



# **DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS**

**»»» 18 JUNE 2025**

## NATIONAL AFFAIRS / GOVERNMENT SCHEME

### 1. Bihar Pioneers India's First Mobile-Based e-Voting System for Urban Polls.



In a historic step toward digital democracy, the Bihar State Election Commission has initiated India's first mobile-based e-voting system for urban local body elections, allowing voters to cast their ballots directly via smartphones.

- The new system enables migrant workers, senior citizens, pregnant women, and persons with disabilities to vote from home using a secured mobile app—especially benefiting those who may struggle to reach polling stations.
- Eligible voters can register through a dedicated app by 22 June 2025. On polling day, they verify their identity with an OTP, and the app features a confirmation screen akin to VVPAT (Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail) before finalizing the vote.
- The platform uses two-factor authentication (OTP) and blockchain encryption to ensure a tamper-proof voting process. Additionally, the ECI's ECINET dashboard will oversee data integrity, streamline roll updates, and manage polling efficiently.

#### Key Points:-

(i) The mobile e-voting system will be piloted during elections in six municipal bodies on 28

June. It will permit up to two voters per device, enhancing flexibility while ensuring controlled access.

(ii) To maintain secrecy and security, a mobile-phone deposit facility will be established outside polling stations, managed by the ECI. Once voters have cast their votes, they can retrieve their devices.

(iii) This initiative marks a significant stride in Digital India efforts and sets a precedent for remote voting in municipal elections. It aligns with the ECI's broader array of modernization measures—like M3 EVMs, VVPATs, and ECINET—aimed at enhancing transparency and voter accessibility.

### 2. Maruti Suzuki Inaugurates India's Largest In-Plant Rail Logistics Hub at Manesar.



In a major step toward green mobility and industrial logistics reform, Maruti Suzuki India Ltd. (MSIL) has launched the nation's largest in-plant railway siding at its Manesar manufacturing plant in Haryana. The project aligns with India's long-term infrastructure vision under PM GatiShakti, promising reduced road traffic, carbon emissions, and logistics costs through high-efficiency freight movement by rail.

- This new siding is connected to the Haryana Orbital Rail Corridor, a dedicated industrial rail line spanning between Palwal and Sonipat. Maruti's internal network links to the Northern Railway's Patli station via a 6.9 km stretch, allowing seamless integration with India's wider Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC).
- Spread across 46 acres with over 8.2 km of track length, this facility can handle approximately 4.5 lakh vehicle dispatches per year. By replacing nearly 65,000 truck trips annually, it is projected to cut down 1.75 lakh tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and save up to 60 million litres of diesel, significantly reducing the carbon footprint of Maruti's logistics operations.
- The inaugural freight operation witnessed a rake carrying 276 vehicles leaving the Manesar facility for Nagpur. This flagged the beginning of a new logistics era for Maruti Suzuki, emphasizing multimodal connectivity and eco-friendly transport.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) Maruti Suzuki invested approximately ₹454 crore in total—₹327 crore for the rail corridor and ₹127 crore for the yard infrastructure. The initiative directly supports PM GatiShakti National Master Plan by improving multimodal integration and accelerating industrial logistics in North India.
- (ii) Currently, about 24% of Maruti's finished vehicles are transported via rail. With the addition of this facility, the company has set a target to increase this to 35% by FY2029-30, taking inspiration from its earlier success at the Gujarat plant, which pioneered the country's first in-plant railway terminal.
- (iii) Hisashi Takeuchi, Managing Director & CEO of Maruti Suzuki, emphasized that this project reflects the company's commitment to sustainability, cost-efficiency, and alignment with India's climate goals. The siding is expected to play a key role in Maruti's roadmap towards

achieving net-zero emissions and leaner supply chain operations.

### 3. India's ICAR-NIHSAD Bhopal Earns Category 'A' Status for Rinderpest Virus Containment by WOAHO-FAO.



India has achieved a significant breakthrough in the field of global animal health with the ICAR-National Institute of High Security Animal Diseases (ICAR-NIHSAD) in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, being recognised as a Category A Rinderpest Holding Facility (RHF). This designation was conferred jointly by the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH), headquartered in Paris, and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations.

