

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

>>> 29 JUNE 2025

NATIONAL AFFAIRS / GOVERNMENT SCHEME

1. Sarbananda Sonowal Inaugurates India's First Maritime NBFC – Sagarmala Finance Corporation Limited.



On 26th June 2025, Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal inaugurated the Sagarmala Finance Corporation Limited (SMFCL), marking the launch of India's first-ever Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) dedicated solely to the maritime sector.

- The event was organized by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW) in New Delhi. It was also attended by Union Minister of State Shantanu Thakur and MoPSW Secretary T.K. Ramachandran. The initiative aims to unlock maritime infrastructure financing in line with Vision 2047.

- Sarbananda Sonowal also unveiled three key digital initiatives at the event—SAGAR SETU, the Digital Centre of Excellence (DCoE) in collaboration with C-DAC, and the DRISHTI monitoring platform—each designed to boost efficiency and transparency in port operations.

Key Points:-

(i) The Sagarmala Finance Corporation Limited, formerly known as Sagarmala Development Company Limited, has now been formally notified as an NBFC by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). It

is a Mini Ratna, Category-I CPSE (Central Public Sector Enterprise).

(ii) SMFCL is expected to play a critical role in plugging financial gaps in port and maritime infrastructure projects. Its structure allows for specialized lending aligned with national priorities such as the PM Gati Shakti and Amrit Kaal Vision 2047.

(iii) This move aligns with the government's broader push to strengthen the blue economy. It will help enhance private investment in port infrastructure, logistics modernization, and integrated coastal development through a sustainable financial framework.

2. India's Longest Wildlife Overpass Corridor Unveiled on Delhi–Mumbai Expressway.



The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) recently inaugurated a 12 km-long wildlife corridor on the Delhi–Mumbai Expressway near Ranthambore. It includes five animal overpasses and a 1.2 km underpass, making it India's longest eco-sensitive expressway section.

- Located in the Ranthambore–Chambal buffer zone, this corridor features five 500 m animal bridges and a 1.2 km underpass to facilitate safe movement for tigers, bears, and other wildlife.

- Approximately 5 km of the expressway was built elevated or sunken to blend with the landscape. High boundary walls and sound barriers minimize noise pollution and reduce wildlife intrusion.
- Developed with guidance from the Wildlife Institute of India and MoEF, the corridor aligns with habitat contours, and tree plantation ensures a natural cover, encouraging animal usage.

Key Points:-

- Over 35,000 native trees were planted; rainwater harvesting every 500 m; drip irrigation reduced water use by over 50%; low-waste modular construction adopted.
- Camera traps have already captured sightings of tigers and bears using the overpasses—showing the corridor's effectiveness and marking a milestone in green infrastructure.

3. Amit Shah Leads Golden Jubilee Celebration of Department of Official Language in New Delhi.



On June 26, 2025, Union Home Minister Amit Shah presided over the 50th Anniversary celebrations (Golden Jubilee) of the Department of Official Language (DoL) under the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), held in New Delhi, Delhi. The event marked

a milestone in the government's efforts to promote Indian languages in administration.

- The event was attended by senior dignitaries including the Chief Minister of Delhi, Rekha Gupta, and Minister of State for Home Affairs, Bandi Sanjay Kumar, highlighting the national significance of the DoL's five-decade journey (1975–2025).
- While addressing the gathering, Amit Shah introduced "Hindi Shabdsindhu", a dynamic vocabulary bank designed to enrich the Hindi language by integrating commonly used terms from other languages. This effort seeks to make Hindi more inclusive and administratively relevant.
- Amit Shah emphasized that the Department of Official Language has played a key role in promoting the cultural self-respect of the nation through language-based governance and bridging communication gaps in multilingual administration.

Key Points:-

- The DoL functions as an independent entity under the Ministry of Home Affairs, ensuring that constitutional and legal requirements related to the use of official languages are properly implemented across government institutions.
- A new division named Bharatiya Bhasha Anubhag has also been established to support central and state government departments in expanding the use of Indian languages, thereby ensuring inclusivity and efficiency in official communication.
- The celebration marked not only the historical journey of the DoL but also reaffirmed the government's commitment to promoting linguistic diversity and empowering regional languages in public governance.

4. Kerala Tops National 'Management Effectiveness Evaluation (MEE)' Rankings of Protected Areas (2020-25 Cycle).



Kerala has secured the top position in the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change's Management Effectiveness Evaluation (MEE) of national parks and wildlife sanctuaries across India for the 2020-25 review period, achieving a 'Very Good' category rating.

