



DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

>>> 23 JUNE 2025

NATIONAL AFFAIRS / GOVERNMENT SCHEME

1. Government to Establish Centre of Excellence at WII-SACON to Mitigate Human–Wildlife Conflict.



On June 21, 2025, Union Environment, Forest and Climate Change Minister Bhupendra Yadav announced the establishment of a Centre of Excellence (CoE) to tackle human–wildlife conflict. This CoE will be hosted jointly by the Wildlife Institute of India and Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History (WII–SACON), equipping India with advanced, science-backed solutions for preventing wildlife-related fatalities.

- The launch builds upon a 2021 advisory and 2022 guidelines on conflict mitigation, at a time when fatalities from tiger and elephant attacks are increasing. In 2024 alone, there were 74 tiger-related deaths—up from 86 in 2023 and 111 in 2022—with Maharashtra, Odisha, and Uttar Pradesh being severely impacted. Similarly, 628 elephant-related human deaths were recorded in 2023–24, with Odisha experiencing 154 such incidents.

- The CoE will focus on the development and deployment of AI-driven tools, including camera traps, GIS mapping, and real-time tracking systems, supported by Standard Operating Procedures, targeted public sensitisation campaigns, and rapid response teams to prevent and manage conflict situations.

Key Points:-

(i) During the announcement, Minister Yadav also initiated an effort to conserve the critically endangered gharial in Uttar Pradesh by releasing seven hatchlings into the Girwa River at Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary. This initiative forms part of a broader aquatic ecosystem and river rejuvenation mission.

(ii) At a workshop held in Dudhwa Tiger Reserve, Minister Yadav interacted with the Tharu tribal community and members of the Special Tiger Protection Force, integrating traditional ecological knowledge and frontline insights. These consultations—along with submissions from 25–30 experts—will inform the CoE's conflict mitigation strategy and policy roadmap.

(iii) The next steps include operationalizing AI-based systems at conflict hotspots, establishing district-level rapid-response units, launching continuous public awareness drives, and formalizing state and district committees for managing compensation and relief. Fully executing this initiative will require sustained funding, training, and ongoing monitoring to protect both communities and wildlife.

2. Yadgir Youth Receive ₹11.70 Lakh Under Karnataka's Yuva Nidhi Scheme as 39,132 Beneficiaries Are Empowered.



In June 2025, the Government of Karnataka successfully disbursed ₹11.70 lakh to 39,132 unemployed youth in Yadgir district through the Yuva Nidhi Scheme, providing monthly financial support and skill-training opportunities via direct benefit transfers.

- Under this flagship scheme, graduates receive ₹3,000 per month, while diploma holders receive ₹1,500 per month, for up to two years or until employment—whichever comes first. Disbursement commences six months after graduation, offering sustained support during job searches.

- Beneficiaries must submit a self-declaration of job status via the Seva Sindhu portal on or before the 25th of each month, ensuring transparency and accountability. Those found employed are immediately removed to maintain scheme integrity.

Key Points:-

(i) The scheme, launched in January 2024 as Karnataka's fifth guarantee initiative, complements other welfare programs like Gruha Jyothi, Anna Bhagya, Griha Lakshmi, and Shakti. The government earmarked ₹250 crore in the first year, with projected expansion to ₹1,200 crore in 2025–26 and ₹1,500 crore annually from 2026 onward.

(ii) This initiative benefits over 1.2 lakh youth statewide, including 5.29 lakh graduates and diploma holders who passed in the 2022–23 and 2023–24 academic years. The seamless Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) process via Aadhaar-linked bank accounts has streamlined and expedited support.

(iii) The Yuva Nidhi Scheme not only offers immediate financial relief during unemployment but also fosters long-term economic stability. By coupling fiscal support with optional skill development training, the program empowers Karnataka's educated youth to pursue job

opportunities effectively and confidently.

3. MoE Released PGI 2.0 Report for 2022–23 and 2023–24 : Chandigarh Tops While Meghalaya Ranks Lowest.



On June 18, 2025, the Ministry of Education (MoE) published the Performance Grading Index (PGI) 2.0 report for 2022–23 and 2023–24. Chandigarh scored 703–719 points, securing the solitary Prachesta-1 (51–60%) grade, while Meghalaya lagged at ~417 in Akanshi-3 (≤46%), exposing a 302–point (≈42%) educational divide.

- PGI 2.0 assesses school education across India using a 1,000-point scale, split into two categories—Outcomes and Governance & Management—and six domains: Learning Outcomes (LO), Access (A), Infrastructure & Facilities (IF), Equity (E), Governance Processes (GP), and Teacher Education & Training (TE&T), based on 73 indicators sourced from NAS 2021, UDISE+, PM-POSHAN, PRABAND, and Vidyanjali portals.

- Chandigarh improved from ~688 to ~703–719, earning the only Prachesta-1 grade (701–760). Its success is credited to strong IF and GP performance, digital school governance, Aadhaar seeding, and vocational education initiatives.

