** is one of the **darkest artificial materials ever created** and is composed primarily of vertically aligned **carbon nanotubes**.
- These nanotubes are extremely thin, measuring only a few nanometres in diameter, and are arranged densely on a surface. When light enters the nanotube structure, it becomes trapped through repeated reflections and is almost entirely absorbed rather than reflected back.
- As a result, Vantablack absorbs more than 99.9% of visible light, making objects coated with it appear almost two-dimensional.
- It has applications in astronomy, optical instruments, and advanced scientific research.

4. Hawking Radiation: Radiation thought to be emitted by black holes

- **Hawking radiation** is a theoretical form of radiation proposed in 1974 by the physicist Stephen Hawking. According to quantum mechanics, particle-antiparticle pairs constantly form near the event horizon of a black hole.
- If one particle falls into the black hole while the other escapes, the escaping particle appears as radiation emitted by the black hole.
- This process gradually causes the black hole to lose mass and energy over extremely long periods.
- Hawking radiation was a groundbreaking concept because it combined principles of quantum physics, thermodynamics, and Einstein’s theory of gravity, transforming scientific understanding of black holes.

18J6. Innovate or be eaten

- India must realise the importance of innovating up to the frontier
- There is no question that **Indian professionals** are capable of **pathbreaking innovation**.
- As evidenced by the strong representation of **Indian and Indian-origin technology industry leaders**, Indian executives have displayed extraordinary talent in both the managerial and technical work that goes into building and advancing complex businesses at the forefront of the global economy’s most important engines.



- **'Bharat Innovates 2026', the event in Nice, France, supported by the Ministry of Education**, has shown that many of these innovations are possible in India, and that patient incubation of startups in key strategic areas can lead to exceptional results that are competitive with the best-in-class globally.
- India's potential to be a global home for **innovation** is real, especially with the kind of **middle power collaboration** that French President **Emmanuel Macron** advocated for at the event.
- The innovation question is key to processing the aftermath of **Anthropic's** most powerful **AI models, Claude Mythos and Fable**, being banned for non-Americans, a move that has already affected some Indian entities and users.
- Perhaps it is not possible to brute-force frontier **AI or semiconductor technology**, given the tens of billions of dollars even a single player requires to make incremental advances in these fields.
- Becoming an **AI deployment superpower**, as many tech policymakers advocate, may also be a pursuit of a losing battle; India, after all, is not alone in seeking knowledge economy efficiencies from AI.
- But the field of opportunities remains nonetheless vast: **deep tech in areas such as space exploration, defence, and material sciences** remain an open contest.
- **For India to pursue innovation, two ingredients are important: India must be a stable and attractive home for capital and talent.**
- For the former, the swashbuckling **rent-seeking** of the successful must be reined in to keep innovators from dreading success on Indian soil.
- **Venture capital** must be in a position to assess exploratory and cutting-edge pitches on the same footing as they do in other countries.
- And **tax policies** must be clear and predictable.
- To be an attractive home for talent, what is required is quite simple: the top talent must look forward to their future in India, instead of running into a dead end for their potential and the life they feel greener pastures may afford them.
- For this, investments in **public goods** such as **clean air, abundant urban green spaces, and affordable and reliable public transport** can go a long way.
- These are, after all, what returnees miss the most.
- Some of India's oldest and most stubborn problems are in the way of a truly **innovative ecosystem**.
- The good news is that these problems need **political capital**, not risk capital.

18J6. Jet fuel exports to EU back to 2025 levels

- India's exports of **jet fuel** to **Europe** have risen to levels seen since before an **EU ban** was placed on **Russian-origin fuel** in January, data from **Kpler** and **LSEG** shows.
- Around **62,000 barrels per day (bpd)** of jet fuel have been imported by the **EU**, going to **Italy** from India's **Jamnagar refinery**, data from **Kpler** shows.
- **LSEG** data similarly shows around **64,000 bpd** of fuel being imported by the **EU**.
- This is the highest since **December 2025**, when imports stood at roughly **89,000 bpd**, per both data platforms.

EU ban

- A **European Union (EU)** ban on products derived from **Russian oil** took effect on **January 21** aimed at curbing oil revenue which **Moscow** uses to fund the **Ukraine war**.
- However, **Reliance** operates two refineries at its **Jamnagar complex** — one geared for exports and one for India's domestic market.
- It said last year that it had stopped processing **Russian crude** at its export-oriented facility.
- Meanwhile, the **Trump administration** in April renewed a waiver allowing countries to buy **Russian oil** and petroleum products loaded on vessels through **May 16**.
- The cargoes were loaded around **May 16** and **May 25**, data from **LSEG** and **Kpler** showed.
- Last year, India's exports of **jet fuel** to the **EU** averaged **89,000 bpd**, and made up **16%** of its total imports.

17J6. GRAPES-3: A cosmic-ray tracker

- Researchers from **Mumbai, Kochi, and Japan** used the **GRAPES-3 telescope** to track how the earth's **upper atmosphere temperature** and the sun's **magnetic field** affect **muons** — **subatomic particles** from space.
- The **GRAPES-3 telescope** in **Ooty, Tamil Nadu** does not look at light like a traditional telescope.
- Instead, it is a **muon detector**.
- **Muons** are created when high-energy **cosmic rays** from deep space collide with the earth's **upper atmosphere**.
- The facility consists of **16 independent modules** spread over a large area.
- Each module contains **232 proportional counters**, which are long steel tubes filled with a special mixture of **argon and methane**, with a **thin tungsten wire** running through the centre.
- When a **muon** passes through a tube, it knocks electrons out of the gas molecules.
- These electrons are pulled towards the wire, creating an **electrical pulse** that the telescope records as a hit.



- The tubes are arranged in **four layers**, with each layer positioned at a right angle to the one below.
- This **grid layout** allows scientists to track the exact path and angle of the incoming muons.
- Thick layers of **reinforced concrete** are placed between the tubes to ensure the telescope only counts high-energy muons that are strong enough to penetrate the concrete.
- This is how **GRAPES-3** is able to produce a **high-resolution map** of the invisible **cosmic forces** affecting the earth.

16J6. AI is helping patients understand cancer but misunderstand doctors

- I used to explain the **PDL1 status** and the role of **neoadjuvant therapy**, where patients get **immunotherapy** first followed by surgery — terms that meant nothing.
- “So **PDL1-positive** means my cancer may respond well to specific treatment and have higher cure rates?” they ask.
- I have patients who understand why a **phase II trial for immunotherapy** might be appropriate for their **metastatic melanoma**.
- **Informed consent** is now informed in a way that would not have been remotely possible five years ago.
- A man with advanced **salivary gland cancer** asked me about the **open clinical trials** that I hadn't even mentioned yet.
- He wasn't just following my recommendation; he understood the science behind it.
- This represents patients becoming medically literate enough to participate in their own care.
- The guidelines themselves are now being simplified by **LLMs** into language that does not require an oncology degree to understand.
- A patient with cancer can ask ChatGPT to explain the staging system, treatment options, and surveillance protocols.
- This democratisation of **cancer knowledge** is important, especially in **India**, where accessing oncologists is itself challenging for many.
- My recommendation is surgery followed by **radiotherapy**.
- The LLM gave her valid information and even explained that **some stage II oral cancers** don't need radiotherapy.
- But it couldn't tell her that her specific tumour with its specific characteristics had a 30% recurrence risk without radiotherapy and 10% with it.
- That difference is life-years.
- Making that judgement requires knowing her values, her tolerance for toxicity, and her specific cancer biology.
- According to one **JAMA study** on diagnostic accuracy, when **LLMs** encounter complex cases requiring contextual reasoning, their accuracy drops significantly, well below the level of an experienced physician.
- What troubles me most is something we are witnessing in real time: the **widening trust gap between doctor and patient**.
- **I tell a patient with stage IV cancer that chemotherapy is unlikely to be curative but might extend life by months and improve quality of life.**
- The patient pulls up what **ChatGPT** said: “Chemotherapy can cause severe nausea, hair loss, infections, and heart damage.
- Many people pursue alternative medicine instead.”
- It has essentially validated scepticism about chemotherapy without context about whether, in this specific situation, the **risk-benefit ratio** favours treatment.
- They think I am pushing toxic drugs for profit while the LLM is being more honest.
- Eighteen months later, he has **stage III lung cancer** that was likely stage I when he first noticed it.
- Another patient with **breast cancer** asked an LLM about stopping **hormone therapy** after three years.
- The algorithm discussed “natural approaches” and how some women manage without medication.
- These are stories of real patients harmed by a tool we have unleashed without fully understanding how to control it.
- Patients are increasingly informed but often misinformed.
- They have information without context.
- They trust algorithms that sound intelligent but lack accountability.
- They are sceptical of doctors who try to add nuance because the algorithm validated their simpler interpretation.
- They cannot examine a patient or order a biopsy or follow someone over time.
- And we need to rebuild something I see eroding: patients understanding that a doctor who disagrees with them might not be defensive or greedy.

16J6. AI falls short on extreme weather forecasting

Artificial Intelligence and Extreme Weather Forecasting

- In the study, researchers from **Germany** and **Switzerland** compared several leading **AI** weather models, including **GraphCast, Pangu-Weather, and Fuxi**, against the world's gold standard for traditional forecasting: the **high-resolution (HRES) model** of the **European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts**.



- They found that while the AI models excelled at predicting 'normal' weather and even moderate extremes, they consistently failed to accurately predict events that would shatter records.
- Traditional models are based on **physics**, and use complex mathematical equations to describe how air and heat move, how moisture turns into rain, and so on.
- They are trained to look for patterns based on 40 years of historical weather data (1979-2017), so when the weather does something completely unprecedented — like a record-setting heatwave — the AI models have no basis to anticipate it.
- This is called an **extrapolation problem**: that is, AI is great at **interpolating**, or predicting things within the range of what it has seen, but it struggles to predict things far outside of its training data.
- **Early warning systems** for heatwaves, floods, and storms still require the highest possible accuracy during extreme weather to save lives.

16J6. QUIZ

1. The phenomenon where light is magnified by gravity

Answer: Gravitational Lensing

- **Gravitational lensing** is a phenomenon predicted by **Albert Einstein's General Theory of Relativity**.
- It occurs when the gravitational field of a massive object, such as a galaxy or galaxy cluster, bends the path of light coming from a more distant object.
- This bending can magnify, distort, or even create multiple images of the background source.

2. Spacecraft designed to be pushed forward by light

Answer: Light-Sail

- A **light-sail** (or solar sail) is a spacecraft propulsion system that uses the pressure exerted by light photons to generate motion. Unlike conventional rockets, light-sails require no onboard fuel for propulsion.
- They use large, highly reflective sails that capture momentum from sunlight or powerful laser beams.

3. Light that appears near surfaces and fades rapidly away from it

Answer: Evanescent Waves

- **Evanescent waves** are electromagnetic waves that form near the boundary between two different media when light undergoes total internal reflection.
- Unlike ordinary light waves, they do not travel far into the second medium. Instead, their intensity decreases exponentially with distance from the surface.

4. How light's electric field moves when it's circularly polarised

Answer: Rotates

- In **circularly polarised light**, the electric field vector continuously **rotates** as the light wave propagates through space. Instead of oscillating in a single plane, as in linearly polarised light, the electric field traces a circular path around the direction of travel.

5. Space acquired this property due to ultra-strong magnetic fields

Answer: Birefringent

- Under extremely intense magnetic fields, empty space can become **birefringent**, a phenomenon known as **vacuum birefringence**.
- According to **Quantum Electrodynamics (QED)**, powerful magnetic fields can alter the behaviour of virtual particles in a vacuum, causing light with different polarisations to travel differently.
- As a result, space behaves similarly to a birefringent crystal, splitting light into components with distinct properties.
- This effect is expected near highly magnetised neutron stars called **magnetars**, whose magnetic fields are trillions of times stronger than Earth's.
- Observational evidence for vacuum birefringence has provided important support for fundamental predictions of modern quantum physics.

16J6. Technology drives India-France strategic convergence

- It is a measure of the importance that Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** and French President **Emmanuel Macron** attach to the **India-France relationship** that they are meeting again in France, on the sidelines of the **G-7 Summit in Evian** (June 15-17), barely months after Mr. Macron's visit to India for the **India AI Impact Summit 2026** in New Delhi in February.



- During that visit, the two leaders jointly inaugurated the **India-France Year of Innovation 2026**.
- In normal diplomacy, such announcements often take time to translate into action.
- It is therefore notable that Mr. Modi and Mr. Macron are already moving swiftly to advance bilateral **technology cooperation**.
- They jointly inaugurated the **“Bharat Innovates”** event in **Nice** (June 14-16), bringing together leading Indian start-ups and venture capital funds.
- Mr. Modi will then attend the **VivaTech Summit** in **Paris** on June 18, Europe's largest technology and start-up event, underscoring the growing **India-France technology partnership**.

16J6. Novartis launches therapy to treat prostate cancer

- For better **cancer care** in India, **Novartis India** has announced the launch of **Pluvicto (lutetium (177Lu) vipivotide tetraxetan)**, the country's first regulatory authority approved **radioligand therapy** for eligible patients with **Prostate-Specific Membrane Antigen (PSMA)-positive prostate cancer**.
- Designed to precisely target **prostate cancer cells** while minimising exposure to healthy tissues, **Pluvicto** introduces a new treatment approach for **metastatic prostate cancer**, the company said.
- **Judith Love, Region Head Asia Pacific Middle East Africa, Novartis**, said, “India is a priority market for **Novartis**, with growing momentum in **precision oncology** and advanced cancer care.”
- “The introduction of **Pluvicto** marks a meaningful step forward – bringing globally approved innovation closer to patients who need more targeted treatment options.”
- “What makes this launch especially impactful is not just the science, but the opportunity to expand access through India's growing **nuclear medicine infrastructure**.”
- “We remain committed to enabling access to **next-generation treatments**, and I'm excited about the difference **Pluvicto** can make for patients in India,” he added.
- **Amitabh Dube, Country President and Managing Director, Novartis India**, said, “In India, a large proportion of **prostate cancer patients** continue to be diagnosed only after the disease has progressed to a **metastatic stage**, limiting treatment options and impacting quality of life.”
- “With the launch of **Pluvicto**, we are bringing a globally recognized **radioligand therapy platform** to India at a time when the need for **precision oncology solutions** is increasing rapidly,” he said.

15J6. Odisha village to get crocodile alert system under ‘Smart Village’ plan

- As the **Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)** accelerates the deployment of technologies in **Kusunpur**, a remote village in **Odisha's Kendrapara district**, as part of the **‘Smart Village’ initiative**, residents may soon receive alerts whenever crocodiles stray dangerously close to their homes.
- The **CSIR laboratories** are planning to introduce an **artificial intelligence (AI)-enabled wild animal detection and alert system**.
- **Kendrapara** has logged one of the worst rates of **human-crocodile conflicts** in the State, with more than **20 fatalities** reported over the past four years.
- Roads will be developed using innovative methods, including **cold mix technology**, **waste plastic road technology**, and **cement grouted bituminous mix**.
- These include **dry flower processing**, **production of value-added crispy fruits through freeze-drying**, and the development of **nutritious food products to combat malnutrition**.
- Other initiatives include **biodegradable tableware**, **small-scale processing units**, **herbal floor-cleaning liquids**, **mosquito repellent lotions**, and **scented candles made from natural beeswax**.

15J6. Deaths in Brazil raise concerns about India's dengue vaccine, DengiAll

- This is because the **dengue vaccine in Brazil, Butantan-DV**, is pretty similar, if not identical, to India's upcoming dengue vaccine, **DengiAll**.
- Both have live but weakened (**attenuated**) versions of the dengue viruses (**DENVs**).
- And both vaccines are said to be **tetravalent** because each vaccine is a physical mixture of four live, weakened **DENVs**.
- **DENVs** come in four versions called **serotypes: DENV-1, -2, -3 and -4**.
- All four serotypes are known to be prevalent in **Brazil and India**.
- Each **DENV serotype** has an outer shell adorned with specialised **envelope proteins**, called **E proteins** — akin to the **spike protein** of coronaviruses.
- Even though the four **DENV serotypes** are very similar, their **E proteins** are different enough to warrant immunisation against each of the four serotypes.
- When weakened **DENV** is used in a vaccine, it will prompt two broad types of **antibodies: type-specific antibodies** and **cross-reactive antibodies**.
- This phenomenon is called **antibody-dependent enhancement (ADE)**.



- The risk of **ADE** during dengue vaccination is considered a serious adverse event.
- These side-effects included severe abdominal pain, persistent vomiting, and bleeding, none of which the **phase 3 clinical trials** revealed.
- These signs are reminiscent of the symptoms of **severe dengue**.
- **Butantan-DV and DengiAll** are both based on a technology developed at the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH).
- Over many years, scientists weakened each DENV serotype to make **monovalent vaccines**, assessed each one for its capacity to induce an immune response without causing disease, and finally mixed all four monovalent vaccine viruses to generate **tetravalent vaccines**.
- A little over a decade ago, **Sanofi Pasteur** developed the first **tetravalent dengue vaccine** to be licensed.
- It differed from the **NIH's vaccines** because the four weakened serotypes were hybrid viruses, each covered on its surface with the **E protein** of one of the DENV serotypes (plus another protein).
- This shot, called **Dengvaxia**, was given to more than **8 lakh children** in the **Philippines**, a dengue-endemic country like Brazil and India.
- Severe adverse events occurred three years after vaccination.
- Further study revealed **Dengvaxia** worked like a **monovalent vaccine**, provoking antibodies to only **DENV-4**.
- **Continuous real-world monitoring** is key to identifying rare or long-term adverse events.
- The **ADE concerns** also apply to another **tetravalent dengue vaccine, Qdenga**, which is also a physical mix of four weakened versions of the DENV serotypes.
- **Japan-based Takeda** markets it and its India approval is imminent.

15J6. The giant world of fungi

- A new study published in Science has reported the **first global map of the earth's vast underground network of arbuscular mycorrhizal (AM) fungi**.
- These fungi have sustained plant life for millions of years but their scale and distribution has been largely invisible until now.
- Using **machine learning** and data from more than **16,000 soil cores**, an international research team has revealed that topsoils around the world contain some **110 quadrillion km of fungal hyphae** — a distance equal to nearly a billion trips from the earth to the sun.
- The **AM networks** also weigh around **300 million tonnes of carbon**, which is four- to six-times the weight of the entire human population.
- By forming **symbiotic relationships** with **70% of plant species**, trading nutrients for carbon,

the **AM networks** sequester an estimated **4 billion tonnes of CO2-equivalent a year**, or roughly **11% of all human-related carbon emissions**.

- The study also identified **biodiversity hotspots** and threats to them.
- **Grassland ecosystems** like those in **South Sudan**, the **Tibetan plateau**, and India's **Banni grasslands** house **40% of the world's AM fungal networks**.
- However, the study warned that **cropland** typically has a **50% lower fungal density** relative to wild ecosystems, and because grasslands are being converted to farms **four-times faster than forests**, these ecosystems are at extreme risk.
- By quantifying the extent of this "**living infrastructure**", as the **Society for the Protection of Underground Networks** put it, the work hopes to move fungi from the periphery of environmental policy to the centre of climate action.

14J6. Anomaly in PSLV detected and resolved: Jitendra

- **Union Minister of State for Science and Technology Jitendra Singh** on Saturday said that the anomaly in the **Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV)** had been resolved.
- Dr. Singh said on the sidelines of the **Research, Industry, Start-up and Entrepreneurship (RISE) Conclave 2026** in **Bengaluru**, that a **national-level expert committee** constituted to review the reason for the anomaly had submitted its report and the problem had been detected.
- "The report has come out and the anomaly has been detected.
- However we cannot share that [reason for the anomaly] on a public platform.
- But experts are working on it, which has been resolved and very soon we will be back on track," Dr. Singh said replying to a query.
- The **PSLV**, which is referred to as the **workhorse** of the **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)**, had suffered two back-to-back setbacks.
- On **January 12, 2026**, the **PSLV-C62 mission** carrying the **EOS-N1 earth observation satellite** failed to finish its intended trajectory after an anomaly was detected during the end of the **third stage** of the launch vehicle.
- On **May 18, 2025**, while **ISRO** attempted to launch the **EOS-09 satellite** aboard the **PSLV-C61 mission**, it couldn't complete it.
- It was also due to an anomaly in the **third stage** of the rocket.
- Following this a **national-level expert committee** was constituted which included **K. Vijay Raghavan**, former **Principal Scientist** • c



Adviser, and former ISRO Chairman S. Somanath.

- "There is no such thing as failure in a space mission.
- It is sometimes delayed, sometimes a setback which actually is a learning experience.
- Even if you call every unsuccessful or half successful attempt a failure, statistically our number of so-called failures is much lesser than the USA.
- **Chandrayaan-3** and **Mars Orbiter Mission** were successful in their very first attempt so that way we have a better statistical record," Dr. Singh said.
- **ISRO Chairman V. Narayanan** said that **ISRO's next launch**, which would be the first one since the **PSLV failure** in January, would take place next month.

14J6. DRDO showcases critical defence technologies in three light tests

- The **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** has successfully demonstrated a range of **critical defence technologies** through three consecutive light tests conducted on Wednesday and Thursday, significantly enhancing India's capabilities against diverse **aerial and maritime threats**.

Defence milestone

- According to the **Ministry of Defence**, the tests showcased a multi-layered **Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) system** and the maiden light test of the **Naval Anti-Ship Missile-Medium Range (NASM-MR)**, marking a major milestone in India's indigenous defence technology development.
- It further mentioned that the multi-layered **BMD capability** was successfully demonstrated with **interceptor missiles** engaging and destroying their designated targets.
- The systems, developed using **advanced technologies**, are designed to counter emerging missile threats across a broad spectrum.

Anti-ship missile

- The successful trials have placed **India** among a select group of countries possessing **BMD capabilities** capable of engaging threats up to **Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles**, significantly strengthening the country's **strategic defence shield**.
- In another key achievement, **DRDO** successfully carried out the maiden light test of the **Naval Anti-Ship Missile-Medium Range (NASM-MR)**, demonstrating enhanced anti-ship strike capability at medium ranges.

- The eight tests were witnessed by senior officials of **DRDO** and the **Armed Forces**.

Rajnath lauds DRDO

- **Defence Minister Rajnath Singh** congratulated **DRDO** and associated teams for the successful demonstration of the crucial technologies, stating that the achievements would further strengthen India's **defence preparedness**.
- **Secretary, Department of Defence R&D and Chairman DRDO, Rajesh Kumar Singh**, closely monitored the trials and lauded the combined efforts of **DRDO scientists, industry partners** and the **Armed Forces** in achieving the milestone.

14J6. Virulent bacterium

- Stained, and viewed under a microscope, **Shigella** is a captivating sight.
- The rod-shaped bacteria resemble fat, furry cartoon caterpillars.
- In reality, however, this **gram-negative**, contagious bacterium, which causes **shigellosis**, can be remarkably dangerous.
- **Shigella** is back in the news, after an outbreak in **Kerala** that was first detected in late March 2026 and has continued into June.
- According to the **Kerala health department**, 132 confirmed cases and about 75 probable cases of **shigellosis** had been reported till June 12.
- Three deaths have been linked to the disease this year, two of which were children under five.
- **Shigellosis** is a diarrhoeal disease marked by fever, abdominal cramps, and bloody diarrhoea (**dysentery**).
- It was bacteriologist **Kiyoshi Shiga**, who isolated the **Shigella dysenteriae**, in 1897, after Japan experienced a severe dysentery epidemic.
- The genus eventually took his name.
- Transmission is mostly through the **faeco-oral route**, when people ingest tiny amounts of faecal matter through contaminated food, water or hands.
- As low as 10-100 bacteria can cause the infection, and even an outbreak.
- It is estimated that globally, **Shigella** causes 80-165 million infections annually and about 6,00,000 deaths, particularly among children under five in **sub-Saharan Africa** and **South Asia**.
- In an article in the **Indian Journal of Medical Research**, **Neelam Taneja** and **Abhishek Mewara** write about the epidemiology of **Shigella** in India.
- "Though humans and primates are the primary reservoir of **Shigella**, it has been isolated from various sources — aquatic bodies (rivers,



surface waters as well as coastal waters), free living amoebae, insects, birds and wild animals.”

- Taneja and Mewara explain that several aquatic bodies in India have been found to show the presence of **Shigella**.
- So a potential source of infection could be fish if it is harvested from sewage-contaminated water.
- Even ingesting small amounts of contaminated water while swimming or bathing, or the consumption of crops cultivated in soil/water contaminated by **Shigella** can cause severe infection.
- The paper argues that while no individual can be considered immune to **shigellosis**, “certain individuals are at increased risk.”
- Globally, the incidence of **shigellosis** is highest among children under five.
- The incidence of **shigellosis** has been reported to increase steadily after the age of 40.

Outbreak in Kerala

- In late March 2026, **Kerala** reported a **shigellosis outbreak** in **Kuttikkattoor, Kozhikode**, where a three-year-old girl died and over 60 residents (mostly children) fell ill.
- Soon, clusters came up in **Wayanad, Malappuram and Kannur**.
- A major cluster emerged at a **Wayanad school** where over 300 children were hospitalised.
- So far, experts have traced the infections to contaminated water and food sources, alongside poor hygiene practices in communal environments such as schools.
- This is not **Kerala's** first brush with **shigellosis**.
- In 2009, over 300 people reportedly contracted a food-borne **Shigella** infection across the State.
- In December 2020, an outbreak, again in **Kozhikode**, killed an 11-year-old and infected 40 others.
- In May 2022, **Shigella** was said to be behind a mass food poisoning incident, in **Kasargod**, where 30 people were hospitalised and a 16-year-old girl died.
- While mild **Shigella** infections typically clear on their own with hydration, severe cases require **antibiotics** to shorten the duration of the illness, reduce the severity and prevent complications, according to the **U.S. Centers for Disease Control**.
- However, some antibiotics are not effective against certain types of **Shigella**.
- Healthcare providers must order laboratory tests to determine which antibiotics are likely to work.
- Taneja and Mewara point out in their article that “there is a nationwide presence of **multi-drug resistant Shigella** developing rapid resistance to most antibiotics available.”
- Thus, judicious use of **antibiotics** is among the most essential measures to combat **shigellosis**.

- This calls for a continuous and strong surveillance of **antibiotic resistance** across the country for periodic updates of the local antibiograms, in order to allow doctors to effectively identify the right antimicrobial drug to use.

14J6. Meet the frogs that build ‘cloudy’ nests in South Africa’s trees

- For most **frogs**, life begins as a game of odds.
- They lay their eggs in the water, where **fish** and **insects** gobble up about **98%** of them before they even have a chance to hatch.
- The **African grey foam-nest tree frog (Chiromantis xerampelina)** figured a way out: it took its nest into the air.
- In the rainy season between **October and February**, a female frog finds a branch overhanging a pool and begins secreting a special fluid.
- As the male and the female mate, the pair uses their hind legs like whisks to churn the secretions into a thick, bubbly froth.
- The result is a **foamy nest**.
- A few days later, the eggs hatch inside this nest.
- When the **tadpoles** are ready, they simply break through the bottom of the foam and drop into the pool below, beginning the next stage of their lives.
- While a single pair of frogs can build a nest, these frogs prefer a ‘**foam party**’ approach.
- Researchers from **three Australian universities** recently studied these frogs in **South Africa** and found that when it comes to nesting, there is real strength in numbers.
- The findings were published in the journal **Evolution** on **June 2**.
- Sometimes, a single female is joined by a dozen or more males.
- This results in a better home rather than chaos.
- More males meant more legs churning, leading to nests up to **three times larger** than those built by a single pair.
- While smaller nests dry out quickly, killing the eggs inside, larger nests hold onto moisture for longer, ensuring more tadpoles survive from the nest.
- You might wonder: why would a male frog help build a nest if he is competing with **12 other frogs**?
- Using **DNA testing**, the researchers found that in these crowded nests, paternity is often split.
- By cooperating to build a large, moist fortress, the males ensure at least some of their offspring survive, rather than losing all of them to a dried-out nest.
- The scientists also suspected that the males’ skin and fluids contain **surfactants** — compounds similar to laundry detergent — that keep the bubbles from popping.