- Kerala achieved a mean MEE score of 76.22%, earning a 'Very Good' grade—second only to Chandigarh (85.16%) among Union Territories and States.
- Eravikulam National Park in Kerala recorded an impressive 92.97%, sharing the top spot nationally with Dachigam National Park (J&K). Additionally, Mathikettan Shola NP (90.63%) and Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary also ranked in the top six protected areas.
- Out of 21 protected areas in Kerala, 20 showed improvement, demonstrating effective management over the evaluation period. Only Mangalavanam Bird Sanctuary in Kochi saw a decline, mainly due to urban pollution and lack of a management plan.

Key Points:-

- (i) Some sanctuaries face ecological stress from human activity. For instance, Idukki Wildlife

Sanctuary suffers from feral cattle pressure, while Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary experiences human-elephant conflict and encroachment. The report recommends tribal hamlet relocation, invasive species control, wildlife corridor linkage, and strengthening eco-development committees.

(ii) The Ministry's 2020-25 MEE cycle assessed 438 national parks and sanctuaries, showing an average score improvement to 64.41% (from 60.52% in 2015-20). A total of 84 PAs received 'Very Good' ratings—Kerala and Chandigarh topping among the States/UTs.

(iii) Kerala's strong scoring reflects its commitment to biodiversity conservation in the biodiverse-rich Western Ghats. The MEE framework, based on IUCN-WCPA standards, supports future-focused actions to improve habitat connectivity, reduce wildlife conflict, and engage communities in sustainable management.

5. Bihar Forms Trust for Construction of Grand Janaki Mandir at Punaura Dham.



On June 26, 2025, the Bihar government constituted a nine-member trust named "Shree Janaki Janmabhoomi Punaura Dham Mandir Nyas Samiti" to oversee the comprehensive development and construction of a grand temple dedicated to

Goddess Sita at her mythical birthplace, Punaura Dham in Sitamarhi district.

- Chief Secretary of Bihar has been appointed as the Chairman of the trust, with the Development Commissioner serving as Vice-Chairman, and the District Magistrate and Deputy Development Commissioner of Sitamarhi acting as Secretary and Treasurer, respectively. The remaining five trust members include key officials and the Mahanth (head priest) of the local math, ensuring a blend of administrative and spiritual oversight.

- Chief Minister Nitish Kumar shared the final architectural design on June 22, 2025, revealing that a Noida-based firm—previously associated with the Ayodhya Ram Mandir project—will develop the master plan. The temple is envisioned on a grand scale, drawing design inspiration from the Ram Mandir at Ayodhya.

- The State Cabinet allocated approximately ₹120 crore for initial development, with around 17 acres already designated at Punaura Dham. An additional 50 acres are being acquired, expanding the total temple campus to nearly 67 acres, incorporating a mandir, gardens, parikrama path, parking, cafeterias, exhibition space and more.

Key Points:-

(i) A 3D model and portal system are being developed to facilitate online public contributions, enabling devotees worldwide to donate. The temple's foundation stone was laid on December 13, 2023, and the trust aims to complete the ambitious construction within 24 months. Inauguration is expected by August 2025.

(ii) Punaura Dham draws lakhs of pilgrims annually, including international visitors from Nepal, Bhutan, and Bangladesh. The new temple complex is expected to enhance religious tourism, connect Mithila culturally to Ayodhya, and

contribute significantly to regional economic development.

(iii) This trust-based approach ensures coordinated oversight of design, funding, and implementation. With high-level administrative leadership, expert architectural planning, and robust public engagement strategies, the project aims to replicate the success of Ayodhya's Ram Mandir—transforming Punaura Dham into a vibrant spiritual destination.

6. Centre Launches 'Adi Karmyogi' to Train Officials for Enhanced Tribal Scheme Implementation.



In June 2025, the Government of India introduced Adi Karmyogi, a targeted training initiative under Mission Karmayogi, aimed at building capacity among officials deploying tribal development programmes to ensure better execution and community engagement.

- Adi Karmyogi is designed to train central and state officials specifically responsible for tribal welfare schemes such as PESA, Eklavya Model Residential Schools, and TSP/MABG-funded programmes, focusing on improving ground-level service delivery.

- This programme is a thematic module developed under the Mission Karmayogi platform and hosted on the iGOT Karmayogi portal. It provides officials with

role-specific e-learning, case studies, and assessment tools to enhance competency in tribal administration.

- Courses under Adi Karmyogi include topics like cultural sensitivity, community consultation, beneficiary verification, effective resource allocation, and grievance redressal, ensuring dignified and inclusive implementation for tribal groups.

Key Points:-

(i) The initiative is a joint effort by capacity-building agencies like DoPT, Ministry of Tribal Affairs, and state TSCs. It aims to create a standardized training architecture adaptable to diverse state contexts, connecting field functionaries with policy makers.

(ii) The measurable impact indicators include the number of officials certified in tribal governance, improved field-level monitoring and scheme audit scores, and enhanced beneficiary satisfaction through a noticeable reduction in implementation gaps.