- Meghalaya scored ~417, falling into Akanshi-3 (≤ 460). It was the only region in this lowest band, pointing to critical shortcomings in access, equity, infrastructure, and learning outcomes.

Key Points:-

- (i) Scores ranged from 719 to 417—a 302-point ($\approx 42\%$) gap, previously $580/10=60$ per band. No region reached higher levels (Uttam or above), underscoring systemic limitations.
- (ii) Between 2022–23 and 2023–24, 24 out of 36 States/UTs improved, while 12 declined. High improvement in access seen in Bihar and Telangana; infrastructure gains marked in Delhi, J&K, Telangana.
- (iii) Despite infrastructure improvements, foundational learning remains weak. The report recommends focused interventions in LO and equity, aligning with NEP 2020 and SDG-4 goals. MoE needs to leverage data-driven governance to elevate all low-performing regions.

4. India Launches Integration of Rare Blood Donor Registry with e-Rakt Kosh to Ensure Faster and Safer Transfusions.



On June 21, 2025, the ICMR-NIIH launched India's first national Rare Blood Donor Registry, a monumental initiative targeting patients requiring

frequent transfusions, such as those with thalassemia, sickle cell disease, hemophilia, and immunodeficiency disorders. The registry is now being integrated with e-Rakt Kosh, the digital blood-bank platform managed by DGHS, to create a unified, real-time access portal for rare blood types.

- The registry has screened over 4,000 O-group donors from major centres like Mumbai, Chandigarh, Kolkata, and Puducherry using molecular assays. It has identified more than 600 rare-antigen-negative donors, including approximately 250 classified as “very rare” and around 170 Bombay phenotype donors, which are in demand nationally (estimated need ~ 120 – 150 units/year). These profiles, along with other ultra-rare types such as P-null and Rh-null, have been catalogued via a web portal for easy requisition.

- e-Rakt Kosh, launched in 2016, already links approximately 3,800–4,000 licensed blood banks across India, enabling real-time inventory updates, donor coordination, and camp information through web and mobile interfaces. The integration flagging rare blood types within this unified platform will enable quicker donor discovery, improved patient matching, and proactive stock management by banks.

- Patients stand to gain significantly from the integration: faster access to compatible rare blood, streamlined national-level search capabilities, and reduced risk of alloimmunization—critical for patients with multiple antigen mismatches. Alloimmunization rates are currently 8–18% in thalassemia cases, and this system is expected to mitigate such risks by incorporating minor antigen matching.

Key Points:-

- (i) By digitizing the rare blood network, India can now move away from fragmented local searches toward a responsive, centralized infrastructure capable of mobilizing rare blood during

emergencies—even on a cross-state or international level. Blood banks will receive centralized dashboards for monitoring rare blood stocks, donor availability, and real-time logistics coordination.

(ii) Despite its promise, the initiative must overcome hurdles such as insufficient equipment for minor antigen typing, uneven digital connectivity across many blood banks, and shortage of trained personnel. To scale up nationwide, continuous investment in infrastructure, staff training, IT integration, and regulatory oversight will be essential to ensure all 4,000+ blood bank units are online and regularly audited.

(iii) The launch and integration of India's first Rare Blood Donor Registry with e-RaktKosh marks a transformational stride in the country's transfusion framework. By placing rare blood visibility at the national level and enabling real-time match-making, this initiative promises faster, safer, and more equitable care for patients with rare blood needs. Continued support and expansion will ensure that no life is lost due to the unavailability of rare blood.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi conducted a four-day official visit from 15–19 June 2025 to Cyprus, Canada, and Croatia, reinforcing India's global partnerships and attending the 51st G7 Summit in Canada.

- PM Modi began his tour with a two-day visit to Cyprus from 15–16 June 2025 at the invitation of Cyprus President Nikos Christodoulides, marking the first Indian Prime Ministerial visit to Cyprus in over two decades since Atal Bihari Vajpayee's visit in 2002. During this historic visit, PM Modi was conferred with the Grand Collar of the Order of Makarios III, Cyprus's highest civilian honour, for strengthening bilateral ties between the two nations.

- To bolster financial sector cooperation, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the National Stock Exchange (NSE) International Exchange at GIFT City, Gujarat, and the Cyprus Stock Exchange (CSE). Additionally, NPCI International Payments Limited (NIPL) signed an MoU with Eurobank Cyprus to introduce Unified Payments Interface (UPI), expanding India's digital payment infrastructure globally.

- On 16–17 June 2025, PM Modi visited Canada at the invitation of Canadian Prime Minister Mark Joseph Carney. Both leaders held strategic discussions and agreed to reappoint high commissioners in each other's capitals to restore diplomatic channels after

INTERNATIONAL

1. PM Narendra Modi Undertakes 4-Day Official Visit to Cyprus, Canada & Croatia; Receives Cyprus's Highest Civilian Honour & Attends 51st G7 Summit.

prolonged tension, thereby reaffirming their intent to rebuild a full-spectrum bilateral relationship.

