

Weekly Current Affairs 14th June to 20th June 2026

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IMPORTANT ONE LINERS

NATIONAL

Resettlement Census Notified for Great Nicobar Project

In the News: The Andaman and Nicobar Islands Administration has notified the beginning of the Rehabilitation and Resettlement census in Great Nicobar Island. The census is linked to the trunk infrastructure component of the Great Nicobar mega-infrastructure project. The exercise will help identify affected families and prepare the basis for rehabilitation, compensation and resettlement support.

Key Pointes:

- **Rehabilitation and Resettlement Census:** The census is meant to identify families and persons likely to be affected by the project. Affected families may have to submit land records, identity documents, islander certificates and other proof-related documents. Such surveys are important before land acquisition or project-related displacement.
- **About the Great Nicobar Project:** The project includes an International Container Transshipment Terminal, greenfield airport, power plant and township. It is planned as a major infrastructure and maritime development project in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The project aims to strengthen India's port capacity and reduce dependence on foreign transshipment hubs.
- **Strategic Importance of Great Nicobar:** Great Nicobar lies close to major international shipping routes in the Indian Ocean region. Its location gives it importance for maritime surveillance and strategic presence. Improved infrastructure may strengthen India's connectivity with Southeast Asia and the wider Indo-Pacific region.
- **Tribal and Social Concerns:** Great Nicobar is associated with vulnerable tribal communities such as the Shompen and Nicobarese. Any development activity in the region must consider tribal rights, customary practices and livelihood protection. Rehabilitation and resettlement become important because infrastructure projects can affect land, livelihood and local ecology.
- **Environmental and Governance Dimension:** Large infrastructure projects require environmental and coastal regulation clearances. Great Nicobar has forests, coastal ecosystems and biodiversity-rich areas. The local administration is responsible for conducting surveys, verifying claims and ensuring compliance with rehabilitation norms.

Indian Army unveils new uniform policy, phases out colonial-era practices

In the News: The Indian Army has introduced a new uniform policy through Army Uniforms-2026. The updated rules aim to standardise dress regulations and phase out several colonial-era practices. The policy also introduces Indian-style formal wear, modifies ceremonial practices and lays down clearer grooming and conduct standards.

Key Pointes:

- **Army Uniforms-2026 Manual:** The new manual updates the rules related to dress, ceremonies and grooming for Army personnel. It seeks to bring uniformity in how different ranks wear ceremonial, formal and service uniforms. Uniform regulations reflect discipline, hierarchy and the professional identity of the armed forces.
- **Introduction of Bandi Jacket:** Officers may now wear closed-neck bandi jackets as part of formal civil dress. The jacket is expected to be sober, solid-coloured and paired with formal trousers and closed footwear. The inclusion of Indian-style formal wear marks a move towards greater cultural rootedness in military dress norms.
- **Changes in Ceremonial Practices:** Reviewing Officers will no longer be required to carry swords during parades. Certain colonial-era accessories such as pouch belts have been removed from specific mess dress categories. The changes retain military dignity while reducing outdated ceremonial elements.
- **Phasing Out Colonial-Era Practices:** Archaic colonial references and symbols are being reduced from Army dress regulations. The policy fits into the broader effort to align military traditions with Indian identity and post-colonial institutional reform. Such changes show how armed forces preserve tradition while updating practices for modern India.



- **Grooming and Conduct Rules:** The rules prohibit unauthorised tattoos, body piercings, radical hairstyles and visible electronic gadgets in uniform. Unauthorised use of uniform in protests or political gatherings is also restricted. These provisions reinforce the apolitical, disciplined and professional character of the Indian Army.

Jharkhand's Bhagaiya Silk, Munda Jewellery and Bamboo Craft Receive GI Tag

In the News: Jharkhand's Bhagaiya silk, Kuchai silk, Munda jewellery and Jharkhand bamboo craft have received the Geographical Indication tag. The recognition is significant for Jharkhand's traditional handloom, tribal craft and rural artisan economy. It is expected to improve product authenticity, branding, market access and livelihood opportunities for local communities. The development also highlights the role of traditional knowledge systems in India's intellectual property framework.

Key Points:

- **GI Tag Recognition:** The GI tag has been granted to Bhagaiya silk, Kuchai silk, Munda jewellery and Jharkhand bamboo craft. These products represent the state's sericulture, tribal jewellery traditions and bamboo-based rural craftsmanship. The recognition gives them a distinct identity linked to their geographical origin and traditional production practices.
- **Role of NABARD:** NABARD supported the process through producer mobilisation, documentation, value-chain strengthening and stakeholder coordination. Its efforts involved artisans, self-help groups, farmer producer organisations, technical institutions and government departments. This makes the case important for questions related to rural development institutions and traditional-product promotion.
- **Importance of GI Tag:** A Geographical Indication tag protects products whose qualities, reputation or characteristics are linked to a specific region. In India, GI protection is governed by the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999. The GI Registry is located in Chennai and works under the intellectual property system of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- **Tribal and Cultural Identity:** Munda jewellery reflects the distinctive craftsmanship and cultural identity of the Munda tribal community of Jharkhand. The bamboo craft recognition highlights the skill of rural artisans who use locally available bamboo for utility and decorative products. Such tags help preserve traditional knowledge while improving the income base of artisan communities.
- **Economic and Market Impact:** GI recognition can improve branding, exports, tourism promotion and value addition for these products. It can also help genuine producers command better prices by preventing misuse of product names. For Jharkhand, the development strengthens the link between heritage conservation and rural livelihood generation.

India Extends Tenure of Ravi-Beas, Krishna Water Tribunals

In the News: India has extended the tenure of the Ravi and Beas Waters Tribunal and the Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal by one year. The extension was issued through gazette notifications by ministry of Jal Shakti. The Ravi-Beas tribunal has been extended up to 5 August 2027, while the Krishna tribunal has been extended up to 31 July 2027. The decision reflects the continued complexity of inter-state river water disputes in India.

Key Points:

- **Latest Extension:** The Ravi and Beas Waters Tribunal and the Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal have both received one-year extensions. The Ravi-Beas tribunal deals with water-sharing issues mainly involving Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan. The Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal-II deals with disputes involving Maharashtra, Karnataka, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.
- **Legal Framework:** Inter-state river water disputes are dealt with under Article 262 of the Constitution and the Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956. The Act allows the Central Government to constitute a tribunal when negotiations fail to settle a dispute between states. Once a tribunal is formed, it examines claims related to the use, distribution or control of inter-state river waters.
- **Ravi and Beas Waters Tribunal:** The Ravi and Beas Waters Tribunal was constituted in April 1986. It was set up to deal with issues connected to the sharing of Ravi-Beas waters and matters linked to the Punjab settlement. The dispute has remained unresolved for decades due to state-level disagreements, clarifications and related legal proceedings.

- **Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal-II:** The Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal-II was constituted on 2 April 2004. It has dealt with water-sharing issues among basin states, with added complexity after the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh and creation of Telangana. The tribunal has also handled additional terms connected with the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014.

Project Kusha

In the News: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh described Project Kusha as a “game changer” for India’s security architecture. He made the remarks while inaugurating the Advanced Weapon System Complex at DRDO’s Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Missile Complex in Hyderabad. Project Kusha is India’s indigenous long-range air defence programme being developed to strengthen the country’s layered air defence capability. The project is linked with India’s broader effort to build advanced missile and air defence systems within the country.

Key Points:

- **Project Overview:** Project Kusha is an indigenous long-range surface-to-air missile and air defence system programme. It is being developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation for protection against advanced aerial threats. The system is associated with extended-range air defence and is often discussed as India’s domestic answer to advanced global air defence platforms.
- **Purpose of the System:** Project Kusha is designed to strengthen India’s ability to detect, track and intercept hostile aerial threats. These threats may include aircraft, drones, cruise missiles and precision-guided weapons. Its importance has increased because modern warfare now depends heavily on air power, missiles, sensors and electronic systems.
- **Advanced Weapon System Complex:** The Advanced Weapon System Complex was inaugurated at DRDO’s Defence Research and Development Laboratory in Hyderabad. DRDL functions within the Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Missile Complex and is closely associated with India’s missile development ecosystem. The new complex is expected to support advanced weapon systems, indigenous missile platforms and future defence technologies.
- **Mission Sudarshan Chakra Link:** The Defence Minister also referred to India’s plan for a multi-level missile defence system under Mission Sudarshan Chakra. This mission aims to protect military installations, critical infrastructure, civil assets and key national establishments. Project Kusha fits into this wider idea of building a layered protective shield for important Indian assets.

Centre Blocks Telegram Access Till June 22

In the News: The Central Government temporarily restricted access to **Telegram in India till 22 June 2026**, ahead of the **NEET (UG) 2026 re-examination scheduled on 21 June 2026**. The action was taken on the recommendation of the National Testing Agency to prevent the misuse of Telegram by organised cheating networks and to protect the integrity of the re-examination.