- The announcement was made during the 92nd General Session of WOAHO, held from May 25–29, 2025, in Paris. This global platform recognised India's capability to safely manage highly sensitive rinderpest virus-containing materials, a virus officially eradicated but retained for emergency preparedness and scientific research.
- The certificate of recognition was presented to Alka Upadhyaya, Secretary of the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying (DAHD), under the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying

(MoFAHD). The ceremony was presided over by WOAH Director General Dr. Emmanuelle Soubeyran and WOAH President Dr. Susana Pombo.

- With this Category A status, ICAR-NIHSAD is authorised to safely store, monitor, and handle all types of rinderpest virus materials, including vaccine stocks, under strict global biosafety guidelines. It reaffirms India's technical capabilities in veterinary virology and outbreak preparedness.

#### Key Points:-

(i) This achievement places India among a select group of only six authorised global centres tasked with the high-security storage of rinderpest virus material (RVCM). These facilities serve as crucial safeguards in case of any future need for emergency vaccine production or viral analysis.

(ii) NIHSAD's elevation to Category A strengthens India's status as a leader in global animal health and veterinary biosafety.

(iii) It also opens new avenues for collaboration with international research and disease containment institutions.

#### 4. India Launches Operation Sindhu to Evacuate 110 Students from Iran Amid Rising Israel–Iran Tensions.



Amid escalating tensions between Iran and Israel, the Indian government recently launched 'Operation Sindhu' on June 18, 2025, to ensure the safe evacuation of Indian nationals—particularly medical students—stranded in conflict-affected areas of Iran. The operation marks India's latest humanitarian effort to uphold citizen safety abroad, reinforcing its proactive foreign policy.

- Operation Sindhu was triggered after Israel launched airstrikes on Iranian nuclear and military sites on June 13, 2025, in retaliation to Iran-backed proxy activities. These attacks intensified military conflict across Iran, leading to missile launches, internet shutdowns, power failures, and civilian disruptions, especially in urban centers like Tehran, Tabriz, and Urmia—where hundreds of Indian medical students study.

- On June 18, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) activated the first leg of Operation Sindhu, successfully evacuating 110 Indian students from Urmia in northwestern Iran. The students were moved by land to Yerevan, Armenia, and then flown to New Delhi via a special evacuation flight, which landed safely in the early hours of June 19.

- The evacuation was coordinated by the Indian embassies in Tehran and Yerevan, in partnership with the Armenian government. Minister of State Kirti Vardhan Singh monitored the mission, while MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal confirmed that additional evacuations were being organized through Turkmenistan and Georgia for students still in Iran.

#### Key Points:-

(i) Operation Sindhu mirrors previous Indian efforts like Operation Ganga (Ukraine, 2022) and Operation Kaveri (Sudan, 2023). It reinforces India's diplomatic agility and reputation for prioritizing the safety of its diaspora, even amid high-risk geopolitical zones.

(ii) Over 4,000 Indian nationals, mostly students,

remain in Iran. The Government of India has activated 24x7 helplines and grievance cells at embassies to manage ongoing evacuations.

(iii) Additional flights are being scheduled, with plans to prioritize those in proximity to active conflict areas. The operation will continue in phases until all vulnerable Indians are brought home safely.

## INTERNATIONAL

### 1. UNGA Declares 2026 as International Year of the Woman Farmer.



In a landmark resolution adopted on May 2, 2024, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) officially declared 2026 as the International Year of the Woman Farmer (IYWF) through Resolution A/RES/78/279. Proposed by the United States and co-sponsored by 123 UN Member States, this declaration recognizes the vital yet historically under-acknowledged role of women in agriculture and aims to address gender disparities in rural livelihoods.

- **The International Year of the Woman Farmer will highlight the significant contribution of women in agriculture, especially in developing countries where they are responsible for 60–80% of food production and represent around 39% of the global agricultural workforce.**

- **Despite their contribution, women own less than 15% of agricultural land globally, face limited access to credit, markets, mechanization, and often lack legal rights or social protection in rural areas.**

- **The UNGA resolution mandates that the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), along with Rome-based agencies like IFAD (International Fund for Agricultural Development) and WFP (World Food Programme), coordinate global efforts during IYWF 2026 to address gender inequalities in land ownership, financial inclusion, climate adaptation, and decision-making power. The year will also amplify women's voices in agriculture, promote capacity-building, and advocate for gender-transformative policies in the food system.**

#### Key Points:-

(i) The declaration strongly supports the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) and SDG 5 (Gender Equality). It calls for inclusive agricultural transformation, with governments, civil society, and the private sector urged to promote gender-responsive policies, ensure equal access to training, irrigation, and technology, and invest in women-led agribusiness models.