Key Points:-

(i) In Canada, PM Modi participated in the 51st G7 (Group of Seven) Summit, where India was invited as a partner country. The summit, hosted by Canada, focused on key global issues including climate change, economic resilience, and digital governance. India's participation signified its growing engagement with multilateral global leadership platforms.

(ii) PM Modi then traveled to Croatia on 18 June 2025 at the invitation of Croatian PM Andrej Plenković, making it the first-ever visit by an Indian Prime Minister to the Republic of Croatia. The two countries signed four major agreements covering agriculture, cultural exchange, science and technology, and the establishment of a Hindi chair at the University of Zagreb to promote academic and linguistic collaboration.

(iii) The multi-nation tour emphasized India's multi-vector diplomacy and growing role in global platforms. The engagements across Cyprus, Canada, and Croatia reflected India's intent to deepen bilateral and multilateral cooperation in finance, digital payments, academia, culture, and strategic diplomacy, boosting India's international stature.

2. According to ECB Report "Gold Becomes World's Second-Largest Reserve Asset After U.S. Dollar".



In a landmark development, gold has surpassed the euro to become the second-largest reserve asset in the world, just after the U.S. dollar, according to a European Central Bank (ECB) report on official reserve composition at the end of 2024.

- By year-end 2024, gold accounted for 20% of global official reserves—overtaking the euro, which held 16%, while the U.S. dollar remained dominant at 46%. Other currencies collectively made up approximately 18%.

- Central banks continued gold purchases at a record pace in 2024, acquiring over 1,000 tonnes—twice the average annual amounts of the 2010s—raising total global holdings to around 36,000 tonnes, levels not seen since the mid-1960s Bretton Woods era.

Key Points:-

(i) Gold prices surged roughly 30% in 2024, reaching \$3,500/oz, fueled by geopolitical tensions—especially the Russia-Ukraine conflict—as central banks used gold to hedge against inflation, sanctions, and currency risks.

(ii) A survey of 60 central banks revealed that nearly two-thirds adopted gold primarily for diversification, while 40% cited protection from geopolitical risks. The historic inverse correlation between gold prices and real yields broke during

the 2022–24 period, reflecting gold's rise as a geopolitical hedge.

(iii) Despite losing ground in reserves, the euro remains crucial in international finance. ECB data show that euro-denominated debt issuance jumped over 40% in 2024—reaching the highest level since the 2008 crisis—highlighting the euro's enduring role in global bond markets, even as central reserves shift toward gold.

3. Four Indian Universities Feature in Top 100 of Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings 2025.



On June 18, 2025, the Times Higher Education (THE) released its University Impact Rankings 2025, with four Indian universities entering the global top 100 for their performance on the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

- Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, achieved India's highest position by ranking 41st globally, while Lovely Professional University (LPU) in Jalandhar, Punjab, secured the 48th position, placing both institutions among the global top 50 in the THE Impact Rankings 2025, which assess universities on contributions to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

- In addition to these, JSS Academy of Higher Education and Research (JSS AHER) in Mysuru,

Karnataka, secured 56th place, and Shoolini University of Biotechnology and Management Sciences, located in Bajhol, Himachal Pradesh, ranked 96th, rounding off India's representation in the global top 100 universities for sustainable development impact.

Key Points:-

(i) The 2025 edition of the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings saw Western Sydney University (Australia) top the global list for the fourth consecutive year, achieving a score of 98.7, followed closely by the University of Manchester (UK) at second place with a score of 98.4. The ranking evaluates institutions on performance across 17 UN SDGs, including gender equality, climate action, and quality education.

(ii) Kyungpook National University (South Korea) ranked third with a score of 97.8, while Griffith University and the University of Tasmania, both from Australia, shared the 4th position, each earning a score of 97.7, reflecting Australia's continued excellence in higher education sustainability metrics.

(iii) The Times Higher Education (THE) is a UK-based global rankings agency headquartered in London, and its current Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is John Gill. The Impact Rankings were first introduced in 2019 to measure university contributions to society based on the SDGs adopted by the United Nations in 2015.

BANKING & FINANCE

1. RBI's New Project Finance Norms Provide Relief to NBFCs as REC and PFC Set for Growth.



In mid-June 2025, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) released the final Project Finance Directions, 2025, significantly easing provisioning norms for infrastructure and commercial real estate loans. This reform provides much-needed regulatory clarity and relief to banks and NBFCs like REC and PFC.

- Under the new norms effective from October 1, 2025, RBI has slashed provisioning requirements for under-construction infrastructure projects from the proposed 5% to 1%, and for under-construction commercial real estate from 2.5% to 1.25%.