INTERNATIONAL

1. World Bank, IAEA Sign Pact to Promote Safe Nuclear Energy in Developing Countries.



The World Bank Group and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) signed a significant

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in Paris on June 26, 2025. This partnership aims to help developing countries adopt safe and sustainable nuclear energy solutions, particularly small modular reactors (SMRs), to meet their rising power needs while maintaining safety and climate commitments.

- This is the first time in decades that the World Bank has shown support for nuclear energy. Historically, the institution had distanced itself from financing nuclear projects, but with the growing global demand for clean and reliable baseload power, the Bank has revised its stance. The partnership with the IAEA signals the beginning of a renewed approach toward incorporating nuclear energy into clean development strategies.

- The collaboration will support knowledge sharing, capacity building, and technical guidance for World Bank projects involving nuclear energy. It will also help the World Bank build internal expertise in nuclear safety, radiation protection, fuel cycle planning, and nuclear waste management—areas where the IAEA has long-standing global leadership.

- A major focus of this agreement is on the development and safe deployment of small modular reactors (SMRs), which are compact, cost-effective nuclear systems suitable for smaller economies. These reactors are especially relevant for nations with limited power infrastructure, as they offer scalable energy without major environmental risks.

Key Points:-

(i) This initiative aligns with the broader global climate agenda and comes in the context of commitments made at COP28 to triple nuclear energy capacity by 2050.

(ii) With electricity demand expected to more than double by 2035 in many developing countries, the World Bank is adopting an “all-of-the-above” strategy that includes solar, wind, hydro, and now

nuclear power to ensure stable energy supplies.

(iii) By lifting its historic restrictions on nuclear financing, the World Bank is also encouraging multilateral institutions and private investors to explore clean nuclear technologies. This move is expected to unlock new funding streams and promote energy security across the Global South, marking a turning point in international climate and development financing.

2. UN Launches 'UN80 Initiative' to Reinvent Its Global Role on 80th Anniversary.



As the United Nations marks its 80th year, Secretary-General António Guterres recently launched the ambitious UN80 Initiative, a comprehensive reform agenda aimed at modernizing the UN system to better serve global peace, development, humanitarian aid, and sustainable financing.

- The UN80 Task Force, led by Under-Secretary-General Guy Ryder (Policy), is charged with driving system-wide reforms focused on three core themes: improving internal efficiency, scrutinizing the implementation of member-state mandates, and considering wide-ranging structural changes across UN agencies, programs, and field

offices. This initiative builds on earlier platforms like Pact for the Future and UN 2.0.

- The first track targets administrative optimization—streamlining bureaucracy, relocating operations from high-cost duty stations (e.g., New York, Geneva), centralizing IT services, and enhancing automation and digital tools. A working group led by Catherine Pollard (Under-Secretary-General) is expected to deliver proposals by June end.

Key Points:-

(i) The second stream reviews nearly 4,000 mandates issued by the UN Security Council, General Assembly, and other organs. Many are outdated or overlapping—and this review, aided by AI and data analytics, aims to prioritize essential functions while urging member states to decide on mandate continuance.

(ii) The third pillar assesses the UN's overarching structure and program alignment. With over 50 reform suggestions already submitted, this stream seeks to realign agencies related to peace and security, human rights, development, and humanitarian action, ensuring coherence and budgetary rationalization.

(iii) All these reforms are driven by a severe liquidity crisis at the UN, exacerbated by delayed or insufficient member contributions. With only 75 of 193 members paying full 2025 dues (total budget: US \$3.72 billion), cuts may include up to a 20% staff reduction in departments like Peace Operations—highlighting the urgency and high stakes of UN80.

BANKING & FINANCE

1. PhonePe & HDFC Bank Introduce RuPay Credit Card with UPI Integration.



On June 26, 2025, PhonePe and HDFC Bank launched their first co-branded RuPay Credit Card, offering seamless integration with Unified Payments Interface (UPI). Available in two variants—Ultimo and UNO—this card leverages UPI's convenience while providing credit rewards across everyday transactions.

- The card, issued by HDFC Bank, works on the RuPay network and can be linked directly to UPI. Users can make QR-code-based credit payments across more than 40 million UPI-accepting merchants, bridging traditional credit cards with India's widely used real-time payment system.

- The Ultimo variant targets high-frequency spenders, offering 10% reward points on PhonePe app spends (e.g., recharges, bills, travel, Pincode platform), 5% on select online platforms, and 1% on all UPI Scan & Pay transactions. It also offers two domestic airport lounge accesses per quarter. The UNO version, designed for lighter users, gives 2% on PhonePe spends, and 1% on e-commerce and UPI payments.

Key Points:-

(i) Cardholders earn reward points that can be redeemed via the PhonePe app or smart portals. The Ultimo version offers a ₹999 joining fee, refundable in the form of a PhonePe gift card via their first credit-on-UPI transaction and subsequent usage. The card often includes fuel

surcharge waivers.

