

WEEKLY GK NOTES- 30TH JUNE TO 6TH JULY

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

1. Pakistan and China Plan SAARC Alternative, India May Be Invited

Pakistan and China, with input from Bangladesh, are in advanced discussions to create a new regional bloc aimed at replacing the dormant SAARC. Initial talks at a Kunming meeting on June 19 signalled plans to broaden the grouping to include Sri Lanka, Maldives, and Afghanistan, with India potentially invited, though its participation remains uncertain due to divergent interests. The bloc is envisioned as a connectivity- and trade-oriented platform to revive South Asian regional cooperation

2. UK High Court Upholds F-35 Parts Export to Israel Despite Gaza War

The London High Court has dismissed a legal challenge from Palestinian rights group Al-Haq, ruling that the UK's continued supply of F-35 jet components to Israel is lawful. The court affirmed that arms export decisions fall under executive discretion, citing national security and alliance obligations. The case highlighted that the UK supplies approximately 15–16% of F-35 parts used in Israeli jets deployed in Gaza, but the court ruled judicial intervention inappropriate in these strategic choices.

3. Thailand's PM Paetongtarn Shinawatra Suspended by Constitutional Court

Thailand's Constitutional Court, in a 7–2 ruling, has suspended Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra pending an ethics investigation after a leaked phone call with Cambodia's Hun Sen during a tense border standoff. In the 17-minute June 15 call, of which a 9-minute snippet was released, Paetongtarn referred to Hun Sen as “uncle,” criticised a Thai military commander, and promised to “take care” of anything he wanted, sparking public outrage over perceived compromises to national interest. A petition by 36 senators accused her of dishonesty and ethical violations. With her coalition already weakened by the Bhumjaithai Party's exit and growing protests, the court suspended her pending her response, granting her 15 days to defend herself. Meanwhile, Deputy PM Suriya Juangroongruangkit initially stepped in as caretaker, later replaced by Interior Minister Phumtham Wechayachai on July 3. Paetongtarn retained the cabinet role of

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Culture Minister during the inquiry. Her suspension marks the third time a Shinawatra family leader has been removed from power via court order or coup (following her father Thaksin in 2006 and aunt Yingluck in 2014), reflecting ongoing tensions between their populist legacy and Thailand's conservative establishment.

4. Turkey Detains Cartoonists After Prophet Drawing

Turkish authorities have arrested four staff members (cartoonist Dogan Pehlevan, editor-in-chief, designer, and manager) from *LeMan* magazine following publication of a cartoon depicting figures interpreted as Prophets Moses and Muhammad shaking hands over missiles. The cartoon was seen as insulting religious values. The arrests, sparked on June 30–July 1, accompanied protests at the magazine's Istanbul office, rock-throwing incidents, and a national debate on press freedom versus religious respect.

5. Indo-French Exercise Shakti 2025 Concludes in France

The 8th edition of Exercise Shakti concluded on July 1, 2025, at Camp Larzac in southern France. The two-week engagement featured 90 Indian Army personnel, including Jammu & Kashmir Rifles troops, and over 500 French military members from the Army, Foreign Legion, Air & Space Force, and Navy. The drills focused on urban warfare tactics, combat shooting, obstacle navigation, electronic warfare, and counter-UAS operations, highlighting growing interoperability and strategic collaboration.

6. Suspected Hate Crime: 20–30 Bullets Fired at ISKCON Temple in Utah

Across several nights in late June, the ISKCON Sri Sri Radha Krishna Temple in Spanish Fork, Utah, was struck by 20–30 bullets, targeting its hand-carved arches and a worship hall window while devotees were present. No one was injured, but significant damage could cost thousands to repair. Surveillance shows a pickup truck stopped near the temple's fence, with gunfire erupting from over 100 yards away before the vehicle fled. Shell casings were recovered, and authorities, including the Utah County Sheriff's Office, are treating it as a suspected hate crime or domestic terrorism, increasing patrols and reviewing footage. The Consulate General of India in San

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Francisco strongly condemned the attack, urging prompt action, and the temple has boosted security with lighting, fencing, cameras, night guards, and a \$1,000 tip reward.