- Existing projects will remain under old rules to avoid disruption groww.in +4 reuters.com +4 business-standard.com +4 . The Directions also cap extensions for date-of-commencement (DCCO) at 3 years (infrastructure) and 2 years (non-infra).

- The new framework replaces multiple legacy circulars with a harmonized, principle-based regime covering banks, NBFCs, and cooperative lenders. It includes guidelines on income recognition, asset classification, and exposure limits, reducing compliance complexity and boosting credit environment predictability.

Key Points:-

(i) Shares of Power Finance Corporation (PFC) and Rural Electrification Corporation (REC)

surged between 3.3% to 6% following the announcement, reflecting investor optimism. Analysts such as Motilal Oswal have reaffirmed buy ratings, with target prices of ₹485 for PFC and ₹460 for REC.

(ii) Market commentators highlight that the norms impose minimal profitability impact, with provisioning increases remaining under 1% even in worst-case scenarios. The softened rules are seen as removing major hurdles for long-term infrastructure finance, supporting anticipated credit growth in FY26.

(iii) RBI's policy fits into a broader agenda under Governor Sanjay Malhotra, which includes easing priority-sector lending for small finance banks and calibrating borrowing norms for non-bank lenders. Implementation of project finance norms from October 2025 gives lenders time to adjust while ensuring sustained funding to infrastructure and real estate sectors.

2. First Abu Dhabi Bank (FAB) Implements Intellect's eMACH.ai Lending Platform to Drive Digital Transformation.

FAB Implements Intellect's eMACH.ai Lending Platform to Drive Digital Transformation

In early 2025, First Abu Dhabi Bank (FAB) adopted Intellect Global Consumer Banking's eMACH.ai Lending Platform ushering in advanced digital lending capabilities with scalable microservices and AI-driven decisioning.

In early 2025, First Abu Dhabi Bank (FAB) adopted Intellect Global Consumer Banking's eMACH.ai Lending Platform.



In early 2025, First Abu Dhabi Bank (FAB) adopted Intellect Global Consumer Banking's eMACH.ai Lending Platform, ushering in advanced digital

lending capabilities with scalable microservices and AI-driven decisioning.

- FAB's eMACH.ai Lending Platform equips the bank with a composable, cloud-native architecture that supports diverse credit products—retail, SME, corporate, and agriculture—unifying origination, servicing, debt and collateral management under one system.
- Leveraging the “Always On, Always Aware” design, the platform delivers 360-degree real-time customer insights, automates credit decisions, allows instant DIY product creation, and offers seamless APIs integration with fintechs and credit bureaus.
- This digital transformation supports FAB's growth with scalable infrastructure, capable of handling 10 million+ accounts and thousands of transactions per second. It enhances efficiency, cuts costs, and sharpens risk management through real-time margin tracking and automated debt servicing.

Key Points:-

- (i) eMACH.ai's implementation at FAB follows its successful roll-out in other regions: in the Middle East & Africa, the platform empowered retail and corporate banking institutions on a composable, event-driven fabric with 329 microservices and 1,757 APIs.
- (ii) Similar deployments include the National Bank of Fujairah, which digitized corporate banking via eMACH.ai, and leading South African banks leveraging the Digital Engagement Platform, highlighting global confidence in the technology.
- (iii) FAB's adoption of the eMACH.ai Lending Platform marks a pivotal step in the bank's digital roadmap. This initiative strengthens its competitive edge, enabling faster product launches, deeper credit insights, and improved alignment with regional and global digital banking

standards.

ECONOMY & BUSINESS

1. Tata Elxsi and Infineon Partner to Develop Application-Ready EV Solutions for India.



In June 2025, Bengaluru-based Tata Elxsi signed an MoU with Infineon Technologies AG of Germany to jointly develop application-ready electric vehicle (EV) systems customized for India's rapidly growing EV market.

- Tata Elxsi, a global leader in design and technology services under the Tata Group, and Infineon Technologies AG, a top semiconductor innovator, will collaborate on creating automotive-grade EV components including high-voltage inverters, scalable battery management systems (BMS), bidirectional onboard chargers, and thermal management systems tailored for Indian two-wheelers, three-wheelers, passenger vehicles, and commercial vehicles.
- The partnership aligns with NITI Aayog's national electric mobility goals—targeting 80 percent electrification of two- and three-wheelers and 70 percent of commercial vehicles by 2030—all while addressing India's surge in EV sales (25–30 percent YoY in 2024, with 28 percent rise in 2W/3W markets).

- A key focus is achieving ASIL-D compliance per ISO 26262 functional safety standards, ensuring the EV subsystems meet top-tier safety requirements. Infineon will provide silicon carbide (SiC) semiconductor components, microcontrollers, and integrated circuits, while Tata Elxsi handles system integration, validation, and design customization.