Key Points:

- **The restriction was imposed through directions issued under Section 69A of the Information Technology Act, 2000**, and it applied to access to the Telegram platform in India for a limited period ending on 22 June 2026. The time period was designed to cover the day of the NEET (UG) 2026 re-examination and its immediate aftermath.
- **A separate feature-specific direction was also issued against Telegram’s message-editing function**, requiring the platform to disable, in India, the editing of already-posted messages till 30 June 2026. This was meant to prevent the later modification of old messages in a manner that could falsely create the appearance of a pre-examination paper leak.
- **The National Testing Agency stated that the measure was linked to public-order concerns and examination security**, as cheating rackets were allegedly using Telegram channels, groups and bots to target NEET (UG) 2026 candidates. The agency clarified that there was no examination paper available outside the secured examination chain and that any claim of such access was fraudulent.
- **The Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre served as the main nodal agency for the operational response**, working under the Ministry of Home Affairs and coordinating with NTA, MeitY and State law-enforcement agencies. The



response included action against Telegram channels, groups and bots that were allegedly being used for misleading or fraudulent claims related to the re-examination.

- **State-level enforcement actions were also cited as part of the wider security response**, including a public advisory by the Bihar Police Economic Offences Unit and action by the Ahmedabad City Cyber Crime Branch against an inter-State cyber-fraud gang allegedly operating Telegram channels. These developments showed that the restriction was part of a broader anti-cheating and cyber-fraud response before the examination.
- **NTA reassured candidates that the NEET (UG) 2026 re-examination would be held as scheduled on 21 June 2026**, and advised candidates to ignore unverified claims circulating on any platform. Candidates were also asked to rely only on the official NTA website and verified NTA handles for examination-related information.

Tripura's Traditional Musical Instrument Sarinda Receives GI Tag Recognition

In the News: Tripura's traditional musical instrument **Tripura Sarinda** received **Geographical Indication recognition** in June 2026. The recognition is important because the Sarinda is closely connected with the folk music traditions of Tripura's indigenous communities and the GI tag is expected to help preserve its identity, protect its authenticity and improve recognition for local artisans and musicians.

Key Points:

- Tripura Sarinda is a traditional bowed string musical instrument associated with the indigenous communities of Tripura, and it has been used in folk performances, devotional singing and other forms of traditional musical expression in the state. Its recognition as a GI-linked product highlights the cultural value of indigenous musical traditions in Northeast India.
- The instrument is generally crafted from a single block of wood with a hollow resonator, which gives it a distinct sound and makes its craftsmanship an important part of its identity. The recognition therefore protects not only the name of the instrument but also the traditional knowledge and skill involved in making it.
- The official GI application for Tripura Sarinda is listed as "Tripura Sarinda (Musical Instrument)" under Application Number 1198, and the applicant is Nabadiganta Welfare Society from Gomati district, Tripura. The application was filed on 18 March 2024 and is classified under Class 15, which relates to musical instruments.
- The recognition is expected to support artisans and musicians connected with Sarinda-making and Sarinda-playing traditions, because a GI tag helps protect the authentic product from misuse and gives greater visibility to communities that have preserved the craft across generations. This makes the development relevant for both cultural preservation and local livelihood promotion.
- With the inclusion of Tripura Sarinda, Tripura now has four GI-recognised products, the other three being Tripura Queen Pineapple, Risa/Pachra or Rignai, and Matabari Peda. This shows the state's growing presence in India's GI framework, especially in products linked with indigenous culture, traditional textiles, food heritage and regional identity.
- The GI system in India functions under the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999, which provides legal protection to goods whose quality, reputation or other characteristics are linked to a particular geographical origin. In the case of Tripura Sarinda, the recognition helps connect the instrument's identity with Tripura's cultural geography and traditional craftsmanship.

Assam Secures GI Tags for Four Traditional Products

In the News: Assam secured Geographical Indication recognition for four traditional products: Karbi Anglong Handloom Products, Assamese Bihu Pepa, Assam Bamboo Crafts, and Assam Deori Handloom Products. The recognition is important because these products represent Assam's tribal handloom traditions, bamboo-based craftsmanship and Bihu-related musical heritage.

Key Pointers:

- The four newly recognised products are Karbi Anglong Handloom Products, Assamese Bihu Pepa, Assam Bamboo Crafts, and Assam Deori Handloom Products. Together, they cover three important cultural areas of Assam: indigenous weaving traditions, bamboo-based handicrafts, and the traditional musical culture associated with Bihu.

- Karbi Anglong Handloom Products represent the traditional weaving practices of the Karbi Anglong region of Assam. The GI recognition is significant because it gives formal identity to the textile traditions, motifs and community-based craftsmanship associated with the Karbi people and their local handloom heritage.
- Assamese Bihu Pepa is a traditional wind musical instrument closely linked with Bihu celebrations in Assam. It is commonly associated with the cultural performance of Bihu and is traditionally made using buffalo horn, making it an important symbol of Assam's folk music and festival identity.
- Assam Bamboo Crafts recognise the state's long tradition of bamboo-based craftsmanship and rural artisan skills. The product has been listed under handicrafts, and its recognition is important because bamboo craft is closely connected with Assam's natural resources, household utility items, decorative products and sustainable livelihood practices.
- Assam Deori Handloom Products recognise the weaving traditions of the Deori community of Assam. The GI tag helps preserve the distinct textile identity of the community and gives legal and commercial recognition to traditional knowledge that has been passed through generations of weavers.
- The GI certification process was supported by NABARD, and these additions increased the number of NABARD-supported GI-certified products from Assam to 12. This makes the development important not only for cultural preservation but also for rural livelihood promotion, branding and better market access for artisans and weavers.

Maharashtra Approves ₹300 Crore Cyclotron Project in Nagpur

In the News: The Maharashtra Cabinet approved a ₹300 crore High-Energy Medical Cyclotron Project in Nagpur to strengthen cancer diagnosis, nuclear medicine services and medical research in Central India. The project aims to make Nagpur a regional hub for radiopharmaceutical production by ensuring local availability of radioisotopes used in PET-CT scans and other nuclear medicine procedures.

Key Points:

- The project will be set up in Nagpur at an estimated cost of ₹300 crore, and it is intended to improve access to advanced cancer diagnosis, treatment planning and nuclear medicine services in Maharashtra and the wider Central Indian region. The decision is significant because many hospitals currently depend on radioisotopes supplied from larger medical hubs, which can create delays due to the short shelf life of such materials.
- A cyclotron is a particle accelerator used for producing medical radioisotopes, which are then used to prepare radiopharmaceuticals for diagnostic and therapeutic purposes. Such radiopharmaceuticals are especially important in detecting and managing cancer, brain-related disorders and cardiovascular diseases through advanced imaging and nuclear medicine techniques.
- The Nagpur facility is expected to support PET-CT and nuclear medicine services by producing radioisotopes locally, thereby reducing dependence on centres such as Mumbai and Hyderabad. This is important because timely availability of radioisotopes directly affects the quality and speed of diagnostic imaging, particularly in cancer care.
- The project is expected to be funded jointly by the Medical Education Department and the Industry Department of Maharashtra on a 50:50 basis, showing that the initiative is being treated both as a healthcare infrastructure project and as a technology-driven industrial development project. This dual approach is important because cyclotron facilities require medical, scientific, engineering and regulatory coordination.
- The facility is planned to develop Nagpur into a radiopharmaceutical innovation hub, with possible benefits for cancer hospitals, medical colleges, research centres and diagnostic facilities across Vidarbha and neighbouring regions. Owing to Nagpur's central location, the project is expected to improve access for patients from parts of Maharashtra and nearby states.
- Several institutions are expected to be associated with the project, including VNIT Nagpur, AIIMS Nagpur, Government Medical College and Hospital, Indira Gandhi Government Medical College and the National Cancer Institute. VNIT Nagpur has been identified as the coordinating agency, which reflects the project's interdisciplinary character involving medicine, engineering, nuclear science and research.

Jharkhand Gets GI Tags for 11 Traditional Products

In the News: Jharkhand's cultural and traditional economy received a major boost as 11 traditional products from the state were granted Geographical Indication tags. The recognised products include handloom items, sweets, paintings, jewellery,

bamboo craft and tribal art forms. The recognition is significant because GI tags protect region-specific products and help artisans, weavers and local communities gain wider market identity.

Key Points:

- **Products Recognised:** The 11 products include Bhagaiya Saree, Kuchai Silk Saree, Koderma (Jhumri Tilaiya) Kesariya Kalakand, Dokra Craft, Dumka Chadars, Jharkhand Benu, Munda Jewellery, Jharkhand Bamboo Craft, Tussar Silk and Sarees, Jadopatia Painting, and Panchi Parhan-Panchi Saree. These products represent Jharkhand's tribal, handloom, craft, food and folk-art traditions.
- **GI Tag and Legal Protection:** A Geographical Indication tag identifies products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities, reputation or characteristics linked to that place. In India, GI protection is governed by the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999. The tag helps prevent unauthorised use of the registered product name by producers outside the recognised region.
- **Economic Importance:** GI recognition can improve branding, authenticity and market access for local producers. Artisans, weavers, sweet makers and craft workers may benefit through better visibility in domestic and export markets. It also supports rural livelihoods by linking traditional knowledge and cultural products with formal intellectual property protection.
- **Jharkhand's GI Profile:** Jharkhand had earlier received GI recognition for Sohrai Painting. The addition of 11 more products expands the state's presence in India's GI landscape. The development is relevant for questions on art and culture, intellectual property rights, tribal crafts, regional products and local economic development.