7. PM Modi Begins Longest Diplomatic Tour in a Decade — July 2–9, 2025

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has set off on an eight-day, five-nation tour, his most extensive since 2016, spanning Ghana, Trinidad & Tobago, Argentina, Brazil, and Namibia, with the goal of boosting India's engagement with the Global South. In Ghana (July 2–3), Modi's first bilateral visit in 30 years includes meetings with President Mahama, a Parliament address, and signing MoUs on traditional medicine, standards, cultural exchange, and defence. He will also be conferred the Officer of the Order of the Star of Ghana. Next, in Trinidad & Tobago (July 3–4), a first visit since 1999, he's scheduled to address Parliament, receive the Order of the Republic, and meet top leaders amid mixed reactions from local communities. In Argentina (July 4–5), Modi's first visit in 57 years to Buenos Aires includes talks with President Milei centred on trade, critical minerals (like lithium), agriculture, energy, defence, and space cooperation. The Brazil leg (July 5–8) features active participation in the 17th BRICS Summit in Rio, followed by a state visit to Brasília for meetings with President Lula on AI, climate finance, multilateral reform, and bilateral partnership. Finally, in Namibia (July 8–9), Modi will address Parliament, pay homage to the country's founding father, and discuss deepening collaboration on UPI, mining (uranium/diamonds), healthcare, wildlife, and digital infrastructure.

8. States Sue Trump Administration Over Medicaid Data Sharing with DHS/ICE

Twenty U.S. states, led by California AG Rob Bonta, sued the Trump administration after HHS under Ronald F. Kennedy Jr. transferred Medicaid data, including personal details, immigration status, and health claims of non-citizens from California, Illinois, Washington, and D.C. to DHS for immigration enforcement. The states say this move violated HIPAA, the Social Security Act, the Privacy Act, and other federal privacy laws, and argue it will deter vulnerable communities from seeking care and compromise public health. Internal HHS and CMS memos warned that the transfer executed in just 54 minutes was unlawful, but the administration proceeded, prompting the lawsuit. The states are asking the court to block further transfers, forbid the use of already shared data for deportation, and destroy the improperly shared data.

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9. Global Liveability Index 2025: Copenhagen Tops, Damascus Sinks to Bottom

The EIU Global Liveability Index 2025 ranked Copenhagen as the world's most liveable city with a near-perfect score of 98.0, achieving full marks in stability, education, and infrastructure, ending Vienna's three-year reign and solidifying Northern Europe's dominance in optimal living conditions. Joining Copenhagen in the top ten were other Western Europe and Asia-Pacific cities: Vienna, Zurich, Melbourne, Geneva, Sydney, Osaka, Auckland, Adelaide, and Vancouver, the latter the only North American city represented. Conversely, the bottom 10 least liveable cities are dominated by conflict zones and regions with strained services, led by Damascus (score 30.7), followed by Tripoli, Dhaka, Karachi, Algiers, Lagos, Harare, Port Moresby, Kyiv, and Caracas. Notably, the global average score remained unchanged at 76.1, but stability continued its decline amid rising geopolitical and civil unrest.

10. Ex-PM Sheikh Hasina Sentenced to Six Months via Contempt Case

The International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) in Bangladesh has sentenced former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to six months in prison in absentia, marking her first conviction since fleeing the country amid protests in mid-2024. The ruling stems from her reaction to a leaked audio suggesting violent reprisals, which the tribunal deemed contemptuous. Alongside her, Shakil Akand Bulbul, linked to the Awami League's student wing, received a two-month sentence. The conviction reflects the interim government's push to hold former leaders accountable for human rights abuses and the restoration of the rule of law.

11. Wisconsin Supreme Court Overturns 176-Year-Old Abortion Ban

In a closely watched 4–3 decision, the Wisconsin Supreme Court struck down the state's 1849 near-total abortion ban, ruling that it had been impliedly repealed by more recent legislation regulating abortion, particularly a 1985 law permitting procedures until fetal viability and establishing protocols like ultrasounds, waiting periods, and consent requirements. The ban, which criminalised virtually all abortions except those performed by the mother to save her life, had been dormant since *Roe v. Wade* in 1973. The recent ruling confirms that existing abortion laws remain intact and enforceable, effectively restoring legal access in Wisconsin. The majority opinion, written by Justice Rebecca Dallet, emphasised that modern statutes thoroughly cover the subject, indicating legislative intent to replace the outdated ban.