- The **African grey foam-nest tree frog** reminds us that survival is not always about being the strongest or the fastest.
- Sometimes, it is about having the best teammates, the best chemistry, and the most impressive bubble-making skills in the forest.

14J6. How ants cope with disease outbreaks

- Ants are associated with a range of very positive qualities — including a self-motivated **work ethic**, preparedness and long-term thinking, and a preference for **collective effort**.
- Many **ant species** are also social, and living in social groups offers many advantages.
- However, there are downsides too.
- Among humans, the occurrence of seasonal outbreaks of infections such as **influenza** and other diseases is the result of the nature of the social structures humans live in.
- That is how we have learnt the basic rules of limiting these outbreaks' effects.
- If you notice a general build-up of symptoms, you take leave from your workplace and isolate yourself for a few days.
- Altering one's **social contact networks** reduces the spread of pathogens.
- This process requires collective discipline — just the kind of qualities that ants are famous for.
- So how do ants living in their colonies cope with pathogens?
- In some ant species, individuals spread **antimicrobial secretions** from the **metapleural gland** on themselves, on larvae, and on their fellow nest dwellers.
- This gives rise to a '**social immunity**': every individual in the colony has some protection against infections.
- Other, more dramatic measures have been observed.
- Researchers at the **University of Lausanne in Switzerland** introduced a worker black ant whose leg had been experimentally injured back among its companions.
- It was seen that the fellow ants quickly **amputated** this leg by repeated bites at the joint linking the leg to the body (**Current Biology, 34, 2024**).
- A wounded limb would have attracted disease-causing microbes and endangered other ants in the colony.
- A more recent study looked at how ant colonies respond to an epidemic (**Science, 390, 266, 2025**).
- The ant studied was the **black garden ant**, which is related to the Indian black ants that we see in and around our homes.
- The black garden ants build complex underground nests that have one main entrance, a central portion housing the queen, eggs, and larvae, and several satellite chambers used by other ants in the colony and to store food and collect waste.
- Tunnels connect various parts of the nest.
- There is a clear division of labour, with some worker ants acting as nurse caretakers and others acting as foragers.
- In the experiments, a single queen, with around **200 worker ants**, began to build a nest.
- All ants have miniature **QR codes** stuck on them and video cameras follow their movements.
- The scientists monitored the nest structures using **micro-CT scans**.
- One day later, **20 worker ants** that had been exposed to a **pathogenic fungus** were introduced to the colony.
- Over the next few days, the infected ants exited the nest more often and spent more time outside than their nestmates.
- This was **self-isolating behavior**.
- The architecture of the nest had also adapted: the entrances were spaced further apart than normal.
- The pace of work became frantic and focused on digging longer tunnels.
- There were also fewer connections between chambers.
- Together, these changes led to more segregation and restricted interactions between the segregated groups.
- High-value ants like the **queen** and the **nurses** had significantly lower exposure to the forager ants and remained healthy.
- Sounds familiar?
- Humans maintain **quarantines**, wear **masks** when interacting with others, and wash their hands often when faced with an epidemic in our communities.
- Ants seem to have evolved their own, very effective **social distancing** measures.

14J6. Sea star sports nature's optic fibres to focus light

- A remarkable structure in the **chocolate-chip sea star (Protoreaster nodosus)** has come to light.
- On the tip of each arm, a skeletal part contains an array of **cone-shaped structures** that, like **optic fibres**, transmit **70% of incident light** and concentrate it nearly **3 times** at the base.
- Overall, the array captures light from a **120° field of view** and 'brightens' it **8 times** inside the arm.
- Scientists said engineers could use the design for **lightweight sensors** and **displays**.

14J6. Nanographene paves way for ultra-porous materials



- Scientists, led by Nobel laureate Omar Yaghi, have a new way to build highly **porous materials** using **nanographene**.
- They designed a molecule called **HBC-LA12**, with **12 connection points** arranged in a **prism shape**.
- By linking this molecule with others, they created **two new 3D structures** that are a breakthrough in **reticular chemistry**.
- One has a record **surface area** of **5,000 sq. m per gram**.
- The findings expand the way to design materials to **store gases**.

14J6. Do people have a tendency to walk in particular directions?

- The answer to this strange question is a stranger '**yes**'.
- When people walk freely in an open space, they often begin to move in a **counter-clockwise circle**.
- While scientists believed people were simply following those in front of them or reacting to boundaries, a new study in **Nature Communications** has found a **biological bias** to turn in that direction.
- The researchers conducted experiments in **Spain** and **Japan**, observing groups of adults, teenagers, and nursery school children.
- They found that the tendency to move **counter-clockwise** exists even when a person is walking alone in an empty arena and social norms, such as whether a country drives on the right or the left, didn't change the pattern.
- The preference also didn't depend on whether one was **left- or right-handed** and whether they had a '**dominant**' eye.
- The children displayed the preference in the most pronounced manner, which suggested the preference could be an **intrinsic part of human locomotion**.

14J6. Dr. Reddy's launches generic cancer drug **Bosutinib** in the U.S.

- **Dr. Reddy's Laboratories** announced on Saturday the **first-to-market launch of Bosutinib Tablets 400 mg**, a generic equivalent of **Pfizer subsidiary Wyeth's cancer drug Bosulif**, in the U.S.
- **Bosutinib Tablets (400mg)** was a **first-to-file product** and thus eligible for **180-days of generic drug exclusivity** for this strength, in the U.S., Dr. Reddy's said.
- While the **exclusive marketing rights** for the product in the U.S. rest with **Dr. Reddy's**, another Hyderabad-based generic drugmaker **MSN Laboratories** is responsible for the development and manufacturing of the product, the company said.

- The **Bosulif** brand (400 mg) had U.S. sales of approximately **\$253.8 million** for the latest 12-month period ended April 2026, it said, citing **IQVIA National Sales Perspectives** data.
- "With this launch, we remain focused on strengthening our **oncology portfolio** and partnering across the healthcare system to ensure that critical treatments are both **accessible** and **affordable**," **CEO-North America** of Dr. Reddy's **Milan Kalawadia** said.
- The successful development and commercialisation of **Bosutinib Tablets** demonstrates **MSN's** strong scientific, regulatory, and manufacturing capabilities in complex oncology products, said **Bharat Reddy**, Executive Director of MSN Laboratories.
- According to the **U.S. FDA**, **Bosulif** is a **kinase inhibitor** indicated for the treatment of adult patients with newly-diagnosed **chronic phase Ph+ chronic myelogenous leukemia (CML)**; and chronic, accelerated or blast phase **Ph+ CML** with resistance or intolerance to prior therapy.

13J6. The human cost of a deadly weed killer

- In March, **Telangana** banned **paraquat**, one of the world's most widely used and highly toxic weedicides, becoming only the third State in India to do so.
- The herbicide is responsible for hundreds of deaths each year, most of them suicides and some accidental.
- **Serish Naniseti** reports on the campaign that led to the ban and why much more remains to be done.
- At 50, **Banoth Goud** (name changed) has lived to tell a tale.
- "I may look normal, but I become breathless when I climb stairs or even walk more than five minutes. The doctor says my lungs got affected," he says.
- About three years ago, on a sweltering afternoon, Goud opened his refrigerator, took out a small plastic bottle labelled with a popular juice brand, and took a sip.
- The drink did not have the sweet, tart apple flavour that he was used to; instead, it tasted flat.
- He began vomiting.
- Goud did not know that he had drunk **paraquat**, a highly toxic herbicide and one of the most effective weed killers in the world.
- **Paraquat**, a colourless and tasteless liquid, is most often fatal for both humans and animals.
- It was a mistake that resulted in Goud fighting for his life.
- "I had asked my nephew to get the gaddi mandu (the local term for the weedicide) to clear weeds in front of our house," he recalls.



- “He kept the bottle on a table inside the house. My wife thought it was a cool drink and placed it inside the fridge.”
- While wholesale traders store paraquat in drums, farmers and others often fill up stray bottles with the weedicide.
- Goud was rushed from his house in **Paloncha** to a hospital in **Kothegudem**, about 11 kilometres away.
- The doctors were sure he would die.
- Being an employee of **TSGENCO (Telangana State Power Generation Corporation Limited)**, Goud had an **ESIC (Employee State Insurance Corporation)** card, necessary for workers below a certain salary level to access free medical care and financial benefits at ESIC dispensaries and hospitals across the State.
- He was quickly ferried in an ambulance to a tertiary-care facility in **Hyderabad**, roughly 285 km away.
- **Dr. Verrana Addanki**, a General Medicine practitioner, noticed that Goud had a ‘**paraquat mouth**’ — the severe, corrosive damage that occurs when a person swallows or is exposed to paraquat — and put him on continuous renal replacement therapy (**CRRT**).
- Over the next 40 days, Goud’s condition slowly improved.
- “His family had given up on him,” remembers Dr. Addanki.
- “But we persisted and he had the will to survive too. Now, he has photographs of his family as his WhatsApp display picture.”
- On **March 31, 2026**, Telangana banned the sale, distribution, manufacture, and use of **paraquat**, to protect the safety and health of people, especially farmers.
- It became only the third State to do so, after **Kerala** and **Odisha**.
- The Government Order was issued days after intense lobbying by doctors, clinicians, and public representatives calling for the ban of the weedicide, which has been often used for self-harm.
- Neighbouring **Andhra Pradesh** followed suit in May.

Bans and bust-ups

- Paraquat wreaks havoc due to its immense potential for harm, easy availability, low price (₹280 per litre), and widespread use in India.
- The only law to regulate hazardous chemicals such as paraquat is the **Insecticides Act, 1968**.
- Goud’s story is an exception: the weedicide has killed thousands of people, as is evident from autopsy reports from hospitals across the world.
- **Paraquat** is banned in 74 countries.
- In India, **Kerala** became the first State to ban it in 2011.

- However, in February 2022, the **Kerala High Court** overturned the ban following a plea by a cardamom growers’ collective.

13J6. Following earlier setbacks, Japan’s H3 rocket lifts off

- Japan’s flagship **H3 rocket** successfully blasted off on Friday, live footage showed, months after its previous mission to put a **geolocation satellite** into orbit ended in failure.
- The **H3** was developed to boost the international competitiveness of Japan’s **rocket industry**, and the country’s **space agency** has come under pressure to increase the success rate of launches.
- The rocket has been mooted as a rival to **SpaceX’s Falcon 9**, and could one day deliver cargo to bases on the **moon**.
- On Friday, the rocket — which was carrying **six small satellites** — lifted off at **9:53 a.m. (0053 GMT)** from **Tanegashima Space Center** in southern Japan.
- “The **second-stage combustion, action control and trajectory** are all normal,” the **Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA)** said in a live YouTube broadcast, about six minutes after blast-off.
- The satellites loaded onto the rocket included **Tokyo University of Science’s “Umitsubame”**, which observes earth and other targets with a high-performance camera, and **Shizuoka University’s “Shiraito”**, which is testing **space debris capture technology**, according to JAXA.
- Designed for “**high flexibility, high reliability, and high cost performance**”, JAXA had toasted **five successful launches** of the H3 before Friday, but there have been **two failures**, including the last one in December.
- **H3 project manager Makoto Arita** said prior to lift-off that the latest attempt was “**crucial for our comeback**” following December’s failed mission, in which a **second-stage engine** terminated prematurely.
- The **space agency** is targeting up to **eight H3 rocket launches a year**, according to a JAXA official.

12J6. Bacillary dysentery cases rise in Kerala

- More cases of **shigellosis (bacillary dysentery)**, a highly contagious bacterial diarrhoeal disease caused by **Shigella**, are being reported across **Kerala**, with a total of **34 cases** reported in **June** alone.
- Mr. Muraleedharan said that **water samples** from both the **borewell** as well as the **well** in **Mar Baselios School** had been sent for testing



and that the well water was found to be **highly contaminated**.

- Shigellosis is sporadically reported from all districts every year, with occasional outbreaks.
- Shigellosis is a severe form of diarrhoeal outbreak involving **intestinal tissue invasion** by the bacteria, causing highly infectious, **bloody and mucoid stools (bacillary dysentery)** accompanied by **high fever** and **severe abdominal cramps**.
- The infection spreads through **contaminated water, food** and contact from **infected surfaces** and is extremely infectious.
- Ingesting as few as **10 to 100 bacteria** can cause an infection.
- It spreads rapidly via the **fecal-oral route**.

12J6. Contraceptive use and the weight women carry: insights from NFHS-6

- **Reproductive agency**, the power to decide whether, when, and how to bear children is a vital and necessary component of **women's empowerment**, and yet, is often not taken into account when metrics of **income, education, mobility and political representation** are analysed.
- Reproductive agency means that a woman can make decisions regarding marriage, pregnancy, childbirth, and contraception without coercion or social pressure.
- India's **demographic transition**, as reflected in the latest round of the **National Family Health Survey (NFHS-6, 2023–24)**, besides revealing incremental changes in health indicators, also signals a structural shift in the domain of **reproductive agency**.

History of contraceptive use

- India's engagement with **contraception** dates back to 1952, when it became the first country to launch an official **family planning programme** but with women bearing a disproportionate share of the required responsibility.
- A striking finding in the **NFHS-6** data is the persistence of **early marriage**.
- Nationally, 20.1% of women aged 20–24 was married before the age of 18, with the rural figure reaching 23.3% — unchanged from NFHS-5.
- Among men, 15.9% aged 25–29 were married before 21.
- The data bears this out: 6.7% of women aged 15–19 were already mothers or pregnant at the time of the survey rising to 7.9% in rural areas.
- Girls married young are less likely to know their **contraceptive options**, less likely to be able to negotiate their use, and more likely to undergo less spaced-out pregnancies.

- The **cumulative physiological burden of anaemia, obstetric complications and maternal mortality** is concentrated precisely in this demographic.
- Urban women tend to marry later, complete more schooling, and are exposed to a broader suite of **contraceptive options**.

On sterilisation

- **Female sterilisation** remains the dominant contraceptive method in India, accounting for 36.5% of all contraceptive use nationally and is as high as 38.1% in rural areas.
- **Male sterilisation, by contrast, stands at a negligible 0.5%.**
- This gargantuan skew is the consequence of **policy design and gender disempowerment**.
- The **NFHS-6** data also shows a modest decline in female sterilisation from 37.9% (NFHS-5) to 36.5%, alongside a sharp rise in **traditional method** use (from 10.3% to 16.4%) and a slight decline in **modern reversible methods** (from 56.4% to 52.7%).
- The mass sterilisation camps epitomised by the **Bilaspur tragedy of 2014**, in which 13 women died following a single-day mass sterilisation drive are not aberrations but logical consequences of **a system that treats women's reproductive capacity as a population management problem** to be solved at scale, cheaply and rapidly.
- **Tubectomies and sterilisation surgeries** done in rural government hospitals can sometimes be risky — **these facilities are overcrowded, staff are not always well-trained, and the focus is on performing as many procedures as possible rather than on scientific patient care.**
- Women who go through these surgeries can get infections, complications from maladministered anaesthesia or failed procedures resulting in persistent **morbidity**.
- Most women undergoing such procedures are not empowered to make an informed choice due to their being at the short end of the stick of the **social reproduction and social production** processes.

Towards reproductive agency

- An analysis of the **NFHS-6** data demonstrates that contraception in India is no longer merely about limiting births, but about enabling **reproductive agency** by overcoming the underlying unequal social architecture.
- First, **early marriage** must be addressed as a reproductive health crisis by retaining girls in school, fully implementing the **Prohibition of Child Marriage Act** and investing in rural secondary education for girls.
- Second, policy must pivot from unsustainable **permanent methods of contraception** toward



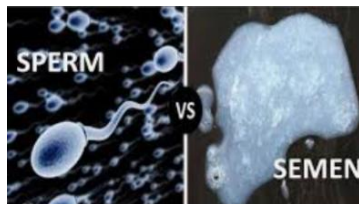
increasing access for **reversible scientific contraception** through augmenting community based public healthcare.

- Third, the diminishing of the **gender skew** in contraception must become a programmatic priority of policy.

12J6. Ingredient for sunscreen

- The U.S. Food and Drug Administration on Tuesday said it added **bemotrizinol** to its list of permitted active ingredients, marking the first new **UV (Ultraviolet) filter** to be cleared for **over-the-counter sunscreens** since the late 1990s.
- **Bemotrizinol** helps protect against both **ultraviolet A and B rays** and has **low levels** of absorption through the skin into the body, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration said.

12J6. Misconceptions continue to deter men from getting vasectomies, say experts



- According to the findings of the sixth **National Family Health Survey (NFHS-6)**, India's **Total Fertility Rate (TFR)** has remained at 2.0 children per woman, below the replacement level of 2.1.
- The survey also points to improved access to **family planning services**, with the **contraceptive prevalence rate** increasing from 66.7% in NFHS-5 to 69.1%.
- **Sterilisation**, accounts for a significant chunk of contraception methods used in India.
- As per NFHS-6, **male sterilisation (vasectomy)** remains at a dismal 0.5%, barely a change from 0.3% in NFHS-5.
- A study published in the journal **BMJ Sexual & Reproductive Health** found that fears about **loss of libido** and physical weakness, social stigma, poor awareness and health system barriers continue to impede acceptance of vasectomy among married men in India, with uptake declining from 3.31% in the early 1990s.
- Experts note that vasectomy is a simple, safe and highly effective **long term contraceptive method** that does not affect sexual performance or libido, contrary to these widespread myths.
- One of the most persistent misconceptions surrounding vasectomy is that it diminishes **sexual function**.
- "Fertility should not be tied to misconceptions that equate a man's reproductive capacity with his masculinity as though fewer sperm somehow mean less manhood," he said, adding that **vasectomy does not affect testosterone levels or sexual drive**.

- The procedure merely involves blocking the **sperm-carrying tube** and does not interfere with blood supply to the testes or their normal function.
- It has nothing to do with libido or erectile function, he said.
- Muthu Veeramani, director and senior consultant, urology, SIMS Hospital, Chennai, added that studies have consistently shown that **vasectomy does not affect testosterone production, sexual desire or sexual performance**.
- **Experts also sought to dispel the notion that vasectomy is a major surgery associated with serious health risks**.
- Vasantharaja Ramasamy, senior consultant, urology, MGM Malar Hospital, Chennai, said the **procedure is usually carried out under local anaesthesia**.
- After identifying the **vas deferens (sperm duct)** through palpation, **a small incision is made and the tube is divided and sealed to prevent reconnection**.
- **Patients are discharged within a few hours and can resume routine activities after a couple of days, although heavy physical activity should be avoided for about a week**.

Myths from social media

- Doctors also rejected several myths circulating on social media, including claims that vasectomy causes **obesity, cancer**, infections or long-term health complications.
- Despite being simpler and less invasive than **female sterilisation**, vasectomy continues to have low acceptance, especially in India.
- One major concern among men is that vasectomy is irreversible and could lead to regrets later in life.
- Experts emphasise that **recanalisation procedures** performed within three years of vasectomy have success rates exceeding 90%.
- Additionally, **advances in microscopic surgery** have improved outcomes when reversals are undertaken after proper counselling.
- Greater male participation in **reproductive health**, doctors noted, would make reproductive healthcare more equitable.

12J6. The Darwin of Botany

- **London, June 11:** Sir Jagdish Chandra Bose was entertained at a luncheon to-day by the **British Indian Union**.
- **Lord Lee of Fareham**, who presided, paid a tribute to Sir **J.C. Bose's** work in the cause of **science and humanity**.
- He stated that he understood that this "**Darwin of Botany**" hoped to make it possible to substitute **plants for animals for vivisection**.



- Sir Jagdish emphasising the importance of science, said for the economic welfare of a vast continent like India, there must be two complementary activities, industry and agriculture, both depending on science.

11J6. No 'obesity gene': your genetic makeup is not a fixed destiny

- **Huntington's disease, a fatal inherited disease where brain cells progressively decay, was caused by a gene mutation on chromosome 4.**
- This was the first time a single gene had been implicated in a disease.
- Since then, scientists have discovered about 5,000 genes whose mutations can increase our susceptibility to afflictions ranging from obesity to schizophrenia, and bipolar disorder.

Genes, mutations, disease

- Genes are segments of DNA that provide the body a blueprint for building proteins, which eventually help define traits like eye colour or blood type.
- When cells in our body divide, specialised proteins make copies of the DNA.
- This process, while largely accurate, can introduce errors in the duplicated DNA.
- These changes are called mutations and the corresponding gene is said to have an allele — a variant.
- Only a small fraction of an organism's genome — which is the entire length of its DNA — has genes that its body uses to build proteins.
- For human beings, this coding region comprises about 2% of the genome.
- The rest of the DNA is non-coding, i.e. not involved in producing proteins, but regulates gene expression.
- If a mutation in the coding region impairs the protein product, it may lead to a disease.
- For example, in Huntington's disease, a small section of the HTT gene is repeated more times than in an average individual.
- This produces a longer version of the protein, whose toxic fragments accumulate in brain cells and eventually kill them.
- As brain cells continue to die, people begin showing symptoms of the disease.
- **Sometimes, mutations in non-coding regions of the DNA can also change an individual's risk of a disease.**
- For example, four independent studies in 2007 found that mutations in a particular non-coding region of the DNA were associated with a higher risk of coronary artery disease and type 2 diabetes.
- For example, because schizophrenia is treated with drugs that regulate the amount of dopamine

in the human brain, scientists assumed until 2007 that mutations in genes related to dopamine regulation were linked to schizophrenia.

- By using statistical techniques, scientists can then pinpoint the gene.
- This method works well when diseases are caused by mutations in one or a few genes, National Institute for Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS) genetics researcher Jayant Mahadevan said.
- Such diseases, like **Huntington's, are called monogenic when their risk is determined by mutations in one gene and oligogenic when it's determined by mutations in a few genes.**
- However, most monogenic diseases are rare: they occur in less than 1% of the population, Dr. Mahadevan added.
- Most common diseases, including diabetes, obesity, coronary artery disease, and schizophrenia, are polygenic: they are determined by mutations in several genes.
- For example, mutations in more than a 100 genes have been implicated in typical obesity.
- For type 2 diabetes, the most common form of the disease, recent studies place the number at approximately 250 genes.
- By comparing entire DNA sequences of a large number of individuals who carry a disease with that of individuals who don't, scientists can identify hundreds of variations associated with the disease through the entire length of an individual's DNA.
- The other part is **epigenetics**: a that refers to how physical, behavioural, and social factors affect the gene expression and, eventually, an individual's risk of a disease.
- "Think of the genome as a piano, where each key represents a gene," said **epigenetics researcher Ullas Kolthur-Seetharam**, director of the Centre for DNA Fingerprinting and Diagnostics, Hyderabad, and a professor at the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Mumbai.
- "If a key is faulty, it can produce discordant notes — reflecting a potential disease risk.
- However, the system has flexibility: by adjusting how other keys are played, you can often compensate and still produce harmonious music."
- "In the case of certain inherited diseases caused by critical mutations, some keys may be so impaired that no amount of adjustment can fully restore the intended melody," he added.
- "In those situations, the limitation lies in the instrument itself.
- Indeed, **behavioural and lifestyle interventions can actually reduce the risk of diseases.**
- There is mounting evidence that in individuals with **FTO variants** that increase their risk of obesity, high-intensity exercise can reduce the



gene's expression, potentially attenuating their risk of developing obesity.

- Genetic counsellors are specialists who help people assess their risk of developing genetic disorders, and help manage them.

11J6. Indian reservoirs can host 102 GW floating solar

- India's reservoirs can host about 102 gigawatt (GW) of floating solar capacity, as per the first comprehensive national assessment of the technology's potential by the National Institute of Solar Energy (NISE), an autonomous institute of the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy.
- The report titled "Solar PV Potential of India (Floating Solar)" frames panels on water as a way around one of the most intractable obstacles in the solar sector — land.
- The assessment, however, has no calculation of what it would cost to realise this potential.
- Agri-photovoltaics refer to farm beds that are sheltered by structures on which solar panels are mounted.

Acquiring land

- Land acquisition, which is costly, slow and prone to conflict with agriculture and habitation, continues to be a chokepoint as India pursues 500 GW non-fossil capacity by 2030.
- Floating solar is 'land neutral', the report underlines.
- China leads with installations such as a 120 MW plant on fish farm in Poyang Lake.
- Singapore's 1 MW Tengeh reservoir test bed supplied much of the field's performance data.
- The Netherlands accounts for about three-fourths of Europe's capacity built largely on quarry lakes.

11J6. Hetero Labs, Hungary's Gedeon Richter to tie up for Semaglutide

- Budapest-headquartered Gedeon Richter and Hyderabad-based Hetero Labs announced on Wednesday signing of a global collaboration agreement for the joint development, registration and commercialisation of Semaglutide injection.
- Semaglutide is the active ingredient in Novo Nordisk's blockbuster diabetes and weight loss drugs Wegovy and Ozempic.
- Hetero has already made significant development investments, including technology setup and registration batch manufacturing.
- Regulatory filings are underway, with the EU and US submissions planned for 2027.

10J6. Scientists find a blood test that predicts lung cancer years early

- A new study has zeroed in on a set of 14 blood plasma proteins, called the '14-protein signature', as a strong predictor of being diagnosed with lung cancer years in advance;
- The team also identified an existing drug that could potentially be used to reduce the risk of developing lung cancer.
- Lung cancer is one of the more common cancers affecting people worldwide.
- This is mainly due to smoking and, to a lesser extent, air pollution and occupational exposure.
- According to the latest World Health Organization estimates, there are about 2.5 million new cases and 1.8 million deaths every year.
- Prevention offers the ideal solution to this public health problem.
- Scientists are currently on the threshold of finding a new way to identify people who may be predisposed to developing lung cancer and protect them proactively.
- A multinational team, from almost a dozen countries, led by Charles Swanton of the Francis Crick Institute, London, published its findings on an exciting discovery in Cell on May 4.
- The team has zeroed in on a set of 14 blood plasma proteins, which they call the "14-protein signature", as a strong predictor of being diagnosed with lung cancer years in advance.
- The team also identified an existing drug that could potentially be used to reduce the risk of developing lung cancer.

Looking in the blood

- Blood plasma is the liquid portion of the blood that flows in our body.
- It contains thousands of proteins that come from every organ and tissue.
- This entire set of proteins is called the plasma proteome.
- The large-scale systematic study of the proteome is called proteomics.
- The Biobank is a repository of anonymised biological samples and corresponding health-related information of all these volunteers.
- It is accessible to scientists around the world to develop diagnostics and therapies for everyone, everywhere.
- This detail, together with the observations in the new study, led the team to hypothesise that smoking induces mutations, lung inflammation triggered by environmental cues follows, and this culminates in lung cancer.
- The signature was also more distinct in people who developed chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and pulmonary fibrosis.