(ii) Prospective users can apply digitally within the PhonePe app. Once approved by HDFC Bank, the card is issued and seamlessly linked for UPI transactions. All account management, including balance checks, bill payments, statement viewing, and reward redemption, is conducted through the PhonePe interface.

(iii) This launch marks PhonePe's entry into the co-branded credit card space, aligning with rising demand for fintech integrations. With over 610 million users and a massive UPI acceptance network, PhonePe shifts more credit-like convenience to everyday commerce. HDFC Bank leverages its robust credit ecosystem to reach digital-first customers.

2. RBI's e-Rupee: How to Use India's Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC-R).



Since December 2022, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has issued the e-Rupee (Digital Rupee)—a token-based, digital version of sovereign currency—via a closed pilot to offer secure, cash-equivalent transactions to consumers and merchants.

- The e-Rupee (e₹) is India's Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC), fully backed by RBI, functioning like

physical cash but in digital form. Retail version (CBDC-R) launched December 1, 2022, alongside wholesale version (CBDC-W) on November 1, 2022.

- Eligible users in pilot cities (e.g., New Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Bhubaneswar) can download the e-Rupee wallet app from participating banks like State Bank of India (SBI), ICICI Bank, Yes Bank, IDFC First, and more. Users must link their savings bank account and verify a debit card to load e-Rupee tokens—no minimum balance required.

- Once e-Rupee tokens are loaded, users can make person-to-person (P2P) and person-to-merchant (P2M) payments. Payments are made by scanning QR codes or entering recipient wallet details. Transfers are instant, work 24×7, and operate even outside regular banking hours.

Key Points:-

(i) e-Rupee offers near-cash privacy: small transactions are less traceable by banks to ensure anonymity. Robust cybersecurity safeguards wallets, and funds can be recovered if the mobile device is lost. RBI is also developing offline transaction capabilities to allow usage without internet in remote areas.

(ii) e-Rupee tokens mirror physical currency denominations (₹2, ₹5, ₹10, ₹20, ₹50, ₹100, ₹200, ₹500, ₹2,000, plus coins of 50 paise and ₹1). It is non-interest bearing, i.e., e-Rupee doesn't accrue interest like bank deposits. RBI positions e-Rupee as a secure and cost-effective medium of exchange with instant settlement and no GST or capital gains tax implications.

(iii) Initially launched in four cities with increasing bank participation, the e-Rupee network aims to expand to additional cities and banks like HDFC, Kotak, Union Bank, and Bank of Baroda. Retail usage has grown rapidly—from ₹16 crores (March 2023) to over ₹1,000 crores

(March 2025)—with six million users and thousands of merchants on board.

ECONOMY & BUSINESS

1. ICRA Projects India's FY26 GDP Growth at 6.2%, Below RBI Estimate.



In June 2025, the Gurugram-based Investment Information and Credit Rating Agency (ICRA) retained India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth forecast for the Financial Year (FY) 2025–26 at 6.2%. This projection was published in ICRA's June Macroeconomic Update and is slightly lower than the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) forecast of 6.5%.

- ICRA has estimated that retail inflation will remain moderate in FY26. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation is projected to be 3.5%, significantly lower than the 4.6% recorded in FY25 and also below the Monetary Policy Committee's (MPC) forecast of 3.7%. This could provide room for policy stability.

- The agency noted that the early onset of the monsoon in May 2025 disrupted electricity and mining activities. However, ICRA expects a robust summer crop season, with Agricultural Gross Value Added (GVA) estimated to grow by 4.5% in Q1 of FY26. For the full year, GVA in the farm sector is projected to

grow between 3.5% and 4.0%, assuming normal monsoon patterns.

Key Points:-

(i) The report also highlights a mixed economic trend in the first quarter (April–June 2025) of FY26. Out of 17 key non-agricultural high-frequency indicators monitored by ICRA, only nine showed improvement compared to Q4 of FY25 (January–March 2025), suggesting patchy recovery in industrial and services sectors.

(ii) ICRA flagged multiple external macroeconomic challenges such as global geopolitical tensions, especially in West Asia, uncertainty around global interest rate cycles, and volatility in financial markets. These could weigh heavily on India's growth trajectory and pose downside risks to the overall economic outlook for FY26.

(iii) This GDP forecast comes in the backdrop of mixed signals from both rural and urban demand, monetary policy constraints, and high base effects from the previous year. Despite this, ICRA maintains cautious optimism about India's medium-term recovery supported by stable inflation and favourable policy frameworks.

2. India Registers \$13.5 Billion Current Account Surplus in Q4 FY25, First in Four Quarters.



In a significant turnaround for India's external balance, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) reported a current account surplus of USD 13.5 billion in the fourth quarter of the financial year 2024–25 (Q4 FY25), amounting to 1.3% of GDP. This is India's first quarterly surplus in over a year, driven primarily by strong services exports and record remittances.