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12. Iran Suspends Cooperation with IAEA After U.S.–Israel Strikes

Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian has enacted a law backed by Parliament and the Supreme National Security Council, suspending cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) until guarantees are provided for the safety of Iran's nuclear sites and personnel. The move follows joint U.S.–Israel airstrikes in June targeting enrichment facilities at Fordow, Natanz, and Isfahan, where Iran had been enriching uranium to near weapons-grade levels (up to 60%). By July 4, the last IAEA inspectors departed Tehran amid heightened security concerns and official distrust, with Tehran accusing the agency of aligning with Western powers to justify the strikes. While Iran has not formally ended the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi confirmed that future inspections will require high-level political approval, yet insisted Iran remains NPT-compliant.

13. Xi Jinping to Skip BRICS Summit in Brazil; Premier Li Qiang to Attend

For the first time since assuming power in 2013, President Xi Jinping will not attend the BRICS Summit in Rio de Janeiro (July 6–7), instead dispatching Premier Li Qiang as China's representative a decision Beijing attributes to scheduling conflicts, though others see deeper diplomatic signaling amid Xi's reduced global engagements and evolving summit priorities. His absence, alongside Russia's Vladimir Putin (who will join virtually due to an ICC arrest warrant), highlights the bloc's shifting dynamics and China's internal focus, though it still underscores BRICS's aim to champion Global South cooperation on issues like climate, health, and AI.

14. IMF Approves \$350 Million for Sri Lanka in Fourth Bailout Review

On July 1, 2025, the IMF Executive Board approved the fourth review of Sri Lanka's \$2.9 billion Extended Fund Facility, releasing an additional SDR 254 million (~\$350 million), bringing total disbursements to SDR 1.27 billion (~\$1.74 billion). Sri Lanka has met nearly all conditions, including restoring cost-recovery pricing for electricity and meeting major March 2025 fiscal targets, though it still holds some arrears. The economy grew 5% in 2024, inflation remains under control, and reserves have strengthened to over \$6.5 billion. However, the IMF warns that rising global trade risks, notably U.S. tariffs on apparel exports, could threaten stability. It emphasises

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continued reforms like better tax compliance, safeguarding fiscal space, finalising \$4.75 billion in debt deals (especially with China), and aligning the national budget with IMF goals.

15. PM Modi Honoured with Ghana’s Prestigious ‘Officer of the Order of the Star of Ghana’

During his visit to Accra on July 2, Prime Minister Narendra Modi was conferred the Officer of the Order of the Star of Ghana, the nation’s second-highest civilian honour, by President John Dramani Mahama, in recognition of his “distinguished statesmanship and influential global leadership”. Modi dedicated the accolade to “the aspirations of the youth of India,” highlighting shared democratic values and a commitment to deepen India–Ghana relations. The ceremony coincided with significant bilateral engagement: agreements on skill development, traditional medicine, standards, and digital payments (including Ghana’s adoption of UPI), reflecting India’s emphasis on demand-driven, capacity-building cooperation with Ghana and broader Global South partners.

16. Foxconn Recalls 300+ Chinese Engineers from India, Disrupting iPhone 17 Production

Foxconn, the world’s largest iPhone assembler, has recalled over 300 Chinese engineers and technicians from its southern India plants over the past two months, leaving only Taiwanese staff onsite. This move, reportedly influenced by Beijing’s informal restrictions on exporting skilled labour and technology, threatens to slow down the ramp-up for iPhone 17 production, reducing assembly-line efficiency and training speed for Indian workers. Despite this, product quality is expected to remain stable. Foxconn continues building a second manufacturing facility in India as Apple pushes to produce most U.S.-bound iPhones there by 2026. However, the talent withdrawal underscores how geopolitical tensions, chiefly China’s efforts to preserve its manufacturing dominance, are complicating Apple’s supply chain diversification.