(ii) The initiative marks a crucial moment in global agricultural reform, acknowledging that empowering women farmers not only supports equity but also improves yields, food security, and nutrition at scale. FAO studies suggest that closing the gender gap in agriculture could increase production in developing countries by up to 4%, potentially reducing the number of undernourished people by 100–150 million globally.

(iii) With 2026 now officially designated as the International Year of the Woman Farmer, the UN invites all Member States, organizations, universities, cooperatives, and women-led rural

movements to participate actively in promoting gender-just agricultural development, thereby laying the foundation for more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable food systems.

## 2. India Presents Landmark Labour Reforms & Social Security Gains at 113th ILO Conference in Geneva.



From 2–13 June 2025, India actively participated in the 113th International Labour Conference (ILC) held in Geneva, Switzerland, where it put the global spotlight on its comprehensive labour code reforms and dramatic rise in social security coverage.

- The Indian delegation was led by Union Minister Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya (Labour & Employment), alongside state ministers, senior IAS officers, and representatives from both employers' and workers' organisations. This strong presence underscored India's proactive role in shaping global labour standards.

- India showcased its successful consolidation of 29 legacy labour laws into four modern codes—covering wages, industrial relations, occupational safety, and social security. These reforms aim to streamline compliance, enhance worker rights, and formalise the labour market.

- Citing new ILO data, Minister Mandaviya highlighted a dramatic increase in social security coverage, which

rose from just 19% in 2015 to 64.3% in 2025—now covering approximately 940 million Indians, making India the second-largest country globally in terms of coverage.

### Key Points:-

(i) Mandaviya also reported that India's unemployment rate dropped from ~6% in 2017 to 3.2% in 2024, with over 75 million formal-sector jobs created. The Employment Linked Incentive (ELI) scheme—budgeted at USD 12.8 billion—is expected to further boost employment and facilitate transitions from informal to formal work.

(ii) Reflecting on emerging labour dynamics, India emphasized its commitment to gig and platform workers, projected to reach 23.5 million by 2030. The e-Shram portal, which now includes over 300 million unorganised sector workers, was highlighted as a key tool for targeted social protection.

(iii) During the ILC plenary and side-events, India supported the development of new international standards on biological hazards at work and decent work in digital economies. The delegation also stressed context-sensitive implementation of global norms, particularly for MSMEs and informal workers.

## 3. OpenAI Secures \$200 Million Contract with U.S. Department of Defense.



In a significant strategic move, OpenAI has recently been awarded a \$200 million contract by the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) to develop advanced frontier AI tools aimed at national security. This marks the company's first direct partnership with the Pentagon, signaling a shift toward broader governmental collaboration.

- The one-year pilot initiative, expected to run through July 2026, will be based around Washington, D.C., where OpenAI will prototype AI solutions for both military (warfighting) applications and enterprise needs—ranging from enhanced healthcare services for service members to streamlined program data analysis and proactive cyber defense systems.

- Previously, OpenAI's terms of service barred applications in military or warfare contexts. The company reversed that policy in 2024, now allowing selective defense collaborations. This contract represents a major pivot in OpenAI's strategic posture.

- Coinciding with the contract announcement, OpenAI unveiled "OpenAI for Government"—a dedicated initiative designed to deliver tailored AI models (like ChatGPT Enterprise and ChatGPT Gov) to federal, state, and local agencies, covering areas such as cybersecurity, healthcare, and administrative efficiency.

#### Key Points:-

(i) This deal emerged after a competitive bidding process featuring 12 proposals. Analysts note that such a high-value DoD award positions OpenAI among the top defense-focused software providers, increasing pressure on traditional contractors like Palantir.