Key Points:-

- (i) Beyond mainstream vehicles, the partners plan to extend their EV solutions to electric Vertical Take-Off and Landing (eVTOL) vehicles, energy storage systems, and off-highway sectors—signaling readiness for future mobility challenges.
- (ii) Nambi Ganesh, Head of Automotive at Tata Elxsi, emphasized that many existing EV solutions are already built on Infineon chips; the MoU will deepen system-level alignment and accelerate go-to-market timelines for the Indian market.
- (iii) Kenneth Lim, Senior Vice President of Automotive at Infineon Technologies Asia Pacific, stated the collaboration reinforces India's electrification efforts by merging Tata Elxsi's design expertise with Infineon's semiconductor innovation—ultimately delivering cost-optimized, safe, and scalable EV systems.

MOUs and Agreement

1. Gujarat Government Signs MoU with Amazon India to Boost MSME E-Commerce Exports Globally.



On June 5, 2025, the Government of Gujarat's MSME Commissionerate signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Amazon India during the Export Connect 2025 event in Ahmedabad. This partnership aims to empower thousands of local MSMEs by leveraging Amazon Global Selling to boost exports from the state.

- The agreement outlines a joint initiative to organize workshops, training sessions, and onboarding camps, focusing on teaching MSMEs how to access and grow through B2C e-commerce exports on Amazon's 200+ country marketplaces. Amazon will also support establishing an Export Community Hub in Gandhinagar to foster ongoing collaboration among exporters.

- A unique cascading training model will be implemented: Amazon India will first train Gujarat MSME commissionerate officials on export protocols and e-commerce operations. These trained officials will then conduct statewide training sessions for local MSMEs, enabling widespread knowledge transfer right from the state level.

Key Points:-

- (i) Gujarat is one of India's top exporting states, making the partnership highly strategic. The collaboration aligns with broader goals to digitalize local businesses and expand global outreach. Through Amazon Global Selling, MSMEs will gain rapid market access without heavy investment in

logistics and cross-border compliance.

(ii) The MoU targets digitizing hundreds of thousands of MSMEs—Gujarat alone has over 36 lakh MSMEs—potentially turning many into global exporters. It aims to accelerate digital growth across the state, increase revenue, generate employment, and reinforce the state’s “Make in Gujarat” brand globally.

(iii) The Gujarat–Amazon MoU marks a significant move in enabling grassroots MSMEs to participate in global trade. By blending Amazon’s global export capabilities with structured state-level support and training, the initiative is expected to unlock vast new opportunities for Gujarat’s small businesses, fuel economic growth, and elevate the state’s export potential.

- The non-binding MoU outlines joint efforts in exploration, extraction, refining, and production of metals and critical minerals both within India and abroad. It covers participation in mineral-block auctions and infrastructure development for mining operations to support a robust domestic supply chain.

- RITES will leverage its expertise in engineering, logistics, and transport planning to assist HCL. It will provide end-to-end consultancy covering project planning, multimodal transport infrastructure, rolling stock provisioning, and logistics management, aimed at enhancing mining efficiency and reliability.

- This collaboration aligns with India’s push for mineral security and self-reliance. By strengthening the domestic mineral value chain, it supports industrial sectors like renewable energy, electronics, defence, and electric mobility, while mitigating import risks and supply-chain vulnerabilities.

2. RITES and Hindustan Copper Ink MoU to Strengthen India's Critical Mineral Supply Chain.



On June 6, 2025, RITES Ltd, a Navratna public-sector engineering consultancy, signed a strategic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Hindustan Copper Ltd (HCL), a central public sector enterprise under the Ministry of Mines. The partnership aims to co-develop a sustainable and self-reliant supply chain for critical minerals, bolstering India’s industrial resilience and reducing import dependency.

Key Points:-

(i) Following the MoU announcement, RITES shares surged by as much as 3% intraday, indicating bullish investor sentiment. Hindustan Copper’s stock also saw gains of around 2%, as markets acknowledged the announcement as a sign of strengthening critical-minerals strategy.

(ii) The agreement establishes a flexible, project-wise framework for financial collaboration and risk-sharing. Both companies are expected to coordinate on blocking auctions, build mining and transport infrastructure, and finalize terms per project. Realizing full impact will require efficient execution, including regulatory approvals, investment, and operational coordination.

(iii) The RITES–HCL MoU marks a pivotal move toward establishing an integrated critical mineral ecosystem in India. By coupling HCL’s mining expertise with RITES’ logistics and engineering capabilities, the partnership enhances India’s

mineral security, supports strategic industries, and reflects positively in market valuations—signaling investor confidence in the nation’s supply-chain strategy.

3. Bihar Cabinet Approves ₹150 Crore MoU with AAI to Develop Six Regional Airports under UDAN Scheme.



On June 17, 2025, the Bihar state cabinet, chaired by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, approved a ₹150 crore Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Airports Authority of India (AAI) to build six new regional airports under the central government’s UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik) scheme, aimed at enhancing affordable regional air travel.