● **India's strong surplus in Q4 FY25 stands in contrast to a current account deficit of USD 11.3 billion in Q3 FY25 and reflects a sharp external recovery. The same quarter last year (Q4 FY24) had recorded a smaller surplus of USD 4.6 billion. The turnaround highlights improved trade services performance and macroeconomic resilience despite global volatility.**

Key Points:-

(i) Two major contributors to this surplus were booming services exports and robust remittances. Net services earnings reached USD 53.3 billion, significantly higher than the USD 42.7 billion recorded in Q4 FY24. Additionally, remittances rose to a historic high of USD 33.9 billion, a clear indicator of strong inward personal transfers from the Indian diaspora.

(ii) Despite this improvement, India's merchandise trade deficit remained high at USD 59.5 billion, compared to USD 52.6 billion in the previous quarter. However, the primary income account deficit narrowed to USD 11.9 billion from USD 14.8 billion year-on-year, further boosting the overall current account figures.

(iii) For the full fiscal year (FY25), India's current account deficit (CAD) stood at USD 23.3 billion, which is about 0.6% of GDP, showing improvement from 0.7% in FY24. Analysts expect India to shift back to a modest CAD in FY26 as global commodity prices and imports pick up. However, India's strong services sector and capital inflows remain key to maintaining a stable

balance of payments.

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

1. Zou Jiayi Elected as AIIB's First Female President to Lead Global Expansion.



On June 24, 2025, China's former Vice Minister of Finance, Zou Jiayi, was elected by the Board of Governors as the next President of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). She will assume office on January 16, 2026, becoming both the second president and the bank's first woman leader, for a five-year term.

- Zou brings over 30 years of international finance experience, having held senior roles such as Vice Minister of Finance and leadership positions within the World Bank Group, Asian Development Bank, New Development Bank, and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). Her election was confirmed at AIIB's 10th Annual Meeting by the Bank's Board Chair.

Key Points:-

(i) During founding President Jin Liqun's decade-long tenure, AIIB grew from 57 to 110 member countries, invested more than USD 60 billion in 322 infrastructure projects across 38 economies, earned AAA ratings, and secured UN Observer

status in 2018.

(ii) As the first female head of the Beijing-based multilateral bank, Zou carries the informal title of the "tiger-fighting lady general", referencing her robust record at China's Central Commission for Discipline Inspection. Her leadership comes amid efforts to globalize AIIB's governance while maintaining its core focus on infrastructure and climate financing.

(iii) Zou's presidency is expected to expand AIIB's global footprint, including new regional offices in Hong Kong, Singapore, and London, and enhanced partnerships with traditional development lenders like the World Bank and Japan. She is poised to balance geopolitical alignments and reinforce AIIB's role amid rising global financing multipolarity.

2. Amitabh Kant Appointed Senior Adviser to Canada-Based Fairfax Financial After Stepping Down as India's G20 Sherpa.



In June 2025, senior Indian bureaucrat Amitabh Kant was appointed Senior Adviser to Fairfax Financial Holdings, a Canada-based global insurance and investment firm. He recently stepped down as India's G20 Sherpa, marking the end of a 45-year career in public service.

- Amitabh Kant will guide Fairfax India Holdings Corporation and its affiliates in identifying strategic investment opportunities aligned with India's "Viksit Bharat" initiative—aiming to transform India from a USD 4 trillion to a USD 30 trillion economy by 2047.
- Fairfax is already active in sectors like insurance, logistics, infrastructure, and airport operations, with stakes in entities such as Go Digit General Insurance and Kempegowda International Airport in Bengaluru.

Key Points:-

- (i) Amitabh Kant brings a wealth of experience from his tenure as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of NITI Aayog, where he spearheaded landmark programmes like the Aspirational Districts Programme, Make in India, Startup India, and efforts that improved India's Ease of Doing Business ranking by 79 places. He also previously served as India's G20 Sherpa, instrumental in forging consensus for the 2023 New Delhi Declaration.
- (ii) Prem Watsa, Chairman and CEO of Fairfax, praised Kant's depth of knowledge in digital infrastructure, urban renewal, industrial reform, and tourism. Watsa highlighted that Kant's values—honesty, transparency, and integrity—perfectly align with Fairfax's corporate ethos.
- (iii) This strategic appointment underscores Fairfax's long-term investment strategy in India. Kant's role is expected to enhance the firm's ability to leverage policy insights, public-private coordination, and sustainable growth channels, reinforcing confidence among global investors in the Indian market.

3. Praggnanandhaa Clinches UzChess Cup and Becomes India's Top-Ranked Chess Player.



In late June 2025, Indian Grandmaster Rameshbabu Praggnanandhaa won the UzChess Cup Masters in Tashkent after a thrilling finale and tiebreaks. This win pushed his live FIDE rating to 2778.3, making him both a Top-4 player globally and India's highest-rated chess player.