17. “Big Beautiful Bill” Blocked in House Procedural Vote

A key procedural vote failed in the House, effectively stalling President Trump’s \$1.2 trillion “Big Beautiful Bill”, which aimed to fund border wall expansion, military upgrades, infrastructure, tax cuts, and reduced foreign aid under his “America First” agenda. The vote to begin debate on the bill was blocked when four Republicans, Brian Fitzpatrick (PA), Andrew Clyde (GA), Keith Self

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(TX), and Thomas Massie (KY), voted “no” on the procedural rule, exceeding the allowable three defections given the narrow GOP majority. Speaker Mike Johnson and President Trump had rallied behind the scenes to sway holdouts, even sending late-night messages and convening urgent meetings. However, with the rule vote falling short at 219–213, the bill cannot advance to the floor unless support is restored. This marks a major setback for Trump’s legislative agenda and intensifies internal strife within the Republican Party.

18. Japan Orders Evacuation After 1,000+ Quakes Strike Akuseki Island

Since June 21, the Tokara Islands in southern Japan, including Akuseki, have endured an intense swarm of 1,031 earthquakes, some reaching magnitude 5.5, strong enough to make standing difficult. Authorities issued evacuation orders for the 89 residents, who gathered at the island school playground before being transported to mainland Kagoshima; the orders were later lifted after safety assessments. Although no casualties or major damage have been reported, seismic experts warn of heightened risks of landslides, structural collapse, and additional quakes; residents report severe sleep disruption and anxiety. This swarm, surpassing previous episodes in 2023 and 2021, underscores Japan’s ongoing geological challenges and the critical need for preparedness.

19. NASA's Anil Menon to Join ISS Expedition 75 in June 2026

Indian-American astronaut Anil Menon, a Harvard-trained neurobiologist, Stanford-educated physician, and U.S. Air Force Colonel, has been selected as a flight engineer for Expedition 75 aboard the Soyuz MS-29 spacecraft scheduled for June 2026. Launching from Baikonur with two Roscosmos cosmonauts, Menon will spend around eight months on the International Space Station, conducting scientific experiments and technology demonstrations critical to advancing long-duration human spaceflight and benefiting life on Earth. He brings a wealth of experience as a NASA flight surgeon and SpaceX medical director, and continues practising emergency medicine alongside his astronaut duties. His assignment follows soon after ISRO-linked Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla joined the ISS via Axiom-4, highlighting growing Indian-origin representation in space.

20. U.S. Imposes First Sanctions on Iranian Oil Since Ceasefire

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In a decisive move, the U.S. Treasury Department unveiled fresh sanctions on July 3 targeting a network involved in smuggling Iranian oil disguised as Iraqi crude and several "shadow fleet" tankers, marking the first such measures since the Washington-supported ceasefire ended the recent 12-day conflict between Israel and Iran. The actions specifically sanction Iraqi businessman Salim Ahmed Said, his UAE-based company, and 12 vessels accused of facilitating covert oil exports. Additionally, the U.S. sanctioned a Hezbollah-controlled financial institution, aimed at crippling revenue streams that aid Iran's destabilizing regional influence. According to Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, these steps are part of a broader "maximum pressure" policy designed to disrupt Tehran's access to funds that support militant factions. The move follows President Trump's brief suggestion that China could resume Iranian oil buys post-ceasefire, only to swiftly reverse course amid Tehran's self-congratulatory rhetoric.

21. India Ranks 4th Most Income-Equal Country Globally, Says World Bank

According to the World Bank's Spring 2025 Poverty and Equity Brief, India boasts a Gini Index of 25.5, placing it fourth worldwide in income equality, behind only the Slovak Republic (24.1), Slovenia (24.3), and Belarus (24.4). This achievement outstrips all G7 and G20 nations, including China (35.7) and the U.S. (41.8), reflecting a notable shift from its 2011 score of 28.8. Over the same period, 171 million people have escaped extreme poverty, with rates plunging from 16.2% in 2011 to 2.3% in 2023 at the global threshold of US\$2.15/day. This transformation is driven by India's focused policies, such as PM Jan Dhan accounts, Aadhaar-based Direct Benefit Transfers, Ayushman Bharat health coverage, and support for SC/ST, women entrepreneurs, and artisans, which have helped streamline welfare distribution and uplift millions.