- The MoU encompasses six towns—Madhubani, Birpur (Supaul), Munger, Valmikinagar (West Champaran), Muzaffarpur, and Saharsa—with each airport estimated at approximately ₹25 crore. These sites were part of prior feasibility studies approved in April 2025, laying the groundwork for construction.
- This initiative aligns with India’s broader vision to add 120 new airports over the next decade under UDAN, expanding the network to serve rural and semi-urban regions and support up to 4 crore additional passengers.
- This expansion is expected to significantly benefit tourism (especially around Valmikinagar Tiger

Reserve), enhance disaster response capabilities, stimulate local economies, and generate employment in underserved regions.

Key Points:-

- (i) Total funding of ₹150 crore has been earmarked for six airports, each receiving ₹25 crore. Additional state budget allocations, like ₹2.58 crore for river studies and ₹224 crore under the Housing for All scheme, reflect a broader infrastructure upgrade push.
- (ii) AAI will spearhead construction and obtain land availability confirmation. The MoU sets up a framework for phased implementation, requiring close coordination with local administrations and periodic audits to ensure timely delivery.

SPORTS

1. India Introduces “ViraaJ” Mascot and Emblem to Launch 100-Day Countdown for New Delhi 2025 World Para Athletics Championships.



On 20 June 2025, the Paralympic Committee of India (PCI) unveiled the official mascot ‘ViraaJ’, a young elephant with a blade prosthesis, and the vibrant logo for the New Delhi 2025 World Para Athletics Championships, marking the commencement of the “100 Days to Go” countdown.

- During a high-profile ceremony at The Ashok Hotel, Chief Minister of Delhi Rekha Gupta formally launched the mascot and emblem in front of distinguished guests including PCI Chief Patron Vanathi Srinivasan (Member of Legislative Assembly) and brand ambassador Kangana Ranaut, highlighting India's commitment to inclusivity and excellence.

- The event also saw participation from dignitaries like Education Minister Ashish Sood, Sports Secretary Hari Ranjan Rao, and Paul Fitzgerald, Head of World Para Athletics, who praised India's preparation and energy, calling the 2025 edition "one of the most engaging and inclusive worldwide".

Key Points:-

(i) IPC President Devendra Jhajharia, a two-time Paralympic javelin gold medalist, emphasised that both mascot and logo symbolise pride, strength, and infinite potential of para-athletes. He mentioned that over 100 countries and more than 2,500 athletes will participate, making it India's largest-ever para-athletics event.

(ii) As the clock starts ticking toward 27 September – 5 October 2025, the 12th edition of the World Para Athletics Championships will spotlight India's organizational capabilities, drive para-sport awareness, and leave a lasting legacy for inclusivity and accessibility in athletics.

2. Jasprit Bumrah Becomes First Asian Pace Bowler to Claim 150 Test Wickets in SENA Countries.



On February 3, 2024, in the second Test at Visakhapatnam, Jasprit Bumrah reached the milestone of 150 Test wickets in just 34 matches, becoming the first Asian fast bowler to achieve this feat against SENA nations (South Africa, England, New Zealand & Australia).

- Jasprit Bumrah surpassed Indian legend Kapil Dev, who had taken the same number of wickets in 39 Tests, marking a new era in Indian pace bowling excellence. While spinners R Ashwin (29 Tests) and Ravindra Jadeja (32 Tests) reached the landmark faster, Bumrah is the quickest Indian pacer to do so.

- In the Asian context, Bumrah is second only to Pakistan's Waqar Younis, who achieved 150 Test wickets in 27 matches back in 1994. He also surpassed Imran Khan (37 Tests) and Shoaib Akhtar (37 Tests), cementing his position among the fastest Asians to the milestone.

Key Points:-

(i) The Visakhapatnam Test saw Bumrah dismiss Ben Stokes for his 150th wicket, completing the milestone during India's second-innings bowling attack. His strike rate of ~44.75 and average of ~20.29 at the milestone reflect his consistent impact.

(ii) So far, Bumrah has claimed 145 wickets in SENA countries at an impressive average of

21.02, recording 7 five-wicket hauls, and becoming the most successful Indian pace bowler in those conditions.

(iii) Bumrah's achievement underscores the growing prowess of Indian pacers abroad. With exceptional control, reverse swing abilities, and lethal yorkers, he is redefining Indian fast bowling—and remains on track for further records, including the chase for 200 Test wickets and dominance in SENA conditions.

IMPORTANT DAYS

1. United Nations Observes International Day of the Celebration of the Solstice 2025 on June 21.



On June 21, 2025, the United Nations marked the International Day of the Celebration of the Solstice, highlighting its astronomical, cultural, and agricultural significance across global religions and ethnic traditions.

- The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted Resolution A/RES/73/300 on June 20, 2019, proclaiming June 21 as the official day to promote awareness about solstices and equinoxes and their influence on Earth's seasonal cycles, festivals, and agricultural rhythms. The resolution emphasizes the connection between cosmic events and human

culture, fostering global awareness of natural timekeeping systems.