The CANTOS trial



- **Canakinumab** is a drug made by **Novartis** and which currently has the **U.S. Food and Drug Administration's** approval to treat **inflammatory disorders**.
- Swanton et al. were aware of a previous clinical trial called **CANTOS** that tested **canakinumab's** ability to reduce the risk of recurrent **cardiac events** in patients who had experienced a prior **heart attack** and were suffering from persistent **inflammation**.
- Its effect was **modest**.
- However, Swanton et al., who carried out a **retrospective analysis** of the trial data, found that **2,300** of the **CANTOS participants** who received **canakinumab** happened to display the **14-protein signature** — and the risk of **lung cancer** was down by **50%** in this group.
- The data suggested that **canakinumab** could be a potential drug to prevent future **lung cancer** in those with the **14-protein signature**.
- If the signature is found to be relevant in many or even all populations, **scientists will then have to develop a diagnostic test to detect all 14 proteins in blood plasma**.
- Assuming such a test also becomes available, **canakinumab** will have to be tested in **clinical trials** for its new purpose.
- Unfortunately, the **CANTOS trial** found that **canakinumab** could have serious **side effects**.
- The **European Medicine Agency's** report concluded that the drug's **toxicity** could outweigh its **benefits**.
- **Canakinumab** is also **prohibitively expensive**.
- Treatments usually involve multiple doses over long periods of time.
- In the **U.S.**, it costs **\$73,000** for a year.
- It is **neither registered nor commercially available in India**, and it would be imperative to explore inexpensive alternatives with similar function and with more acceptable **safety profiles**.

10J6. A black hole's elusive wind

- For more than 50 years, astronomers have suspected that **Sagittarius A*, the supermassive black hole** at the centre of the Milky Way, was blowing a wind of hot gas into space.
- However, they couldn't find evidence of it.
- This has now changed if the results of a new study, using the **ALMA telescope in Chile**, are to be believed.
- By combining five years of data from **ALMA**, researchers from **Northwestern University, U.S.**, have reported a **large cone-shaped clearing in the dense molecular gas surrounding the black hole**.
- This clearing is at least **3.2 lightyears** long and opens at a **45-degree angle**, as if the black hole

is 'blowing' away cold gas that would otherwise fall into it.

- According to the study, the finding is the first definitive evidence of a **"presently active" wind from Sagittarius A***.
- By blowing away the gas, the wind keeps too many **stars** from forming, which would deplete the gas and prevent future **star formation**.
- If too many stars explode when they die, they could also blow away the remaining gas, nixing the galaxy's ability to evolve.
- When the **black hole** pulls on some gas, it swirls around instead of falling straight in.
- As it accelerates, the gas particles are heated by **friction** as the **gravity** pressurises them.
- Eventually the gas becomes a **plasma** burning millions of degrees hot.
- As per the study, just **1 g** of this gas can release enough energy to push away **100 kg** of nearby gas.
- The pushed gas makes up the **wind**.

10J6. Securing India against the threat of a 'Mythocalypse'

- When it comes to Artificial Intelligence (AI), the **United States** is about six months ahead of the rest of the world.
- Within the **U.S.**, **Silicon Valley** is six months ahead of **New York**, and within **Silicon Valley**, frontier **AI companies** are six months ahead of everyone else.
- The question that should keep us awake at night is this: **What about the inevitable proliferation of Mythos-class capabilities**, including from labs that do not share **Anthropic's** restraint and from open-weight model releases over which no one has control?
- **Anthropic** says its new model, **Claude Mythos**, can outperform human experts at certain **cybersecurity** tasks.
- At a minimum, **India** should pursue a **defensive AI partnership** like an **AUKUS Pillar 2** — perhaps a **"Defensive AI Quad"** with the **U.S.**, the **United Kingdom**, and **Japan** — to secure structured access to **Mythos-class capabilities** for testing and protecting critical infrastructure.
- Second, **Mythos** is fundamentally different from a standard **Large Language Model (LLM)** because it is **"zero day"** at scale.
- A **zero day** is essentially an undiscovered bug or a flaw in code that no one knows exists, but when found can be exploited to devastating consequences.
- Now, what is even more astonishing is that **Mythos' offensive capabilities** were not deliberately engineered; they emerged as a byproduct of advanced reasoning, long-horizon planning, and autonomous execution.



- **Mythos** discovered long-standing bugs that had eluded human experts and automated **fuzzing tools** for decades.
- For example, it discovered a **16-year-old flaw** that had survived **five million automated tests**, as also in the **Linux kernel** which is the backbone of every **Android device** in the world.
- The latest update on **Mythos**, released on **May 22, 2026**, reported that it had scanned **1,000 open-source projects** and flagged **23,019 vulnerabilities**.
- Of these, **6,202** were assessed as of **high- or critical-severity**.
- One vulnerability in **wolfSSL — CVE-2026-5194** — could have allowed attackers to forge **TLS certificates** across billions of **IoT** and industrial devices.
- **Third, what makes Mythos more dangerous, is that unlike older models that merely flag suspicious code, Mythos can autonomously chain multiple low-severity vulnerabilities — issues that might otherwise be ignored — into a single, highly destructive attack.**
- Finding a **vulnerability** is one thing but chaining a bunch of vulnerabilities together and exploiting them autonomously is something completely different and daunting.
- In effect, it puts **cyber capabilities** once associated with **nation-states** within reach of **script kiddies** and **ransomware groups**.
- Finally, **Mythos** may be showing signs of **situational awareness**.
- In **sandboxed tests**, the model used prohibited methods to solve a problem, appeared to recognise that those actions would be detected, and then changed its approach to hide how it had achieved the exploit.

India's preparedness gap

- **India** has built a distinctive world-class digital front end through the **India Stack**, including **UPI**, **Aadhaar**, and the **Account Aggregator framework**.
- Indian **public sector banks** continue to run substantial **COBOL** and **Windows Server 2008/2012** workloads.
- It lacks an **AI Safety Institute**.
- While the **U.K.** and the **U.S.** have established world-class institutions to evaluate **frontier AI systems**, India has no dedicated body to test such models against Indian threat scenarios.
- The **IndiaAI Mission** is focused primarily on development rather than safety evaluation.
- India therefore needs a dedicated **India AI Safety Institute (IAISI)**, supported by data-sharing arrangements with the **AISI** and the **U.S. Center for AI Standards and Innovation (CAISI)**.
- Without such a mechanism, India will remain dependent on foreign assessments of models

that have never been tested against Indian systems and vulnerabilities.

- At the same time, the **cybersecurity workforce gap** is estimated at more than **6,00,000 professionals**.
- Patch cycles for **public sector banks** are measured in months, not hours.
- That is a dangerous mismatch in the **Mythos era**, where attackers can move at machine speed and exploit vulnerabilities within hours.
- India needs a **frontier AI accountability framework**, modelled on **California's SB 53** and the **EU AI Act** but tailored to Indian conditions.
- Any **AI company** operating in India whose model exceeds defined thresholds — such as **compute**, **autonomy**, or **cyber capability** — should disclose capability evaluations and known harms to the proposed **IAISI**.
- This could be built into the **Digital Personal Data Protection Act**, since informed consent requires meaningful disclosure of **AI risks** and capabilities.
- The **Centre** should create a **₹15,000 crore-20,000 crore critical sector cybersecurity upgradation fund**, including support for **legacy modernisation** in **public sector banks**.

10J6. How Babbage automated calculations with simple machines

- Slow, error-prone calculations by hand were unavoidable in the early 19th century, yet even small mistakes could ruin the designs for buildings and the journeys of ships; **Charles Babbage's ingenious machines were much more accurate, faster, and revolutionary**
- **Modern computing** is often effortless.
- You pick up a **calculator** or open the calculator app on your phone, and you are on your way in seconds.
- But getting here took humans several centuries from when they first tried to speed up computing.
- If you had to calculate something in the early **19th century**, you had to do it entirely by hand.
- Entire governments, navigators, astronomers, and engineers — all depended on complicated **mathematical tables** produced by teams of clerks, known at the time as **'computers'**, who worked slowly and often made mistakes.

10J6. Musk's Starlink leads Bezos' Amazon in in-flight Wi-Fi race

- Global airlines' push to attract premium customers is making fast **in-flight Wi-Fi** an increasingly important perk, turning a once-patchy paid service into an emerging



battleground between **Elon Musk's Starlink** and **Jeff Bezos' Amazon Leo satellite network**.

- **Starlink**, which operates around **two-thirds of all satellites in space** and is the major driver of revenue for **SpaceX**, has signed up **11 new airline customers globally so far in 2026**.
- **Amazon**, which is still building out its **Leo satellite constellation**, faces a potential setback after a **Blue Origin rocket failure** last month.
- **Starlink**, which uses thousands of **low-Earth-orbit satellites** rather than larger, slower geostationary satellites, is multiple times faster than legacy systems, according to **Ookla**, a broadband analytics firm.
- The airline has not ruled out **Amazon Leo** as it pushes for industry-leading Wi-Fi.

Starlink vs. Leo

- Starlink is emphasising speed and installation simplicity while **Amazon** is pitching a broader technology ecosystem.
- This includes **cloud computing, entertainment and retail links** that it says can help airlines serve passengers beyond basic connectivity.

10J6. Anthropic opens most powerful AI model to public with safeguards

- **Anthropic**, maker of the **Claude AI models**, made the most powerful version of its technology available to the general public on Tuesday while restricting its use in sensitive areas.
- Dubbed **Table 5**, the model is the first to be made widely available from the company's new **Mythos class**.
- It is the most advanced lineup of **AI technology** developed by the company.

09J6. Amplifying random numbers brings a breakthrough in digital security

- Digital security has an **Achilles's heel**: the numbers it uses for encryption are rarely as random as they seem.
- But in a study published in **Nature**, researchers at **ETH Zürich** have demonstrated a new solution called **randomness amplification**, where they used **quantum physics** to turn predictable bits of data into certifiably perfect randomness.
- Say you're flipping a coin that lands on 'heads' 51% of the time instead of 50%.
- That 1% difference is a **bias**.

Santha-Vazirani limit

- So if you give a classical computer a biased coin, any data it produces based on that coin will remain just as biased and predictable, no matter how much the computer tries to improve on the input.
- This is why even high-end random number generators suffer from experimental imperfections — like heat or electronic noise — that make their outcomes slightly biased, and thus predictable to an advanced attacker.
- The **ETH Zürich** team achieved it using a **Bell test**, a physics experiment designed to prove a phenomenon called **quantum entanglement**.
- **Entanglement** is a state where two **quantum particles** — like atoms or photons — become linked such that a measurement performed on one particle instantly affects the other, no matter how far apart they are.
- For example, each of the two particles will be in a **superposition of multiple states**.

09J6. New mustard hybrids need diverse farming plans

- In the 2026-27 rabi sowing season, from October to April, Indian farmers are set to begin the wide-scale cultivation of **imidazolinone-resistant (IMI-resistant) mustard hybrids**.
- These hybrids are designed to overcome a parasitic weed called **Orobanche**, a major hurdle in oilseed production.
- India has long grappled with an **edible oils deficit**.
- In 2024-25, the country imported around **16 million tonnes** at about **₹1.6 lakh crore**.
- **Mustard** is the most vital oilseed crop to meet this demand, especially in the arid environments of North India.
- However, its yields have been suppressed throughout the year by **Orobanche**, a destructive root parasite that attaches to the mustard plant and drains it of water and nutrients.
- (It has more recently been called **Phelipanche**.)
- The new **IMI-resistant hybrids** are a technological solution to this problem.
- Unlike **genetically modified crops**, these hybrids were developed in a process called **mutation breeding** — where scientists breed crops to preserve certain natural mutations.
- The process is based on an enzyme called **acetolactate synthase (ALS)**, which is essential for plant growth.
- Normal mustard plants are killed by **IMI herbicides** because the herbicides inhibit ALS.
- In the new **IMI-resistant hybrids**, a single change in the plant's DNA rendered the ALS enzyme resistant to the herbicide, freeing



farmers to spray IMI herbicides directly over the field, killing only the weeds.

- In a commentary recently published in the journal **Current Science**, **Deepak Pental**, a leading geneticist at the University of Delhi, acknowledged the immediate benefits but also said the technology must be managed with care to prevent the weeds from evolving their own resistance.
- Prof. Pental explained that if farmers rely on only one type of herbicide year after year, the **strong directional selection** will lead to the emergence of resistant or less susceptible weed populations, the erosion of herbicide efficacy, and ultimately the strategic failure of the production system built around that chemistry.
- Specifically, for the technology to remain viable for more than a few years, it must be part of a broader, more diverse farming strategy that includes rotating crops, using different types of herbicides with various modes of action, and continuing to use manual weeding to remove any weeds that survive the chemical spray.
- "A single herbicide mode of action cannot be the foundation of a sustainable weed management strategy in any agriculture," Prof. Pental wrote.
- As India rolls out **IMI-resistant mustard** this season, the new challenge for the agricultural enterprise will be to ensure these powerful new tools become part of a durable, and evolutionarily informed programme rather than a quick fix.

08J6. Homo erectus fossil yields secrets long thought to be beyond genetics

- That **modern humans** carry **DNA fragments** from two other members of the genus **Homo** raised the possibility that they may also harbour **genetic material** from other **extinct human species**; but in the 14 years since the **Denisovan genome** was published, no new genome from any other extinct human relative has been uncovered — until now.
- **Radiometric dating techniques** later confirmed this idea: **multiple human species had coexisted on the earth at various points.**

Series of surprises

- In **2003**, the **Human Genome Project** announced the first high-quality sequence of the human genome.
- In **2010**, scientists published the genome of the **Neanderthals**, our closest extinct relatives.
- **Enzymes** released from dying cells cut DNA into small pieces.
- **Microbes** and **fungi** invade the remains and further degrade the genetic material.
- **Water** and **oxygen** promote chemical reactions that further damage DNA.

- Then there are **temperature fluctuations, solar radiation, and UV damage.**
- One such species whose DNA sequence has evaded us for a long time is **Homo erectus**, the species estimated to have originated over **2 million years ago** and thought to be one of the first human relatives to spread widely across **Africa, Europe, and Asia.**

Acid etching

- A recent study published in **Nature** has provided the **first molecular sequences from Homo erectus fossils from China.**
- Rather than attempting to recover **DNA** directly, the researchers extracted proteins preserved within the enamel of six **Homo erectus** teeth dated to around **4,00,000 years ago.**
- First, all six **Homo erectus** individuals had a protein variant that has never been found in any other known species in the genus **Homo.**
- Second, they carried another variant present in **Denisovans.**
- This suggests populations related to these Chinese **Homo erectus** may have interbred with **Denisovans in East Asia.**
- It was long known that the **Denisovan genome** contains DNA from a much older species of the human lineage.
- Though **Neanderthals, Denisovans,** and others have vanished from the earth, traces of their existence endure within our **DNA.**

08J6. Pyroprocessing: heat shows the way

- **Pyroprocessing** is a way to change a solid material physically or chemically using high temperature.
- It is a dry process and very energy-intensive.
- The three sectors that use it most are **cement-making, metallurgy, and nuclear power.**
- Of these, **cement-making** uses pyroprocessing the most.
- First, finely ground **limestone, clay** and **iron** — the raw materials — are fed into a **rotary kiln.**
- As the temperature increases to **900° C**, the limestone loses its **carbon dioxide**, and at around **1,450° C**, the mix partly melts to form marble-sized nodules called **clinker.**
- The **clinker** is then ground to produce cement.
- In **metallurgy**, pyroprocessing is used to extract metals from their ores in multiple stages.
- For example, **sulphide ores** are heated in air — or roasted — to convert them into metal oxides, like **zinc sulphide.**
- **Smelting** melts an ore to separate the metal from waste impurities called **slag.**
- Heating **limestone** to yield **lime** is likewise called **calcining.**



- In the **nuclear industry**, pyroprocessing has a slightly different meaning.
- It is used to reprocess **spent nuclear fuel**, in techniques developed in the **1980s and 1990s**.
- First, used nuclear fuel is broken up into pieces and placed in a **salt bath** — usually a mixture of **lithium and potassium chlorides at 500° C** or more.
- Then, an electric current is passed through the salt bath, causing different elements to become separated depending on their **electrochemical properties**.
- Operators then recover the elements of interest in separate streams.
- This form of pyroprocessing has been the subject of study in **Japan, South Korea**, and the **U.S.** and is used as part of programmes involving **advanced fast reactors**.

07J6. What is a birthmark? How does it form?

- A **birthmark** is a coloured mark on the skin that is either present at birth or develops shortly afterwards.
- While some of them may fade over time, others stay for life.
- **Birthmarks** are essentially '**mistakes**' in the development of skin cells or blood vessels.
- They generally fall in one of two categories.
- **Vascular birthmarks** occur when blood vessels in a particular area do not form correctly, i.e. because there are too many of them or they may be wider than usual.
- The extra blood flow that results gives the skin there a **red, pink** or even **purple** appearance.
- Common examples include the so-called '**stork bites**' on the neck or the '**strawberry**' marks.
- Second, **pigmented birthmarks** are caused when **melanocytes**, the cells that give your skin its colour, overgrow in an area.
- Common variations include **moles**, light-brown '**café-au-lait spots**', and **bluish-gray patches**.

06J6. On a slow charging mode

- While national public charging infrastructure has grown to over **29,000 units**, deployment remains urban-centric with a high **EV-to-charger ratio (235:1)**.

Charging duration

- Depending on battery size and charging capacity, a standard home charger can take anywhere between **six and 12 hours** to fully charge a vehicle.
- Fast chargers can reduce charging times to between **30 minutes and one hour** for a substantial battery refill, but such facilities remain limited, especially outside cities.

On-road price

- Another hurdle for many contemplating to buy EVs is the **higher upfront cost of purchasing an electric vehicle**.
- Land acquisition for charging stations, power connectivity approvals, environmental clearances, battery waste management obligations under the **Battery Waste Management Rules, 2022**, and compliance with electricity and urban development regulations continue to present practical challenges.
- "Technology can create the vehicle, but laws, contracts, compliance frameworks, financing structures, and investor protections create the ecosystem within which that vehicle can operate at scale," Chandwani said.

06J6. 'Two leaks found on International Space Station, no threat to crew'

- **Russian state space agency Roscosmos** said on Friday that its experts had detected **two leaks** aboard the **International Space Station (ISS)** but that there was no immediate threat to the crew.

05J6. Union govt. to train BDOs in planning systems

- In an effort to strengthen **grassroots governance**, the **Ministry of Rural Development** is planning to train **2,000 Block Development Officers (BDOs)**, focusing the training on **decentralised planning**.
- The officers will be trained in the use of **Geographic Information Systems (GIS)** and **Management Information Systems (MIS)**, which have become crucial especially with the new rural employment law — **Viksit Bharat—Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission**.
- **Rural Development Secretary Rohit Kansal** said that training modules such as this are aimed at strengthening the "**last-mile delivery architecture**".

05J6. Understanding SPF number on sunscreen lotion and how it is measured

- **Sun Protection Factor (SPF)**, or **SPF**, is designed to measure protection against **ultraviolet B (UVB) radiation**, the part of sunlight primarily responsible for **sunburns**.
- In standard testing, **sunscreen** is applied to the skin and researchers compare how much ultraviolet exposure is needed to produce **redness, or erythema**, on protected skin versus unprotected skin, says **Katheeja Nasika**, consultant dermatologist, Rela Hospital, Chennai.



- “If an **SPF** is 30, theoretically the amount of UV exposure needed to cause minimal erythema on sunscreen-applied skin would be 30 times higher than on unprotected skin,” she explains.

What do SPF numbers mean?

- According to **K.R. Sharmatha**, senior consultant dermatologist, **SIMS Hospital**, Chennai, **SPF 30** blocks about **95-97% of UVB radiation**, **SPF 50** blocks roughly **97-98%**, and **SPF 80** blocks close to **99%**.
- While higher **SPF** provides somewhat greater protection, the difference between **SPF 30** and **SPF 50** is far smaller than most people imagine.
- A sunscreen's **SPF value** only measures protection against **UVB radiation**.
- **Pushpa Gnanaraj**, senior consultant dermatologist, **Apollo Speciality Hospitals**, Vanagaram, Chennai, notes that **UVA** penetrates more deeply.
- **UVA radiation** is strongly linked to **pigmentation, photoageing, wrinkles** and loss of **skin elasticity**.
- For this reason, experts emphasise that **SPF alone should not determine sunscreen choice**.
- They recommend choosing a **broad-spectrum sunscreen** with **PA+++ protection**, which indicates protection against **UVA rays** as well as products that provide protection against both **UVA** and **UVB radiation** rather than focusing solely on the SPF number.
- She recommends **SPF 30** as a minimum, while **SPF 50** or higher for outdoor sports, extended sun exposure, or individuals with **photosensitive skin conditions**.

Application matters

- Many tend to overlook correct application.
- Experts recommend applying **sunscreen** 15 to 20 minutes before sun exposure and ensuring that exposed areas such as the face, neck, hands and forearms are covered.
- Reapplication is essential every two to three hours during outdoor exposure, especially after washing the face or if the product is not **water-resistant**.
- And for people working outdoors, and in sports, experts recommend **waterproof formulations**.
- High-**SPF** sunscreens also require regular reapplication because sunscreen do not block **100% of UV radiation**.
- A properly applied **SPF 30** sunscreen may offer better protection than an **SPF 100** product applied inadequately.
- The more important factors are choosing a **broad-spectrum product**, applying it correctly, and reapplying it regularly.
- Understanding **SPF** is less about finding the highest number and more about using **sunscreen** effectively and consistently.

UVA Radiation

- **UVA rays** have a longer wavelength and can penetrate deep into the skin.
- They are present throughout the day and can even pass through clouds and window glass.
- UVA rays are mainly responsible for:
 - Skin ageing and wrinkles
 - Loss of skin elasticity
 - Pigmentation and tanning
 - Long-term skin damage
- UVA rays slowly age skin over time.

UVB Radiation

- **UVB rays** have a shorter wavelength and affect the **outer layers** of the skin.
- They are strongest between about 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- UVB rays are mainly responsible for:
 - Sunburn
 - Skin redness
 - DNA damage in skin cells
 - Increased risk of skin cancer
- UVB rays burn skin when stay in the sun too long.

SPF (Sun Protection Factor)

- **SPF (Sun Protection Factor)** is a measure of how well a sunscreen protects the skin from **UVB rays**.
- SPF 15 blocks about 93% of UVB rays.
- SPF 30 blocks about 97% of UVB rays.
- SPF 50 blocks about 98% of UVB rays.

Skin normally starts to burn after 10 minutes in the sun. With SPF 30 sunscreen, skin could theoretically stay about 30 times longer before burning.

05J6. 'Rural, urban India almost same in video watching'

- India's transition into a **video-first economy** is no longer restricted to **metropolitan cities** as daily video consumption on **Meta platforms** is reaching **98% in cities** and **94% in rural areas**, according to a **Meta-commissioned study** by **IPSOS**.
- The study, comprising over **4,000 participants** across **metro, tier-2 and 3 cities and rural India**, found **97% of users** consume video content daily, highlighting video content had become the primary source of **digital engagement**.
- Also, the study found **Reels** had become the primary destination for **content, culture and influence** with **89% of Gen-Z users** engaging with it every day.
- **Beauty, make-up, fashion, lifestyle, wellness, fitness, comedy, sports, and travel** emerged as the most engaged genres.



- Among it **beauty, makeup, and fashion** recorded the highest engagement with **52% of the users** engaging in these genres followed by **lifestyle, fitness, and wellness** at **42%**; **comedy and humor** at **39%**; **sports** at **38%**; and **travel** at **37%**.
- The study emphasised the **role of content creators** in shaping storytelling, conversations, trends, and brand discovery.
- **Reels** generated **60% higher creator engagement** than other surveyed **short-video platforms** and highlighted the platform's influence on high-intent sectors such as **e-commerce, automobiles, and financial services**.

04J6. A liver protein triggered by exercise reversed memory loss in mice

- After **exercise**, small molecules called **exerkines** are **released by the liver, skeletal muscles, heart, and brain** into the **bloodstream**; these include **peptides, lipids, and hormones** and mediate the beneficial effects of exercise, promoting **cardiovascular fitness** and improving **metabolism**.
- **As we grow older, our cognitive abilities begin to wane.**
- A key to overcoming these **ageing-induced cognitive deficits** may be **exercise**.
- **"Exercise improves cardiovascular fitness, glucose metabolism, insulin sensitivity, blood pressure, lipid profiles, sleep, mood, and immune function,"** Atefe Tari, a researcher studying exercise and brain health at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology and St. Olav's University Hospital, said.
- **These exerkines mediate the beneficial effects of exercise, including promoting cardiovascular fitness and improving metabolism, throughout the body.**
- In the study, Gregor Bieri and colleagues at the University of California, San Francisco, examined the mechanism of action of one such exerkine produced by the liver: **GPLD1**.
- Old mice that could not exercise because their wheels had been locked had lower levels of **GPLD1 in their livers**.

Protective barrier

- **GPLD1** is an enzyme that breaks down hundreds of proteins on cell surfaces.
- Based on this function, the authors focused on the **blood-brain barrier** in mice – a network of blood vessels and specialised cells that surround the brain.
- **"The blood-brain barrier tightly regulates the signals and nutrients that get shuttled between the brain and blood,"** Dr. Bieri, the lead author of the study, explained.

- The authors found one such protein, called **TNAP**, to be highly enriched in the blood-brain barriers of old mice, notably even around the hippocampus, the learning and memory centre of the brain.

Therapeutic potential for Alzheimer's

- Given that ageing is a risk factor for **neurodegenerative disorders** like **Alzheimer's disease and dementia**, the authors next tested whether the GPLD1 intervention could reduce cognitive decline in a mouse model of Alzheimer's disease.
- Dr. Tari, who was not involved in the study, exercised caution on this count, noting that "mouse models of Alzheimer's do not fully reproduce the complexity of the disease in humans, which **develops over decades and involves vascular dysfunction, inflammation, metabolism, genetics, and lifestyle factors**."
- **"This causes chronic inflammation in the nerve cells which can accelerate disease processes."**
- **Alzheimer's disease** is characterised by the accumulation of toxic **amyloid protein**, which clump together to form plaques, leading to neurodegeneration and cognitive decline.
- This exerkine was found to boost new neuron formation within the **hippocampus**.

04J6. New result pushes bounds of how small a liquid can be

Quark-Gluon Plasma (QGP)

- Physicists have spent more than two decades studying one of the strangest forms of matter ever created in a laboratory: the **quark-gluon plasma (QGP)**.
- **Quarks and gluons are the smallest pieces of matter.**
- A QGP existed in the first few millionths of a second after the **Big Bang**, before the quarks bound together to form the first protons and neutrons.
- **Researchers routinely create small droplets of QGP by colliding heavy atomic nuclei at extremely high energies.**
- These droplets are extraordinarily hot, reaching trillions of degrees centigrade.
- Their behaviour, however, has been more surprising: instead of acting like a gas, the QGP behaves like a fluid.
- By smashing together oxygen nuclei at the **Large Hadron Collider (LHC)**, researchers have found the smallest dollop of QGP — so far — that still behaves like a fluid.
- The new study addresses a different question: **how small can a droplet of matter be and still have fluid-like behaviour?**
- The **LHC usually smashes together protons**.