Exercise Pitch Black 2026

In the News: The Indian Air Force will participate in Exercise Pitch Black 2026, a major multinational air combat exercise hosted by Australia. The exercise will be conducted in Australia's Northern Territory from July 20 to August 7, 2026. It will involve over 100 aircraft and personnel from allied and partner nations, making it one of the major international air combat training events in the Indo-Pacific region.

Key Points:

- **Host and Location:** Exercise Pitch Black is hosted by the Royal Australian Air Force. The 2026 edition will be held in Australia's Top End region, mainly linked with the Northern Territory. The region provides vast airspace and large training areas suitable for complex aerial combat drills.
- **Indian Air Force Participation:** The participation of the Indian Air Force reflects India's growing defence engagement with Australia and other partner countries. Such exercises help air forces practise coordination, mission planning and operational procedures in a multinational environment.
- **Nature of the Exercise:** Pitch Black is designed as a large-scale air combat exercise with complex and combat-like scenarios. Night-time flying is one of its major features. The exercise allows participating air forces to train in realistic conditions involving multiple aircraft, missions and operational roles.
- **Earlier Editions:** Exercise Pitch Black has been conducted by Australia for several decades and has gradually expanded in scale. The 2024 edition involved 20 nations, 140 aircraft and 4,400 personnel. The 2026 edition continues this trend of large multinational participation and advanced air combat training.

Army Contingent Leaves for Mongolia to Participate in Exercise KHAAN QUEST 2026

In the News: The Indian Army contingent has left for Mongolia to participate in Exercise KHAAN QUEST 2026. The multilateral military exercise will be held from 20 June to 3 July 2026 at the Five Hills Training Area in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. The exercise focuses on peace support operations and military cooperation among participating countries.

Key Points:

- **Exercise Details:** Exercise KHAAN QUEST 2026 is a multilateral joint military exercise hosted in Mongolia. It brings together military forces from different countries for coordinated training. The 2026 edition is being conducted at the Five Hills Training Area in Ulaanbaatar.

- **Indian Participation:** The Indian Army contingent consists of 40 personnel. It is being represented mainly by troops from a Battalion of the JAT Regiment. Personnel from other Arms and Services are also part of the contingent.
- **Historical Background:** Exercise KHAAN QUEST began in 2003 as a bilateral exercise between the United States and Mongolian Defence Forces. From 2006 onwards, it became a multilateral peacekeeping exercise. The 2026 edition is the 23rd iteration of the exercise.
- **Training Focus:** The exercise aims to prepare participating forces for peacekeeping missions in a multinational environment. Training activities include joint planning, patrolling, cordon and search operations, and checkpoint establishment. It also includes evacuation of civilians, counter-IED drills, combat first aid, and casualty evacuation.

Telegram Ban and Section 69A of the IT Act, 2000

In the News: The Government temporarily restricted access to Telegram in India under Section 69A of the Information Technology Act, 2000. The action was taken ahead of the NEET (UG) 2026 re-examination scheduled for 21 June 2026. The Delhi High Court upheld the temporary blocking order in the Telegram case.

Key Points:

- **Reason for Action:** The restriction was imposed after concerns that cheating rackets were using Telegram to target NEET (UG) 2026 re-examination candidates. The National Testing Agency stated that the platform was being misused for fraudulent “paper leak” claims. The measure was described as time-bound and linked to exam security.
- **Duration of Restriction:** Access to Telegram was restricted for a limited period ending 22 June 2026. The restriction covered the day of the NEET (UG) re-examination and its immediate aftermath. Telegram’s message-editing feature for already posted messages was directed to remain disabled in India until 30 June 2026.
- **Section 69A Explained:** Section 69A empowers the Central Government or authorised officers to block public access to information through any computer resource. Such blocking can be ordered on grounds including sovereignty and integrity of India, defence of India, security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States, public order, or prevention of incitement to related cognizable offences. The provision requires reasons to be recorded in writing and operates with prescribed procedure and safeguards.
- **Role of Agencies:** The Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre under the Ministry of Home Affairs coordinated operational action against fraudulent channels, groups, and bots. Inputs were also received from State law-enforcement agencies including police forces in Bihar, Gujarat, and Rajasthan. Several channels and groups advertising misleading exam-related content were taken down before the platform-level restriction.
- **Delhi High Court Ruling:** The Delhi High Court held that Section 69A can extend to blocking an entire platform and not only individual posts or messages. The Court noted that the term “information” under the IT Act is broad enough to include software and applications. It also held that the temporary platform-wide restriction satisfied the requirement of proportionality in the given circumstances.

Indian Coast Guard Inducts First Indigenous Hovercraft H-561

In the News: The Indian Coast Guard inducted its first indigenously constructed Air Cushion Vehicle, H-561, in Goa on June 18, 2026. The hovercraft is the first of six indigenous ACVs being built by Chowgule & Company Private Limited for the Indian Coast Guard. The induction is important for coastal security, shallow-water mobility and rapid maritime response.

Key Points:

- **First Indigenous ACV:** H-561 is India’s first indigenously constructed Air Cushion Vehicle inducted into the Indian Coast Guard. An ACV, commonly called a hovercraft, moves over water, mudflats, sandbanks and marshy stretches by riding on a cushion of air. This makes it useful in coastal and littoral zones where normal vessels may face depth-related restrictions.
- **Builder and Location:** The ACV has been built by Chowgule & Company Private Limited in Goa. The Ministry of Defence had earlier signed a contract with the company for six ACVs for the Indian Coast Guard. The project reflects the growing role of domestic shipbuilding firms in maritime security platforms.
- **Operational Role:** H-561 will support coastal patrolling, reconnaissance, interception, interdiction and search-and-rescue operations. Its ability to operate in shallow and marshy waters gives the Coast Guard greater flexibility during



security and emergency missions. Such platforms are especially useful along creeks, estuaries, island zones and tidal coastal stretches.

- **Indian Coast Guard:** The Indian Coast Guard functions under the Ministry of Defence and was established in 1978. Its mandate includes maritime law enforcement, coastal security, pollution response, search and rescue, and assistance to vessels in distress. The induction of ACVs strengthens its operational reach across India's long coastline.
- **Contract Details:** The six ACVs were contracted under the Buy Indian category at a cost of ₹387.44 crore. The procurement is linked to indigenous manufacturing and development of domestic ancillary industries, including MSMEs. It is also relevant for questions on defence procurement categories and maritime infrastructure.

Three-Language Formula and Nagaland's Linguistic Challenge

In the News: The Association of Unaided CBSE Schools in Nagaland has raised concerns over CBSE's mandate to implement the Three-Language Formula under NEP 2020. The concern arises because Nagaland has a highly diverse linguistic profile, with many tribal languages and dialects. Schools have flagged issues related to teachers, textbooks, standardisation and practical implementation.

Key Points:

- **CBSE Mandate:** CBSE has aligned its language policy with NEP 2020 and the National Curriculum Framework for School Education 2023. From July 1, 2026, Class IX students are required to study three languages under the R1, R2 and R3 structure. At least two of the three languages must be native Indian languages.
- **Nagaland's Language Diversity:** Nagaland has a rich linguistic tradition, with languages closely linked to different tribes. The state government portal notes that many tribal dialects are mutually unintelligible, making inter-tribe and intra-tribe communication difficult. English serves as the state language, while Nagamese functions as a common lingua franca in daily communication.
- **Implementation Challenge:** The Three-Language Formula becomes complex in Nagaland because there is no single dominant regional language like many other states. A school may have students from different tribal communities, each with a different mother tongue or dialect. This creates difficulty in deciding which Indian language should be taught as the third language.
- **Resource Concerns:** Schools have pointed to possible shortages of trained language teachers, standard textbooks and uniform teaching material. Several tribal languages have strong oral traditions but limited standardised classroom resources. This may create uneven implementation across private and unaided CBSE schools.
- **Policy Background:** NEP 2020 supports multilingualism and gives flexibility to states, regions and students in choosing languages. However, the requirement that two of the three languages must be Indian languages has raised practical concerns in multilingual regions. Nagaland's case highlights the need to balance national curriculum reform with local linguistic realities.

Green Hydrogen Certification Portal of India

In the News: The Green Hydrogen Certification Portal of India was launched by Union Minister for New and Renewable Energy Pralhad Joshi. The launch took place during a national workshop linked to the National Green Hydrogen Mission. The portal is meant to support transparent certification, traceability and regulatory compliance for green hydrogen production in India.