- These variations are caused by the Earth's axial tilt of 23.5 degrees. During the June solstice, the Northern Hemisphere experiences peak sunlight and enters summer, while the Southern Hemisphere enters winter. In December, the pattern reverses, highlighting the importance of axial tilt in defining seasonal changes and influencing ecological, agricultural, and social activities.

Key Points:-

(i) An equinox occurs when the Sun is directly above the Equator, resulting in nearly equal day and night durations across the globe.

(ii) The word is derived from Latin: "aequus" (equal) and "nox" (night). There are two annual equinoxes—the March Equinox, occurring around 20 March, marks the beginning of spring, while the September Equinox, occurring on or around 23 September, signals the start of autumn. Both equinoxes divide the year symmetrically, balancing daylight and darkness globally.

(iii) The UN encourages observance of this day to deepen understanding of astronomical heritage, promote harmony with nature, and celebrate indigenous knowledge systems that honor the solstices and equinoxes as spiritual and cultural milestones. The International Day of the Celebration of the Solstice aims to reconnect modern society with these cosmic rhythms and enhance respect for seasonal balance and environmental consciousness.

2. International Olympic Day 2025 Celebrated on June 23 with "Let's Move?" Campaign to Promote Physical Activity Worldwide.



Every June 23, the Olympic Movement celebrates International Olympic Day, commemorating the founding of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in 1894. In 2025, the global theme “Let’s Move?”, launched with WHO, urges communal physical activity to combat inactivity.

- The concept of Olympic Day dates back to 1947, when Dr. Josef Gruss of Czechoslovakia proposed it at the IOC’s 41st session in Stockholm. The initiative was approved at the 42nd session in St. Moritz in January 1948, and launched in nine countries on June 23, 1948.

- International Olympic Day annually marks the 1894 founding of the IOC by Baron Pierre de Coubertin at the Sorbonne, Paris. Now observed in over 150 nations, it promotes core Olympic values – excellence, friendship, and respect – through global sporting and educational events.

- The 2025 theme, “Let’s Move?”, jointly launched by the IOC and World Health Organization (WHO) on 17 June, addresses alarming inactivity levels: 1 in 3 adults and over 80% of youths globally fall short of recommended physical activity. The campaign encourages shared movement to foster health, community, and joy.

Key Points:-

(i) Highlights of the day include Olympic Day Runs—non-competitive events ranging from

1.5 km fun runs to 10 km races—participated in by national Olympic committees worldwide. First launched in 1987, today over 160 NOCs organise these events to drive mass sport participation.

(ii) In 2025, the IOC partnered with WHO and global sponsors like Samsung and TCL, plus Indian partners like Reliance Foundation & Abhinav Bindra Foundation, launching “Let’s Move +1” to mobilise communities via mass events, digital challenges, and free access to sports venues in 50+ Indian cities.

(iii) The movement emphasizes that sport is both a physical and social connector. IOC President Thomas Bach noted, “Sport is joy... sport brings people together,” while WHO Director-General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus framed it as a “low-cost, high-impact tool for healthy bodies, healthy minds, and resilient communities”.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. Bharti Space to Invest ₹313 Crore in Eutelsat’s Satellite Expansion.



In June 2025, Bharti Enterprises’ space arm announced a ₹313 crore (approx. €31.4 million) investment in French satellite operator Eutelsat, as part of its wider €1.35 billion capital raise initiative for satellite network expansion and debt reduction.

- Bharti's infusion into Eutelsat contributes to a capital-raising exercise structured to both de-leverage existing debt and fund the deployment of new satellite constellations—including geostationary and low-Earth-orbit (GEO-LEO) systems—supporting global satellite infrastructure growth.

- This investment strengthens Bharti's ongoing commitment to its space ambitions. Following the Eutelsat–OneWeb merger in 2023—where Bharti emerged as the largest shareholder with a 21.2% stake—the latest investment underscores strategic continuity and global satellite connectivity objectives.

Key Points:-

(i) The funds will accelerate Eutelsat's deployment of next-generation satellite constellations optimized for broadband, IoT, and enterprise services, boosting bandwidth capacity, reducing latency, and enabling access in underserved regions worldwide.

(ii) Bharti's sustained financial backing of Eutelsat positions it at the intersection of global satellite connectivity expansion—competing with players like SpaceX's Starlink—and reinforces India's aspirations in the space-tech and digital infrastructure domains.

(iii) With the capital raising expected to close later this year, Eutelsat will begin accelerating constellation rollouts, while Bharti continues to strengthen its influence in satellite communications—a move that could enhance digital inclusion, rural connectivity, and commercial broadband reach.

2. NASA's Voyager 1 Spacecraft Encounters Superheated "Wall of Fire" at Solar System Edge.



NASA's Voyager 1 probe, nearly 24 billion kilometers from Earth, has detected a thin plasma shell at the heliopause reaching temperatures of 30,000–50,000 K, nicknamed the "Wall of Fire."