(ii) OpenAI hasn't entirely new to defense work—it previously collaborated with defense tech firm Anduril, integrating its AI into counter-drone systems, and CEO Sam Altman publicly supported the \$500 billion "Stargate" AI infrastructure initiative.

(iii) Despite military engagement, OpenAI maintains ethical guardrails: its usage policies continue to ban AI for weapon development, harmful operations, or destructive activities. The Pentagon echoed that all use cases under this agreement must align with these policy constraints.

#### 4. Vietnam Joins BRICS as 10th Partner Country, Deepening Global South Cooperation.



On June 13, 2025, the Brazilian government, currently presiding over BRICS, formally announced that Vietnam is its 10th "Partner Country". This status allows Vietnam to participate in BRICS summits and meetings without full membership, highlighting its growing importance in

South–South solidarity and sustainable development

- BRICS introduced the Partner Country category in 2024 to foster broader engagement. As a partner, Vietnam can attend meetings, endorse declarations, and collaborate on key projects without being bound to full membership obligations.
- Vietnam joins a diverse group of nine existing partners, including Belarus, Bolivia, Kazakhstan, Cuba, Malaysia, Nigeria, Thailand, Uganda, and Uzbekistan—making it the 10th nation granted this status.
- Brazil's foreign ministry, speaking as the host of the 2025 BRICS presidency, endorsed Vietnam's admission. The statement emphasized Vietnam's role in South–South cooperation and its steadfast pursuit of sustainable development, framing it as a valuable Asian partner.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) Vietnam's inclusion reflects its diplomatic strategy of "bamboo diplomacy" — balancing partnerships with major powers while retaining strategic autonomy. It boosts Hanoi's leverage in global forums including ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation), G7/G20 (Group of Seven / Group of Twenty), and the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development).
- (ii) Membership in BRICS partner category links Vietnam more closely with the New Development Bank and joint infrastructure/investment initiatives, aligning with its ambitions to diversify trade partnerships and enhance multilateral connectivity.
- (iii) Although Vietnam previously indicated interest in deeper BRICS engagement—evidenced by its leader's participation in BRICS+—Hanoi remains cautious about full membership to preserve strategic ties with Western partners, including the

U.S..

## BANKING & FINANCE

### 1. RBI Raises Agency Commission for Banks Handling Government Transactions.



The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has issued a revised Master Circular (RBI/2025-26/06) effective April 1, 2025, under Section 45 of the RBI Act, 1934, to enhance agency commission rates for banks acting as intermediaries in processing government transactions.

- This circular consolidates instructions issued up to March 31, 2025, and restates the RBI's mandate to remunerate agency banks for handling essential tasks such as revenue collections, government payments, pension disbursements, and Small Savings Scheme (SSS) operations—including Public Provident Fund (PPF), Sukanya Samridhi, and Kisan Vikas Patra, with commissions for SSS borne by the Government of India.
- Under the new circular, the updated commission rates are as follows: ₹40 per physical receipt, ₹12 per electronic receipt, and a substantial ₹80 per pension payment. Additionally, banks will now receive 7 paise per ₹100 of turnover for all other eligible payment transactions, with the exception of pre-funded

schemes or transactions where compensation is provided by Government agencies.

- The circular clearly outlines categories of ineligible transactions—such as bank guarantees, dealings with statutory/autonomous bodies, capital payments, Gold Monetisation Scheme transactions, and loans or withdrawals from financial institutions—which will not qualify for agency commission.

#### Key Points:-

(i) To claim their commissions, agency banks must upload transaction reports daily via QPX/e-Kuber before 6 PM and submit quarterly claims to the Central Accounts Section (CAS), Nagpur, or respective regional RBI offices. Banks are also required to certify that none of the claimed transactions are ineligible.

(ii) Failure to adhere to correct claim procedures may result in penal interest imposed at the Bank Rate plus 2%.

(iii) Overall, by increasing agency commission rates and formalizing clear eligibility criteria, enhanced reporting protocols, and penalty provisions, the RBI aims to strengthen the procedural efficiency, transparency, and fair remuneration for banks conducting critical government business—especially in rural and semi-urban regions.