Key Points:

- **Portal Launch:** The portal has been launched under the Green Hydrogen Certification Scheme of India. It aims to create a digital mechanism for certifying green hydrogen produced in India. The platform will help producers, regulators and market participants verify the green credentials of hydrogen.
- **Nodal Ministry:** The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy is the nodal ministry for the National Green Hydrogen Mission. The Mission was approved by the Union Cabinet on January 4, 2023. It seeks to make India a global hub for production, use and export of green hydrogen and its derivatives.

- **Certification Purpose:** Certification is important because green hydrogen depends on how the energy used in production is sourced. A standardised certification system helps ensure transparency, traceability and market credibility. It also supports future trade in green hydrogen, green ammonia and green methanol.
- **Mission Targets:** The National Green Hydrogen Mission targets at least 5 million metric tonnes of annual green hydrogen production capacity by 2030. It is also linked with about 125 GW of renewable energy capacity addition. The Mission is expected to attract large investments and create employment across the clean energy value chain.
- **Associated Benefits:** The Mission is expected to reduce fossil fuel imports and support decarbonisation of hard-to-abate sectors. Important sectors include refineries, fertilisers, steel, shipping, mobility and heavy industry. The certification portal strengthens the institutional framework needed for a reliable green hydrogen market.

Centre bans 16 fixed dose combination drugs, including antibiotics, painkillers, skin meds

In the News: The Central Government has banned the manufacture, sale and distribution of 16 fixed dose combination drugs for human use with immediate effect. The banned drugs include certain antibiotic-based medicines, pain-relief products, antispasmodic drugs and dermatological formulations. The decision was taken after expert review found that these combinations lacked therapeutic justification and could pose health risks.

Key Points:

- **Meaning of FDC:** A fixed dose combination is a medicine containing two or more active pharmaceutical ingredients in a fixed ratio. Such drugs may be useful when the combination is scientifically justified and improves patient compliance. However, irrational FDCs may increase side effects, drug resistance and unnecessary exposure to medicines.
- **Legal Basis:** The ban was issued under Section 26A of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940. This provision empowers the Central Government to prohibit the manufacture, sale or distribution of a drug in public interest. It is generally used when a drug is found unsafe, ineffective or lacking therapeutic value.
- **Expert Review:** The decision followed a review involving an expert committee, the Drugs Technical Advisory Board and a DTAB sub-committee. The review process found that the 16 combinations were not supported by adequate scientific evidence. Stakeholders were also given opportunities to submit data before the final action was taken.
- **Categories Covered:** The banned combinations include antibiotic combinations, dermatological products, pain-relief combinations and some antispasmodic formulations. Some topical and cosmetic combinations were also found poorly justified from a regulatory point of view. The action aims to remove irrational formulations from the market.

INTERNATIONAL

India, Nepal Discuss Janakpur-Ayodhya Rail Link

In the News: India and Nepal recently discussed cross-border railway cooperation, including the proposed passenger train service between Janakpur in Nepal and Ayodhya in India. The talks were held during the 10th Project Steering Committee meeting and the 8th Joint Working Group meeting in Kathmandu on June 11 and 12, 2026. The discussion focused on operational procedures, ongoing rail projects and future connectivity between the two countries.

Key Points:

- **Janakpur-Ayodhya Passenger Link:** The proposed passenger train service aims to connect Janakpur in Nepal with Ayodhya in India. The route has cultural and religious importance because both places are associated with the Ramayana tradition. It can also strengthen pilgrimage tourism between the two countries.
- **Bilateral Railway Mechanism:** The discussions were held under two bilateral platforms, the Project Steering Committee and the Joint Working Group. These mechanisms review railway cooperation, project progress, technical issues and operational coordination between India and Nepal.
- **Standard Operating Procedures:** One major point of discussion was the preparation of Standard Operating Procedures for starting passenger services on the Janakpur-Ayodhya section. Such procedures are needed for train movement, passenger handling, security checks and coordination between railway authorities.

- **Other Rail Projects:** The meetings also reviewed the Raxaul-Kathmandu broad-gauge railway link and other cross-border rail projects. These projects are important for improving physical connectivity between Nepal and India's border states.

US-Iran ceasefire: Nuclear issue postponed, why next 60 days are crucial

In the News: The United States and Iran have reached a preliminary framework to reduce hostilities, reopen the Strait of Hormuz and move towards further negotiations. The agreement leaves the most sensitive issue, Iran's nuclear programme, for discussions during a 60-day ceasefire window. This period is crucial because sanctions relief, uranium enrichment limits and the shape of a final deal remain unresolved.

Key Points:

- **Preliminary Ceasefire Framework:** The framework seeks to halt military operations and reduce tensions in West Asia. It is expected to create space for diplomatic engagement between the United States and Iran after a period of escalation.
- **Strait of Hormuz Reopening:** A major part of the arrangement is the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most important energy shipping routes. Any disruption in this route can affect global oil and gas supplies and increase energy prices.
- **Nuclear Issue Deferred:** The agreement does not immediately settle Iran's nuclear programme. Further talks are expected to focus on uranium enrichment, nuclear stockpiles and restrictions on expansion of nuclear facilities.
- **Sanctions and Frozen Assets:** The draft arrangement reportedly includes possible oil-sanctions waivers, no new sanctions before a final agreement and discussions on the release of frozen Iranian assets. These financial measures are closely linked to Iran's willingness to accept nuclear limits.
- **Importance of the 60-Day Window:** The 60-day ceasefire period is not a final settlement but a diplomatic testing phase. If the two sides fail to resolve nuclear and sanctions-related issues within this period, tensions may return and the agreement may remain fragile.

Modi, Macron inaugurate innovation conference in Nice

In the News: Prime Minister Narendra Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron jointly inaugurated Bharat Innovates 2026 in Nice, France, on June 14, 2026. The event showcases India's deep-tech innovators, start-ups and higher education institutions before global investors and industry leaders. It forms part of the India-France Year of Innovation and highlights the technology dimension of the bilateral partnership.

Key Points:

- **Bharat Innovates 2026:** Bharat Innovates 2026 is being organised by the Union Ministry of Education in Nice, France. The event brings Indian innovators, start-ups, investors, corporates and higher education institutions onto a common international platform.
- **Focus on Deep Technology:** The conference covers sectors such as advanced computing, semiconductors, space technology, biotechnology, energy, healthcare and manufacturing. These sectors are important because they influence future industrial capacity and technology leadership.
- **India-France Year of Innovation:** The event is linked to the India-France Year of Innovation, which gives it a wider diplomatic and economic context. It shows that innovation has become a major pillar of the India-France strategic partnership.
- **Start-up and Investor Linkages:** The platform aims to connect Indian start-ups with global investors, research institutions, universities and industry partners. Such engagement can help start-ups access funding, technology partnerships and international markets.
- **Bilateral Technology Partnership:** India and France already cooperate in areas such as defence, space, civil nuclear energy and climate action. Bharat Innovates adds a stronger innovation and deep-tech dimension to this partnership.

India and France Launch ATL Bridge to Connect School Innovation Labs and Young Innovators

In the News: India and France launched the India–France ATL Bridge to strengthen school-level innovation cooperation between the two countries. The initiative has been established by Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog, and La Fondation Dassault Systèmes. It connects India’s Atal Tinkering Lab ecosystem with a new school innovation platform in France.

Key Points:

- **Launch and Partnership:** The India–France ATL Bridge has been established by Atal Innovation Mission under NITI Aayog in partnership with La Fondation Dassault Systèmes. It reflects growing education and innovation cooperation between India and France. The initiative was formalised through a Letter of Intent in France.
- **First School Innovation Lab in France:** The initiative establishes the first School Innovation Lab in France inspired by India’s Atal Tinkering Lab framework. This makes India’s school innovation model a reference point for international collaboration. It will provide young learners with a structured environment for practical learning and problem-solving.
- **Role of Atal Tinkering Labs:** Atal Tinkering Labs are school-level innovation spaces created to promote curiosity, creativity and design thinking among students. They encourage hands-on learning in areas such as science, technology, engineering and innovation. The ATL Bridge extends this model beyond India’s domestic education ecosystem.
- **Focus on Young Innovators:** The platform will allow students, educators and innovation mentors from India and France to collaborate on real-world challenges. It is expected to support knowledge exchange, capacity building and joint innovation activities. The initiative gives importance to early-stage innovation and student entrepreneurship.
- **Bilateral Innovation Cooperation:** The ATL Bridge is part of the India–France Year of Innovation 2026. It adds an education-linked dimension to India–France cooperation, which already covers defence, space, energy, technology and culture. The initiative is important for understanding innovation diplomacy and international education partnerships.

UK Announces Social Media Ban for Under-16 Users: Platforms Affected and Key Changes

In the News: The United Kingdom announced a major policy to restrict social media access for users below 16 years of age. The measure is expected to come into effect from spring 2027. The move has been presented as a child safety and digital wellbeing measure, aimed at reducing online harm faced by children.