- **Praggnanandhaa clinched the title after edging out rivals Nodirbek Abdusattorov and Javokhir Sindarov in gripping blitz tiebreaks.** The classical tournament itself ended with a three-way tie at 5.5/9, but Pragg triumphed in the sudden-death playoff, showcasing nerves of steel and exceptional tactical precision.
- **His final-round classical clash against Abdusattorov was decisive—Pragg played brilliantly with the Black pieces, turning his position into a dramatic win to force the tiebreaks.** He also overcame GM Arjun Erigaisi in an earlier round, reflecting both resilience and strategic clarity.

Key Points:-

- (i) With live FIDE rating soaring to 2778.3, Praggnanandhaa overtook compatriot GM D Gukesh (2776.6) and reached World No. 4—the highest-ever global and national live ranking by an Indian since Viswanathan Anand.
- (ii) This marks his third major classical tournament victory in 2025, following his wins at the Tata Steel Masters in Wijk aan Zee and the Superbet Chess

Classic Romania. Each title was clinched via intense tiebreaks—highlighting his unique clutch performance under pressure.

(iii) India's chess community and leaders, including former world champion Viswanathan Anand and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin, lauded Pragg's victory. Anand called it "an impressive demonstration of character," underscoring its significance for Indian chess's growing international stature.

SUMMITS & CONFERENCE / COMMITTEES & MEETINGS

1. "Netherlands Hosted 2025 NATO Summit in The Hague and Members Commit to 5% GDP Defence Spending by 2035".



For the first time since NATO's establishment in 1949, the Netherlands hosted the NATO Summit on June 24–25, 2025, in The Hague. This pivotal gathering brought together leaders from all 32 member nations to adopt decisive commitments on defence, security, and global cooperation under the chairmanship of NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte.

- The Netherlands hosted its first-ever NATO Summit at the World Forum in The Hague, making it a landmark moment in the alliance's history. The

summit witnessed participation from 32 NATO countries, including 45 heads of state and government, 6,000 official delegates, and around 2,000 media personnel. To ensure security, the Netherlands implemented its largest-ever protective operation—"Operation Orange Shield"—mobilizing over 27,000 personnel, including police, army, F-35 jets, and drone surveillance, along with weeks-long street closures around the venue.

- The summit agenda featured the NATO Public Forum, Defence Industry Forum, and multiple bilateral meetings. The Public Forum hosted academic leaders, civil society, and youth voices from all NATO countries, emphasizing transparency and public engagement. The Defence Industry Forum saw participation from over 100 global defence companies, presenting new technologies in artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and defence logistics. Leaders from the Indo-Pacific region, including Japan, Australia, and South Korea, were invited for special strategic consultations.

- One of the summit's most consequential outcomes was the unanimous agreement—barring a few exceptions—on increasing national defence expenditure to 5% of each member's GDP by 2035. This includes 3.5% for traditional military capabilities and 1.5% for emerging threats and infrastructure development. This target will be subject to mid-term review in 2029. Secretary-General Mark Rutte termed the commitment "a generational leap in collective defence readiness," while several leaders described it as NATO's most transformative fiscal agreement since the Cold War.

Key Points:-

(i) Former US President Donald Trump, who attended the summit, took credit for pushing the 5% goal, calling it "a great victory for fairness." He strongly advocated for European nations to buy American-made weapons, reflecting domestic

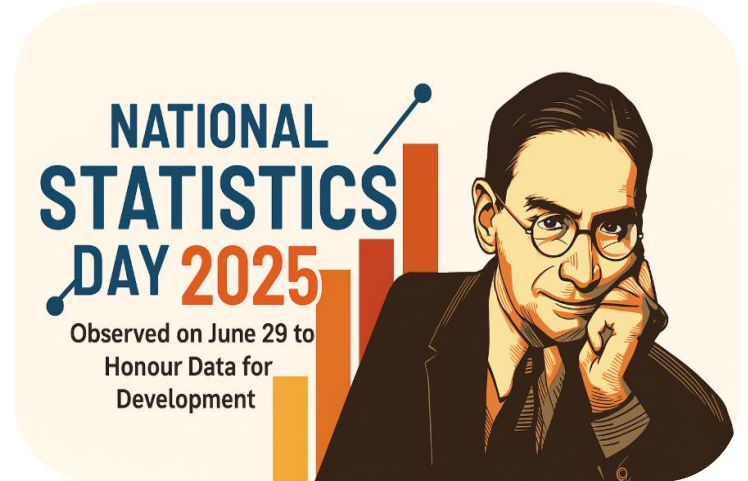
industrial interests. However, the proposal drew internal resistance. Spain officially opted out of the 5% target citing economic constraints, although it agreed to maintain the 2035 timeline for related reforms. Italy, Slovakia, and Belgium also voiced concerns about balancing social welfare spending with defence commitments.