In a strategic leadership move, Meta Platforms Inc., headquartered in California, USA, has appointed Arun Srinivas as the new Managing Director (MD) and Head of Meta India, effective July 1, 2025. This transition is part of Meta's broader plan to reinforce leadership in one of its largest growth markets, following the exit of Sandhya Devanathan from the India MD role as she now leads the company's operations across India and Southeast Asia (SEA).

- Arun Srinivas succeeds Sandhya Devanathan, who has now taken over a larger regional role. Srinivas will be responsible for driving Meta's India strategy, focusing on business growth, innovation, advertiser engagement, and revenue expansion. He will continue to report directly to Sandhya Devanathan, Meta's Vice President for India & Southeast Asia.

- Arun Srinivas brings with him almost three decades of experience in the domains of sales, marketing, and digital strategy. He began his corporate career in 1996 at Reebok and later served in multiple key positions at Hindustan Unilever Ltd (HUL) until 2017, eventually becoming VP – Foods South Asia, based in Mumbai.

- Before joining Meta, he worked as Operating Advisor at WestBridge Capital (2017–2019), and then held dual roles of Chief Operating Officer (COO) and Global Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) at Ola from 2019 to 2020, overseeing business expansion and customer engagement strategies in India and overseas.

## APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

### 1. Meta Appoints Arun Srinivas as Managing Director and Head for India.

**Key Points:-**

(i) Since joining Meta in September 2020 as Director and Head of Ads Business for India, Arun Srinivas led the company's monetization strategy, focusing on scaling the ads ecosystem and building advertiser confidence across Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp using AI tools and regional outreach.

(ii) This leadership change comes at a time when Meta is addressing regulatory challenges and data governance issues in India. With growing scrutiny from the Competition Commission of India (CCI) and concerns over WhatsApp's data-sharing framework, having a strong and experienced leader at the helm is crucial for sustaining growth and compliance.

(iii) India remains a key market for Meta, with explosive growth in areas like business messaging, Reels, creator economy, and AI innovation. Under Arun Srinivas's leadership, Meta aims to deepen advertiser relationships, invest in regional content creators, and enhance small business engagement through Meta platforms.

**SPORTS****1. ICC to Permit 4-Day Tests in 2027–29 World Test Championship for Smaller Nations.**

The International Cricket Council (ICC) is preparing to introduce a major change to the 2027–29 World Test Championship (WTC): allowing four-day Test matches for emerging cricket nations. This shift aims to make Test cricket more feasible for smaller boards, while traditional five-day matches will remain for marquee rivalries.

- **Smaller cricketing nations face logistical and financial hurdles hosting five-day Tests. By reducing match duration, boards could host a three-Test series in under three weeks, increasing playing opportunities and helping spread the Test format more widely.**

- **ICC Chair Jay Shah backed the proposal during discussions at the WTC final at Lord's, stating that the plan could be ready for the 2027–29 cycle. He emphasized that major series like the Ashes, Border-Gavaskar Trophy, and Anderson–Tendulkar Trophy will remain five-day affairs.**

- **To maintain competitive integrity, four-day Tests will have a minimum of 98 overs per day, instead of the standard 90 overs in five-day games. This ensures that shorter duration does not lower the standard of play.**

**Key Points:-**

(i) The ICC previously approved four-day Tests for bilateral series in 2017, including fixtures involving Ireland, Zimbabwe, and England. But applying it to the WTC would be the first major global format change.

(ii) Countries like Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Pakistan, West Indies, and New Zealand often struggle to organize longer series. The four-day format would give them more opportunities, addressing concerns voiced by South Africa over their sparse Test calendar, despite being the current WTC champions.

(iii) The ICC is set to finalize the proposal for four-day Test matches in time for the 2027–29 WTC cycle, while retaining five-day Tests for the 2025–

27 period. This move, pending consultations with member boards and stakeholders, aims to enhance inclusivity and financial viability for smaller nations without affecting marquee five-day rivalries.

## 2. ICC Reveals Schedule for Women's ODI World Cup 2025 in India & Sri Lanka.



The International Cricket Council (ICC) has officially unveiled the full schedule for the 13th Women's ODI World Cup, which is set to run from 30 September to 2 November 2025. India and Sri Lanka will jointly host the tournament, featuring eight top teams, five venues, including a unique hybrid model for Pakistan's matches.