Key Points:

- **Minimum Age Rule:** Under the announced policy, children below the age of 16 will not be allowed to use certain social media platforms. The rule marks a major shift in the regulation of children’s access to digital platforms. It follows rising concerns over online bullying, harmful content, addiction and mental health risks.
- **Platforms Likely to be Covered:** Major social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, Snapchat, YouTube and X are expected to come under the policy framework. The focus is on platforms that allow social networking, algorithm-based content feeds and user interaction. Messaging and learning-related services may be treated differently depending on their functions.
- **Age Verification and Compliance:** Technology companies will be required to ensure that under-16 users cannot access covered platforms. Age assurance systems may include stronger verification tools and platform-level checks. The role of the regulator will be important in framing compliance standards and enforcement mechanisms.
- **Restrictions for Older Teenagers:** The policy discussions also include restrictions on certain high-risk online features for teenagers above 16. These may include limits on livestreaming, unknown-user interactions and access to harmful digital services. The aim is to reduce exposure to unsafe online environments while allowing safer internet use.

52nd G7 Summit Begins in France as Leaders Focus on Global Security and Economic Stability

In the News: The 52nd G7 Summit began in Évian-les-Bains, France, and is being held from 15 to 17 June 2026. France holds the G7 Presidency for 2026. The summit brings together leaders of major advanced economies to discuss global security, economic stability, trade tensions and major geopolitical challenges.

Key Points:

- **Venue and Presidency:** The 2026 G7 Summit is being hosted by France in Évian-les-Bains. France assumed the G7 Presidency on 1 January 2026. Évian is also significant because it earlier hosted a major G8 summit in 2003.
- **G7 Membership:** The G7 consists of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States. The European Union also participates in G7 discussions. The grouping is an informal forum and does not have a permanent secretariat.
- **Major Agenda Areas:** The summit is focused on global economic imbalances, trade tensions, geopolitical instability and security concerns. The war in Ukraine, developments in the Middle East and energy market risks are major discussion areas. Leaders are also expected to discuss debt pressure and development financing.
- **Technology and Digital Safety:** Artificial intelligence and online safety for minors are also part of the wider G7 discussion. France has placed emphasis on safer digital spaces for children during its G7 Presidency. This connects the summit with debates on technology governance and digital regulation.
- **India and Invited Partners:** India is among the invited partner countries at the summit, along with other major emerging and regional economies. Such invitations show the G7's effort to engage with countries beyond its core membership. It also reflects the growing role of emerging economies in global decision-making.

US-Iran memorandum of understanding: The elusive quest for 'New Middle East'

In the News: The United States and Iran reached a memorandum of understanding aimed at reducing hostilities and easing tensions in the Middle East. The agreement is linked with the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz and the gradual restoration of energy flows. However, several issues remain unresolved, including Iran's nuclear programme, sanctions and regional security concerns.

Key Points:

- **Purpose of the MoU:** The memorandum is intended to create a framework for de-escalation between the United States and Iran. It seeks to reduce the immediate risk of conflict and restore normal movement through the Strait of Hormuz. The agreement is being viewed as an initial step rather than a final settlement.
- **Strait of Hormuz Factor:** The Strait of Hormuz is one of the world's most important energy transit routes. Any disruption in this passage can affect oil and gas supplies, shipping costs and global energy prices. The MoU's reference to reopening or normalising traffic through the Strait makes it economically significant.
- **Nuclear Issue Deferred:** The agreement does not fully settle the question of Iran's nuclear programme. Further negotiations are expected to deal with nuclear commitments, monitoring and compliance. This makes the MoU a temporary stabilising arrangement rather than a comprehensive nuclear deal.
- **Sanctions and Assets:** Sanctions relief and the possible release of frozen Iranian assets remain sensitive parts of the broader negotiation. These issues are linked to Iran's future compliance and the political acceptability of the agreement in both countries. Economic concessions are likely to remain a major bargaining point.
- **Regional Security Dimension:** The phrase 'New Middle East' reflects the hope of creating a more stable regional order. However, the situation remains complicated due to Israel's security concerns, Iran's regional influence, proxy groups, Lebanon and Gulf shipping security. The MoU may reduce immediate tensions, but durable peace will depend on follow-up negotiations and regional participation.

PM Modi's Historic Slovakia Visit

In the News: Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid a historic State Visit to Slovakia on 15 June 2026, marking the first-ever visit by an Indian Prime Minister to Slovakia. During the visit, India and Slovakia elevated their bilateral relationship to a Comprehensive Partnership, making it an important development in India's engagement with Central Europe.

Key Points:

- The visit was historic because it was the first-ever visit by an Indian Prime Minister to Slovakia, and it came at a time when India has been expanding its diplomatic and economic engagement with European countries beyond its traditional partners.



- India and Slovakia elevated their bilateral relations to the level of a Comprehensive Partnership, which indicates a broader and more structured relationship covering political dialogue, trade, technology, defence, education, mobility, culture and people-to-people cooperation.
- Prime Minister Modi held talks with Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico in Bratislava, and the discussions focused on giving a new direction to bilateral cooperation, especially in areas such as automobiles, railways, advanced manufacturing, green technologies, digital technology and trade.
- Technology and innovation emerged as major areas of cooperation during the visit, as both sides signed an MoU on digital technologies and also announced the establishment of the first-ever ICCR Chair in Artificial Intelligence at the Technical University of Košice in Slovakia.
- Defence cooperation received special emphasis during the visit, with both countries signing a Letter of Intent in the defence field, which is expected to support cooperation between the defence industries of India and Slovakia, including joint development and joint production.
- The visit also produced important outcomes in labour mobility, higher education, research, tourism, audiovisual cooperation, quantum communication, critical infrastructure protection, and traditional medicine, reflecting the wide scope of the new Comprehensive Partnership between the two countries.
- Prime Minister Modi was conferred Slovakia's highest State honour, the Order of the White Double Cross, First Class, by Slovak President Peter Pellegrini, making the visit significant not only for bilateral diplomacy but also for symbolic recognition of India-Slovakia friendship.

World's Most Beautiful Airports 2026

In the News: Two Indian airport projects, Navi Mumbai International Airport Terminal 1 and Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport Terminal 2, Guwahati, were included in the Prix Versailles World's Most Beautiful Airports List 2026. The list recognised seven airports and airport terminals across the world for architectural quality, regional identity, sustainability and passenger experience.

Key Pointers:

- The World's Most Beautiful Airports List 2026 was released by Prix Versailles, an international architecture and design award initiative that is announced every year at UNESCO and recognises contemporary projects in categories such as airports, campuses, passenger stations, sports, museums, hotels and restaurants.
- India secured two places in the 2026 airport list, with Navi Mumbai International Airport Terminal 1 and Terminal 2 of Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport, Guwahati, being selected among the seven recognised global airport projects. This makes the recognition important for India's airport infrastructure and design profile.
- Navi Mumbai International Airport Terminal 1 was recognised for its lotus-inspired architectural design, including lotus-like columns and a petal-shaped roof. The design is important because it connects modern airport infrastructure with Indian cultural symbolism while also focusing on functional airport operations.
- Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport Terminal 2 in Guwahati was recognised for its bamboo-orchid-inspired design, flowing ceiling patterns and strong connection with the cultural identity of Northeast India. The terminal's design highlights how airport architecture can reflect local geography, materials and regional heritage.
- The seven airports recognised in the 2026 list are located in China, Germany, India, Cambodia and the United States, showing that the list is global in character and not limited to one region. The other selected airports include Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport Terminal 3, Frankfurt Airport Terminal 3, Techo International Airport, Pittsburgh International Airport and San Diego International Airport Terminal 1.
- The selection criteria of Prix Versailles give importance to innovation, creativity, local heritage, ecological efficiency and social value, rather than treating airports only as transport facilities. This makes the list relevant for competitive exams because it links infrastructure development with sustainability, design, tourism and cultural representation.
- Three of the seven selected airport projects will later receive additional World Titles, such as Prix Versailles, Interior or Exterior awards, later in 2026. Therefore, the 2026 list should be understood as a shortlist of globally recognised airport projects, not as a simple numerical ranking of airports.

India and Canada Launch Security Pact Talks, Aim to Finalise Trade Deal in 2026

In the News: India and Canada agreed to launch negotiations on a General Security of Information Agreement (GSOIA) and reaffirmed their aim to conclude the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) negotiations in 2026. The decision was taken during the meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney on the sidelines of the G7 Summit in Évian, France, on 16 June 2026.