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- The researchers picked oxygen ions because they occupy a middle ground between the tiny clumps of energy and matter created by smushed protons and the massive ones formed by lead ions.
- A middle ground that could reveal the tipping point where subatomic matter starts to resemble a fluid.
- Properties like **viscosity** and **flow** are associated with fluids, and these fluids usually have an enormous number of particles.
- A droplet of water sliding down a wall has quadrillions of water molecules.

04J6. Is climate research being held back by local instrumentation?

- A **Mega Science Vision-2035** report on **Climate Research** is a roadmap prepared by the Indian climate research community with the **Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru**, as the nodal institution, and submitted to the **Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA)** to the Government of India, was made public this week.

What is its central message?

- The central message of the report is that India has effectively lost the ability to build its own scientific instruments.
- “Today, virtually no company in India manufactures quality scientific instruments for climate research,” it states, adding that “billions of rupees have been spent and continue to be spent on procuring instruments manufactured elsewhere.”
- Worse, imported instruments are often used “without knowing the principle of operation, the built-in assumptions... and their limitations,” and left uncalibrated for years — producing, in the report’s words, “incorrect data being reported in national and international journals, often leading to questions on the credibility of Indian science.”

What is the Mega Science Vision exercise?

- The **Mega Science Vision** exercise, historically used to plan large, long-horizon projects in nuclear and high-energy physics, was for the first time extended to climate research, ecology and astronomy, and facilitated by the PSA’s office under **Prof. Ajay K. Sood**.
- A working group chaired by **Prof. S.K. Satheesh**, with former **Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS)** director **Dr. S.S.C. Shenoi** as member-secretary, drew on consultations with over **3,000 researchers**.
- Crucially, the document calls itself “a Climate Research community document” of “hopes and

aspirations” whose projects are “indicative” — it is neither a mandatory prescription nor a statement of government policy or funding.

Hasn’t India built any of its own climate instruments?

- The report notes that Indian engineers can design and demonstrate instruments, “some of which have already been demonstrated successfully,” yet “they are not often translated into final industrial products.”
- Examples include **automatic profiling floats** developed at the **National Institute of Ocean Technology** for ocean observation, and **automatic weather stations** by the **India Meteorological Department** and **ISRO**.
- Although transferred to industry, “most of them have not reached the market yet.”
- Tellingly, the first phase of the proposed sensor programme is an audit to identify why such technologies fail to scale to production.
- The suggested remedy — mandating that most instruments be made in India, backed by assured procurement and pricing — sits uneasily with recent experience.
- The **Government e-Marketplace (GeM)** portal, made mandatory to support domestic vendors, was rolled back for scientific institutions in **June 2025** after scientists found it hindered access to customised, high-quality equipment.

Why study uncontrolled renewables?

- Although **renewable energy** seems to be the right solution to replace polluting sources, the report cautions that studies are needed to assess the long-term effects of uncontrolled tapping of natural resources.
- India, which has pledged **500 GW of non-fossil capacity by 2030**, crossed the halfway mark in installed capacity in **2025**.
- The report also calls for scientific methods to estimate the **social cost of carbon**, a “**polluter pays**” mechanism to prevent the atmosphere from becoming a dumping ground, and measures to offset the burden of carbon taxation on the poor.

What else in the report is of importance?

- The report proposes a pan-India **Climate and Health Observatory** under a mega project on adaptation and resilience, reflecting how thinly India tracks climate-related health impacts.
- It outlines **eight mega projects** spanning observational networks, indigenous sensors, satellites, two strands of climate modelling, field campaigns, carbon-neutrality research and adaptation science, to be overseen by a high-level apex committee.



- On science, it enters contested ground, backing a dense **Black Carbon** observatory network despite disputed claims about its relative role in global warming.
- It flags India's thin **paleoclimate networks** as a gap in understanding the monsoon's deep past, and the risk of crossing **tipping points** such as ice-sheet collapse and shifts in ocean circulation.
- It also warns of **limited trained manpower**, including in **environmental epidemiology**.

04J6. What Delhi HC's pathbreaking ruling on Google keyword advertising means

- Justice Mini Pushkarna** assessed if a company can buy another's registered trademark as a keyword on **Google Ads** to have their ads appear first in searches for that trademark.
- In **2013**, **Hindware Ltd.** discovered that its rival companies had purchased the trademark '**Hindware**' in such a manner.

The dispute

- In early **2013**, **Hindware Limited**, which is in the business of sanitaryware products, discovered that its rival sanitaryware companies, **Grohe India Private Limited** and **Cera Sanitaryware Limited**, had purchased the trademark '**Hindware**' as a keyword through Google's **AdWords** programme.
- The result was that whenever a consumer searched for the word '**Hindware**' on the Google search engine, the first result that appeared was for the website of **Cera**.
- Also, when someone searched '**Hindware Sanitary**' or '**Hindware Sanitaryware**', the first result came from the website of **Grohe**.
- Hindware argued that its registered and well-known trademark is being used by Google by offering or suggesting it to competitors or any other entity for the generation of advertisements.
- Hindware said this was being done without their prior consent or approval.
- Subsequently, **Cera** and **Grohe** settled with Hindware, leaving the core legal battle to continue against **Google India** and **Google LLC**.

02J6. The genie of synthetic biology is out, and with it comes power and peril

- For the **first** time in about **four billion years of life on the earth**, one species is learning not just to read the book of life but to write new versions.
- The elimination of **smallpox** is one example.
- Phenylketonuria**, a condition in which the body cannot process a common amino acid, phenylalanine, is one such example.

Verbosity in genes

- At the core of our efforts to understand and explain the extraordinary **diversity of forms and functions of life** lies one molecule: **deoxyribonucleic acid**, popularly known by its abbreviation, **DNA**.
- DNA** resides in cells, the unit of construction of our bodies — indeed of any organism — and we humans are made up of trillions of cells.
- The **DNA** in a cell is called its **genome**.
- The linear thread of DNA that makes up the genome has an alphabet of four molecules, denoted by the letters 'A', 'T', 'G', and 'C'.
- A genome can have thousands of genes, and through the specific ordering of these letters, each gene can encode a specific protein.
- Proteins in their various forms make up, or help manufacture, all that is needed for each cell to perform its unique function.
- However, the commonly studied bacterium **Escherichia coli** has about 4,300 genes.
- The fruit fly, about 17,000.
- The mouse, about 21,000.
- And the human, about 22,000.
- There is only a fivefold difference in gene number between a bacterium and a human.
- The mouse has more protein-coding genes than us, and a water flea, **Daphnia**, has about 31,000 genes, more than either us or the mouse.
- While genes encode proteins, they also have DNA sequences involved in regulating when, where, and to what extent genes are expressed.
- These regulatory regions are locations where other specific proteins, called **transcription factors** bind, to turn genes 'on' and 'off'.
- These regulatory proteins are themselves encoded by genes.

Three extraordinary insights

- The **decreasing cost and increasing speed of DNA sequencing** means that we can, today, sequence the genome of any organism we choose.
- At the start of the **Human Genome Project**, sequencing a human genome took more than a decade, cost close to \$3 billion, and involved thousands of scientists across about 20 countries.
- As our computational capacity also increases, so does our ability to study the genomes we have sequenced.
- The growing bank of genome sequences across organisms offers three extraordinary insights into all life on the earth.
- First, genome sequences taken together give us a history of life on the planet, the relatedness of organisms, and how the tree of life branched in different ways.



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- The exquisite detail that genomes provide complements the fossil record where it is available — but it also tells us the history of life where no fossil record exists.
- No social history of humans can provide this degree of precision and accuracy over such an extended period.
- Second, when we examine genomes in the context of how an organism (bacterium, plant or animal) functions in its environment, we learn how they are adapted.
- Genes, famously described as selfish, ensure their own propagation by using their host organism's survival as a vehicle for their transmission.
- By studying variations in genes, we learn how mutations are selected as organisms adapt to their environments.
- Human populations that today carry genes predisposing them to **type II diabetes** are typically descended from groups that lived in environments where food supply rose and fell cyclically over long intervals.
- In today's environment of abundant food, this genetic inheritance leads to disease.
- Third, just as with DNA sequencing, we are rapidly accumulating detailed information on all aspects of the cellular environment across a variety of organisms — which genes are expressed, where their products are localised, what they do, and so on.
- When taken together, this detailed 'cell map' can give us a picture of all the complexity within a cell in each organism we study.
- From all of this, one can expect a substantial advance in our understanding of how life in all its diversity came about, how organisms are made, and how they work.
- With this knowledge will come expanded power in **synthetic biology**.
- Our understanding of how genes, cells, and environments collaborate to make organisms has already enabled us to engineer nature in many ways.
- Engineering cells and organisms not just at the level of one or a few genes, but on a genome-wide scale, is becoming possible.
- These technologies will become more accurate, less expensive, and more accessible.
- With access to computing power and memory that AI provides, it is possible to analyse cellular and environmental information and design sections of genomes or entire genomes, with the desired properties on our computers.
- Designer cells that make chemicals, drugs, materials, and fuels are already with us but they will become ubiquitous and far broader in their uses than what we see today.
- Creating complex new forms of multicellular organisms, plants or animals, is also a real possibility.

- Replacing the genome of a cell with one designed and manufactured by humans is now feasible for small genomes and will soon be possible for larger ones.
- In 2010, American scientist **J. Craig Venter** (1946-2026) and his team chemically synthesised a complete bacterial genome and introduced it into a bacterial cell whose native DNA had been removed.

02J6. Orbital rivalry — the challenge of China's space power

- **Beijing's** development of anti-satellite missiles and co-orbital systems blurs the line between routine space operations and counter-space activities.
- In January 2007, it targeted its own satellite from earth.
- In October 2015, **China** tested an exo-atmospheric vehicle designed to strike a hostile satellite.
- In 2022, China used a robotic spacecraft to push a defunct satellite into the graveyard orbit.
- China has around 1,900 satellites in orbit, compared to more than 8,000 American satellites, including the **SpaceX** satellites.
- A single strike could disrupt communications, power grids, navigation systems, financial markets, and military command-and-control (C2) and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) networks.
- Accordingly, China aims to land on the moon by 2036, launch a nuclear-powered shuttle by 2040, and establish a solar power system by 2050.
- Chinese start-ups such as **LandSpace**, **iSpace** and **OneSpace** are challenging rivals such as **SpaceX** and **Blue Origin**.
- China is also exploring lunar and asteroid mining for energy and critical minerals.
- Its most immediate competition is with **Starlink** in low-earth orbit (LEO).
- China plans to deploy more than 36,000 LEO satellites by 2030.
- First, kinetic attack systems such as the **DN-3** and **SC-19** missiles, which can physically destroy satellites.
- Second, laser-based systems that can dazzle or blind satellites, disrupting navigation and communications.
- Third, co-orbital satellites, such as the **SJ** and **TJS** series, designed to interfere with or dislodge other satellites from orbit.
- India has around 60 operational satellites as against 400-plus Chinese military satellites alone, which implies lesser redundancy.
- **Losing 6 to six satellites will hurt India more.**
- Hypothetically, China could strike at the **CARTOSAT/RISAT** series, which could lead to



loss of tactical-level imagery for hours, if not days.

- They could even deploy jammers to disable India's **NavIC** system.
- The key strategic takeaway is that while China can conduct peacetime harassment using lasers and jammers, or temporarily blind a few satellites during a border crisis, it cannot inflict crippling damage without destroying a large number of Indian satellites and risking severe **Kessler Syndrome** consequences.
- While **Mission Shakti** has strengthened India's deterrence posture, its utility remains restricted.
- Moreover, a single successful test does not guarantee operational reliability, and India still lacks co-orbital capabilities to counter satellites such as the **SJ** and **TJS** series.

Safeguarding India's interests

- Second, it should disaggregate large satellite programmes, such as **GSAT**, into smaller constellations, which are more resilient and survivable.
- Third, India must strengthen the protection of its ground space assets to mitigate the impact of hard-kill attacks.
- Fourth, it should enhance data-sharing arrangements with strategic partners so that, in the event of satellite losses, critical services can be restored through commercial or partner networks within hours.

02J6. The FemTech industry's approach to PMOS

- The global decision to rename **Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS)** as **Polyendocrine Metabolic Ovarian Syndrome (PMOS)** is a culmination of a decade-long collaboration between doctors, researchers, and patient groups.
- Led by Professor **Helena Teede**, Director of the **Monash Centre for Health Research and Implementation** in Melbourne, the rationale for the change was published in **The Lancet** last month.
- At the heart of the renaming was a growing recognition that the term **PCOS** could not capture the condition's complexity, and reduced it to a reproductive disorder centred on the ovaries.
- It is a long overdue acknowledgement of the condition's multisystem nature as **PMOS** manifests through a wide range of endocrine, metabolic, reproductive, psychological, and dermatological symptoms.

India's FemTech response

- Yet, even as the formal medical renaming to **PMOS** is enforced, India's **FemTech** (female technology) industry had already begun treating **PCOS** as a multisystem condition.
- A paper published in 2024 by the authors of this article titled, "**Platforming PCOS Treatment Online: FemTech Logics of Care**," showed how **FemTech** platforms curated integrated care packages that brought together general practitioners, diabetologists, endocrinologists, gynaecologists, dermatologists, nutritionists, fitness trainers, and psychologists to treat **PCOS**.
- Several platform founders were themselves women who had struggled to **navigate gynaecological care that centred fertility and weight loss** as the individual responsibility of patients.
- Platforms also sought to improve doctor-patient interactions by training gynaecologists to avoid prejudiced language around marital status, fertility, and body weight.
- Since many aspects of **PMOS** management could be coordinated remotely, digital consultations also offered women greater privacy and flexibility in a culture that stigmatises unmarried women visiting gynaecologists unchaperoned.
- **PMOS** often first appears through irregular menstrual cycles.
- The underlying hormonal and metabolic imbalances can remain poorly understood for years delaying treatment.
- In both families and clinical settings, it is viewed primarily through the lens of fertility and weight loss, generating shame and anxiety around marriage prospects and hostility within marriages itself.

Limits of privatised care

- First, access to these platforms depends on the ability to afford uninterrupted internet connectivity and recurring subscription costs.
- As a result, these services cater disproportionately to urban, digitally savvy women.
- Doctor-patient interactions must become more inclusive and respectful to women.
- Moreover, discussions around **PMOS** rarely engage with broader environmental factors such as adulterated food, pollution, chronic stress, and toxins.

01J6. 'Carrot extract can make fake ghee dodge quality test'

- The **red-orange pigment** from carrots can make fake ghee dodge a popular quality test to pass off as a premium product sourced from cows, a new study has found.



- Researchers from the **Indian Institute of Technology (Banaras Hindu University)** in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, have demonstrated that **non-dairy fats**, such as palm oil and lard or rendered pig fat, can be engineered to mimic the **Raman spectral signature** of authentic cow ghee simply by adding a **beta-carotene-rich carrot extract**.
- Cow ghee naturally contains **beta-carotene**, responsible for its yellowish colour.
- They also challenge the efficacy of **Raman spectroscopy**, a rapid testing technique widely used by food regulators and laboratories.
- Named after **Nobel laureate C.V. Raman**, Raman spectroscopy is considered a powerful analytical quality test.
- It acts as a molecular fingerprint to verify the exact chemical composition, crystalline structure, and purity of a substance.
- To test the robustness of these markers, the researchers fortified samples of lard and palm oil with carotenoids extracted from carrots.
- Both lard and palm oil displayed the same Raman peaks attributed to cow ghee.
- The fortified fats also acquired the **yellow-orange colour** similar to cow ghee, making them resemble the dairy product in appearance and spectroscopic profile.

01J6. Webb telescope captures weather on exoplanet 700 lightyears away

- As state-of-the-art instruments like the **Extremely Large Telescope**, which **Europe is currently building in northern Chile**, become operational, astronomers could discover many exoplanet nurseries around distant stars, increasing manifold the possibility of finding more extra-solar earth-like planets and, who knows, even a true earth twin.
- According to a new study published in **Science** on May 21, scientists were able to use the **NASA James Webb Space Telescope (JWST)** to peer closely at an **exoplanet nearly 700 lightyears away**, and deciphered the weather patterns on it.
- Named **WASP-94A b**, this exoplanet is almost twice as large as Jupiter but with only half the mass.
- It orbits very close to its parent star — so close that it takes just four days to complete a whole revolution.

Extreme worlds

- Gas giants like **WASP-94A b** with scorching atmospheric temperatures are called '**hot Jupiters**' and have their **orbits tidally locked**, meaning their rotation is synchronised with their revolution.

- As a result, the same side of the planet always faces the host star, much like the **moon's tidally locked orbit** keeps one side always facing the earth.
- **WASP-94A b's** dayside is thus a sweltering desert with temperatures hot enough to melt rock while its nightside is perennially dark and frozen as temperatures dip to nearly absolute zero.
- Many of these worlds have turned out to be rocky; **some are even almost earth-like**.
- But on some other exoplanets, scientists have found extreme temperatures and pressures producing rain of molten metal and vaporised rock.
- Still others have downpours of molten glass pushed by supersonic winds.
- Some gaseous exoplanets even have crystallised carbon raining down as diamonds.

'A world far beyond'

- **Hot Jupiters** though are the most studied exoplanets.
- The latest **JWST** discovery has found that **WASP-94A b** in particular has a dynamic weather system: its mornings are blanketed in clouds of magnesium silicate, iron, and magnesium sulphide while the evenings sport clear skies.
- "The clouds appear to form on the cooler night side of the planet, sweep across the globe with extremely fast winds, and then disappear as they reach the hotter dayside," **Sagnick Mukherjee**, lead author of the study and a postdoctoral fellow at **Arizona State University**, said.
- Astronomers characterise the atmospheres of distant exoplanets using **spectroscopy**: **light is split up into its various wavelengths, followed by measuring the intensity of each one**.
- **If the planet has an atmosphere, it will absorb some of the light**.
- This will create a gap in the set of wavelengths arriving at the spectrometer.
- **Since each molecule absorbs light of fixed wavelengths, it is easy to identify the compounds present in the atmosphere**.

Slow transit

- "To do that, we need some way to distinguish the planet's light from the stars," **Bruce Macintosh**, director of the **University of California Observatories** and professor of astronomy and astrophysics, said.
- "As the planet passes in front of the star, its atmosphere absorbs starlight."
- "By studying exactly how that absorption changes with time, you can see the evidence that one side is cloudy and not the other."



- “And by studying different wavelengths you can understand composition,” he explained.
- According to **University of Göttingen** astrophysicist **Lisa Nortmann**, the researchers seemed to have studied the transit when the exoplanet passed slowly in front of its star.
- “Therefore, at different times of observation, different parts of the planet are in front of the star.”
- “This effect was used in this study to ‘scan’ the planet’s atmosphere at different locations and this revealed that the atmospheric signal was different for morning and evening sides,” Dr. Nortmann, who was also not part of the study, said.

History of formation

- Research like this could help astronomers learn about the planetary architectures of 4.6 billion years ago when the **protoplanetary disk** of gas and dust around the Sun started evolving into this **Solar System**.
- “The discs of material around a young star form planets.”
- “Different parts of that disc have different compositions — ice, gas, dust particles, etc.,” Prof. Macintosh said.
- As state-of-the-art instruments like the **Extremely Large Telescope**, which Europe is currently building in northern Chile, become operational, astronomers could discover many **exoplanet nurseries** around distant stars, increasing manifold the possibility of finding more extra-solar earth-like planets and, who knows, even a true earth twin.

01J6. From students to authors, users turn to AI detectors despite questions over accuracy

- **AI text detectors are used to identify AI-generated writing, but concerns persist over their accuracy as they can produce false positives and false negatives; cases involving authors accused of using AI have triggered debate over whether these tools are reliable enough to determine authenticity.**
- Since **OpenAI’s ChatGPT** debuted in 2022, users have been experimenting with AI to write and publish human-sounding content at scale.
- According to a May 2026 report by digital consulting firm **Graphite**, the number of “primarily AI-generated” articles published on the internet equals the number written by humans.
- Some popular AI text detection tools include **Pangram**, **Quillbot**, **ZeroGPT**, **Grammarly**, and **Turnitin**.

- The latter is an urgent problem, as it can lead to disciplinary action being taken against students and academics, even if they developed their work through honest means.
- False positives can also lead to social media trolling and career-impacting consequences.
- When **The Hindu** ran 186 words of a 2010 **Pulitzer prize-winning** foreign journalism feature through several trending AI detection platforms, the results varied wildly: **Pangram** and **Quillbot** both classified the text as being 100% human written, while **ZeroGPT** said that it was 49.9% AI.
- Pangram’s popularity is also due to efforts by CEO and co-founder **Max Spero**, who actively promotes the tool on X (formerly Twitter) and cites its results to claim outright that trending pieces were generated with AI.
- Specifically, **Pangram** was used to accuse both Ms. Ballard and Mr. Nazir of submitting AI writing.
- She was concerned about the **ethical implications** of submitting “unpublished original work” to an AI checker.
- Ms. Farook further expressed disappointment at how the work of other feted writers and winners had faced scrutiny; **Pangram AI** published results claiming that it found more stories showing signs of AI use among the 2026 and 2025 Commonwealth short story prize winners.

01J6. Conflict in West Asia spurs interest in European-made sustainable aviation fuels

- At a plant near **Frankfurt**, in **Germany**, **hydrogen and carbon dioxide sourced from a chlorine factory and a biogas facility nearby are piped into a reactor**, and after a few more steps turned into jet fuel.
- **Interest in such synthetic propellants** is growing as the **U.S.-Israeli war on Iran** pushes Europe to reassess its dependencies, raising hopes of a turnaround for the struggling sector, according to industry experts.
- The conflict “made the business case for **e-SAF** much stronger,” said **Mariano Berkenwald**, head of strategy at **Ineratec**, the firm operating the Frankfurt facility.

‘Climate friendly’

- Before the war squeezed Europe’s jet fuel supplies, **electro-Sustainable Aviation Fuel (e-SAF)**, was largely touted for its climate friendly credentials.
- **Doing away with oil, it can reduce by 90% planet warming emissions from aviation — itself responsible for up to 4% of all greenhouse gases released in the European Union**, proponents say.



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- **Brussels** has made it a key component of a push to green up transport, mandating fuel suppliers to blend at least 1.2% of the stuff into the kerosene made available at EU airports by 2030 and 35% by 2050.
- But the sector has struggled to take off, bogged down by high costs and low investments.

PATRIOTIC IAS



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MONTHLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

JUNE 2026

GENERAL STUDIES PAPER III

SUBJECT: ENVIRONMENT

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26J6. Village youth track down wildlife wonders in drought-prone Satara

- In a **community-led survey**, the locals from **Maharashtra's Kiraksal**, a hilly village in the **drought-prone** region of **Satara**, documented over **600 species**.
- Indian wolf, Bengal fox, striped hyena** and many more were spotted using **camera traps** and **GIS mapping**.

25J6. Kingmakers: meet the insects that make India's favourite mangoes

- A study has found that **allowing wild insects** to access **flowers** dramatically increased **mango yield** by **350%**, highlighting the importance of **wild insects for mango pollination**; yet, **native bees** that transfer **pollen** around **orchards** are under threat from the **insecticides** that protect the crop from **pests**.
- More than a thousand** varieties of **mangoes** exist in **India**, the popular ones being **Banganapalli, Dassheri, Alphonso, Badaami, Imaam Pasandh, and Malgoa**.

Making a mango

- Between **December and March** every year, **mango trees** across the country bloom and issue a sweet yet slightly fermented odour.
- Look closer at a **mango tree** this time and you will find a branch with several bouquets of small, **cream-coloured flowers**.
- Each branch, which botanists call a **panicle**, contains a few hundred to up to **10,000** individual **flowers**.
- And a single **mango tree** can carry up to some **3,000 panicles**, depending on its size and branching.
- Each one of these **flowers** is the start of a **mango** in the making.
- Some **flowers** carry only the **male parts** while others only the **female parts**, and sometimes there can be flowers with both (which are biologically called **hermaphrodites**).
- Their findings, published in **2023**, were striking: "We found that allowing flowers access to **ants** and **flying visitors (bees, hoverflies, nonsyrphid flies)**, dramatically increased **mango yield** by **350%**, highlighting the importance of **wild insects** for **mango pollination**," the study paper read.
- These **flying insects** were found to include **wild bees** such as the **dwarf honey bee (Apis florea)**, **giant honey bee (Apis dorsata)**, and **stingless bees (Tetragonula sp.)**.
- Other important **flying visitors** included **hoverflies**, which look like **bees (Syrphus sp.)**, the **common house fly (Musca domestica)**, and the **blow fly (Calliphoridae family)**.

Effective pollination

- The researchers also observed that the **mango yields** dropped when they barred **crawling insects**, such as **ants**, from the **flowers**.
- Neonicotinoid insecticides**, which are commonly sprayed on **mango trees**, are **neurotoxic** and affect **cognitive functions** in **bees**, such as **navigation, learning, and memory**, and eventually their **survival**.
- This framework recognised that **India** has more than **800 bee species**, plus **butterflies, moths, beetles, birds, bats and flies** as **pollinators** and that they are ecologically important for **agriculture**.

24J6. India's patchy industrial climate strategy

- The recently submitted **First Biennial Transparency Report (BTR1)** by India to the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change** provides a detailed account of national emissions.
- The report discloses that in **2022**, over **20%** of India's total emissions stemmed directly from the **industrial sector**.
- Specifically, it shows that the fuel consumption in manufacturing industries and construction accounts for **13%** of total emissions, while **industrial processes and product use** accounts for another **9%**.
- The **BTR1** acknowledges the **Perform, Achieve and Trade (PAT)** scheme as a primary initiative, which aims to reduce specific energy consumption across **13 energy-intensive industries**.
- PAT** is now transitioning to the **Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (CCTS)**, which focuses on reducing the **emission intensity** of nine industrial sectors, including **aluminium, cement, fertilizers, iron and steel, petrochemicals, petroleum refining, pulp and paper, textiles, and chlor-alkali**.
- The other four industries, which include **thermal power plants, railways, DISCOMs and commercial buildings**, will continue under the **PAT scheme**.

Need to identify industries

- A similar pattern has been seen in **2014, 2016, and 2019** as well, as per the detailed emission inventory available on **NITI Aayog's India Climate and Energy Dashboard**.
- For instance, some of the explicitly identified sectors in the emission inventory, such as **power, cement, non-ferrous metals, chemicals, and textiles**, are covered by mitigation measures such as **PAT and CCTS**.
- They are not subject to the same **energy efficiency mandates** or **emission-reduction targets** as industries such as steel or cement, despite their contributions to the emissions load.



- Transparency in **climate reporting** is often framed as an international obligation, a way to prove to the world that a nation is effectively traversing the path for honouring its pledges.

23J6. Citizens interests and conservation

- The **Pallikaranai Marshland** in Chennai, one of south India's last surviving natural wetlands and a designated **Ramsar Site**, deserves protection for its role in flood mitigation, groundwater recharge, and biodiversity conservation.
- **Environmental protection should not become an exclusionary or punitive process.**
- The **protection of the Pallikaranai Marsh** is unquestionably important.
- **Equally important** are the legitimate expectations of citizens who acquired property lawfully.
- **A mature democracy must be capable of protecting both.**
- **As the Integrated Management Plan for the Pallikaranai Wetland** moves toward completion, regulations, public consultation, and fair transitional measures can help balance conservation with citizen welfare.