- Eight nations—India, Australia, England, New Zealand, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and Bangladesh—will compete in a single round-robin group stage, after which the top four teams advance to the semi-finals and a final, totaling 31 matches.

- The tournament begins with India vs Sri Lanka on 30 September at M. Chinnaswamy Stadium, Bengaluru. The two semi-finals are scheduled for 29–30 October (Guwahati or Colombo and Bengaluru), and the final on 2 November will be held at either Bengaluru or Colombo, depending on Pakistan's progression.

- Indian venues include Bengaluru, Guwahati, Indore (Holkar Stadium), and Visakhapatnam, while all of Pakistan's league matches will be played at R. Premadasa Stadium, Colombo, under the hybrid hosting model.

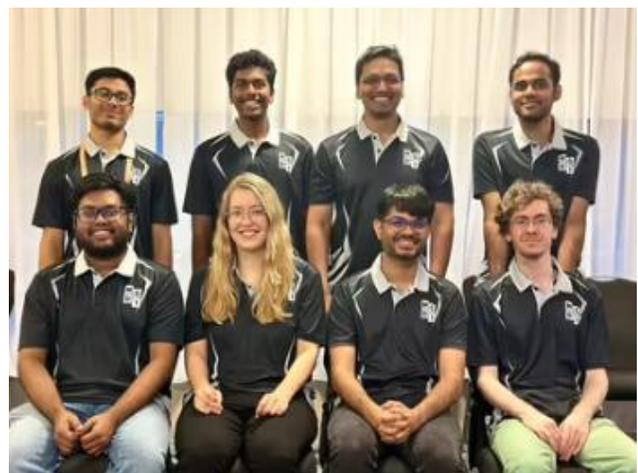
### Key Points:-

(i) The highly anticipated India vs Pakistan match is scheduled for 5 October 2025 at Colombo's R. Premadasa Stadium, amidst ongoing regional tensions—playing out at a neutral venue as per ICC's hybrid model agreement.

(ii) Holkar Stadium, Indore, will host five matches, including marquee clashes like Australia vs New Zealand (1 Oct), India vs England (19 Oct), Australia vs England (22 Oct), and Australia vs South Africa (25 Oct)—marking women's cricket's return after 28 years.

(iii) This marks the fourth Women's ODI World Cup in India (previous wins in 1978, 1997, 2013) and the first in Sri Lanka, being the final edition with only eight teams. ICC expects expansion in future tournaments to support global growth in women's cricket.

## 3. India's Team MGD1 Clinches 2025 FIDE World Rapid Team Championship in London.



At the FIDE World Rapid Team Championship 2025, held in London from June 11–13, Team MGD1 (Team MGD1 is a chess team) from India made history by becoming the first Indian side to win the Rapid Team title. Outperforming 52 international teams across a demanding 12-round Swiss format, they secured top honours with 21 match points out of a possible 24.

- **Competing in a field of over 50 teams from around the world, Team MGD1 won 10 matches, drew 1, and lost only 1, finishing with a commanding 21 match points. Consistency and resilience defined their performance.**

- **On the climactic final day, Team MGD1 delivered a perfect performance—winning all 4 matches—to edge past rivals like Hexamind Chess Team, who gathered 20 match points.**

- **The team featured top Indian grandmasters such as Arjun Erigaisi, Pentala Harikrishna, Leon Luke Mendonca, Pranav Venkatesh, along with amateur board player Atharvaa P Tayade, whose remarkable 11/12 score greatly bolstered the team effort.**

#### **Key Points:-**

(i) Their victory was sealed with a tight 3.5–2.5 win over UK-based Malcolm’s Mates in the final round, underscoring their nerves and strategy under high-stakes pressure.

(ii) No Indian-sponsored team had previously won the FIDE World Rapid Team Championship. Team MGD1 joins elite status alongside international teams, enhancing India’s global chess credentials.

(iii) This edition was part of the wider FIDE World Rapid & Blitz Team Championships, held from June 10–16 at Novotel London West. The tournament featured top global talent, including both grandmasters and amateurs, with a total prize pool of €310,000 for Rapid events.