(ii) The summit reaffirmed NATO's collective defence principle under Article 5 and identified Russia as a "long-term, systemic threat." While Ukraine was not at the center of negotiations, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and Foreign Minister Andriy Sybiha were present and engaged in high-level talks. Despite debates over immediate membership, NATO reiterated support for Ukraine's sovereignty and pledged continued financial and military assistance, including updated air defence systems and battlefield intelligence coordination.

(iii) The summit concluded with the formal adoption of "The Hague NATO Summit Declaration 2025," outlining all major resolutions including defence budget benchmarks, cybersecurity collaboration, and defence innovation strategies. Member nations committed to reconvening for a mid-term implementation review in 2029. Türkiye was officially announced as the host for the 2026 NATO Summit. The Hague declaration is now viewed as a foundational document shaping NATO's strategic path through the 2030s.

IMPORTANT DAYS

1. National Statistics Day 2025 Observed on June 29 to Honour Data for Development.



India observed the 18th National Statistics Day on June 29, 2025, to commemorate the birth anniversary of Professor Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis, the pioneer of Indian statistics.

- The 2025 observance was themed "Honouring Data for Development," emphasizing the essential role of accurate statistics in driving evidence-based policy, sustainable development, and national planning.
- The day is organized annually by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) to raise public awareness about the importance of statistics in socio-economic planning and governance. Events were conducted across India, including panel discussions, data dissemination workshops, and felicitation of young statisticians and researchers.

Key Points:-

(i) Professor P.C. Mahalanobis, born on June 29, 1893, played a foundational role in establishing the Indian Statistical Institute (ISI) in 1931 and introducing large-scale sample surveys in India. His contribution also includes the Mahalanobis distance formula and shaping the Second Five-Year Plan with a statistical approach to development.

(ii) The United Nations recognizes India's National Statistics Day as a major regional initiative for promoting data literacy in the South Asian region.

MoSPI also uses the occasion to promote its digital tools like the National Integrated Information Platform (NIIP) for better statistical governance.

(iii) In 2025, awards were conferred to various national and state departments for innovation in data quality, statistical modelling, and transparent reporting. The government emphasized the use of emerging technologies like AI and Big Data in modernising India's statistical system for better planning and development outcomes.

- Nearly 40 % of the world's population lives in the tropics, with two-thirds of the world's children expected to reside there by 2050. Tropical societies are marked by remarkable cultural diversity, indigenous knowledge systems, and vibrant traditions.

- Despite their richness, tropical regions struggle with climate change impacts, deforestation, urban sprawl, and biodiversity loss. Additionally, high poverty rates, slum proliferation, and water scarcity make them disproportionately vulnerable to global shocks.

Key Points:-

(i) The first 'State of the Tropics' report was published on 29 June 2014, and following its success, the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution A/RES/70/267 in 2016, officially declaring June 29 as the International Day of the Tropics.

(ii) This day aims to foster global solidarity, data-driven policy responses, and partnerships for sustainable tropical development.

(iii) Each observance prompts governments, NGOs, researchers, and schools worldwide to hold seminars, exhibitions, panel discussions, and digital campaigns. Activities focus on protecting tropical biodiversity, supporting resilient livelihoods, and bolstering inclusivity in policymaking to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

2. International Day of the Tropics 2025 Observed on June 29 to Highlight Challenges and Diversity.



Every year on June 29, the United Nations (UN) observes International Day of the Tropics to honour the vital ecological and cultural importance of tropical regions while spotlighting the environmental and developmental challenges they face.

- Tropical zones span between the Tropic of Cancer and Tropic of Capricorn, covering roughly 40 % of Earth's land area and housing nearly 80 % of global biodiversity. They sustain rich ecosystems such as rainforests, coral reefs, and mangrove forests, which are essential for climate regulation and natural resources.

3. UN Observed First-Ever International Day of Deafblindness on June 27, 2025.

UN OBSERVED FIRST-EVER INTERNATIONAL DAY OF DEAFBLINDNESS JUNE 27, 2025



The United Nations (UN) observed the first-ever International Day of Deafblindness on June 27, 2025, to promote global awareness about deafblindness—a unique dual disability involving both vision and hearing loss. The observance aims to highlight the challenges faced by individuals with deafblindness in communication, mobility, education, and accessing information.

- This new international day aligns with Deafblind Awareness Week, observed globally from June 23 to June 29 each year.
- The 2025 theme of the awareness week is “Cultivating Leadership: Together, We Grow,” which emphasizes the importance of empowerment and inclusion of the deafblind community in leadership roles and decision-making spaces.