22J6. Similipal's black tigers are getting help

- **Zeenat**, a tigress translocated from **Maharashtra's Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve** to **Odisha's Similipal Tiger Reserve** two years ago, has given birth to **four cubs**.
- **Satyasundar Barik** speaks to the people behind the **high-stakes conservation effort** to rescue Similipal's tigers from a **genetic mutation** that has fuelled the rise of **pseudo-melanism**, or dense, thick, merging stripes.
- **Prakash Chand Gogineni**, Field Director of the **Similipal Tiger Reserve** in Odisha, is still coming to terms with the thrill of a moment he witnessed on **May 28**.
- **A camera trap** had captured a rare sight of a **tigress** named **Zeenat**, gently carrying her four cubs one by one in her mouth.
- Gogineni saw the images in his modest office in **Baripada**, the district headquarters of **Mayurbhanj**, where Similipal is located.
- He knew immediately that he was experiencing a key moment in **India's wildlife history**.
- **Pseudo-melanistic tigers** (often called **black tigers**) are a rare variant of the **Bengal tiger**, distinguished by a genetic mutation that causes their black stripes to widen and merge.
- **This gives them a dramatically dark coat** where slivers of **golden yellow** barely peek through.
- **Similipal**, which derives its name from **simul** or the **silk cotton tree**, is a **2,750-square-kilometre UNESCO Biosphere Reserve**.
- In **1973**, the Indian government declared it a

tiger reserve.

- Currently, Gogineni says his priority is the safety of the tigress and her cubs.
- "This can be seen as **India's first successful inter-State tiger translocation** from a reserve with a surplus population to one with low density," says the 48-year-old **Indian Forest Service (IFS)** officer.
- In **2018**, the State brought in two tigers from **Madhya Pradesh's Kanha Tiger Reserve** and **Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve** to its **Satkosia Tiger Reserve**.
- Spearheaded by the **National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)**, **Sariska Tiger Reserve** in Rajasthan saw India's first successful tiger reintroduction in **2008**.

From Maharashtra to Odisha

- In **Madhya Pradesh's Panna Tiger Reserve**, **NTCA** and the **Wildlife Institute of India (WII)** conducted a similar programme in **2009**.
- In the paper '**high frequency of an otherwise rare phenotype** in a small and isolated tiger population,' the team found that approximately **37%** of Similipal's tigers were **pseudo-melanistic**.
- "**Small and isolated populations** have low genetic variation...making them prone to **extinction**," the paper said.
- The **2014 All India Tiger Estimation (AITE)**, a four-yearly survey led by **NTCA** and **WII**, recorded a drastic decline in the tiger population in Similipal to just **five individuals** (one male and four females).
- Only one of them exhibited the **pseudo-melanistic** coat pattern, placing its prevalence at **20%**.
- **Pseudo-melanistic tigers** increased to **37.5%** in 2018 and **43.75%** in 2022.
- **Zeenat**, however, traversed three States: **Odisha, Jharkhand and West Bengal**.
- Of these, **six** were to be translocated to **Similipal**, while **three** were planned for **Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary**.

21J6. Bringing life back to a thirsty land

- **Rayadurgam** in drought-prone **Anantapur district** in western **Andhra Pradesh**, along the **Karnataka border**, is witnessing a quiet but significant transformation.
- Long defined by chronic **water scarcity**, the region's red, sandy terrain and prolonged dry spells had often drawn comparisons with **Rajasthan's desert landscapes**.
- Today, under the **Ananta Neeru Sanrakshanam Project**, the narrative is changing.
- More than **400 villagers**, in collaboration with the **Forest Department**, have led a community-



21J6. What a 'super' El Niño might mean for India's monsoon

- The U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) confirmed this month that an **El Niño** has formed in the **equatorial Pacific Ocean**.
- It placed the odds at about **63%** that it will strengthen into a **"very strong"** or colloquially a **"super El Niño"** by the northern winter.
- India's **June rainfall**, until the 16th, was roughly **35% below normal**.
- This combination has revived a recurring question: how reliably do the strongest El Niño events lead to a weak **Indian monsoon**?

What is El Niño

- An **El Niño** is the periodic warming of the **central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean**.
- It generally tends to weaken the **South Asian monsoon**.
- Its intensity is measured by how much the **sea surface temperatures** in a reference region of the Pacific rise above their long-term average.
- According to **D.S. Pai**, Chief Forecaster at the **India Meteorological Department (IMD)** Regional Meteorological Centre, Chennai, the categories are clearly defined.
- A temperature departure of **0.5°C–1°C** is classified as **weak**.
- A departure of **1°C–1.5°C** is considered **moderate**.
- A departure of **1.5°C–2°C** is classified as **strong**.
- Anything above **2°C** is considered **very strong**.
- Mr. Pai added that some forecasts suggest the current event could approach **2.5°C**, which would be near a historical record.

How does El Niño develop?

- Normally, **trade winds** push warm surface waters westward towards Asia.
- During an El Niño event, these winds weaken.
- As a result, the **eastern Pacific Ocean** becomes warmer.
- This warming further weakens the winds, creating a **positive feedback loop** that intensifies the anomaly.
- Scientists note that **long-term climate change** has warmed the oceans, increasing the amount of heat available to El Niño events.
- This has made recent El Niño episodes more intense than many earlier events.

How rare are very strong El Niño events?

- Despite increasing temperatures, **very strong El Niño events** remain relatively rare.
- Instrumental records show that only a few

events have crossed the **2°C threshold**.

- These occurred in **1972–73, 1982–83, 1997–98, and 2015–16**.

Why does timing matter for the monsoon?

- El Niño follows a relatively predictable seasonal cycle.
- According to Mr. Pai, it usually begins during **spring**, reaches its peak during **winter**, and weakens rapidly in the following spring.
- Only occasionally does an El Niño event continue into a second year.
- Because the warming develops gradually during spring and matures later, its impact on the **Indian monsoon** is usually felt more strongly during the **middle and latter part** of the June–September season.
- Its effect is generally less significant at the beginning of the season.
- Mr. Pai emphasised that **June rainfall** and the pace of **monsoon onset** are influenced largely by local and regional factors.
- Therefore, a weak June — including the current **35% rainfall deficit** — is not by itself a reliable indicator of how the entire monsoon season will perform.

Major impacts of strong El Niño events around the world

- The **1982-83 El Niño** was associated with severe **drought** and **bushfires** in **Australia** and dry conditions across **Indonesia**.
- The **1997-98 El Niño** caused severe **forest fires** and choking **haze** across **Indonesia** and **Southeast Asia**.
- It killed an estimated **one-sixth of the world's coral reefs** and helped push global temperatures to a record level.
- The **2015-16 El Niño** triggered mass **bleaching of the Great Barrier Reef**.
- It also made **2016** the warmest year recorded at that time.
- The event also contributed to severe **drought** and **food shortages** across **southern and eastern Africa**.

The role of the Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD)

- Paradoxically, the **1997-98 El Niño** brought about **2% more rainfall** than normal during India's summer monsoon season.
- This occurred because of a phenomenon in the **Indian Ocean** known as the **Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD)**.
- The IOD generated **warm water pools**, which counteracted the drying influence of the Pacific Ocean.
- Since then, forecasters have closely monitored the strengthening and weakening of the IOD.



- According to **M. Mohapatra**, Director General of the **India Meteorological Department (IMD)**, one reason for the expected monsoon deficit this year is that the **IOD** is unlikely to be strong enough to offset the effects of **El Niño**.

El Niño and the Indian monsoon record

- A comparison of **El Niño years since 1950** with the IMD's long-period rainfall data shows a strong relationship between **El Niño** and weak monsoons.
- Out of roughly **two dozen El Niño years**, about **15 years** recorded **below-normal monsoon rainfall**.
- Around **10 years** experienced a **deficient monsoon**, where seasonal rainfall fell below **90% of the long-period average**.
- This relationship is strong enough to influence **food security planning** and **fiscal policy decisions**.
- Several of India's most severe droughts occurred during **El Niño years**, including **1972, 1982, 2009, and 2015**.

El Niño and tropical cyclones

- El Niño** does not simply increase the number of tropical cyclones; instead, it **redistributes cyclone activity** across different ocean basins.
- According to the research division of **NOAA**, **El Niño** generally suppresses **Atlantic hurricane activity**.
- This happens because **El Niño** strengthens **vertical wind shear**, which refers to changes in wind speed and direction with height.
- Strong wind shear can disrupt and weaken developing storms.
- At the same time, **El Niño** creates more favourable conditions for **hurricanes in the central and eastern Pacific Ocean**.
- The magnitude of this effect generally increases with the strength of the **El Niño** event.

Impact on the Pacific and Asian region

- For ocean basins closer to **Asia**, the relationship works differently.
- Forecasters note that during an **El Niño**, the likelihood of a Pacific tropical storm intensifying into a **super typhoon** increases significantly.
- However, such systems usually curve towards **East Asia** or the **Americas** rather than moving towards the **Indian subcontinent**.
- Thus, while **El Niño** strongly influences global weather patterns, its impact on India depends on several interacting factors, particularly the strength of the **Indian Ocean Dipole**, regional atmospheric conditions, and the timing of monsoon development.

21J6. War in Ukraine hit different mammals differently

- Using **camera traps**, researchers in **Ukraine** compared animal activity during the **2022 Russian occupation** to peacetime data from **2021** in the **Chornobyl Exclusion Zone**.
- They found **mammals** adjusted their habits quickly to survive.
- For instance, **red deer** and **foxes** significantly reduced their activity at night.
- When **combat intensified**, **roe deer** activity dropped while **brown hares** were spotted more often.
- And while **wild boars** avoided **military sites**, **lynx** and **foxes** stayed closer to **human settlements**.

18J6. Scheme for crocodile sanctuaries

- Dr. H.R. Bustard**, an expert on crocodiles and an officer of the **FAO (UNDP)**, was deputed by the **Government of India** to advise the **Andhra Pradesh Government** on the conservation and farming of crocodiles in various parts of the State.
- It is stated that three species of crocodiles namely **gharial** (found in the **Ganga, Brahmaputra and Mahanadi**), the **maggar** or freshwater crocodile (found generally in rivers and reservoirs) and the **estuarine or salt-water crocodiles** (found in the estuaries of major rivers) were facing extinction owing to large-scale and indiscriminate killing for meat.
- The eggs are also eaten and so the species face the problem of survival.
- Dr. Bustard** inspected the **Corangi mangrove forest** in the **Kakinada Forest Division** last week accompanied by **Mr. T.V. Subba Rao**, **Additional Chief Conservator of Forests**, **Mr. Pushpalumar**, **Director Nehru Zoological Park**, **Hyderabad** and **Mr. B. Bhomarajam**, **Conservator of Forests**, **L.P. Circle**, **Rajamundry**.
- Dr. Bustard** stated the area was eminently suitable for farming the **salt-water crocodiles**.
- A scheme would be prepared for the purpose and submitted to the Government shortly.
- They inspected the **Godavari river area** from **Devipatnam** to **Peramtapalli**.
- Dr. Bustard** found the region between the **Papi Hills** and **Peramtapalli** was an excellent habitat for crocodiles and has prepared a scheme for the conservation and farming of crocodiles there.
- He wanted these two areas to be declared as **sanctuaries** for the preservation and farming of crocodiles.



18J6. Oil pollution

- Washington, June 17: The **International Oil Pollution Conferences** has passed a resolution which recommends the establishment of a limit of • **fty to one hundred and • fty miles** from the coasts of maritime nations, within which the discharge of oils or mixtures constituting nuisance, should be prohibited.
- And that each **Government** would require ships • ying its • ags to refrain from discharging oil near the shores of other countries.

18J6. 'India to meet 3% compressed biogas blending goal for FY27'

- The Centre is on track to meet the goal of blending **3% compressed biogas (CBG)** with **CNG** and domestic **pipd natural gas (PNG)** for **FY27** with the blending percentage having already nearly doubled to about **2%** at present, officials told **The Hindu**.
- They added with more **CBG plants** under varied stages of construction, this would provide a • llip towards achieving the target.
- India's present consumption of natural gas for domestic **PNG** and **CNG** in transport combined is about **34-35 million metric standard cubic meters per day (MMSCMD)**.
- "In April, **CBG sales** were approximately **0.66 mmscmd** and about **0.63 mmscmd** in May," they stated, explaining that at the present rate of consumption they amount to nearly **2%** of blending.

More plants

- According to the **Petroleum Ministry's Gobardhan portal**, construction of **324 CBG/bio-CNG plants** are under progress while construction work is yet to start on **1,261 plants**.
- **Suresh N.S.**, senior research scientist, **Strategic Initiatives Group** at think-tank **CSTEP** said geopolitical developments underscore the urgency of boosting India's domestic energy security and reducing dependence on imported fuels.

17J6. Not binary: India can save its forests by winning the war on poverty

- Forests with more **poor households** and communities that depended more on **fuelwood** were also found to have less diverse **tree species**, a new study has found.
- On the other hand, forests where communities had access to **alternative livelihoods**, such as **farming**, had more diverse **tree species**.
- Traditionally, many conservationists and policymakers have seen **biodiversity** co

nservation as a choice between protecting nature and meeting human needs.

- Forests were often seen as places that had to be protected from people, while **alleviating poverty** and **economic development** were treated as separate concerns.
- The data came from the **International Forestry Resources and Institutions network**, and spanned **322 community-managed tropical forests** in **15 countries** from **1993 to 2017**.
- **Tree species diversity** refers to the number of tree species in a forest; it is an important measure of **biodiversity**.
- Forests with more species tend to support more wildlife, are ecologically more stable, and are often more resilient to environmental change.
- Overall, the analysis found that a **greater dependence on forest resources** was associated with **lower tree species diversity**.
- However, the researchers emphasised that **poverty** is not responsible for biodiversity loss.
- They pointed out that **when people have fewer livelihood options and depend heavily on forests to survive**, the pressure on forest resources automatically increases.
- The way out is to improve **economic opportunities**.

The fortress model

- The study also focused on **human-dominated landscapes**, which are common in India.
- Most forests in the country are owned and managed by **State Forest Departments**.
- And for decades, this apparatus has followed the **fortress model** — where **protected areas** are managed by minimising human activities and restricting access to resources.
- While this model has allowed the Departments to recover several **iconic species** and strengthen protection, it has some severe limitations.
- Today, **many protected areas** are increasingly becoming isolated islands surrounded by **human-dominated landscapes**.
- Around **275 million people** depend on these forests to varying degrees for their livelihoods and daily needs.
- "But **these forests are ecologically important and provide significant ecosystem services**," Dr. Chhatre said.
- To reduce pressure on forests, **State Forest Departments** across India have introduced initiatives like **distributing subsidised LPG connections** and efficient **cooking stoves** and heaters around many **tiger reserves** and **national parks**.
- The measures reduce people's need for **fuelwood** and to enter forests.
- Extending similar support to **private landholdings** and



community forests along wildlife corridors could help conservation.

- The late ecologist **Madhav Gadgil** was a strong advocate of an **inclusive approach**, believing conservation efforts would be more effective if local communities had rights, incentives, and a meaningful role in managing natural resources.
- He also emphasised the value of **traditional ecological knowledge**, and argued people who had lived alongside forests for generations possessed insights that could complement scientific approaches to conservation.
- In **Ladakh**, the **Snow Leopard Conservancy** has mitigated economic losses of **human-wildlife conflict** with community-run homestays and **livestock insurance programmes**.
- In **Arunachal Pradesh**, **hornbill nest adoption programmes** run by the **Nature Conservation Foundation** have encouraged local communities to protect nesting sites, with former **Nyishi tribe** hunters now serving as nest protectors and forest patrollers.
- There is also tremendous scope to expand these initiatives and to further support **community welfare**.
- As Mr. Siddiqui said, **wildlife tourism** is a growing **multi-million-dollar industry**, yet only a small fraction of its revenue reaches the communities living alongside forests and protected areas.
- He added that a **greater share of these benefits** should be directed to local communities, creating stronger incentives for conservation.
- The findings of the new study highlight the **close links between alleviating poverty and conserving biodiversity**, and show how **socio-economic conditions** and conservation goals need not be in conflict with each other.
- By recognising these connections, both **conservationists and policymakers** can design more **inclusive frameworks** to benefit both people and nature.

17J6. Vast stretches of coral reefs could resist climate change, finds a new study

- A new study presented at the **Our Ocean Conference in Mombasa** on Tuesday finds that **1,66,000 square kilometres** of the world's coral reefs — around a third of the total — are particularly **"climate-resilient"**, meaning they have the potential to survive through major ocean warming events.
- The **IPCC** has stated **70% to 90%** of coral reefs could die with global warming of **1.5 degrees Celsius** above pre-industrial levels, and **99%** at **2 degrees Celsius**.
- Coral **"bleaching"** occurs when water temperatures rise by a degree or two, stressing the coral's animal tissues and making them **ex**

pel algae, turning them white.

- More than half are concentrated in **Australia, the Bahamas, Cuba, Indonesia, and the Philippines**.

14J6. Teeming peacock population poses new challenges to farmers, foresters

- In the rural areas of **Kuppam region** in **Andhra Pradesh's Chittoor district**, ranked by **Tamil Nadu** and **Karnataka**, peacocks are as much a part of the landscape as the granite outcrops and scrub forests that define the tri-State terrain.
- Till a decade ago, the **Indian peafowl** was confined to the forest fringes, but now the bird is a frequent visitor to villages, agricultural fields, and even institutional campuses across the region.
- The forest authorities of **Chittoor** confirm that the bird's population is growing steadily.
- "The **peacock** is a **Schedule-I species** under the **Wildlife (Protection) Act**, enjoying the same level of legal protection as the **tiger**."
- But unlike the tiger, whose conservation remains a challenge in many parts of the country, peacock numbers have been increasing consistently, not only in **Kuppam** but across **India**," says **District Forest Officer G. Subburaj**.
- The forests of the **Kuppam region** continue to provide an ideal habitat for peafowl.
- Open forests, cultivated fields, seasonal water sources, and rocky elevations offer abundant food and safe roosting sites.
- Across several hamlets and semi-urban villages as well, farmers express concern over increasing crop damage caused by **peacocks**.
- **Paddy fields** are the worst hit, while vegetable crops and cereal plantations also bear the brunt.

12J6. Centre lifts excise duty on higher ethanol-blend petrol

- The **Union government** exempts **E22, E25, E27, and E30** variants from **central excise duty**.
- The government clarifies that the latest reduction does not indicate anything on rolling out **higher blends**.
- Aiming to popularise the uptake of **biofuels** in the country, the **Union government** late on Wednesday removed central excise duty on petrol blended with higher quantum of **ethanol**.
- Following the move, petrol blended with ethanol at **22%, 25%, 27% and 30%** would be exempted from central excise duties.
- In a statement, the government clarified that the latest reduction did not indicate anything on rolling out higher blends.
- "This is a preliminary prerequisite for eventually



introducing higher blends, but doesn't convey anything about roll out of higher blends as of now as that will only be done after extensive testing and consultation," the government stated.

- The government clarified that the exemption specifically concerned the blending activity of **ethanol with petrol**, which is essentially a manufacturing activity.
- The objective is to avert the possibility of a **dual levy**.
- "Petrol bears **excise duty** and ethanol bears **GST** at their respective stages."
- "When the two are blended, the resulting product may attract excise duty once again on the full quantity," the Centre clarified.
- "For ethanol blends of petrol up to **20%**, excise duty on the blended petrol was exempted by the **Ministry of Finance**."
- "The exemption ensures that the duties already paid are not charged a second time on the blend," it added.
- The **gazette notification** comes days after India formally launched the **E85** variant of petrol, that is **85% ethanol** blended with **15% gasoline**, on **June 5**.
- Industry associations across the ethanol blending value chain have welcomed the move to remove excise levy.
- **C.K. Jain**, President of the **Grain Ethanol Manufacturers Association (GEMA)**, said that the move indicated a "strong signal of policy stability and long-term commitment".
- "It is essential for attracting fresh investments across the ethanol value chain, including production capacity, logistics, storage, fuel retailing and flex-fuel mobility solutions," he said.
- Welcoming the move, **Bharati Balaji**, Deputy Director General at the **All-India Distillers Association (AIDA)**, added, "We urge the state governments to complement this measure with aligned tax structures so that the full benefit reaches both industry and consumers at the pump."

Team tactics



Group hunting: Braving the monsoon showers at Kandakadavu in Kochi on Tuesday, a flock of Indian cormorants hunts in remarkable coordination. Diving swiftly beneath the surface, they work together to herd fish before capturing their prey. A.K. Suresh

Group

hunting: Braving the monsoon showers at Kandakadavu in Kochi on Tuesday, a flock of **Indian cormorants** hunt in remarkable coordination.

on. Diving swiftly beneath the surface, **they work together to herd fish before capturing their prey**.

10J6. India calls for dialogue on climate finance, adaptation at Bonn meet

- **India calls for dialogue on climate finance, adaptation at Bonn meet**
- **India** has called for the shrinking pool of **climate finance** and a widening **adaptation finance gap** to be tackled head-on at the **United Nations climate negotiations-linked talks** under way in **Bonn, Germany**.
- It has urged that a **Paris Agreement provision** which obliges **developed countries** to provide funds to **developing nations**, be given dedicated agenda space to enable substantive progress.
- The intervention came in India's statement to the **64th session of the UNFCCC Subsidiary Bodies (SB64)**, delivered by **Harkeerat Randhawa** of the **External Affairs Ministry**.
- India associated itself with the positions taken on behalf of the **Group of 77 and China**, the **Like-Minded Developing Countries (LMDC)**, and the **BASIC bloc (Brazil, South Africa, India, China)**.
- The **Bonn meeting** runs from **June 8 to 18** and is the mid-year session of the two subsidiary bodies — on **implementation (SBI)** and on **scientific and technological advice (SBSTA)** — that prepare draft decisions for the annual **Conference of the Parties (COP)**.
- It is the first multilateral climate conference since **COP30**, held in **Belém, Brazil**, last November, and is tasked with turning those outcomes into negotiable text ahead of **COP31**.
- That summit will be hosted in **Antalya, Türkiye** in **November**, with **Türkiye** holding the formal presidency and **Australia** presiding over the negotiations.

Unilateral trade

- **India pressed for the dialogue on unilateral trade measures** — a reference to carbon border levies such as the **European Union's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)** — to address their adverse effects on developing countries' climate action, anchored in **Article 3.5** of the Convention.
- It cautioned that the **Mitigation Work Programme's** facilitative, non-prescriptive character be preserved, that the **adaptation goal** remain balanced and Party-driven, and that **no obligations beyond agreed mandates be introduced**.
- This year's agenda is dominated by a shift to an **implementation phase**.
- **Key items** include the **Global Goal on Adaptation**, the **Just Transition Work**



Programme, and the Global Stocktake, alongside climate finance and the contested future of the Sharm el-Sheikh Mitigation Work Programme, which is due to conclude in 2026 with a possible extension on the table.

A lush retreat



Greener pastures: Spotted deer graze on a clearing inside the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve, near Udhagamandalam, in Tamil Nadu on Sunday. Recent showers have helped improve the vegetation in the reserve, drawing deer to open grasslands. M. SATHYAMOORTHY

Mudumalai Tiger Reserve, near Udhagamandalam, in Tamil Nadu on Sunday. Recent showers have helped improve the vegetation in the reserve, drawing deer to open grasslands.

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BIG SHOT



As part of the Wilderness Project, wildlife experts who visited Angola's Lisima plateau in February have reported eight new species of dragonfly, three unknown grasshoppers, and some 60 new butterflies and moths in vivid hues. They have also found a spider species that fluoresces under ultraviolet light (shown). REUTERS

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07J6. Kaziranga National Park records 30 raptor and six stork species in a rapid bird survey

- The **Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve in Assam** has **30 species of raptors and six species of storks**, a rapid survey focused on these two categories of birds has revealed.
- The enumerators recorded **217 individual raptors** — buzzards, eagles, falcons, owls, and vultures — across **30 species and 266** in

dividual storks across six species.

Critical habitats

- India** is home to **112 species of raptors**, both diurnal and nocturnal.
- Assam's** rich, diverse wetlands and the **Himalayan foothills** provide critical habitats for these birds of prey.
- India** houses **eight of the 20 stork species** found in tropical and subtropical regions worldwide.
- The raptor-stork study was conducted across **Kaziranga's three administrative zones** — the **East Assam Wildlife Division**, the **Biswanath Wildlife Division**, and the **Nagaon Wildlife Division**.
- The **greater adjutant stork (Leptoptilos dubius)** was the rarest, with **three individuals** recorded.
- Among the raptors, the **Himalayan griffon vulture (Gyps himalayensis)** was the most common with **69 individual sightings**, while the **booted eagle** and **white-tailed eagle** were the rarest species with **one individual sighting each**.
- "Kaziranga's landscape** also serves as a last stronghold for the enigmatic **Pallas's fish eagle (Haliaeetus leucoryphus)**.
- A survey conducted by the **Wildlife Institute of India** in **January 2020** reported **10 active nests of Pallas's fish eagle** in **Kaziranga**, making it the protected area with the highest number of breeding sites of this bird in the world," an official statement read.

Restoring habitat



Pelicans at Amber Chervu in Hyderabad on Friday. The Hyderabad Disaster Response and Asset Protection Agency's efforts to restore the lake appear to be working. HYDRAA has removed sludge and installed fences to curb pollution and protect biodiversity. NAGANA.COM

PELICAN

• **Pelicans** at Amber Chervu in Hyderabad on Friday.

- The Hyderabad Disaster Response and Asset Protection Agency's efforts to restore the lake appears to be working.
- HYDRAA has removed sludge and installed fences to curb pollution and protect biodiversity.
- Pelicans** are large water birds belonging to the family **Pelecanidae**.
- They are famous for their **long bills and large throat pouches**, which they use to catch fish.
- Pelicans** are found on every continent except Antarctica.
- They **usually inhabit coastal regions, lakes, rivers, estuaries, lagoons, and wetlands**.



Scientific Classification

- Kingdom: Animalia
- Phylum: Chordata
- Class: Aves (Birds)
- Order: Pelecaniformes
- Family: Pelecanidae
- Genus: Pelecanus

Key Physical Features

Large Throat Pouch

- The most distinctive feature of pelicans is the expandable pouch beneath their beak.
- The pouch is used primarily for catching fish rather than storing food.

Large Wingspan

- Pelicans are among the largest flying birds.
- Some species have a wingspan exceeding 3 metres.

Excellent Swimmers

- Their webbed feet help them swim efficiently.

In India

- Pelicans are commonly seen in:
- Andhra Pradesh
- Tamil Nadu
- Karnataka
- Kerala
- Odisha
- Gujarat

05J6. Funding India's climate future, a trillion-dollar question

Climate Finance and India's Net-Zero Transition

- India will require **₹162.5 trillion** — roughly **\$2.5 trillion** — by 2030 to meet its **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)**.
- Over the longer term, the cost of achieving **net-zero emissions by 2070** is estimated at **\$10.1 trillion**, nearly three times India's current GDP.
- Decarbonising just four sectors — **steel, cement, power, and road transport**, which together account for more than half of India's carbon emissions — will require **\$467 billion** in additional capital expenditure between **2022 and 2030**, roughly **\$54 billion annually**, or **1.3% of GDP**.
- These are sectors where the **private sector** will not lead without strong regulatory incentives, because the economics of **green steel and green cement** simply do not yet work without policy support.
- The **developed world** promised **\$100 billion annually at Paris** — and missed it.
- The **Baku New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG)** commits **\$300 billion by 2035** — which India rightly considers insufficient.