## **SUMMITS & CONFERENCE / COMMITTEES & MEETINGS**

### **1. AYUSH Ministry Hosts ‘Yoga Connect 2025’: Global Summit on “Yoga for One Earth, One Health” in Delhi.**



On 14 June 2025, the Ministry of AYUSH organized Yoga Connect 2025, a hybrid global summit at Vigyan Bhawan, Delhi, as a flagship event leading up to the 11th International Day of Yoga (IDY) on 21 June. The summit, centered on the theme “Yoga for One Earth, One Health”, brought together international delegates, experts, and practitioners to explore yoga’s role in global wellness and sustainability

- **The summit attracted over 1,000 in-person attendees, complemented by a large global audience joining virtually from countries including Bahrain, the USA, the UK, and South Korea. The event was coordinated by the Central Council for Research in Yoga and Naturopathy (CCRYN) to foster academic, health, and policy-level engagement.**

- **A major highlight was the release of the ‘Yoga Prabhava’ report, offering a comprehensive assessment of IDY’s impact over the past decade, including health metrics, public participation, and research outcomes.**

- **At the Global Yoga Connect 2025 Summit, three key publications were launched to highlight India’s yoga and ecological research efforts. These included the**

“Decadal Impact of Yoga”, an e-book summarizing ten years of global yoga outreach and its public health outcomes; a Scientometric Analysis of Yoga Research, offering data-driven insights into academic trends; and “Bhartiya Vriksha Vaibhavam”, a unique work celebrating the cultural and environmental value of indigenous Indian trees.

### Key Points:-

(i) The summit featured multiple thematic sessions covering vital topics such as yoga's role in preventing non-communicable diseases, assessing the impact of the Common Yoga Protocol, integrating technology through Yoga-Tech, addressing women's health across life stages, and exploring the global potential and economic value of universal yoga adoption.

(ii) The summit featured leading figures like Swami Baba Ramdev, Acharya Balakrishna, Dr H.R. Nagendra, Bikkhu Sanghasena, and Sri Bharath Bhushanji, who brought philosophical insights and wellness perspectives.

(iii) Yoga Connect 2025 marks a pivotal moment—ten years after the UN declared 21 June as International Day of Yoga in 2014—and underscores yoga's recognition by UNESCO as intangible cultural heritage. It reinforces India's global leadership in promoting holistic health, mindfulness, and wellness diplomacy.

## IMPORTANT DAYS

### 1. UN Observes International Day for Countering Hate Speech 2025 with Focus on AI-Driven Threats.



Every year on June 18, the world observes the International Day for Countering Hate Speech, a United Nations–designated awareness day. Established by the UN General Assembly in July 2021 through resolution A/RES/75/309, this day builds on the UN Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech launched in June 2019.

- The theme for 2025 was “Hate Speech and Artificial Intelligence Nexus: Building coalitions to reclaim inclusive and secure environments free of hatred.”
- This year's focus was on tackling AI-driven hate speech, including challenges posed by deepfakes, algorithmic bias, and bot-generated misinformation.

### Key Points:-

(i) UN Secretary-General António Guterres called hate speech a “poison to peace,” emphasizing the urgent need for responsible technology, platform transparency, and global cooperation.

(ii) Key initiatives included ethical AI practices, media literacy campaigns, youth-led counterspeech programs, and the global #NoToHate social media movement.

(iii) Countries and organizations across Africa, Europe, and Asia actively participated, hosting educational forums and calling for stronger policy measures to combat online and offline hate narratives.

## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

### 1. China Launches 'Zhangheng 1-02' Satellite to Boost Natural-Disaster Early Warning Systems.



On 14 June 2025, China successfully launched Zhangheng 1-02, an electromagnetic monitoring satellite, aboard a Long March 2D rocket from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwest China. Crafted in collaboration with Italy, the satellite enhances China's space-air-ground integrated approach for tracking geological and atmospheric risks.

- Zhangheng 1-02, also known as CSES-02 (China Seismo-Electromagnetic Satellite-02), operates in a Sun-synchronous orbit with a 6-year lifespan. It carries nine scientific payloads, including Chinese-Italian electric field detectors and high-energy particle sensors from Italy.