Key Points:-

- The official recognition of the day came after the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted Resolution A/RES/79/294 on June 16, 2025, establishing June 27 as the International Day of Deafblindness.
- The date was chosen to honour the 145th birth anniversary of Helen Keller, a globally renowned advocate for the deafblind and a symbol of resilience and advocacy.
- The UN’s 2025 observance stems from efforts

dating back to 1984, when U.S. President Ronald Reagan launched Deafblind Awareness Week. It gained global momentum with the 1989 Swedish Declaration on Deaf-Blind Rights, marking a key milestone in disability inclusion.

DEFENCE

1. ICG Inducts ‘Adamya’, First Fast Patrol Vessel Under 08-FPV Project at GSL.



On June 26, 2025, the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) officially inducted its first Fast Patrol Vessel (FPV) named “Adamya”, designed and built by Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL) under the 08-FPV Project. This vessel marks a leap in indigenous maritime security and technology.

- India's maritime self-reliance is strengthened as Adamya, with over 60% indigenous content, showcases advanced capabilities—including Controllable Pitch Propellers (CPPs) and homegrown gearboxes—representing significant progress under the Aatmanirbhar Bharat (self-reliant India) and Make in India initiatives.
- The 52 m long and 8 m wide vessel, with a top speed exceeding 27 knots, meets dual certification from the American Bureau of Shipping and the Indian Register of Shipping. Adamya is the first FPV in the ICG fleet to

feature CPP-based propulsion, improving maneuverability and operational flexibility.

- Equipped with state-of-the-art naval systems, the FPV sports a 30 mm CRN-91 gun, two 12.7 mm stabilized remote-control guns, an Integrated Bridge System (IBS), Integrated Platform Management System (IPMS), and an Automated Power Management System (APMS). These systems significantly enhance surveillance, rescue, and enforcement capabilities.

Key Points:-

(i) The induction of Adamyia provides a boost to the ICG's mission areas—maritime law enforcement, Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) protection, coastal surveillance, and Search & Rescue (SAR) operations—acting as a force-multiplier in India's coastal security architecture.

(ii) As the first of eight FPVs to be delivered under the 08-FPV Project, Adamyia paves the way for future vessels—'Akshar', 'Amulya', 'Akshay', 'Achal'—which will enter service over the next 24–30 months, further expanding India's maritime defense infrastructure.

OBITUARY

1. Shefali Jariwala, 'Kaanta Laga' Star, Dies at 42 in Mumbai.



Renowned Indian actress and model Shefali Jariwala, best known as the “Kaanta Laga Girl”, passed away on June 27, 2025, at her home in Mumbai's Andheri. She was 42 years old, with initial reports indicating a sudden cardiac arrest—no foul play is suspected.

- That evening, Shefali experienced a sudden heart attack and was swiftly taken by her husband, actor Parag Tyagi, and others to Bellevue Multispeciality Hospital. Tragically, she was pronounced brought dead on arrival. Police were alerted, and her body was sent to Cooper Hospital for a mandatory post-mortem.

- Preliminary police reports suggest that she had taken her regular medication and received an anti-ageing injection, possibly on an empty stomach, which may have triggered a severe blood-pressure drop leading to cardiac arrest. Drugs are not suspected in the incident.

Key Points:-

(i) Shefali rose to fame in 2002 with the viral music video “Kaanta Laga”, later acted in films like Mujhse Shaadi Karogi, and featured on reality shows such as Nach Baliye seasons 5 & 7 and Bigg Boss 13. Her recent work included the supernatural series Shaitani Rasmein.

(ii) Celebrities like Mika Singh, Aly Goni, Divyanka Tripathi, Vahbiz Dorabjee, and others expressed shock and sorrow on social media, remembering Shefali as vibrant and full of life. Fans across generations mourned the loss of the charismatic performer.

(iii) Mumbai Police launched a routine Accidental Death Report and are awaiting post-mortem and toxicology results before officially declaring the cause of death. No suspicion of foul play has been reported.

Static GK

MoPSW	Union Minister : Sarbananda Sonowal	Headquarters: New Delhi
International Atomic Energy Agency	Director General : Rafael Mariano Grossi	Headquarters : Vienna, Austria
National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)	Chairman: Santosh Kumar Yadav (IAS)	Headquarters: New Delhi
Kerala	Chief minister: Pinarayi Vijayan	Governor: Rajendra Arlekar
Bihar	Chief minister: Nitish Kumar	Governor: Arif Mohammad Khan
Netherlands	Capital: Amsterdam	Official language: Dutch
HDFC Bank	CEO: Sashidhar Jagdishan	Headquarter : Mumbai
RBI	Governor : Sanjay Malhotra	Headquarter : Mumbai
ICRA Limited	MD & CEO : Ramnath Krishnan	Founded: 1991
Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank	Establishment : 2016	Headquarters : Beijing, China

(AIIB)		
Indian Coast Guard (ICG)	Director- General: Paramesh Sivamani	Headquarters: New Delhi