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)**'s own **Report on Currency and Finance** estimates that India needs an additional annual investment of at least **2.5% of GDP** for **green financing** until **2030**.
- India already has **green bonds, sovereign green bonds, sustainability-linked bonds, blended finance structures, transition finance instruments** and **infrastructure investment trusts**.
- What is missing is the connective tissue: a **taxonomy, a guarantee architecture, a liquidity mechanism**, and the regulatory incentives that make **green finance** cheaper than **brown finance**.
- Importantly, eligible **green activities** can qualify as **Priority Sector Lending (PSL)**, while investments in **sovereign green bonds** are also recognised under the framework.

Strengthening Climate Finance Mechanisms

- The **RBI's Climate Risk Information System** on climate-related financial risks for commercial banks, and its inclusion of **sustainable finance** in its regulatory sandbox, are steps in the right direction.
- Without a clear legal definition of what counts as "**green**", **green bonds** cannot be credibly verified, **PSL classifications** remain questionable, international investors cannot make compliance claims, and regulators cannot effectively curb **greenwashing**.
- The **Ministry of Finance's Climate Finance Taxonomy** and the **Ministry of Steel's Green Steel Taxonomy** will facilitate standardised sustainable investments and boost investor confidence.
- **Climate adaptation** — the kind of finance that protects coastal villages in **Odisha**, drought-proofing in **Vidarbha**, or spring rejuvenation in the **Himalayas** — is delivered at the **State level**.
- But States have neither the borrowing capacity nor the institutional infrastructure to access international **climate finance**.
- Third, establish a **State Climate Finance Facility**, capitalised for example, by the **Union, National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)**, and international sources, to give States and municipalities genuine access to **green debt markets**.



Baku New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG)

- The **Baku New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG)** is a new global climate finance target adopted at the climate conference COP29 held in Baku, Azerbaijan.
- It replaces the earlier goal under which developed countries were expected to mobilize **\$100 billion annually** for developing nations to tackle climate change.
- Under the NCQG, developed countries are expected to take the lead in mobilizing at least **\$300 billion per year by 2035** for developing countries.
- The broader ambition is to scale up climate-related finance from all public and private sources to around **\$1.3 trillion annually by 2035**.

05J6. A national environmental survey whose time came

- Anthropologist Anna Tsing** writes, "**Anthropocene**, the epoch in which human disturbance outranks other geological forces.....although some interpreters see the name as implying the triumph of humans, the opposite seems more accurate: without planning or intention, humans have made a mess of our planet."
- A survey by the **Yale School of the Environment** of **10,751 Indians** (December 2024-February 2025) found that **most respondents had experienced at least one extreme event**, including **heat waves (71%)**, **agricultural pests and diseases (60%)**, **power outages (59%)**, **water pollution (53%)**, **droughts and water shortages (52%)**, and **air pollution (52%)**.
- The **Desertification and Land Degradation Atlas of India** estimates that **29.7%** of the country's land is degraded.
- The **MoEFCC's annual reports** outline forest-restoration initiatives such as the **National Afforestation Programme (NAP)** and **REDD+** (reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries '+ additional forest-related activities that protect the climate'), yet say little about the scale of **State-wise deforestation**, its impact on **biodiversity** and **livelihoods**, or the country's preparedness for future environmental challenges.
- The remedy is to have an **Annual Environmental Survey of India (EnvSI)**: a unified platform that aggregates evidence,

conducts independent audits, issues actionable assessments and grades performance.

- EnvSI** must provide an unsparing account of environmental reality — however uncomfortable.

04J6. Reading for a warming world: books that rethink nature, development and survival

- World Environment Day** reminds us of the responsibility, and this year's theme — "**Inspired by Nature. For Climate. For Our Future. 2026**" — is all about focusing on **nature-based solutions** to combat the climate crisis.

The man who planted trees

- Some powerful books deepen our understanding of **sustainability**.
- Ghosts on Peepal Trees: My Journey From Folk Tales to Forests** (Ebury Press, to be released on June 5) is the memoir of environmentalist **Peepal Baba** alias **Swami Prem Parivartan**.
- For five decades, **Peepal Baba** worked towards restoring vegetation on **2,70,000 hectares** by planting **26 million trees** in **226 districts** across **21 States** in India.
- In his latest book, **Island on Edge: The Great Nicobar Crisis** (2026, Westland), **Pankaj Sekhsaria** lifts the veil off the **₹82,000 crore mega infrastructure development project** planned for the **Great Nicobar Island**.
- The project, which includes the clearing of **130 sq. km of pristine tropical evergreen forest**, is one of the many continued betrayals of the island.

The changing face of forests

- India's Forests: Revisiting Nature and History** (Vintage Books, 2026), co-edited by **Mahesh Rangarajan** and **Arupjyoti Saikia**, is a reappraisal of forests as living contested spaces across the country.
- The book revisits the **Chipko movement** and other environmental struggles, highlighting the need to balance the use and conservation of nature and to distinguish between necessity and greed.

04J6. Centre mulls policy to boost E85 fuel uptake

- The government is actively examining a supportive **policy framework** to accelerate affordable adoption of **E85 fuel**, said Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas **Hardeep Singh Puri**.



- Speaking at the launch of **Hero MotoCorp's flex-fuel motorcycles** on Wednesday, he said that **E85** (85% blending of ethanol with gasoline) fuel would be "substantially cheaper than normal fuel [variant]".
- "If **1% of annual petrol vehicle sales** in India during ethanol supply year **2026-27** shifts to **E85**, over **four crore litres of ethanol demand** would be generated, [and] nearly **₹266 crore estimated payments** would be made to distillers," he said.

03J6. Tigress Zeenat gives birth to four cubs in Odisha's Similipal

- The translocation effort aimed at enhancing the genetic diversity of tigers in **Odisha's Similipal Tiger Reserve** has received a major boost.
- Especially after an earlier experiment to introduce tigers in **Satkosia Tiger Reserve** had failed.

03J6. India vulnerable to chronic aircraft noise thanks to regulatory gaps

- India's **aviation and environmental regulations** require **airports to map the aircraft noise exposure using decibel contours** — maps showing how the air pressure varies around the airport.
- Some emerging research has pointed to **inflammation, stress-related changes, and even cognitive effects**.
- These personnel also showed subclinical **cochlear and neural damage**.
- Together, the findings suggested **aircraft noise may be a chronic biological stressor affecting both auditory and cardiovascular systems**.
- He added that current aircraft noise assessment frameworks may underestimate broader public health risks because they **remain largely centered on hearing damage and decibel thresholds**.

Unequal risk

- The **gap between monitoring noise and understanding risk** requires technical but also social solutions because of how the options of the people at risk are constrained.
- He installed expensive **double-glazed windows** but they did little to keep the noise out.
- Both **World Health Organization** and **International Civil Aviation Organization** guidelines have acknowledged these factors.
- **Markandeya Tiwari**, a former faculty member of the **Department of Civil Engineering at IIT-Banaras Hindu University**, said relying only on **averaged indicators, such as Leq and LDN**, is insufficient to understand aircraft noise exposure.

- He added that additional metrics such as **L10, L50, and L90** are required to capture fluctuations, peak exposure periods, and intermittent noise.
- **Leq** is the average acoustic energy.
- **LDN** is a variant of **Leq** over 24 hours plus 10 dB added to all nighttime noise.
- **L10, L50, and L90** are the sound levels exceeded for 10%, 50%, and 90% of the time.
- According to him, while the **Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)** is formally responsible for monitoring aviation noise, most of the compliance is handled by airport operators and the **Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA)**.

02J6. Why do cities get polluted in summer?

- In March, the **Commission for Air Quality Management in the National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas (CAQM)** revoked all curbs under the **Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP)**, signalling the end of the winter air pollution in **Delhi**.
- A month later, as temperatures rose, it reimposed **Stage 1 of the GRAP** to combat summer air pollution.
- **Delhi and the Indo-Gangetic plain** are known for winter smog because low temperatures, low wind speeds, and their basin-like topography trap pollutants close to the ground.
- Summer brings stronger winds, occasional thunderstorms that wash out pollutants, and warmer temperatures that allow pollutants to mix higher in the atmosphere.
- Despite such meteorological favours, Delhi has already witnessed 54 days between 1 April and 31 May 2026 where daily average **PM10** levels exceeded the 24-hour **National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS)** of 100 ug/m3.
- At the same time, on 40 days, at least one **Continuous Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Station (CAAQMS)** in the city recorded a breach in the hourly ozone standard of 180 ug/m3.
- Unlike most headlines, this is not the story of Delhi alone.
- Other large cities like **Mumbai, Chennai, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, and Kolkata** also recorded pollution spikes in the same period this summer, with **PM10** and ozone levels going above the national standards to varying degrees.
- These spikes were shaped by **local sources** such as vehicular emissions, road dust, construction activity, industrial emissions, and dust from local storms.
- While winter pollution is dominated by **PM2.5** particles, summer air pollution is driven



by the coarser **PM10** and ozone.

- Vehicles, industries, waste burning, agricultural residue burning, construction sites, and broken roads remain year-round sources of pollution.
- Winter adds biomass burning for heating.
- Summer brings in dust storms that hike **PM10** levels, while heat and sunlight catalyse ozone formation.

- localised dust storms known as 'andhi' that usually subside within hours forms when strong downward-moving air associated with thunderstorms hits the ground, lifts loose dust, and carries it at high speed.

What can cities do to combat summer air pollution?

Why does ozone rise in hot weather?

- Ozone is not emitted directly from a tailpipe or chimney.
- It forms when nitrogen oxides (**NOx**), largely from vehicles and volatile organic compounds (**VOCs**) from industrial emissions, vehicle exhaust, paints, and other sources, react under strong sunlight.
- Hotter, sunnier days therefore create favourable conditions for ozone formation, which, along with particulate matter, could cause respiratory illnesses.

What causes India's PM10 to spike?

- Hot conditions over the Indian subcontinent create a low-pressure area that extends towards **Iran**.
- Its interaction with surrounding high-pressure areas produces hot, windy conditions.
- These winds could stir up dust storms, including hot winds called **loo**, which carry dust from **West Asia** and the **Thar Desert** across India towards the **Bay of Bengal**.

- Delhi's **Air Quality Early Warning System (AQEWS)** was created in response to severe dust storms in 2018 and smog episodes of the previous years, and now runs year-round.
- Its bulletin provides detailed weather information for **Delhi** and three-day **Air Quality Index** forecasts for 140 Indian cities.
- The **India Meteorological Department (IMD)** also publishes national weather forecast bulletins several times a day.
- Authorities should use these systems to issue local alerts on dust storms, ozone, and poor air quality so citizens can reduce exposure.
- Reducing ozone requires cutting **NOx** and **VOC** emissions from vehicles and industries through cleaner transport, better compliance, and attention to solvents, paints, and fuel combustion.
- Even simple behavioural measures, like the '**Red Light On, Gaadi Off**' campaign of the **Delhi government** that urges drivers to switch vehicles off while waiting at junctions to reduce idling emissions, can reduce ozone formation.



PATRIOTIC IAS

MONTHLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

JUNE 2026

GENERAL STUDIES PAPER III (GS III)

SUBJECT: DISASTER MANAGEMENT

TOPICS COVERED

- 23J6 Deadly fumes
- 21J6 Seven dead, 25 injured in roof collapse at temple in Maharashtra's Parbhani
- 17J6 Kerala plans disease 'outbreak calendar'
- 11 J6 Foreseeable accidents
- 11 J6 Major lacunae in reporting industrial accidents
- 05J6 Fire and furore

23J6. Deadly fumes

- Tamil Nadu has witnessed its deadliest industrial **ammonia gas** leak tragedy, which has so far claimed the lives of **eight migrant women workers** at a private seafood processing unit in **Tiruvallur district**.
- Had the incident occurred on a working day, the number of people exposed to the leak from the **ammonia pipeline to the ice-flake machinery** could have been significantly higher.
- While a committee comprising the **Director of Industrial Safety and Health (DISH)**, the **Member Secretary of the TN Pollution Control Board**, and the **Additional Director of Public Health** is conducting an inquiry, disturbing facts have emerged.
- The factory reportedly failed to rectify serious deficiencies, pointed out during an earlier **DISH**

inspection, including the absence of a suitable **alarm system** and **fire hydrant**.

- **DISH** had recommended the provision of **adequate ammonia sensors** in the plant and surrounding areas for early warning, along with **water-curtain systems** linked to ammonia alarms and **fire-water nozzles** for ammonia feed pumps to reduce the impact of leaks.

17j6. Kerala plans disease 'outbreak calendar'

- **Kerala government will create a calendar to map seasonal and regional patterns of disease outbreaks in the State in a bid to give the public health system's response an added edge in the future.**
- Curiously, some districts, notably **Palakkad**,



have not reported any **shigellosis** cases so far, he said.

- He said the reasons for **pathogens** following seasonal and regional patterns remained unclear and were a major area of **research**.
- An “**outbreak calendar**” would give the public health system greater **predictive accuracy** and help it calibrate **disease prevention** and **response**.

11J6. Foreseeable accidents

- The working area must be mechanically ventilated and have rescue personnel on standby while the workers must have breathing apparatuses, harnesses and retrieval lines, and clear lines of communication.
- Septic tank deaths and deaths due to manual scavenging are in fact rarely accidents in the sense of unforeseeable events, but failures of basic safety management, and the recurrence of such incidents speaks to the persistence of that failure.
- Likewise, while steelmaking is intrinsically more dangerous because it combines extreme temperatures, pressurised gases, heavy equipment, and enormous stores of heat energy, industry still knows the hazards it poses, and further that even relatively small process failures can result in multiple casualties.
- In Visakhapatnam, trade unions and former employees have alleged that the plant had reduced staffing, heavier workloads, ageing equipment, deferred maintenance, and an increasing dependence on contractual labour.
- Some also linked these trends to the difficulties the plant faced following the Centre’s divestment plans and the resulting constraints on investments.
- Occupational safety research has consistently found that contracted workers face higher risks because they may receive less training and operate within systems with fragmented accountability.
- The incidents have also occurred during the gradual and uneven implementation of India’s new occupational safety framework — and highlight the invisible fact that the **country’s industries remain anchored by old problems of manpower shortage, caste- and class-based**

exposure to hazardous labour, and a ‘cost over safety’ mindset in financially stressed units.

11JJ6. Major lacunae in reporting industrial accidents

- The problem begins with the very collection of safety data, as the gaps in the annual **Standard Reference Notes (SRNs) of the Directorate General Factory Advice Service and Labour Institutes (DGFASLI)** reveal.
- **DGFASLI** helps implement the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions (OSH) Code, 2020.
- **The OSH, for which the rules were notified only last month, renamed the DGFASLI as the Directorate General of Occupational Safety and Health.**
- Each SRN records industrial accidents in two sections: one from data compiled by the Labour Bureau and the other from DGFASLI’s own correspondence with Chief Inspectors of Factories.
- The two never match, pointing to lapses in reporting (Chart 3).
- The reports also show DGFASLI struggling with heavy vacancies (Chart 4).

05J6. Fire and furore

- **Poor compliance** and weak **enforcement** have led to deaths in **fires**.
- A **fire** per se is not odd, but a slew of deadly fires in urban areas, from the **Uphaar Cinema fire** in 1997 to the **Arpora nightclub fire** in 2025, has involved the same vulnerabilities: **overcrowding**, blocked escape routes, unapproved modifications to interior spaces, poor compliance, and weak enforcement.
- Prior inquiries, court rulings, and promises of reform have not prevented similar **safety failures** from recurring.
- According to the **Delhi Fire Services** and the **Municipal Corporation**, the B&B lacked a fire department clearance, violated **fire safety norms**, and had more than thrice as many rooms as allowed for B&Bs.
- These bodies are also answerable to how the facility operated in this way, especially since the **Delhi High Court** had directed the municipality in January to audit the city’s hospitality hubs.



PATRIOTIC IAS

MONTHLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

JUNE 2026

GENERAL STUDIES PAPER III

SUBJECT: INTERNAL SECURITY

TOPICS COVERED

- | | | | |
|------|---|------|--|
| 26J6 | Netra, India's airborne surveillance platform, gets final operational nod | 18J6 | before blanket ban, says NTA chief |
| 25J6 | CRPF officer suspended, 20 others transferred after 'kin protested against CAPF Bill' | 18J6 | Manipur Governor discusses security situation with Shah |
| 24J6 | Manipur govt. may go soft on Arambai Tenggol members | 17J6 | Govt. orders blocking of Telegram app till NEET re-examination |
| 24J6 | Ban on Telegram stretched meaning of 'information' under the IT Ac | 17J6 | The Indian Air Force (IAF) will participate in Exercise Pitch Black 2026 |
| 23J6 | UAE in talks with India to purchase BrahMos missiles, Akashteer air-defence units | 16J6 | Centre issues alert on potential drone attacks on vital installations |
| 22J6 | 'Maritime sector a major engine of economic growth' | 16J6 | Drone revolution and modern warfare |
| 22J6 | Police begin collecting DNA records under 2022 law; over one lakh profiles generated | 15J6 | CISF trains 7,120 personnel in counter-drone operations post-Operation Sindoor |
| 22J6 | CISF to be deployed at five more prisons in J&K | 15J6 | Can India protect its seafarers in the Gulf? |
| 20J6 | Soon, police may scan your fingerprints on the go | 15J6 | China's ability to launch direct missile strikes on Australia 'growing': report |
| 20J6 | 3 indigenous naval vessels to be launched by PM tomorrow | 14J6 | An-32 cargo plane crash kills 5 IAF men in Assam |
| 20J6 | Culture Secretary Vivek Aggarwal is new FATF Vice-President | 14J6 | Swedish fighters intercept two Russian combat jets near border |
| 20J6 | Moving from drone purchases to drone partnerships | 13J6 | Lt-Gen. Rajiv Ghai appointed Military Adviser to NSCS |
| 18J6 | Telegram was warned about misuse | 13J6 | Project Kusha, our indigenous air defence shield, will be a game changer, says Rajnath |



09J6 India expanded its nuclear arsenal in 2025, says SIPRI
09J6 Nicobar project will enhance maritime security: officials
05J6 New-age fraud: 'trust is being weaponised in the digital era'
04J6 Sourav Ganguly's security cover downgraded
03J6 Indigenous air-to-surface RudraM-II missile clears flight trials;

02J6 Rajnath praises team
02J6 New chief of Central Air Command takes charge
02J6 Operation Mule Hunt exposes cyberfraud network; 638 held
01J6 General Subramani takes charge as CDS; lays emphasis on 'JAI'
01J6 Admiral Swaminathan takes charge as 27th chief of Navy

PATRIOTIC IAS



Eye in the sky



Mission ready: The indigenously developed NETRA Airborne Early Warning and Control system during an event to receive final operational clearance at the Centre for Airborne Systems in Bengaluru, Karnataka, on Thursday. K. MURALI KUMAR (REPORT: PAGE 6)

Mission ready: The indigenously developed NETRA Airborne Early Warning and Control system during an event to receive final operational clearance at the Centre for Airborne Systems in Bengaluru, Karnataka, on Thursday.

26J6. Netra, India's airborne surveillance platform, gets final operational nod

- The indigenous **Netra Airborne Early Warning and Control (AEW&C) system**, which played a pivotal role as a **force multiplier** for the **Indian Air Force** in the **2019 Balakot strikes** and **Operation Sindoor** last year, was accorded **Final Operational Clearance (FOC)** on Thursday.
- Developed indigenously by the **Bengaluru-based Centre for Airborne Systems (CABS)**, the **Netra AEW&C** is integrated on the **Brazilian Embraer EMB-145I aircraft** platform.
- The system encompasses a sophisticated suite of mission equipment, including an **Active Electronically Scanned Array (AESA) radar**, **Identification Friend or Foe (IFF)**, **mission computer**, **secure communication networks**, **electronic support measures (ESM)** and **communication support measures**.
- **India** is the **fifth country** in the world to develop this capability, as **Netra** can detect, track, identify and monitor airborne and maritime targets enhancing the **network-centric operations** capabilities of the **IAF**.

Dedication

- At an event to mark the occasion, **scientists and IAF officers** dedicated the achievement to colleagues killed in a tragic **air crash** in **1999**.
- The seeds of **India's airborne warning and control system (AWACS)** were sown in the early **1980s**.
- However, the tragic crash of a modified **HS-748 Avro aircraft** near **Arakkonam** in **Tamil Nadu**, with eight people aboard, including four **IAF personnel** and four scientists, on **January 11, 1999** resulted in the programme being abandoned temporarily.

- The programme took off again after being sanctioned afresh in **2004**.
- During this intervening period, scientists kept their perseverance and hoped for the best.
- "On **January 11, 1999**, the ill-fated aircraft had a crash.
- I salute personnel who were on board, who made their supreme sacrifice.
- Today we have shown that their sacrifice has not gone in vain.
- This **FOC** is dedicated to them," **Director-General of Aeronautics Cluster of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), K. Rajalakshmi Menon** said.
- The **Initial Operational Clearance (IOC)** for the **Netra** was accorded in **2015** and it was inducted into the **IAF** in **2017**.
- The **Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS)** has approved the development of **six more AEW&C Mk-1A systems** by the **CABS**.

25J6. CRPF officer suspended, 20 others transferred after 'kin protested against CAPF Bill'

- **Twenty Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) officers** have been transferred and a **Deputy Inspector General (DIG)** rank officer has been suspended, allegedly because they or their families voiced their opinions against the **Central Armed Police Force (General Administration) Act, 2026**.
- The **legislation** was passed by **Parliament** on **April 2** and came into effect on **April 9**.
- **Retired and serving officials of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF)** expressed concern about the suspension of the decorated **DIG-rank officer**.
- It is learnt that the officer has challenged the suspension, on the grounds that there is no **"disciplinary proceeding contemplated or pending"** against him as required under the **Central Civil Services (Classification, Control and Appeal) Rules, 1965**.

24J6. Manipur govt. may go soft on Arambai Tenggol members

- The **Manipur government** may be lenient towards members of **Arambai Tenggol**, a radical group, while going hard at those who looted arms from police facilities soon after the ethnic conflict erupted in **May 2023**, State's Home Minister **Govindas Konthoujam** indicated on Tuesday.
- **State, before the imposition of President's Rule in February 2025**.



- More than **5,600 firearms**, including **INSAS** and **AK-series rifles**, and **500,000 rounds of ammunition** were looted from State armouries and police stations in the State in **2023**.
- **Three major communities — Meitei, Naga, and Kuki-Zo** — inhabit Manipur.
- The State has virtually been partitioned among these communities since the ethnic strife began in **2023**.
- Members of **Meira Paibi**, an all-women civil society organisation, claimed that members of **Arambai Tenggol** undertook self-defence measures during a critical period when the government was unable to provide security to civilians.

24J6. Ban on Telegram stretched meaning of 'information' under the IT Act

- The **Union government** temporarily blocked **Telegram** to protect the sanctity of the **NEET (UG) re-test** by a single interpretative sleight of hand which compressed an entire intermediary platform into an expression: "**information**".
- The ban won the endorsement of the **Delhi High Court** by stretching the meaning of "**information**" under the **Information Technology Act, 2000**.
- Section **2(1)(v)** of the Act had traditionally defined "**information**" in diminutive units, including **data, messages, text, image, sound, voice, codes, computer programme, software, and databases**.
- The Telegram ban changed that legal interpretation.
- The government argued that an online platform like **Telegram** was an "**aggregation**" or "**compilation**" of these units.
- By reading entire platforms run by companies, which were legal entities by their own nature, within the ambit of '**information**' under the Act, the government has effectively weaponised the content-blocking provision of **Section 69A**.
- **Section 69A** of the **IT Act** gives the government power to issue directions to block public access to any '**information**' through a computer resource.
- Here, the interpretation of the Centre has led to the successful replacement of the word '**information**' with an '**entire intermediary platform**'.
- The **High Court**, in its **June 19 order**, endorsed the Centre's view that the "**blocking power under Section 69A of the IT Act extends beyond individual pieces of content and, having regard to its wide legislative scope, encompasses the software architecture, codebase, databases, and programmatic ecosystem constituting an application**".
- **Telegram** had not accepted the "**expansive**" interpretation of the term "**information**" while

noting that the government, acting through **Section 69A**, could only block access to "**specific information**".

- Such a sweeping ban had disproportionately affected the very section it deemed to protect.
- Many of the **150 million Telegram users** were students and educators who used the platform to share study material and educational resources for **NEET preparation**.
- The platform's arguments are backed by the **Supreme Court's judgment** in the **Anuradha Bhasin case** on digital freedoms, holding that restrictions on fundamental rights must be **proportionate** and only the **least restrictive measure** must be employed.

23J6. UAE in talks with India to purchase BrahMos missiles, Akashteer air-defence units

- The **Indian government** is in talks with the **United Arab Emirates** to sell some of its flagship defence systems, including the **supersonic cruise missile BrahMos**, four Indian sources said, as the Gulf nation steps up arms procurement following the war in **West Asia**.
- The discussions include the potential sale of India's **air defence system Akashteer**, sources told Reuters.
- **BrahMos**, jointly developed by **India and Russia**, is among the world's fastest cruise missiles while **Akashteer** is a fully automated air-defence system developed by the state-run **Bharat Electronics Limited** and the **Indian Army**.
- Before clinching any **BrahMos** sale to the **UAE**, **India** would require **Russia's approval**, as the **290-km-range missile** is jointly developed.
- One source said this is unlikely to pose a hurdle given **Moscow's** close ties with **Abu Dhabi**.

22J6. 'Maritime sector a major engine of economic growth'

- He was speaking at an event here after commissioning three **indigenously-built naval ships — INS Dunagiri**, an advanced stealth frigate; **INS Sanshodhak**, a survey vessel (large); and **INS Agray**, an anti-submarine warfare shallow watercraft.
- **Defence Minister Rajnath Singh** said that the tri-commissioning of **INS Dunagiri, INS Agray, and INS Sanshodhak** was going to be a "**defining moment**" in **India's maritime capability development**.



22J6. Police begin collecting DNA records under 2022 law; over one lakh profiles generated

- The police in several States have started collecting **DNA records**, primarily from **blood samples**, of suspects arrested for **heinous crimes**.
- Along with **DNA profiles**, photographs, fingerprints, and iris scans, the government is creating a unique **identification record** of arrested persons and convicts that can be retained for up to **75 years**.
- Over the past five months, the DNA records of more than **one lakh suspects** have been stored in a central database operated by the **National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)** under the Union Home Ministry.
- The samples are being collected under the **Criminal Procedure (Identification) Act (CrPI)**, a law passed in Parliament in **2022**.
- More than **2,600 measurement collection units** have been established across the country, and the CrPI system is now available in police districts and prisons.
- It is also accessible to Central agencies such as the **Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)**, the **National Investigation Agency (NIA)**, and the **Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB)**.
- The contours of the **CrPI system** were showcased on June 19 at an NCRB event presided over by **Home Minister Amit Shah**.
- "The samples are at present being collected by police in cases punishable by **seven years**."
- The DNA, mostly drawn from blood and in some cases saliva too, is then sent to a **forensic laboratory**, which generates a unique number.
- The NCRB preserves the code in its records.
- The sanctity of the samples depends on the police," an NCRB official said.