Key Points:

- The proposed General Security of Information Agreement is important because it will create a framework for the secure exchange and protection of classified information between India and Canada. Such an agreement is usually treated as a foundation for deeper defence and security cooperation, as it allows both governments to share sensitive information in a more structured and legally protected manner.
- India and Canada also reaffirmed their shared objective of concluding CEPA negotiations in 2026. CEPA refers to a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, which is broader than a simple trade agreement because it can cover trade in goods, trade in services, investment, supply chains, technology cooperation and other economic areas.
- The leaders reviewed the positive momentum in India–Canada relations after Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney’s visit to India in March 2026. The June 2026 meeting showed that both countries are trying to stabilise and rebuild relations through practical cooperation in trade, energy, security, technology, education and people-to-people ties.
- Economic cooperation was a major focus of the meeting, especially in the areas of LNG, LPG and metallurgical coal. These areas are important for India because Canada is a resource-rich country, while India is a large and growing energy market with increasing demand for diversified and reliable supplies.
- The meeting also highlighted growing institutional engagement between the two countries. India and Canada noted recent meetings of the Joint Science and Technology Committee and the Consular Dialogue, and also looked forward to future dialogues in defence, finance and migration, which shows that the relationship is being rebuilt through multiple official channels.
- Both sides recognised the importance of resilient and reliable supply chains in strengthening global energy and food security. This is significant because India–Canada cooperation can support sectors such as energy, agriculture, critical minerals, technology, education and skilled mobility, which are important for both bilateral trade and wider Indo-Pacific engagement.
- Prime Minister Modi expressed India’s support for Canada becoming a Dialogue Partner of the Indian Ocean Rim Association. This is relevant for exams because IORA is an Indian Ocean regional organisation, and Canada’s proposed engagement reflects the growing strategic importance of the Indo-Pacific and Indian Ocean region in India–Canada cooperation.
- The two leaders also announced the establishment of Raisina Americas as a platform for dialogue and cooperation.

World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought Observed in India

In the News: India observed the World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought 2026 on 17 June 2026 at an event held at Indira Paryavaran Bhawan, New Delhi. The event was led by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, and focused on India’s progress in land restoration, drought resilience and sustainable land management under the UNCCD framework.

Key Points:

- The World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought is observed every year on 17 June under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. The day is meant to create awareness about desertification, land degradation and drought, and to encourage countries to adopt stronger measures for restoring degraded land and protecting vulnerable ecosystems.
- The theme for 2026 was “Rangelands: Recognize. Respect. Restore.” The theme highlighted the importance of rangelands and grasslands in supporting biodiversity, livestock-based livelihoods, water-cycle regulation, carbon sequestration and climate resilience, especially for pastoralist and rural communities.

- India announced that 21.76 million hectares of land have already been brought under restoration efforts against its Bonn Challenge target of 26 million hectares by 2030. This is significant because India's restoration commitment is one of the major global commitments aimed at restoring degraded and deforested landscapes.
- The Ministry released India's Second Progress Report on the Bonn Challenge and a Special Issue of Indian Forester during the event. The progress report presents India's restoration work across States and Union Territories and records the ecological and socio-economic benefits of forest landscape restoration, land degradation neutrality and ecosystem resilience.
- The Bonn Challenge is a global initiative launched in 2011 to restore degraded and deforested landscapes. Its global target is to bring 350 million hectares of degraded and deforested land under restoration by 2030, making it an important international framework for climate action and sustainable land management.
- India highlighted several national initiatives linked with land restoration, including WDC-PMKSY, Green India Mission, CAMPA-supported afforestation, Joint Forest Management, agroforestry, bamboo plantations and the Aravalli Green Wall Initiative. These programmes show that India's strategy against land degradation is spread across watershed development, forest restoration, community participation and landscape-level ecological repair.
- India's drylands extend across about 228 million hectares and are crucial for agriculture, livestock rearing and rural livelihoods. The India Desertification and Land Degradation Atlas has indicated that 97.85 million hectares, or 29.77% of India's geographical area, are affected by land degradation and desertification, making the issue highly relevant for environmental governance and sustainable development.

US and Iran Sign Interim Pact to Halt Conflict and Reopen Strait of Hormuz

In the News: The United States and Iran signed an interim agreement known as the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding to halt hostilities and restore commercial movement through the Strait of Hormuz. The agreement is associated with Islamabad because talks were held there, but the signing took place electronically rather than through a single physical signing ceremony in Islamabad. The pact provides for an immediate halt to military operations, Iran's reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, and the immediate lifting of the US naval blockade.

Key Points:

- **Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding:** The agreement is called the Islamabad MoU because Islamabad hosted key negotiations between the parties. Pakistan played the role of mediator and witness in the diplomatic process. The MoU is an interim arrangement meant to reduce hostilities and create space for a final settlement.
- **Electronic Signing and Switzerland Process:** The MoU was signed electronically by the concerned parties, while a separate diplomatic process was linked to Bürgenstock, Switzerland. This distinction is important because the agreement should not be understood as having been physically signed in Islamabad. The signing format reflects the use of remote diplomacy in high-level international negotiations.
- **Immediate Maritime Measures:** Iran agreed to reopen the Strait of Hormuz immediately, while the United States agreed to immediately lift the naval blockade. The earlier framing of a 30-day delay for the blockade is inaccurate in this context. These measures were aimed at restoring maritime traffic and reducing pressure on global energy markets.
- **Strait of Hormuz Significance:** The Strait of Hormuz connects the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea. It is one of the world's most important routes for crude oil and liquefied natural gas movement. Any disruption in this route can affect oil prices, shipping costs and energy security for importing countries.
- **Final Agreement Window:** The 60-day period refers to the window for negotiating a final agreement, not to a temporary 60-day reopening of the Strait. The final talks are expected to deal with issues such as Iran's nuclear programme, enriched uranium stockpiles and international monitoring. This makes the pact a temporary confidence-building framework rather than a complete settlement.

India-UK CETA and Social Security Agreement to Take Effect from July 15, 2026

In the News: India and the United Kingdom announced that the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) and the Agreement on Social Security, also known as the Double Contribution Convention (DCC), will come into force on July 15, 2026. The agreements are aimed at expanding trade, improving market access and easing social security burdens for professionals working across the two countries.

Key Points:

- **CETA Implementation Date:** The India-UK CETA will enter into force on July 15, 2026, after completion of ratification procedures. It is one of India's major bilateral trade agreements with a developed economy. The agreement is expected to strengthen goods trade, services trade and investment flows.
- **Duty-Free Access for Indian Exports:** CETA will provide immediate duty-free access on 99% of Indian tariff lines. Sectors such as textiles, leather, marine products, engineering goods, processed food, chemicals and pharmaceuticals are expected to benefit. Sensitive Indian sectors such as dairy, cereals, millets, edible oils, oilseeds and apples have been protected from tariff concessions.
- **Services and Mobility Access:** The UK has offered market access across major services sectors and 137 sub-sectors of Indian export interest. Indian professionals in IT, healthcare, education, engineering, financial services, telecom and consultancy may benefit from improved access. The agreement also covers business visitors, intra-corporate transferees, contractual service suppliers and independent professionals.
- **Double Contribution Convention:** The Social Security Agreement will prevent eligible professionals from paying social security contributions in both countries during temporary assignments. The exemption period has been increased from three years to five years. Over 75,000 Indian professionals and more than 900 companies are expected to benefit from this arrangement.
- **UK Market and Tariff Gains:** The UK expects the deal to increase bilateral trade by £25.5 billion annually in the long run. India will reduce tariffs on products such as whisky and automobiles under agreed conditions. The agreement is significant for India-UK economic relations, trade diplomacy and professional mobility.

UAE Sets Minimum Social Media Age at 15

In the News: The United Arab Emirates has approved a rule setting 15 years as the minimum age for personal social media use. Children below 15 will not be allowed to create, use or operate personal social media accounts. The decision is part of the UAE's wider child digital safety framework and gives platforms up to 12 months to comply.

Key Points:

- **Minimum Age Rule:** The UAE has become the first Arab country to set 15 as the minimum age for social media use. Children below 15 cannot post content, comment, share, join public groups or operate personal social media accounts. This rule reflects growing legal attention to children's online safety.
- **Safeguards for Teen Users:** Teenagers aged 15 and 16 may use social media with additional safeguards. These include age-appropriate content controls, restrictions on unknown users, screen-time tools and parental supervision features. The rule tries to balance digital access with child protection.
- **Age Verification Requirements:** Social media platforms operating in the UAE must introduce strong age-verification systems. Digital identity checks and AI-supported technologies may be used, while self-declared age will not be accepted. Platforms must also prevent attempts to bypass the verification process.
- **Data Protection Measures:** Platforms are required to disable accounts created by children below 15. They must also avoid using children's personal data for targeted advertising or behavioural profiling. This connects the rule with privacy, data protection and platform accountability.
- **Child Digital Safety Framework:** The rule builds on the UAE's Federal Decree-Law No. 26 of 2025 on Child Digital Safety, which came into force on January 1, 2026. The law provides a broader framework for protecting children from harmful digital content, unsafe online interaction and misuse of personal data.

Uzbekistan Becomes First Central Asian Member of New Development Bank

In the News: Uzbekistan has officially joined the New Development Bank, becoming the first Central Asian country to become a member of the BRICS-led multilateral lender. The NDB listed "Uzbekistan Officially Joins New Development Bank as New Member Country" as a press release dated 18 June 2026. Its membership became effective after the accession process was completed in June 2026.