22. Israeli Airstrike Eliminates Hamas Naval Commander in Gaza

On June 30, 2025, Israeli fighter jets conducted a targeted airstrike in Gaza City, resulting in the death of Ramzi Ramadan Abd Ali Saleh, the commander of Hamas' naval force in northern Gaza. The strike also killed two other Hamas operatives: Hisham Ayman Atiya Mansour, the deputy head of Hamas' mortar array unit, and Nissim Muhammad Suleiman Abu Sabha, an operative within the same unit. The Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) and Shin Bet (Israel Security Agency) described Saleh as a "significant source of knowledge" within Hamas. In recent weeks, he had

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been involved in planning maritime attacks against Israeli forces operating in Gaza. The airstrike targeted a covert meeting at an internet café in Gaza City, a location that had reportedly become a gathering place for young people, including students, journalists, and artists. The attack resulted in at least 41 fatalities and 75 injuries, with most casualties being women and children.

23. UK Engineers Land in Kerala to Fix Grounded F-35 B

A Royal Air Force Airbus A400M touched down at Thiruvananthapuram International Airport on July 6, carrying a team of 21–24 UK engineers and specialists to inspect and attempt repairs on a British F-35B stealth fighter jet stranded since June 14 due to an emergency landing prompted by low fuel and a technical fault during exercises from HMS Prince of Wales. The jet was towed into an MRO hangar and will be assessed for on-site repairs; if unrepairable, it may be partially dismantled and airlifted out later. The A400M is expected to return to the UK later, but the engineering crew will stay until the operation is complete.

24. BRICS Summit in Rio Navigates Crises Amid Trump Tariff Threats

The 17th BRICS Summit (July 6–7) in Rio de Janeiro has unfolded against the backdrop of escalating global tensions, including the Israel-Iran conflict and Donald Trump’s trade warnings. Trump vowed to impose an extra 10% tariff on countries it deems aligned with “anti-American” BRICS policies. In response, BRICS nations issued a carefully worded declaration condemning unilateral tariffs and supporting fair trade, while avoiding explicit criticism of the U.S. The summit emphasised multilateral cooperation, sustainable development, AI, and green energy; however, the absence of Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin underlined internal divisions. Brazilian President Lula, hosting the summit, steered discussions toward developing Global South infrastructure and institutional reform, deliberately sidestepping direct confrontation with the U.S. in an effort to maintain bloc unity amid threats and block fragmentation.

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25. Prolonged Droughts Linked to Rise in Sexual Violence Against Young Women

A groundbreaking study in *PLOS Global Public Health* reveals that extreme, multi-year droughts lasting 8–43 months in low- and middle-income countries significantly increase sexual violence

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against women aged 13–24. Researchers from Curtin University analysed data from over 35,000 young women across 14 countries in South America, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Southeast Asia, using Violence Against Children and Youth Surveys conducted between 2013 and 2019. The study shows how drought-driven stressors such as water scarcity, forced migration, and early or forced marriages create heightened vulnerabilities and increased exposure to violence. Even shorter dry spells are linked to similarly elevated risks of sexual assault. This is the first large-scale, population-based analysis connecting drought conditions specifically to non-partner sexual violence among teenage girls and young women. The findings underscore the need for climate-resilient social policies, including improved access to water, targeted migration support, and violence prevention strategies tailored to environmental crises

26. Indian Navy Saves Tanker Crew After Engine Fire in Gulf of Oman

The stealth frigate INS Tabar, deployed in the Gulf of Oman, swiftly responded to a distress call on June 29 from the Palau-flagged oil tanker MT Yi Cheng 6, which had suffered a major engine-room fire and total power failure while sailing from Kandla to Shinas, Oman. The tanker, with 14 Indian-origin crew, was aided when 13 naval personnel and five crew members aboard conducted coordinated firefighting, using both the ship's boats and a helicopter, significantly reducing the blaze and ensuring everyone's safety.