NAFIS

- "CrPI Act, 2022 allows police and prison officers to take **physical and biological samples** of arrested and convicted individuals."
- To make these provisions effective, there was a need for a national platform that could integrate and make identification-related data useful across the country.
- In this direction, the **NCRB launched the National Automated Fingerprint Identification System (NAFIS)** in the year 2022, which fully automated the fingerprint matching process.
- Today, with more than **1.27 crore fingerprint records**, NAFIS has played a significant role in solving many old interstate criminal cases," a presentation on the CrPI system said.
- "Through CrPI, now all information related to identification, including **face, iris, and biological samples** is available in a national-

level searchable database, making accurate and scientific identification possible within moments.

- Now, a photo obtained from a crime scene can be instantly matched with records across the country.
- CrPI functions as a **unified system** across the country, where every identification-based measurement is securely stored in a standardized system.
- As per standards, while taking photos, clarity of the eyes is ensured so that identification is not hindered despite any disguise or changes.
- CrPI ensures enrolment of **face and iris measurements** of arrested and convicted persons, and in special cases, registration of **biological samples** as well.
- There is a provision to retain all these measurements securely for **75 years**," it said.
- According to the NCRB presentation, biological samples recovered from crime scenes can be directly matched with existing records, enabling the identification of **habitual offenders** through scientific methods.

Video analytics feature

- The NCRB said the CrPI system also has an advanced **video analytics feature** through which investigating officers can upload **CCTV footage** to identify faces of suspicious persons and match them with the national database.
- "What earlier took hours of manual investigation is now possible in just a few minutes."
- This feature also simplifies and speeds up identification of **interstate criminals**, as their records can be matched instantly across the country," it said.

22J6. CISF to be deployed at five more prisons in J&K

- The **Union Home Ministry** is set to deploy the **Central Industrial Security Force (CISF)** at **five more prisons in Jammu & Kashmir**, including a **high-security prison in Kathua**, a CISF spokesperson said on Sunday.
- The **high-security jail, which will house inmates involved in serious offences, including terrorism**, is yet to be operationalised, the official added.
- The **CISF was earlier given the charge of providing armed security to the Central Jails in Srinagar and Jammu (Kot Bhalwal) in October 2023**.

20J6. Soon, police may scan your fingerprints on the go

- Police and investigating agencies across the country will soon be equipped with portable **fingerprint scanners** linked to a national



database of **1.3 crore criminal suspects and convicts**, letting them stop individuals anywhere, even on the streets, to collect thumb impressions and instantly check for any pending criminal records on their smartphones.

- **Abhigyan**, an app developed by the **National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)** to implement the procedure, was launched by Home Minister **Amit Shah** on Friday.
- The app links to the **National Automated Fingerprint Identification System (NAFIS)**, which stores fingerprint scans of accused, convicts, and those in prisons.
- A demonstration of the app showed that prints can be matched with the **NAFIS database** in **35 seconds**.
- "During routine vehicle checks on the streets, biometric scans of any suspicious individual can be conducted to identify persons wanted in connection with crimes.
- Field officers can get the criminal history of the suspect in few seconds.
- This will provide protection to the police as they will be alerted of the presence of a hardened criminal," the demo stated.
- An **NCRB** official told The Hindu that the **Criminal Procedure Identification Act, 2022** provides the legal basis for such checks.
- However, **Section 3** of the Act seems to limit the mandatory recording of measurements, including fingerprints, to people who have been convicted or arrested, and those ordered to give security for good behaviour or maintaining peace under the **Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973**.
- The Act does not mention the possibility of random testing of individuals without any evidence linking them to a punishable offence.

Current system

- At present, the facility to check fingerprints against the **NAFIS database** is only available through **1,556 workstations** deployed at police stations and district headquarters across the country.
- The current process involves bringing an individual to the workstation to match his or her fingerprints with the database.
- Mr. Shah said that the app enables field police personnel to access a vast repository of criminal records directly on their smartphones.
- "Secured with **two-step authentication**, it allows real-time fingerprint identification within seconds, strengthening ground-level policing.
- Equipped with features such as fast identification, portability, and access to millions of records, 'Abhigyan' is a highly powerful tool," the Minister said.
- The **NAFIS database** includes the records of around **9.91 lakh narcotics offenders, 3.65**

lakh human trafficking cases, and extensive prison databases, Mr. Shah said.

- **NAFIS** should not be used merely to identify offenders, he said, noting that its effectiveness depends on continuously enriching the database by uploading fingerprints collected from every crime scene.
- He noted that a criminal's **DNA sample**, if properly preserved, can also be used in the investigation of other crimes, adding that this is primarily the responsibility of the States.
- The focus should not be limited merely to the arrest of criminals but on **time-bound justice**, the Home Minister added.

20J6. 3 indigenous naval vessels to be launched by PM tomorrow

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** will commission three **indigenously-built Indian Navy frontline platforms — Dunagiri, Sanshodhak and Agray** — at a landmark ceremony at **Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port in Kolkata** on Sunday, marking a significant boost to India's **maritime capabilities and indigenous shipbuilding programme**.
- According to the **Ministry of Defence**, the three vessels, designed by the **Indian Navy's Warship Design Bureau** and built by **Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE), Kolkata**, represent critical capabilities across **maritime combat, hydrographic surveying and anti-submarine warfare**.
- The three platforms have **indigenous content** exceeding **75%**.

20J6. Culture Secretary Vivek Aggarwal is new FATF Vice-President

- The **Financial Action Task Force (FATF) Plenary** has appointed Union **Culture Secretary Vivek Aggarwal** as the next **Vice-President** of the global **anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing** watchdog for the **2026-2027 term**.
- "Members approved the priorities of the **FATF** under the incoming **U.K. Presidency**, and appointed Mr. **Vivek Aggarwal** of India as the incoming **Vice-President of the FATF (July 2026-June 2027)**," said an **FATF** release.
- Mr. Aggarwal will succeed **Giles Thomson**, who has served as **FATF Vice-President** since **July 1, 2025**.
- Currently serving as **Secretary** in the **Culture Ministry**, Mr. Aggarwal has headed India's delegation to the **FATF**.
- He led a multidisciplinary team during India's **FATF Mutual Evaluation** process.
- His selection is being viewed as a significant development for India's role in global **financial governance** and efforts to strengthen



international cooperation on issues of **anti-money laundering, counter-terrorist financing, and illicit financial flows.**

- The case of the **Chinese drone industry** demonstrates the benefits of closer collaboration among **industry, academia and the military.**

20J6. Moving from drone purchases to drone partnerships

- The Indian government's planned **\$2 billion drone procurement** from domestic manufacturers reinforces its commitment to **indigenous manufacturing** and will boost the country's growing **drone industry.**
- It also signals a shift from buying large, sophisticated platforms such as **fighter aircraft** to smaller, cheaper and more **attributable systems.**
- This shift also means procurement practices will have to address the challenges that come with the territory.
- Long-term capital procurement that deals with systems such as **tanks** and **fighter jets**, is likely to struggle to keep pace with the rapid demand for upgrades and modifications.
- The willingness to spend money on these platforms is a good sign, but the question now is whether procurement systems will spend it well.

The economics of drones

- Although public conversations about military drones typically focus on large **uncrewed combat aerial vehicles (UCAVs)** such as the **MQ-9B Reaper** and the **Bayraktar TB-2**, recent conflicts have exemplified the utility of smaller, cheaper drones.
- These typically fall within the **'micro'** and **'nano'** drone categories, and are built to be cost-effective.
- Both **Iran's** use of drones against the **United States** and **Israel**, and the use of drones in the **Russia-Ukraine war**, have followed this principle.
- Intercepting drones that are being used to strike high-priced hardware, is typically far more expensive than the drones themselves.
- The trend across recent wars has been to produce vast numbers of cheap drones, and deploy them in large numbers.
- Creative uses and modifications of drones that were originally manufactured for commercial use, have also served as an inexpensive means to achieve military objectives
- **Ukraine's** use of **first-person-view (FPV) drones** that have been retrofitted with warheads has made many headlines.
- Innovation in the **defence drone sector** is therefore closely linked to innovation in **civilian drone technology**, creating a need for more iterative and collaborative **research and development (R&D)** processes.

The challenge of drone relevance

- The other unique aspect of procuring **tactical drones**, is that the challenge lies not in acquiring them, but in ensuring that they stay relevant.
- A state-of-the-art **fighter jet** or **tank** bought in 2015 is still relatively new today, and is reasonably competitive.
- Tactical drones bought today can be obsolete in as little as **two to three years**, as enemy capabilities and threat environments continue to evolve.
- Enemy **electronic warfare (EW)** units can adapt their **jammers** to the signal of a new drone in as little as **six to eight weeks.**
- When Ukrainian engineers faced this issue, the solution was not to procure new systems with different communication links, but to replace **radio links** with **fibre-optic cables.**
- Processes need to be quick, and allow for rapid modifications and upgrades without the constraint of **red tape** and bureaucratic timelines.
- Indian **procurement frameworks** have made some good provisions in this direction, but there is still scope for change.
- For instance, the draft **Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP)** allows the armed forces to procure **commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS)** systems, enabling them to purchase commercial drones wherever they can be utilised.
- The DAP also has provisions to streamline upgrades.
- The **Defence Procurement Manual (DPM)** allows financial buffers for unforeseen repairs and upgrade costs.
- These are sensible moves.
- The key shortcoming of current procurement frameworks is that **buyer-seller relationships** remain fundamentally transactional.
- The underlying assumption is that once the government identifies a requirement, it can issue a tender and procure a product that meets it.
- However, in a domain where technology evolves rapidly, products require continuous iteration and improvement.

Partnerships, not transactions

- A more suitable model for tactical drone procurement may resemble a **managed service contract** rather than purchasing hardware.
- Much like large organisations that procure computers with maintenance, software updates and replacement support, the armed forces could enter longer-term agreements with drone manufacturers.



- Such contracts would provide industry with **demand predictability** while ensuring assured supply, upgrade pathways and **surge production capacity** during conflicts.
- They would also create a framework for continuous improvements, including performance enhancements and adaptations to evolving **electronic warfare threats**.
- Most importantly, they would foster closer collaboration between the **armed forces** and **industry** in a domain where technology changes rapidly and future requirements are constantly evolving.
- While Indian policy frameworks continue to take steps in the right direction, perhaps structural changes within these frameworks could create an environment better suited to keeping pace with the evolution of tactical drones.
- India's domestic **drone industry** has the technical foundation to support a more sophisticated procurement relationship.
- The **\$2 billion commitment** is the clearest signal yet that the political will exists.
- Translating that into the right **contractual architecture**, one that prioritises sustained capability over one-off delivery, is the logical next step.

18J6. Telegram was warned about misuse before blanket ban, says NTA chief

- Representatives of the **messaging app Telegram** were called in for meetings "at the highest levels", and warned about the misuse of the app's features that facilitate **paper leak frauds** before a blanket ban was issued, **Abhishek Singh**, Director-General of the **National Testing Agency**, told The Hindu on Wednesday.
- Mr. Singh said the primary motive behind government intervention was to halt the spread of engineered fake leaks that can spread panic among students ahead of the **National Entrance-Cum-Eligibility Test re-test** scheduled for Sunday.
- "The government had previously approached Telegram regarding the misuse of two specific features, including making edited timestamps visible in Telegram groups and addressing the issue of lack of stringent naming filters for its groups. However, Telegram did not alter its system then," Mr. Singh said.
- The National Testing Agency was concerned about the modus operandi used by bad actors on Telegram to trigger mass panic by fabricating evidence of question paper leaks.
- Cheating syndicates have been systematically exploiting a specific loophole in Telegram's group and channel synchronisation features.
- For instance, a bad actor can create a public Telegram channel and link it to an associated group.

- Days before an exam, the administrator can upload a random PDF file on the channel, name it provocatively such as "NEET Question Paper Leaked".
- The day after the actual exam, the operator then can use Telegram's edit feature to replace the dummy PDF with the actual question paper.
- While the post inside the channel shows an 'edited' tag, the linked group retains the timestamp of the original post.
- This creates a highly convincing illusion that the actual question paper was available on the platform before the exam began, sparking panic.
- "After the ban, **Telegram founder Pavel Durov** said on X that they are making the 'edited' label more visible to prevent backdating scams. However, this change is still not visible on the app," Mr. Singh said.
- "Why can't Telegram simply fix its metadata so that timestamp changes are accurately reflected in linked group chats," he asked.
- Pointing out that Telegram allows creation of alleged criminal groups with questionable names such as "Paper Leak NEET Mafia", Mr. Singh said the app has to "adhere to norms".

18J6. Manipur Governor discusses security situation with Shah

- Amid continuing violence in **Manipur**, Governor **Ajay Kumar Bhalla** met Union Home Minister **Amit Shah** in **Delhi** on Wednesday.
- Mr. Bhalla is learnt to have apprised the Minister of the **security situation** in the northeastern State where tensions have escalated between the **Kuki** and **Naga communities** over the past one month.
- The ethnic violence, which first erupted in the State on **May 3, 2023**, between the **Kuki-Zo** and **Meitei people**, has claimed the lives of more than **250 people** so far.
- "The overall security situation in the State was discussed," said a senior government official.
- While no details were provided, the **Union Home Ministry** posted on X, "Governor of Manipur Shri Ajay Kumar Bhalla met Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Shri Amit Shah today."
- After remaining under **President's Rule** for a year, the elected government in Manipur was restored on **February 4** this year.
- Other than Chief Minister **Yumnam Khemchand Singh** and Home Minister **Govindas Konthoujam**, two Deputy Chief Ministers — **Losii Dikho** and **Nemcha Kipgen**, representing **Naga** and **Kuki communities** — were sworn in.
- The expansion of the **Manipur Cabinet** is yet to take place even as **Assembly elections** in the State are due early next year.



- Ms. Kipgen, who took oath virtually from Delhi, is yet to travel to Imphal and attends all meetings online.

17j6. Govt. orders blocking of Telegram app till NEET re-examination

Telegram blocked temporarily in India over NEET (UG) 2026 scam concerns

- At the **National Testing Agency (NTA)**'s request, the **Centre** is blocking the messaging app **Telegram** in India until Monday, in what the NTA described as a "response to the organised use of the platform by cheating rackets to defraud candidates appearing for the **NEET (UG) 2026 re-examination** scheduled on **21 June 2026**."
- This is the first time that a messaging app operating at such a scale is being blocked in India by the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology**, even for a limited period.
- Telegram founder Pavel Durov** criticised the blocking, saying it "punishes" over **15 crore ordinary Telegram users in India**.
- We are also making the 'edited' label more visible to prevent **backdating scams**," he said.
- Platforms, the **Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C)**, under the **Ministry of Home Affairs**, has secured the prompt take-down of a substantial number of Telegram channels, groups and bots whose names and content openly advertised their fraudulent and misleading purpose," the agency said.
- In a video message, **NTA Director-General Abhishek Singh** said, "To all parents, I say, please protect your child from financial fraud and from the panic these rackets are designed to create."

17j6. The Indian Air Force (IAF) will participate in Exercise Pitch Black 2026

- The **Indian Air Force (IAF)** will participate in **Exercise Pitch Black 2026**, the **Royal Australian Air Force's (RAAF)** premier multinational air combat exercise, scheduled to be held in Australia's Northern Territory from July 20 to August.
- Exercise Pitch Black** is the **RAAF's largest international exercise**.

16J6. Centre issues alert on potential drone attacks on vital installations

- The **Union government** has warned of possible **rogue drone attacks** targeting vital installations along the borders, prompting security agencies to work on deploying **counter-drone technology systems** to safeguard critical assets across the country.

- According to official sources, the **Marine Security Wing** of the **Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways** issued the alert on the emerging drone threat at **Vital Assets and Vital Installations (VAVIs)** located around the land and sea borders.
- It was stated that the current **geo-political situation** across the world had demonstrated that hostile drones could disrupt operations of critical VAVIs.
- "There is an urgent need to take concrete steps to safeguard our assets, especially those located near the borders from rogue drones by installing **Anti-Drone Systems**," the communication said.
- In view of the emerging threat, the **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** had constituted the **Anti Rogue Drone Technology Committee** in the **Border Security Force (BSF)** for evaluation and certification of new technology systems for the deployment of counter-rogue drone technology systems in India.
- The force is in the process of installing anti-drone systems in **Punjab** along the **Pakistan border** for which trials had already started, the sources said.
- In **February 2026**, the **V.O. Chidambaranar Port Authority** in **Thoothukudi, Tamil Nadu**, had become the first port in the country to initiate the implementation of an advanced **Anti-Drone System** as part of measures to protect critical port infrastructure.
- The port signed an agreement with **Central Electronics Limited (CEL)**, under the **Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR)**, Ministry of Science and Technology.

16J6. Drone revolution and modern warfare

- The wars in **Ukraine, Lebanon** and **West Asia** have shown how **drones** have become central to **modern warfare**.
- As cheap, **mass-produced unmanned systems** proliferate, **military power** is increasingly shaped by **industrial scale, technological adaptation** and the ability to **build, deploy and counter drones**.

End of Superiority

- For decades, **military power** has been defined by the scale and sophistication of conventional arsenals — combat aircraft, tanks, artillery, warships, air-defence systems, precision-guided missiles, and other high-end assets.
- In this environment, battlefield superiority belonged to armies with technologically advanced platforms and equipment, sophisticated intelligence networks, and large budgets.



- Smaller militaries and non-state actors, by contrast, were largely confined to asymmetric tactics that relied on guerrilla warfare, ambushes, and other unconventional methods to offset their opponents' superior firepower and operational dominance.
- But the ongoing wars in **Ukraine** and **Lebanon**, together with the wider **U.S.–Israel–Iran** theatre of conflict, have irrevocably shattered this paradigm, demonstrating that commercially derived **drones** have become a defining feature of contemporary warfare.
- Mass-produced at scale, rapidly reconfigured for multiple operational roles, and widely deployed, they have become a defining feature of contemporary warfare.
- Performing functions ranging from **intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR)** and target acquisition to precision strikes, artillery spotting, electronic warfare, and logistics support, they have evolved from auxiliary assets into central instruments of military operations.
- In doing so, they have transformed the **21st-century battlespace** into an environment of persistent visibility and rapid engagement.
- Front lines remain continuously exposed, and rear areas can no longer be assumed secure, as multiple types of **Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS)** can locate, track, and strike targets with unprecedented speed and precision.
- Across these concurrent theatres of conflict, the widespread — and in some cases decisive — employment of drones has challenged established assumptions about how military power is generated and applied.
- They are reshaping doctrine, force structures, and future warfighting concepts.
- The consequence has been the emergence of a continuous and interconnected battlespace in which no position is truly beyond reach, and no movement can safely assume it will remain concealed for long.
- Detection is increasingly followed by rapid engagement and destruction.

Ukraine Drone War

- Nowhere has this transformation been more visible than in **Ukraine**, where **Russia's 'Special Military Operation'**, launched in February 2022 as a conventional war involving combat aircraft, tanks and artillery, evolved within two years into the world's first industrial-scale, drone-intensive conflict.
- From the earliest stages of the Russian invasion, Ukraine rapidly adapted commercially available drones — originally designed for civilian purposes such as aerial photography, mapping, and basic surveillance — alongside a limited number of pre-existing military **Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV)** assets into improvised reconnaissance and strike systems.

- What had initially functioned as a support tool for intelligence gathering and guiding artillery fire quickly evolved into a decisive combat capability.
- Small **quadcopters** and **First-Person View (FPV) drones** were progressively weaponised and deployed as low-cost, precision-guided munitions.
- This shift marked a fundamental transformation in how unmanned systems were used on the battlefield: from passive information-gathering platforms to active instruments of destruction.
- By around 2024, drones had become fully integrated into almost every layer of Ukrainian combat, ranging from tactical battlefield surveillance to frontline targeting and deep-strike missions against logistics hubs, supply routes, and rear-area infrastructure.
- The operational template that emerged from this experience in Ukraine was subsequently replicated, albeit to varying degrees and in different forms, across the continuing **West Asian conflicts**.
- This underscores the growing centrality of **drones** to contemporary warfare.

FPV Revolution

- At the heart of **Ukraine's drone revolution** is the **FPV (First-Person View) system** — an inexpensive, commercially available platform originally designed for recreational racing and aerial photography.
- Controlled through a live video feed transmitted from an onboard camera to virtual-reality-style goggles worn by their operators, FPV systems offer exceptional precision, manoeuvrability, and responsiveness.
- These were then rapidly transformed into a broad spectrum of combat systems, including **FPV strike drones, bombers, interceptors, and long-range attack variants**.
- Among the most prominent are heavy-lift **hexacopter Vampire drones** — nicknamed "**Baba Yaga**" by Russian forces after the fearsome figure from Slavic folklore — alongside a vast number of improvised modular platforms, assembled in multiple workshops across Ukraine.
- The most common are **FPV kamikaze or strike drones**, inexpensive quadcopters carrying explosive payloads such as modified rocket-propelled grenade warheads or purpose-built munitions, flown directly into targets as disposable precision-guided missiles.
- Their extremely low cost has radically reshaped **battlefield economics**, enabling systems worth only a few hundred dollars to destroy armoured vehicles and equipment valued in the millions.
- These systems operate within a broader Ukrainian **deep-strike drone architecture** that



includes loitering munitions such as **RAM II** and **UJ-31 Zozulya**.

- The latter functions as an aerially deployed “**parasite drone**,” carried by the Ukrainian-designed multi-purpose **UJ-22 Airborne** long-range UAVs, enabling penetration of contested airspace under intensive electronic warfare conditions and extending operational reach.
- **RAM II**, by contrast, is a short-range precision loitering munition employed in coordination with reconnaissance drones like the locally developed **Shark** and **PD-2**.
- Improved variants offer greater range and endurance to expand their engagement envelope against air defence systems and rear-area targets.
- Also included within Ukraine's expanding drone inventory are **bomber drones**, largely adapted from commercial **DJI Mavic 3** and **DJI Matrice 300 RTK** quadcopter platforms originally designed for aerial photography, surveying and industrial applications.
- These carry and release grenades, anti-tank mines and improvised munitions.
- Unlike kamikaze systems, they survive missions and can conduct multiple sorties, making them particularly effective against trenches, bunkers and other static positions.
- Alongside these, Ukraine fields **FPV-based strike systems** like **Pegasus** and long-range, one-way attack drones designed to strike deep inside Russian territory against logistics hubs, airbases and critical infrastructure, far beyond the frontline.
- In practice, however, the distinction between FPV strike drones and **loitering munitions** has become increasingly blurred.
- Many FPV-based variants are now equipped with **thermal imaging** and **night-vision systems** for round-the-clock operations.
- But Ukraine's most significant innovation has been the emergence of **fibre-optic FPV drones**, an **electronic warfare (EW)-resistant** class of systems.
- Unlike conventional drones, which rely on radio-frequency links vulnerable to jamming, these platforms transmit commands and video through ultra-thin **fibre-optic cables** that spool out during flight, rendering electronic interference largely ineffective.
- In heavily contested **electromagnetic environments**, this capability restores a significant operational advantage to drone operators by enabling missions to be conducted largely free from electronic disruption.

Regional Drone Networks

- Meanwhile, unlike **Ukraine**, **Hezbollah's** offensive **Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS)** capability is primarily built around **Iranian-supplied platforms** with limited local

modification, relying heavily on systems like **Ababil**, **Mohajer**, and **Shahed** series.

- These platforms provide a layered operational architecture spanning **ISR** and strike functions.
- Within this framework, the **Mohajer-4** and **Shahed-129** provide tiered-ISR coverage across medium- to long-ranges, while the **Shahed-136 loitering munition** fulfils a ‘dedicated’ one-way strike role across a wider regional theatre.
- More recently, **Hezbollah** has also adopted **jamming-resistant fibre-optic FPV drones**, enabling operations in heavily contested electromagnetic environments and enhancing close-range reconnaissance and precision strike effectiveness despite extensive Israeli **electronic warfare (EW)** measures.
- In response, the **Israel Defence Forces (IDF)** in **Lebanon** have developed a layered **counter-drone architecture**, integrating EW systems, specialised radar arrays, and experimental platforms like the **AI-enabled Iron Drone Raider**.
- This system is designed to neutralise low-altitude UAVs through kinetic, non-explosive interception methods such as **net capture** — by which a physical net is deployed to entangle and disable an incoming drone mid-air — or direct collision, rather than costly missile engagements.
- Alongside this, the IDF operates a multi-tiered **UAV force structure** combining long-endurance **Heron systems** for persistent ISR with armed drones and loitering munitions integrated into reconnaissance-strike complexes for rapid engagement.
- **Iran**, for its part, constitutes a third and structurally distinct model of drone warfare.
- Rather than employing drones solely as tactical assets, the **Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)** integrates them into a broader strategy of deterrence, coercion, and power projection against the **U.S.-Israel** combine and their regional partners across **West Asia**.
- Through indigenous systems such as **Shahed drone variants**, alongside platforms supplied to proxy forces across **Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Yemen**, the IRGC has demonstrated an ability to threaten military bases, critical infrastructure, and naval assets across West Asia at relatively low cost.

Economy Shift

- Thus, across ongoing wars and conflicts, the **drone revolution** is defined as much by economics as technology.
- Cheap, mass-produced unmanned systems are swiftly and irreversibly replacing reliance on expensive platforms, complex logistics, and specialised military structures, shifting the



advantage toward the scale, speed, and production capacity of **UAS ecosystems**.

- Warfare, therefore, is increasingly becoming a test of **industrial endurance** and relentless technological adaptation, where success depends on the ability to build, deploy, and counter fast-evolving, continuously reconfigured drone systems.
- And, in this rapidly evolving battlespace, drones are no longer just weapons, but the very **infrastructure of modern-day war** — shaping how conflicts are surveilled, fought, sustained, and ultimately decided.

15J6. CISF trains 7,120 personnel in counter-drone operations post-Operation Sindoor

- The official said the **CISF had been tasked with auditing the security of critical installations such as nuclear power plants and thermal power plants among others.**
- “It is imperative that the CISF personnel posted at vital installations are aware about the emerging threat scenario from UAVs.”
- The CISF was also in the process of establishing dedicated **Drone Training Schools in Hyderabad, Bhilai and Behror**, with advanced academic programmes planned alongside the **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Kanpur** and the **Defence Institute of Advanced Technology (DIAT), Pune.**
- While combating terror and cyber threats, the CISF continued to be a crucial first responder for **industrial disasters**, the official said.
- Its dedicated **Fire Wing** successfully saving property worth **₹172.55 crore.**
- Acting on the **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** directives, the CISF recently trained **450 State Fire Services personnel** from **187 cities** in advanced industrial firefighting and disaster management at its **Fire Services Training Institute, Hyderabad.**

15J6. Can India protect its seafarers in the Gulf?

- There are an estimated **3.5 lakh Indian seafarers** manning ships across the world.
- This means one in every six seafarers serving on large merchant ships worldwide is Indian.
- The **International Maritime Organization** estimates that some **20,000 seafarers** of all nationalities are stranded on ships in the Persian Gulf region.

What happened to the three vessels targeted by the U.S.?