- **Voyager's Historic Crossing:** Launched in 1977, Voyager 1 became the first human-made object to cross the heliopause on 25 August 2012, entering interstellar space and later discovering the "Wall of Fire" with its instruments. Its twin, Voyager 2, followed in 2018 and recorded the same phenomenon.

- **What is the "Wall of Fire"?** This term describes a narrow region—about 1 AU thick—of superheated plasma where the outward-flowing solar wind collides with the slower interstellar medium. Although electrically charged, it remains extremely low-density, insufficient to damage Voyager's thermal shielding.

- **Voyager 1's plasma, cosmic ray, and magnetic sensors** recorded the wall's temperature spike between 30,000 and 50,000 K (54,000–90,000 °F), making it hotter than many stellar surfaces—prompting NASA to dub it a cosmic blast furnace.

Key Points:-

(i) Both Voyagers found that the magnetic field outside the heliopause aligns closely with the solar magnetic field inside, contradicting previous models and indicating a stronger magnetic linkage between the heliosphere and interstellar space.

(ii) Despite the heat, Voyager 1 is unharmed due to the low particle density. It transmits critical science data over a 22-hour delay at just 160 bits per second, while its onboard plutonium-powered instruments continue functioning with minimal energy.

(iii) Building on Voyager's findings, NASA's upcoming Interstellar Mapping and Acceleration Probe (IMAP) is scheduled for launch in 2026 to study heliopause plasma dynamics. A future Interstellar Probe mission is also under development to reach 400 AU and map the "Wall of Fire" in greater detail.

and *Uraeotyphlus narayani* (Narayan's Caecilian). These species are largely endemic to the Western Ghats and have been recorded for the first time in this reserve.

• Three reptile species were also newly documented: *Cnemaspis rashidi* (Rashid's Day Gecko), *Dravidogecko meghamalaiensis* (Meghamalai Dravidogecko), and *Dravidogecko beddomei* (Beddome's Dravidogecko). These lizards are primarily found in isolated hill regions and indicate the microhabitat diversity within PTR.

Key Points:-

(i) In total, the survey recorded 67 amphibian species and 82 reptile species in the reserve. Around 80% of the amphibians found were endemic to the Western Ghats, highlighting the region's role as a global biodiversity hotspot and its need for scientific documentation and habitat protection.

(ii) The exercise was collaboratively led by the Kerala Forest Department (KFD), the Periyar Tiger Conservation Foundation (PTCF), and the Aranyakam Nature Foundation (ANF), with the participation of more than 150 individuals, including researchers, college students, forest officials, and local volunteers.

(iii) Conservation significance was underscored by the presence of 12 species classified as Vulnerable or Endangered under the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List. These include the Travancore Tortoise (*Indotestudo travancorica*) and the Cane Turtle (*Vijayachelys silvatica*), both facing habitat threats in the Western Ghats.

ENVIRONMENT

1. Kerala's Periyar Tiger Reserve Survey Discovers Eight Previously Unrecorded Herpetofaunal Species.



A detailed herpetofaunal survey conducted from 7 to 10 June 2025 in Kerala's Periyar Tiger Reserve (PTR) uncovered eight new species records—five amphibians and three reptiles—not previously documented in the reserve, reaffirming the Western Ghats' ecological significance.

• The survey added five amphibians to the PTR checklist: *Microhyla darrelli* (Darrel's Chorus Frog), *Euphlyctis kerala* (Kerala Skittering Frog), *Euphlyctis jaladhara* (Jaladhara Skittering Frog), *Microhyla nilphamariensis* (Nilphamari Narrow-mouthed Frog),

Static GK

Eutelsat	CEO : Jean-François Fallacher	Headquarters: Paris, France
NASA	CEO : Janet Petro	Headquarter : Washington, D.C., United States
Kerala	Chief minister: Pinarayi Vijayan	Governor: Rajendra Arlekar
Paralympic Committee of India (PCI)	Chairman and President : Devendra Jhajaria	Headquarters: New Delhi
Amazon	CEO: Andy Jassy	Headquarters: Seattle, Washington, United States
Cyprus	President: Nikos Christodoulides	Capital : Nicosia
the Times Higher Education (THE)	CEO : John Gill	Headquarters : London
RBI	Governor : Sanjay Malhotra	Headquarter : Mumbai
Karnataka	Chief minister: Siddaramaiah	Governor: Thawar Chand Gehlot
Tata Elxsi	CEO: Manoj Raghavan	Headquarters: Bengaluru

MoE	Union Minister : Dharmendra Pradhan	Headquarters: New Delhi
Rail India Technical and Economic Service (RITES)	Chairman & MD : Mr. Rahul Mithal	Headquarters: Gurugram
Bihar	Chief minister: Nitish Kumar	Governor: Arif Mohammad Khan