Key Points:

- **First Central Asian Member:** Uzbekistan's entry marks the NDB's first expansion into Central Asia. This is significant because Central Asia is emerging as an important region for energy, connectivity, transport corridors and infrastructure finance. Uzbekistan became the 10th member of the Bank after completing the required accession formalities.
- **About NDB:** The New Development Bank was established in 2015 by the BRICS countries. Its mandate is to mobilise resources for infrastructure and sustainable development projects in BRICS and other emerging markets and developing countries.
- **Membership Process:** The NDB Board of Governors had officially admitted Colombia and Uzbekistan as borrowing members at its 10th Annual Meeting in Rio de Janeiro in July 2025. Uzbekistan's effective membership followed the completion of domestic and institutional requirements.
- **Development Focus:** NDB financing is linked to sectors such as clean energy, transport infrastructure, water and sanitation, environmental protection, social infrastructure and digital infrastructure. These areas match Uzbekistan's needs in regional connectivity, public infrastructure and sustainable development.

Indian Jurist Bimal Patel Elected to ITLOS

In the News: Indian jurist Professor Bimal N. Patel was elected as a Judge of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea for the 2026–2035 term. The development was reported on 19 June 2026, with India thanking UNCLOS member states for supporting its candidate. Patel will take office on 1 October 2026.

Key Points:

- **About ITLOS:** The International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea is an independent judicial body created under the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. It deals with disputes relating to the interpretation and application of UNCLOS. The Tribunal is based in Hamburg, Germany.
- **Composition of Tribunal:** ITLOS consists of 21 independent members. Its members are elected from persons having high reputation for fairness, integrity and recognised competence in the law of the sea. The Statute also requires representation of major legal systems and equitable geographical distribution.
- **Election Process:** Judges are elected by States Parties to UNCLOS. In the 2026 election, seven seats were filled for the 2026–2035 term. The election was held during the 36th meeting of States Parties to UNCLOS at the UN Headquarters in New York.
- **Profile of Bimal N. Patel:** Professor Patel is a member of the UN International Law Commission and Vice-Chancellor of Rashtriya Raksha University. His areas of work include public international law, law of the sea, maritime law and international courts and tribunals.
- **India's Representation:** His election ensures India's continued presence in ITLOS after Judge Neeru Chadha's term ends in September 2026. Neeru Chadha has been a member of ITLOS since 2017 and has served as Vice-President of the Tribunal.

Want to cross the Strait of Hormuz? Fill out this form first

In the News: After the signing of a 14-point MoU between the United States and Iran, Iran's newly constituted Persian Gulf Strait Authority announced a permit procedure for vessels crossing the Strait of Hormuz. Ships must submit transit requests at least 48 hours before arrival. The procedure comes after major disruption to shipping through one of the world's most important energy chokepoints.

Key Points:

- **New Permit System:** Iran's Persian Gulf Strait Authority has stated that vessels must use official channels to seek permission for passage. The process involves an online form seeking details such as vessel name, flag, IMO number, cargo type, owner, ship manager and contact information.

- **48-Hour Rule:** Ships must submit passing requests at least 48 hours before reaching the Strait of Hormuz area. Iran has said that route coordination and scheduled passage time are necessary because of mine-affected areas and risks to safe navigation.
- **60-Day Fee Waiver:** During the initial 60-day window under the MoU, Iran will not collect tariffs or service fees from ships. The waived charges relate to security, safety, environmental services and related insurance. After this period, Iran may seek to introduce charges for maritime services.
- **Strategic Location:** The Strait of Hormuz connects the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea. It is especially important for crude oil, LNG and Gulf energy exports, and disruptions there can affect shipping costs, oil prices and energy security.
- **Law of the Sea Angle:** Under UNCLOS rules on international straits, ships and aircraft enjoy the right of transit passage through straits used for international navigation. The new permit and possible fee system has therefore raised legal and commercial questions among global shippers.

India to Assume Vice-Presidency of FATF for 1st Time

In the News: India will assume the Vice-Presidency of the Financial Action Task Force for the first time. Vivek Aggarwal of India has been appointed as the incoming FATF Vice-President for the term July 2026 to June 2027. The appointment was approved at the FATF Plenary held in Paris from June 17 to 19, 2026.

Key Points:

- **Indian Appointment:** Vivek Aggarwal has been appointed as the incoming Vice-President of FATF for July 2026 to June 2027. He is a senior Indian bureaucrat and was serving as Secretary in the Ministry of Culture. This is the first time India will hold the Vice-Presidency of FATF.
- **About FATF:** FATF is a global standard-setting body that leads action against money laundering, terrorist financing and proliferation financing. It is a 40-member body, the 40 members comprise 38 countries plus 2 regional organisations (the European Commission and the Gulf Cooperation Council) and its standards are followed through a global network of more than 200 jurisdictions. FATF also conducts mutual evaluations of countries' financial crime frameworks.
- **Origin and Mandate:** FATF was established in 1989 by the G7 to examine and develop measures against money laundering. In 2001, its mandate was expanded to include terrorist financing. The FATF Secretariat is located at the OECD Headquarters in Paris.
- **India and FATF:** India became a full member of FATF in 2010. In 2024, India's Mutual Evaluation Report placed it in the "regular follow-up" category. The evaluation noted India's AML/CFT framework and its role in tackling illicit finance.
- **Important Terms:** AML refers to anti-money laundering, CFT refers to countering the financing of terrorism, and CPF refers to countering proliferation financing. FATF uses grey-listing for jurisdictions under increased monitoring and black-listing for high-risk jurisdictions subject to a call for action. These terms are frequently used in questions on global financial governance.

APPOINTMENTS

Sundarraaj Pattilingam Appointed NIA Inspector General

In the News: The Union Ministry of Home Affairs approved the appointment of Sundarraaj Pattilingam, also known as Sundarraaj P, as Inspector General in the National Investigation Agency on central deputation. He is a 2003-batch IPS officer of the Chhattisgarh cadre and was serving as Inspector General of Police, Bastar Range, before his appointment to the NIA.

Key Points:

- Sundarraaj Pattilingam's appointment was approved through an official communication dated 16 June 2026, and the Ministry of Home Affairs requested the Chhattisgarh Government to relieve him so that he could take charge of his new central assignment in the National Investigation Agency.
- He is a 2003-batch Indian Police Service officer of the Chhattisgarh cadre, and his appointment to the NIA is significant because it brings an officer with long field experience in internal security and counter-insurgency operations into India's premier anti-terror investigation agency.



- Before this appointment, Sundarraj Pattilingam served in Chhattisgarh's Bastar region for about 12 years, including around seven years as the police head in the region. Bastar has been one of India's most important theatres of anti-Maoist and Left-Wing Extremism operations.
- His work in Bastar was closely associated with anti-Maoist operations and security initiatives, especially in districts such as Sukma, Bijapur, Dantewada, Narayanpur, Kanker and Kondagaon. This operational background makes his appointment relevant for internal security, counter-insurgency and anti-terror investigation themes.
- The appointment has been made against an existing vacancy in the NIA and will be governed by the usual conditions of central deputation. He is expected to formally join the NIA after the Chhattisgarh Government completes the administrative process of relieving him from his State responsibilities.
- The National Investigation Agency is India's central counter-terror investigation agency, established under the National Investigation Agency Act, 2008. It investigates and prosecutes offences affecting the sovereignty, security and integrity of India, making it a key institution in India's internal security framework.

National Statistical Commission Gets New Chairperson and Members

In the News: The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the appointment of Dr. Saibal Chattopadhyay as the new Chairperson of the National Statistical Commission (NSC). The government has also appointed Prof. Shubhabrata Das, Shri Satyendra Bahadur Singh and Dr. Madhavan Mukund as members of the Commission. The appointments are significant because the NSC is the nodal body for India's official statistical system and plays a major role in maintaining the quality, credibility and coordination of national data.

Key Points:

- **New Chairperson:** Dr. Saibal Chattopadhyay has been appointed as Chairperson of the National Statistical Commission. He is a former Director of the Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta. His academic background is in statistics, with specialisation in survey sampling, estimation methods and quantitative techniques.
- **New Members Appointed:** The newly appointed members are Prof. Shubhabrata Das, Shri Satyendra Bahadur Singh and Dr. Madhavan Mukund. Prof. Das is associated with IIM Bangalore, Shri Singh is a retired Indian Statistical Service officer, and Dr. Mukund is Director of Chennai Mathematical Institute. Their backgrounds cover statistics, official data systems, computer science and policy-related statistical work.
- **About the NSC:** The National Statistical Commission was set up in 2005 as the nodal body for core statistical activities in India. It works on statistical standards, priorities, coordination and quality control. The Commission is important for improving public trust in official statistics.
- **Composition of the Commission:** The NSC consists of a part-time Chairperson, four part-time members with experience in statistics and related fields, and the CEO of NITI Aayog as an ex-officio member. The Secretary of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation acts as the Secretary to the NSC. This structure connects statistical policy with national planning and governance.
- **Functions of NSC:** The Commission evolves national policies and priorities related to the statistical system. It recommends standard concepts, definitions, classifications and methodologies for official statistics. It also reviews statistical activities of ministries, departments, States and Union Territories to improve the quality and integrity of data.