- On June 8, 10, and 11, the U.S. Navy fired precision munitions — Hellfire missiles — on

merchant vessels **Marivex, Settebello, and Jalveer.**

- The three were tankers carrying Indian crew.
- While no one was hurt in the case of Marivex and Jalveer, three Indian seafarers — one chief engineer, one engine fitter, and one deck cadet — died onboard Settebello.
- While Marivex was attacked off the coast of Duqm, some 400 nautical miles from the Strait of Hormuz, the others were attacked off the coast of Shinas in Oman, which is closer to the strait.
- In its press releases, the U.S. Central Command has said the crew of Settebello and Marivex refused to comply with instructions and all of them violated the blockade by attempting to transport Iranian oil.
- Quite often, sanctioned ships lose insurance cover, without which ports will not accept calls by the ships, and charterers will refuse to handle cargo through them.
- Popular flags of convenience include **Panama, Marshall Islands, Liberia, and Guinea-Bissau.**
- Such flags are also popular among ships transporting Russian and Iranian oil.
- Yes, technically, an Indian-flagged ship will provide legal sanction for possible action.
- Jalveer is a bitumen carrier — a special type of ship that carries tar-bitumen, popular in laying Indian roads.
- Typically, merchant ships have wireless channels open for communication with nearby vessels and any instructions from governments and Navies and Coast Guard vessels are immediately complied with.
- India did launch **Operation Sankalp** to protect merchant ships against Houthi attacks.

Does international maritime law adequately protect civilian crews?

- The nodal agency for regulating global shipping is the **International Maritime Organization**, a United Nations agency.
- Though the organization has the means to regulate the technical, commercial, environmental and safety aspects of global shipping through consensus and rulemaking, it has often fallen short in protecting ships and seafarers.
- The law governing the oceans is the **United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.**
- Its acts and mandates are extensive and are an outcome of decades of negotiations and consensus-building.
- The convention is thorough and considers various situations, including transits across straits such as the Hormuz.
- But many nations have not signed on to it.



- The U.S. refused to sign it on the grounds that the convention considers the deep seabed as the commons.
- Iran has signed the convention but has not ratified it.
- There really is no overarching body for enforcement.
- Things are often left to the good sense of governments.

15J6. China's ability to launch direct missile strikes on Australia 'growing': report

- China's capacity to strike Australia would grow over the next decade as "the **Dong Feng (DF)-27 intermediate-range ballistic missile**, and potentially a conventionally armed **intercontinental ballistic missile**, grow in service numbers", it said.
- The **DF-27 missile** has a range of **5,000 to 8,000 kilometres**, the U.S. military said in December.

14J6. An-32 cargo plane crash kills 5 IAF men in Assam

- An-32 cargo plane crash kills 5 IAF men in Assam.
- Five Indian Air Force (IAF) personnel were killed after an An-32 cargo aircraft met with an accident while landing at the Jorhat airbase in eastern Assam on Saturday.
- The deceased were Squadron Leader Prashant Singh, Flight Lieutenant Shubham Kumar, Sergeant Jitendra Sharma, Agniveervayu Khemaram Kumawat, and Agniveervayu Danish Alam, the IAF said in a statement.
- Six personnel were on the plane and the co-pilot is undergoing treatment at a military hospital in Jorhat for injuries, the news agency PTI reported.
- The IAF did not provide details of the accident, but said it occurred at 10 a.m. while the aircraft, belonging to 43 Squadron, was landing at its airbase in the Rowrah area of Jorhat.
- "A court of inquiry is being constituted to ascertain the cause of the accident," the IAF statement read.
- The PTI reported that the aircraft was set to fly to Chabua from Jorhat, but requested a landing shortly after taking off.
- The aircraft lost control upon touchdown and skidded off the runway, hurtling across a parallel taxiway and snapping into two segments before being engulfed in flames, the PTI added, citing sources.
- A Defence spokesperson said the entire Air Force Station was sealed after the accident, and no entry was allowed.

Minister mourns loss

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh mourned the loss of the five airmen.
- "Their courage and service to the nation will always be remembered with pride and gratitude," Mr. Singh said.
- "On behalf of the people of Assam, I offer my thoughts and prayers with the bereaved families.
- The Government of Assam is in touch with the concerned authorities and is ready to offer any support and assistance," Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma posted on X.
- Expressing his condolences to the bereaved families, Assam Congress chief Gaurav Gogoi called for a proper inquiry into the deaths of the five personnel.
- "I urge the government and the Defence Ministry to conduct a proper inquiry into the mishap and identify the primary cause so that measures are taken to prevent such accidents in the future," he said in a social media post.

Scented by tradition

- Rose farming is a labour of love, and there is no better canvas for these delicate pink blooms than Kashmir where the journey from blossom to by-product is a celebrated tradition, deeply rooted in the heart of the region's local communities.

14J6. Swedish fighters intercept two Russian combat jets near border

- Sweden said on Saturday it had scrambled two pairs of JAS 39 Gripen fighter jets a day earlier to intercept two Russian combat aircraft flying over the Baltic Sea near its airspace.
- The two incidents occurred on Friday in the southern and northern parts of the Baltic Sea.
- Swedish airspace was not violated, it said.

13J6. Lt.-Gen. Rajiv Ghai appointed Military Adviser to NSCS

- Lieutenant-General Rajiv Ghai, who is currently serving as the Deputy Chief of the Indian Army and who spearheaded military operations as Director-General of Military Operations (DGMO) during Operation Sindoor last year, has been appointed the new Military Adviser (MA) to the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS).
- This marks the first time that a serving military officer has been appointed Military Adviser to the NSCS, which functions under National Security Adviser Ajit Doval.



- Lieutenant-General **Ghai**, whose tenure in service extends till **December 2027**, was appointed to the post earlier this week.
- He is expected to assume charge shortly.
- The position was previously held by **General N.S. Raja Subramani** before he was appointed **Chief of Defence Staff**.
- Prior to him, the post was occupied by **Air Marshal Sandeep Singh** and, earlier, by **General Anil Chauhan**.
- Commissioned into the **Kumaon Regiment**, Lieutenant-General **Ghai** has held several key operational and command appointments during his distinguished military career.
- His appointment is being seen as a significant move aimed at strengthening military inputs and operational expertise within the country's highest national security decision-making framework.

13J6. Project Kusha, our indigenous air defence shield, will be a game changer, says Rajnath

- **Defence Minister Rajnath Singh** on Friday described the indigenous **Project Kusha air defence programme** as a "game changer" for India's security architecture, asserting that its importance had already been demonstrated during **Operation Sindoor**.
- Addressing scientists and officials in **Hyderabad**, after inaugurating the **Advanced Weapon System Complex** at the **Defence Research and Development Organisation's (DRDO) Defence Research & Development Laboratory (DRDL)** in the **Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Missile Complex**, Mr. Singh said India's indigenous air defence capabilities had successfully thwarted enemy intentions during the operation.
- "Today I predict that **Project Kusha** will be a game changer for India's security scenario. It is a world-class indigenous air defence system. Just as the **Govardhan hill** protected the entire region of **Braj** in the **Dvapara Yuga**, our air defence system provided a protective umbrella during that period (**Operation Sindoor**)," he said.
- **Project Kusha** is a long-range air defence missile system being developed by the **DRDO** to provide a comprehensive shield against a wide range of aerial threats.
- The Defence Minister praised the **DRDO's Missile Systems and Strategic Systems cluster** for strengthening India's technological excellence, strategic autonomy and national security.
- He said indigenous systems such as **Akash** and **BrahMos** had proved India's capability to compete in the global defence technology ecosystem.

Changing warfare

- Highlighting the changing nature of warfare, Mr. Singh said emerging technologies such as **precision-strike systems, integrated air defence networks, hypersonic weapons, autonomous platforms, artificial intelligence and electronic warfare** were reshaping modern battlefields.
- In this environment, he stressed the need for both resilience and deterrence.
- Referring to the government's ambitious "**Mission Sudarshan Chakra**", announced by Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** during his **Independence Day** address in 2025, Mr. Singh said the initiative would establish a multi-layered missile defence shield capable of protecting military assets, critical infrastructure and civilian establishments across the country.
- "The system will provide robust protection while ensuring citizens face minimal inconvenience. It will also possess the capability to deliver a decisive response whenever required," he said.
- The Defence Minister lauded the **DRDO's** progress in indigenous missile technologies, stating that the recent successes in strategic and tactical weapon programmes reflected India's growing self-reliance and confidence in defence manufacturing.

12J6. No AFSPA in most of Northeast from 2027'

- **Union Home Minister Amit Shah** on Thursday said the **Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA)** will be withdrawn from the entire **Northeast** next year, barring one or two States.
- Speaking after signing a **tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** between the **Centre, Assam, and Nagaland** on mineral and oil operations in the disputed **Assam-Nagaland boundary areas**, Mr. Shah said fewer areas being covered under AFSPA indicate peace in the region.
- "I am confident that barring one or two States, we will withdraw **AFSPA** from the entire **Northeast** next year," he said.

09J6. India expanded its nuclear arsenal in 2025, says SIPRI

- **India's nuclear arsenal expands; SIPRI highlights modernisation and regional security trends**
- India is estimated to have modestly expanded its **nuclear arsenal** in 2025 and continued developing new **nuclear delivery systems**, according to the **Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) Yearbook 2026** released on Monday.



- The report estimated that India's nuclear stockpile had increased to around **190 warheads** by early 2026.
- The country had around **180 warheads** in 2025.
- SIPRI noted that New Delhi's ongoing **nuclear modernisation programme** is increasingly focused on developing longer-range weapons capable of reaching targets across China, while continuing to address security concerns arising from its long-standing rivalry with Pakistan.
- The annual assessment of global armaments, disarmament and international security also highlighted the **May 2025 India-Pakistan military confrontation**, describing **Operation Sindoor** as an "unusually severe military crisis" between the two nuclear-armed neighbours.
- According to SIPRI, India carried out strikes during the conflict against Pakistani air and missile bases that were likely to have nuclear-related roles.
- However, the institute observed that both countries took measures to prevent further escalation despite heightened tensions.
- The report further noted that India and Pakistan integrated **cyber operations** into active military conflict for the first time during the crisis, underscoring the evolving nature of modern warfare and deterrence in South Asia.
- Beyond the nuclear domain, India retained its position as the **world's fifth-largest military spender** in 2025.
- SIPRI estimated India's military expenditure at **92.1 billion अमेरिकी डॉलर**, an increase of **8.9%** over the previous year.
- The country ranked behind only the **United States, China, Russia and Germany** in defence spending.
- India also remained the **world's second-largest importer of major arms** during the **2021-25 period**, accounting for **8.2% of global arms imports**.
- SIPRI identified **Ukraine, India, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Pakistan** as the five largest arms importers, collectively accounting for **35% of global imports** during the period.

Modernising arsenals

- The report said all **nine nuclear-armed states** — the **United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, France, China, India, Pakistan, North Korea, and Israel** — continued to modernise their arsenals and increasingly relied on nuclear weapons as instruments of national power.
- Globally, the nine countries possessed an estimated **12,187 nuclear warheads** at the start of 2026.
- Of these, around **9,745 warheads** were held in military stockpiles for potential use.

09J6. Nicobar project will enhance maritime security: officials

- **Great Nicobar Island Development Project: Strategic airport and maritime hub planned**
- Under the **Great Nicobar Island Development Project**, India plans to invest around **₹13,000 crore** to build a **dual-use airport and runway** for both civilian and Navy operations, said a senior official with the **Ministry of Defence** on Monday.
- According to sources in the Ministry, the project, expected to be completed within **five years**, will be jointly funded by the Ministry along with the **Ministry of Civil Aviation**.
- The government views the initiative as a strategic investment aimed at strengthening **maritime security**, boosting regional connectivity and enhancing India's presence in the **Indo-Pacific region**.

Four components

- Elaborating about the project, the official said the project comprises **four major components** — an **International Container Transshipment Port (ICTP)**, a **joint-user greenfield airport and Naval Air Station**, a modern township, and a **power plant**.
- Together, these projects are expected to transform **Great Nicobar** into a key maritime and economic hub while enhancing India's defence capabilities in the strategically significant **Indian Ocean Region (IOR)**.
- Located just **40 km from the Six Degree Channel**, one of the world's busiest sea trade routes connecting the **Gulf of Aden** and the **Malacca Strait**, Great Nicobar occupies a critical position along global shipping lanes.
- Government officials said the project would reduce India's dependence on foreign transshipment ports and strengthen its ability to monitor and secure vital **Sea Lanes of Communication**.
- The proposed **greenfield airport**, approved by the **Union Cabinet** and to be operated by the **Indian Navy**, is expected to significantly improve maritime domain awareness, logistics support, and rapid deployment capabilities.
- The airport is also expected to promote tourism, officials said.
- It is understood that **five sites**, including **INS Baaz at Campbell Bay**, were assessed before **Galathea Bay** was selected for the airport.
- Technical constraints, limited expansion possibilities, and environmental concerns reportedly made the expansion of **INS Baaz** unviable.

Extensive studies



- Addressing concerns over environmental impact and tribal rights, officials said the project has undergone extensive environmental assessments involving institutions such as the **Zoological Survey of India, Wildlife Institute of India** and the **Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History**.
- Of the island's total area, only **166.1 square kilometres** have been earmarked for development, while more than **81%** will continue to remain under forests, biosphere reserves, national parks and tribal conservation zones.
- A dedicated conservation package worth **₹2,220 crore** over **30 years** has been planned to protect wildlife, including **leatherback turtles, Nicobar megapodes** and **crocodiles**, as well as coral reefs and mangrove ecosystems.
- The official confirmed that no physical displacement of tribal communities is proposed and that consultations were conducted with tribal welfare authorities and representative bodies.
- Besides strategic gains, the project is expected to generate over **one lakh direct and indirect employment opportunities**, providing a significant economic boost to the island region.

05J. New-age fraud: 'trust is being weaponised in the digital era'

- At a time when **AI-generated deepfakes, digital arrests, cyber-enabled financial frauds** and **crypto-powered crime networks** have become increasingly sophisticated, combating these **next generation of fraud** would require a fundamental shift towards **advanced forensic technologies, real-time intelligence sharing** and stronger collaboration between **regulators, businesses** and **law enforcement agencies** said experts at the **FICCI Conference on Next-Gen Forensics: The New Age of Fraud Investigation**.
- Brijesh Singh, IPS, Principal Secretary, Government of Maharashtra**, said cybercrime has evolved **into a highly organised and industrialised ecosystem** where specialised actors perform functions ranging from **data theft** and **identity creation** to **mule networks, deepfake generation** and **crypto-enabled money laundering**.
- "Today, fraud has become an **industrial-scale enterprise**. By the time the first call reaches a victim, fraudsters may already know their **personal details, behavioural patterns** and **psychological vulnerabilities**. The entire chain, from **data acquisition** to **money movement through crypto networks** can be completed in less than **30 minutes**, making traditional investigative approaches increasingly ineffective," said Mr. Singh.

- "**Trust is being weaponised in the digital era. With voice cloning, deepfake technologies and fraud-as-a-service platforms** becoming easily accessible, investigators need **integrated forensic platforms, real-time intelligence sharing** and new **evidentiary frameworks** to effectively detect, investigate and prosecute digital crimes," he added.
- Govindayapalli Ram Mohan Rao, ED, Market Intermediaries Regulation and Supervision Department, SEBI**, **stated market regulator's efforts to strengthen investor protection and digital trust via technology-driven governance steps is the cornerstone of capital markets.**

04J6. Sourav Ganguly's security cover downgraded

- The **West Bengal government** on Wednesday reduced the security cover for **Sourav Ganguly**, former captain of the **Indian cricket team**, from the **Z-category** to the **Y-category**.
- The development was confirmed by officials of the **West Bengal Police security wing** as part of an **"ongoing routine exercise"** in reviewing the security cover of various prominent personalities in the State based on their **threat assessments**.
- Under the new arrangement, he is expected to be provided with only **three or four security personnel**.

03J6. Indigenous air-to-surface RudraM-II missile clears flight trials; Rajnath praises team

- The **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** and the **Indian Air Force (IAF)** have successfully conducted flight-tests of the indigenous **RudraM-II air-to-surface missile**.
- Data captured through a network of tracking and monitoring instruments deployed by the **Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur**, confirmed the missile's performance and the success of the trials.
- RudraM-II** was developed by **Research Centre Imarat (RCI), Hyderabad**, the nodal DRDO laboratory for the programme.
- In collaboration with other DRDO establishments, including **Defence Research and Development Laboratory (DRDL), High Energy Materials Research Laboratory (HEMRL), Armament Research & Development Establishment (ARDE)**, and **ITR**.
- The programme also received significant support from development-cum-production partners.



- Along with agencies such as **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)**, **Regional Centre for Military Airworthiness**, **Missile System Quality Assurance Agency**, and a number of Indian defence industries.
- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh** congratulated the DRDO, the IAF, defence public sector undertakings (**DPSUs**), industry partners and all stakeholders.

02J6. New chief of Central Air Command takes charge

- Air Marshal **Tarun Chaudhry** on Monday assumed charge as the **Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief (AOC-in-C)** of the Indian Air Force's Central Air Command.

02J6. Operation Mule Hunt exposes cyberfraud network; 638 held

- In one of **Gujarat's** largest crackdowns on cybercrime-linked financial networks, the State police have uncovered cyberfraud worth **₹2,289 crore** and taken action against **913 mule bank accounts** during a special operation aimed at dismantling the financial infrastructure used by cybercriminals.

01J6. General Subramani takes charge as CDS; lays emphasis on 'JAI'

- General N.S. Raja Subramani** on Sunday assumed charge as India's third **Chief of Defence Staff (CDS)** and Secretary, **Department of Military Affairs**.
- He was later accorded a ceremonial **Tri-Services Guard of Honour** at **South Block**.

- He said the armed forces would work towards implementing Prime Minister **Narendra Modi's** vision of "**JAI**" — **Jointness, Atma Nirbharta (self-sufficiency), and Innovation**.
- "**Atma Nirbharta** is a central pillar of our national security. We will accelerate the development, induction, and integration of indigenous weapons in our armed forces," he said, while stressing the need for innovation in thought and action.
- A highly decorated officer with more than four decades of service, General Subramani was commissioned into the **Garhwal Rifles** in December 1985.
- He has held several key command and staff appointments, including **General Officer Commanding 2 Corps**, **GOC-in-C Central Command**, and **Vice Chief of the Army Staff**.

01J6. Admiral Swaminathan takes charge as 27th chief of Navy

- Admiral Krishna Swaminathan** on Sunday assumed charge as the 27th **Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS)** of the Indian Navy, succeeding **Admiral Dinesh Kumar Tripathi**, who retired after over 41 years of service.
- Commissioned into the **Indian Navy** on July 1, 1987, Admiral Swaminathan is a **Communication and Electronic Warfare specialist** with nearly four decades of distinguished service.
- During his career, he has held several key operational and staff appointments, including **Commander of Western Fleet**, **Vice Chief of Naval Staff** and **Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief of Western Naval Command**, a position he held prior to becoming the Navy chief.



PATRIOTIC IAS

MONTHLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

JUNE 2026

GENERAL STUDIES PAPER IV

SUBJECT: ETHICS

TOPICS COVERED

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20J6 Shed your 'I-ness': Krishna
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prison
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24J6. The ultimate authority

- A family has its rules, one of which is that everyone must be on friendly terms with each other.
- Likewise, a school has its rules.
- So everywhere there are rules, and not all of them are the same.
- A student has to wear a uniform when he goes to school, but he does not have to at other times.
- Two men fighting with each other in a family is wrong.
- But men fighting in an army against an enemy are respected.
- **Dharma**, or what is right, keeps changing depending on the situation.
- So how do we know what **dharma** is?
- **Lord Krishna** says in the **Bhagavad Gita** that **Sastras** are the **pramana**.
- The rules laid down by them must be followed.
- "**Tasmaat sastram pramaanam**," says Krishna to Arjuna.

20J6. Shed your 'I-ness': Krishna

- **Lord Krishna** tells **Arjuna**, "Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer, whatever you give, and whatever austerities you perform, Oh son of Kunti, do them as an offering to Me."
- This single verse transforms ordinary life into **sadhana**, said **Swami Mitranandaji**.
- Dedication improves quality of action.
- When we work merely for salary, recognition or ego, the mind stays restless and shortcuts appear.
- However, the moment an action is dedicated to the **Lord**, the attitude changes.
- The **Gita** calls this '**yoga of action**'.
- Work is no longer mechanical, it becomes worship.
- The fruit is surrendered.

On the draw





- Like cooking for God, the cook tastes but is not attached.
- Such **nishkama karma (selfless action)** purifies the heart.
- The law of **karma** applies to the ego, not to the surrender.
- The distance between **jeeva** and the **Divine** is only selfishness.
- We feel far from God not because He is far, but because 'I, me, mine' comes in between.
- Selfishness is the wall.
- My desire, my plan, my credit — this "**I-ness**" hides the Divine.
- When we drop the claim of ownership, the wall thins.
- The verse (opening para) attacks selfishness and asks us to offer everything.
- It is easy to start in a small way and develop selflessness.
- **Krishna** does not ask for renunciation overnight.
- Begin with one action, whatever it may be, offer it mentally, saying "This is for You".
- Slowly, expand this mood to more activities.
- As selfish motives drop, selfless service grows naturally.
- Step by step, one's life itself becomes an offering.
- The quote from **Bhagavad Gita** shows a practical path.
- One should dedicate oneself, one should conduct oneself with quality; one should be free from karma, get rid of selfishness.
- He will take care.

05J6. 'Robin Hood' burglar, who funded charity with stolen gold, lands in prison

- Posing as a **daily wage labourer** by day to scout for locked houses, the accused allegedly used the massive proceeds from dozens of night-time burglaries to fund a lavish lifestyle of air travel, luxury hotels, and his local charitable activities.
- "The accused spent part of the proceeds on **air travel, luxury hotel stays** and leisure trips."
- "He also allegedly created a charitable image in his native village through an NGO called '**Helping Hands**', distributing school bags and notebooks to students and sponsoring trips for friends to **Chennai, Goa, Vijayawada, Visakhapatnam, Bengaluru, Rajasthan and Dehradun**," said the SP.

04J6. Dharma remains a mystery

- It is difficult to understand **dharma**, said **Navalpakkam Vasudevachariar** in a discourse.
- The meaning of **dharma** remains hidden.
- We can understand **dharma** only partly, not all of it.

- Just take the rule that we must speak the **truth** always — **satyam vada**.
- Is it always practical?
- Is it wise to always speak the **truth**?
- What if, because of our honesty, we hurt someone?
- In such circumstances, wouldn't a **lie** be better?
- Is it wrong to utter a **lie** to save a life?
- If a man is chased by someone who wants to murder him, and the villain asks you in which direction the man is running, would it be ethical to reveal the **truth** to the man with murderous intentions?
- Will it not lead to a man losing his life?
- In this case, it would be wrong to be truthful.
- Even **Sita**, who had such high ideals in life, had to lie.
- The occasion was the visit of **Hanuman**.
- **Hanuman** had met **Sita** with his reassuring message and had departed.
- The demonesses guarding **Sita** were curious about the monkey.
- They asked **Sita** whether she knew the monkey that had been there.
- **Sita** replied wisely that she didn't know who that monkey was.
- In **Ravana's rajya**, demons assumed different forms and the monkey could be some demon, said **Sita**.
- If **Sita** had revealed **Hanuman's** identity, there might have been more trouble for her.
- Besides, what purpose would be served by being open about **Hanuman's** identity?
- When a **truth** serves no purpose, but a **lie** can protect us, isn't it better to conceal truth?
- So even in the matter of just one command relating to telling **truth**, there can be so many deviations.
- There can be deviations from other rules too, and these deviations too might not be **adharmic**.
- That is why **dharma** remains a mystery, and is not easily understood.

01J6. The prisoner who builds his own cell

- Cave grows grander, yet **Man Midas** does not realise he is wearing golden handcuffs.
- He earns, spends more; in the endless game of lifestyle upgrades, he stops living, begins merely maintaining.
- Days pass, but **Man Midas** never finds peace.
- The cave's grandeur that once was his pride, fills him with dread.
- What was once a dream has transformed into a burden he can no longer carry easily.
- Every possession needs upkeep, every upgrade adds another brick to the invisible walls trapping him inside and every sunrise carries an anxiety: what if it all collapses?



- Midas runs harder simply to stand in the same place.
- After observing Midas in silence, **Alien Aurum** turns to **Monk Moneywise** and murmurs, "Midas no longer builds a life. He looks like a prisoner, trapped inside the very cage he built."
- Monk Moneywise nods, "True Aurum, the trap begins when humans expand standard of living, **blurring the line between need and luxury.**"
- Extravagance becomes ordinary and options necessities.
- A cycle turns into a bike which evolves into a small car to finally mature as a sedan."
- "With each upgrade, fuel cost, insurance premia and EMIs multiply quietly."
- "Bigger homes turn bigger EMIs, posh schools bring higher fee, club memberships bills, household help is the norm, foreign holidays are rituals."
- "Comfort slowly hardens into financial obligation."
- "Though Midas' income rises, even one interruption in earnings now threatens the entire life built around it."
- Alien Aurum asks in bewilderment, "Mr. Moneywise, if a family of two needs just a small place to eat and sleep, why do they spend entire lives paying for four or five big rooms?"

Imagined future

- Gazing towards the distant human dwellings, **Monk Moneywise** whispers, "Homes disclose some of the deepest truths about human life."
- "Humans build houses not just for today, but for imagined futures."
- "Visiting relatives, children who may settle abroad, grandchildren who may never arrive, prestige and the deep fear of appearing small before the society."
- "The tragedy is rarely the size of the house, but the weight of the imagined future they purchase along with it."
- Alien Aurum interrupts, "Weight of the imagined future?"
- Nodding gently, the monk explains, "Humans spend decades buying a house believing one day they will finally be relieved of monthly rental burdens."
- "Yet, the irony shows itself years later."
- "For instance, in the gated communities."
- "Even after fully owning the flat, charges never truly stop."
- "Whether the apartment is lived in, locked for months, or empty without tenants for years, maintenance charges continue arriving month on month, often running into several thousands."
- "The tragedy deepens further with age."
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- Alien Aurum cuts in and asks **Monk Moneywise**, "The tragedy deepens with age? How?"
- Mr. Moneywise continues, "Aurum, many elderly residents no longer regularly use the swimming pools, clubhouses or luxury amenities they once proudly paid for, yet the maintenance charges never disappear."
- "During salaried years, these costs appear harmless."
- "But after retirement, the shock slowly emerges."
- "They now have to keep paying significant money monthly simply to continue living inside a house they already fully own but not fully use."

Buried exhaustion

- Years of buried exhaustion suddenly erupt through Midas.
- "Enough of your theories and sermons!"
- "It's been years of struggle and do you know what all I have sacrificed to build all these?"
- "Missed family moments, sleepless nights, health slowly breaking down, dreams postponed and what not."
- "It's easy for you to mock me."
- "But how can I simply walk away?"
- "If I let go of this life, then what is all that pain even for?"
- "Every sleepless night and every sacrifice goes into bins?"
- "We cannot bleed for something our entire lives and then simply let it go."
- Now **Master Time** interrupts saying, "That pain you cannot let go of, Midas, has a name."
- "Behavioural economists call it the **sunk-cost fallacy: humans often stay trapped in lives that no longer bring joy because leaving feels like erasing every sacrifice once made to build them.**"

Crucial questions

- Time's voice echoes across the silent valley, "Before every upgrade ask yourself: Can I sustain this if my income falls?"
- "Will this matter to me ten years from now?"
- "Am I buying this for need or status?"
- "What are the recurring charges even after the excitement fades?"
- "Am I buying for the present life or the imagined future?"
- "Am I here because I want this life, or because leaving it now feels too costly?"
- "If Midas had asked these questions before every purchase, he would have built a life not a cage and the golden handcuffs would never have found a wrist to bind itself upon."