- The satellite performs quasi-real-time detection of global electromagnetic fields, ionospheric status, and the neutral atmosphere. It captures aberrations due to earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, extreme weather, lightning, and space weather events.

- Data from Zhangheng 1-02 aids scientists in correlating physical-field anomalies with geological events, bolstering earthquake, tsunami, and volcanic

eruption prediction. It sharpens China's early-warning, risk assessment, and emergency response systems.

#### Key Points:-

(i) Paired with Zhangheng 1-01 (launched in 2018), this new satellite enables synchronized observations, improving horizontal spatial and temporal resolution—leading to more accurate mapping of ionospheric and electromagnetic disruptions.

(ii) The joint mission deepens Sino-Italian collaboration in payload development, data exchange, and research. Italian scientists praised the mission as a milestone that mirrors Matteo Ricci's historic East-West cultural exchange.

(iii) Marking China's 581st Long March launch, the satellite signals Beijing's commitment to resilient infrastructure under its civil-space roadmap. It supports global disaster management, Belt and Road partners, and secures telecommunications and navigation networks, while setting the stage for a future satellite constellation.

## BOOKS & AUTHORS

### 1. Former New Zealand PM Jacinda Ardern Releases Memoir: A Different Kind of Power.



In June 2025, Jacinda Kate Laurell Ardern, the former Prime Minister of New Zealand, released

her much-anticipated memoir titled "A Different Kind of Power." The book is published jointly by Virago Press (an imprint of the UK-based Little, Brown Book Group) and Crown Publishing Group, a division of Penguin Random House (USA).

- **Jacinda Ardern, who served as the 40th Prime Minister of New Zealand from 2017 to 2023, made global headlines for her empathetic and inclusive leadership style. At just 37 years old, she became one of the youngest leaders in New Zealand's history, and the second elected head of government in the world to give birth while in office.**

- **The memoir offers a reflective narrative of Ardern's early political life, her rise to the premiership, and the challenges she faced as a young woman leading a diverse coalition government. She writes candidly about discovering her pregnancy during intense post-election negotiations in 2017.**

- **Ardern shares deeply moving insights on responding to the 2019 Christchurch mosque shootings, where her compassionate handling earned global admiration. Her leadership resulted in swift and strict gun control reforms that reshaped New Zealand's firearm laws.**

#### **Key Points:-**

(i) A chapter is devoted to the Zero-COVID strategy, which prioritized science-driven decisions, aggressive border management, and public trust. New Zealand reported one of the lowest COVID-19 death rates globally during her tenure.

(ii) Through ten personal leadership principles, Ardern redefines what power can mean in modern politics—positioning empathy, vulnerability, and authenticity not as weaknesses but as transformative tools for effective governance.

(iii) The book also reflects on the global scrutiny women in leadership face, and how she navigated criticism with poise. Her approach inspired

debates on gender, media accountability, and inclusive political discourse.

**Static GK**

<b>Bihar</b>	Chief minister: Nitish Kumar	Governor: Arif Mohammad Khan
<b>UNGA</b>	President: Annalena Baerbock	Headquarters: New York
<b>RBI</b>	Governor : Sanjay Malhotra	Headquarter : Mumbai
<b>ICC</b>	President: Jay Shah	Headquarter : Dubai
<b>Sri Lanka</b>	President: Anura Kumara Dissanayake	Prime minister: Harini Amarasuriya
<b>China</b>	President: Xi Jinping	Capital: Beijing
<b>Maruti Suzuki India Limited</b>	Founded: 1981, Gurugram	Headquarters: New Delhi
<b>Ministry of AYUSH</b>	Cabinet Minister: Sarbananda Sonowal	Headquarters: New Delhi
<b>International Labour Organisation (ILO)</b>	Director- General (DG) : Gilbert F. Houngbo	Headquarters : Geneva, Switzerland
<b>the World Organisation for</b>	President: Dr.	Director General: Dr. Emmanuelle

<b>Animal Health (WOAH)</b>	Susana Pombo	Soubeyran
<b>Vietnam</b>	Prime minister: Pham Minh Chinh	Capital: Hanoi
<b>Iran</b>	Official language: Persian	Capital: Tehran
<b>FIDE</b>	President: Arkady Dvorkovich	Headquarters: Lausanne, Switzerland