ECONOMY

India Launches New Wholesale Price Index Series with Base Year 2022-23

In the News: India released a new Wholesale Price Index series with 2022–23 as the base year on 15 June 2026, replacing the earlier WPI series based on 2011–12. The revised series was launched by the Office of Economic Adviser, DPIIT, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, along with new Producer Price Indices to modernise India's price-measurement system.

Key Points:

- The base year of the Wholesale Price Index has been revised from 2011–12 to 2022–23, making the index more representative of the present structure of the Indian economy. A base-year revision is important because older price baskets may not fully capture changes in production patterns, energy sources, consumption behaviour and industrial composition.
- The revised WPI series has been released by the Office of Economic Adviser under DPIIT, which functions under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. The new series became effective in June 2026 with the release of provisional WPI data for May 2026, and back-series data has also been made available from April 2023 to May 2026.
- The commodity basket under the new WPI series has expanded from 697 items to 957 items, which gives the index wider coverage and improves its ability to reflect current wholesale price movements. The revised basket also removes outdated items and includes newer items that are more relevant to the present economy.
- The new WPI series includes renewable and nuclear energy within the electricity group, with solar, wind and nuclear electricity added to the basket. This is significant because it reflects India's changing energy mix and gives better statistical recognition to non-conventional sources of energy in price measurement.
- Crude petroleum and natural gas have been shifted from the Primary Articles group to the Fuel and Power group, so that major energy-related commodities are placed under a more coherent structure. This change improves the tracking of energy prices because the Fuel and Power group already includes coal, electricity and petroleum products.
- The revised series uses Gross Value of Output for deriving weights instead of Net Traded Value, which was used in the earlier 2011–12 series. This methodological change is important because Gross Value of Output better reflects the domestic production importance of commodities, rather than being influenced by import and export flows.
- India also released new Producer Price Indices along with the revised WPI series, including Output PPI, Trial Input PPI and Service PPI for seven service sectors. The government has indicated that WPI will run along with PPI for five years before being discontinued, giving users time to shift gradually from WPI to PPI.

SCIENCE AND TECH

Artemis III

In the News: NASA announced the crew members for the Artemis III mission, which is planned for 2027. The mission will be an important test flight under NASA's Artemis programme. It will use the Space Launch System rocket and Orion spacecraft to carry astronauts to low Earth orbit for mission-critical tests before future lunar surface missions.

Key Points:

- **Crew Announcement:** NASA named Randy Bresnik as commander, Luca Parmitano as pilot, and Andre Douglas and Frank Rubio as mission specialists for Artemis III. Bob Hines has been named as the backup crew member. Luca Parmitano's selection is significant as he is an astronaut from the European Space Agency.
- **Mission Objective:** Artemis III is planned as a test mission in low Earth orbit. It will demonstrate rendezvous and docking operations between Orion and test versions of commercial human landing systems. These tests are important for future missions involving human landings near the lunar South Pole.
- **Launch Vehicle and Spacecraft:** The mission will use NASA's Space Launch System rocket and the Orion spacecraft. The launch will take place from Kennedy Space Center in Florida. Orion will carry four crew members and remain central to NASA's crewed deep-space exploration architecture.
- **Commercial Lander Role:** Blue Origin and SpaceX are developing human landing system test articles for the mission. Orion is expected to dock with one or both of these lander test systems during the flight. This shows the growing role of commercial space companies in major human spaceflight missions.



ENVIRONMENT

Project Great Indian Bustard Adds Three New Chicks, Captive Population Reaches 94

In the News: Project Great Indian Bustard recorded a major conservation milestone after three new chicks were added to the captive breeding programme. With this, the captive stock of Great Indian Bustards has increased to 94 birds. The development was announced by Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav in June 2026.

Key Points:

- **Three New Chicks Added:** The three new chicks were added to the Great Indian Bustard conservation breeding programme in Rajasthan. They emerged from one wild-collected egg and two captive-laid eggs. This addition has increased the captive population under the project to 94 birds.
- **Fourth Year of Captive Breeding:** The project is currently in the fourth year of captive breeding. So far, 26 chicks have hatched during this breeding phase. This includes chicks hatched through artificial insemination, natural breeding and wild-collected eggs.
- **Artificial Insemination Success:** Out of the 26 chicks hatched so far in the fourth year, 18 were through artificial insemination. Four chicks were through natural breeding and four came from wild-collected eggs. This indicates the importance of scientific breeding methods in saving critically endangered species.
- **Jumpstart Intervention in Rajasthan:** Three chicks have also hatched in the wild in Rajasthan through jumpstart intervention. This method involves collecting vulnerable wild eggs and supporting chick survival to improve genetic diversity. It also helps reduce predation risks during the early life stage of the bird.

SPORTS

Smriti Mandhana in TIME100 Most Influential People in Sports 2026

In the News: Smriti Mandhana was included in **TIME100: The 100 Most Influential People in Sports 2026**, becoming the **only Indian** to feature in the global list of influential sports personalities. Her inclusion is significant because it recognises her growing stature in international women's cricket and her role in strengthening India's presence in global sport.

Key Points:

- Smriti Mandhana is an Indian women's cricketer and a left-handed opening batter, who has become one of the most prominent faces of Indian women's cricket due to her consistent performances across formats and her leadership role in franchise cricket.
- TIME100 Sports 2026 recognises influential figures connected with the world of sport, including athletes, coaches, advocates and investors who have shaped the sporting landscape through performance, leadership, commercial impact or wider public influence.
- Mandhana was placed in the 'Titans' category of the TIME100 Sports 2026 list, alongside several globally recognised sporting figures, which highlights the international recognition she has gained beyond Indian cricket.
- She became the first Indian woman to score a double century in a domestic one-day match, and this achievement remains an important milestone in the development of women's cricket in India because it demonstrated her ability to dominate long-format limited-overs batting.
- She also became the first Indian woman to score a century in all three international formats, namely Tests, One Day Internationals and T20 Internationals, making her one of India's most complete batters across formats.
- Mandhana is a joint holder of the record for most international centuries in women's cricket, with 17 centuries, which reflects her long-term consistency and her importance as a top-order batter for India in major international matches.
- She became the first woman to score more than 1,000 ODI runs in a calendar year, finishing 2025 with 1,362 ODI runs, which set a new benchmark for batting consistency in women's One Day International cricket.



Deepti Sharma Becomes Joint-Highest Wicket-Taker for India

In the News: Indian all-rounder Deepti Sharma entered a major record list during the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2026. She became the joint-highest wicket-taker for India in women's international cricket by equalling Jhulan Goswami's tally. The milestone highlights her long-term consistency as one of India's most reliable all-round performers.

Key Points:

- **Record Milestone:** Deepti Sharma equalled Jhulan Goswami's record of 355 wickets for India across formats in women's international cricket. This made her the joint-highest wicket-taker for India in women's internationals. The milestone is significant because Jhulan Goswami is regarded as one of the greatest fast bowlers in women's cricket.
- **Achievement in T20 World Cup:** Deepti's record came during India's ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2026 campaign. She had earlier produced a match-winning spell of 5/10 against Pakistan. These figures were reported as the best bowling figures in a women's T20I match.
- **Role as an All-Rounder:** Deepti Sharma has contributed to India with both bat and ball across formats. Her main value comes from her ability to bowl in pressure phases and provide batting depth in the middle order. Such players are important in modern limited-overs cricket because they offer balance to the team.
- **Link with Indian Women's Cricket:** The record places Deepti alongside Jhulan Goswami, who shaped India's pace-bowling identity for many years. Deepti's rise reflects the increasing depth of Indian women's cricket. It also shows the growing importance of spin-bowling all-rounders in international tournaments.
- **Tournament Context:** India's strong performances in the Women's T20 World Cup 2026 have been supported by both senior players and younger names. Deepti's milestone adds to India's record-based achievements in the tournament. It is also relevant for sports current affairs questions on women's cricket and ICC events.

Fatima Sana Sets Women's T20 World Cup Records

In the News: Pakistan captain Fatima Sana created history during the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2026. She became the first captain in Women's T20 World Cup history to score a half-century and take three wickets in the same match. The feat came against South Africa, where she remained unbeaten on 55 and also took 3/16.

Key Points:

- **Historic All-Round Feat:** Fatima Sana became the first captain in ICC Women's T20 World Cup history to score a fifty and take three wickets in one match. Her performance included an unbeaten 55 with the bat and three wickets with the ball. This made her achievement one of the notable all-round records in the tournament.
- **Match Against South Africa:** The record came in Pakistan's match against South Africa at the Women's T20 World Cup 2026. Despite Fatima Sana's performance, Pakistan lost a close contest by two wickets. Her effort stood out because she influenced the match in both innings.
- **Captaincy Importance:** Fatima Sana's performance is important because it came while leading Pakistan. A captain contributing with both bat and ball adds tactical strength to the team. It also reflects the growing role of all-round captains in women's cricket.
- **Pakistan Women's Cricket:** Fatima Sana is among the prominent young names in Pakistan women's cricket. Her record strengthens Pakistan's presence in global women's cricket discussions. It also adds to the visibility of players from Asian teams in ICC tournaments.