27. Lucknow Becomes UP's First "Zero Dump City"

Lucknow has officially earned the title of Uttar Pradesh's first Zero Dump City after its Shivri solid waste treatment plant began handling all 2,100 MT of daily municipal waste, processed across three 700 MT units. Since launching in 2012, the plant faced delays and mismanagement, but a renewed ₹96 crore remediation project under the Swachh Bharat Mission led to Pune-based Bhumi Green Energy taking over in early 2024. They introduced microbial treatments and air-drying techniques to eliminate odour and leachate. Two-thirds of the long-standing "waste mountain" has been cleared. The plant now converts waste into compost, refuse-derived fuel (RDF), coarse aggregates, and construction debris. Materials like coconut husks and plastics are repurposed into ropes and mats. IIT Roorkee, VJTI Mumbai, and NEERI Nagpur monitor the project's performance, which is also preparing for waste-to-energy generation in future phases.

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28. Bihar Eases SIR Voter ID Rules for Post-1987 Births

The Election Commission has clarified that during Bihar's Special Intensive Revision (SIR), voters born after 1987 do not need parental birth documents if either parent was listed in the 2003 electoral rolls. An extract from that 2003 list is now sufficient proof of eligibility for around 4.96 crore voters, easing documentation requirements and reducing the burden on many citizens

29. India to Launch 52 Military Satellites for Border Surveillance

India will fast-track deployment of 52 defence surveillance satellites under the ₹26,968 crore SBS-III programme by 2029 (likely as early as April 2026 launch) to ensure “deep and persistent” monitoring of land and maritime borders following insights from Operation Sindoor. ISRO will launch 21 satellites, while private firms will build the remaining 31, with operations managed by the Defence Space Agency (DSA) and featuring AI-enhanced capabilities and rapid “launch-on-demand” functionality

30. India Bars U.N. Investigator from Air India Crash Probe

India has denied entry to an ICAO expert who offered observer status in the probe of the June 12 Air India Boeing 787 crash near Ahmedabad, which claimed 260 lives. Despite concerns over transparency and black box analysis delays, the Civil Aviation Ministry says flight-recorder data was downloaded two weeks post-crash, and the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) is leading the inquiry under national ICAO protocols

31. India is developing the Agni-5 -bunker-buster missile with 80–100 m Penetration

India's Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) is modifying the Agni-5 intercontinental ballistic missile into a conventional bunker-buster, equipped with a massive 7,500 kg warhead capable of penetrating 80–100 meters of reinforced concrete or rock. The warhead sacrifices range—down to roughly 2,500 km—in exchange for destructive depth and precision, and the missile is expected to travel at hypersonic speeds (Mach 8–20). This development follows global trends, inspired by U.S. use of GBU-57 Massive Ordnance Penetrators (MOPs) against Iranian nuclear facilities, with India opting for a cost-effective, missile-based

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delivery—as opposed to relying on strategic bombers—under its evolving indigenous precision-strike capabilities.

32. Cabinet Unveils ₹4 Lakh Crore Growth Push: Jobs, Skills, R&D & Infrastructure

India's Cabinet has approved a major stimulus package totalling over ₹4 lakh crore, spanning employment, skilling, research, transport, and sports. Firstly, the ₹1.07 lakh crore Employment-Linked Incentive (ELI) Scheme (under a broader ₹2 lakh crore allocation) aims to generate approximately 3.5 crore jobs between August 2025 and July 2027. It includes Plan A (one-month wage subsidy of up to ₹15,000 for first-time employees), Plan B (bonus support to manufacturing firms for extended hiring), and Plan C (employer incentives of ₹1,000–3,000/month across all sectors). In coordination, the Cabinet approved ₹63,000 crore for internships and skill training, plus ₹30,000 crore to modernise Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs)—complementing an earlier ₹60,000 crore ITI upgrade approval. Next, a historic ₹1 lakh crore R&D and Innovation (RDI) fund via the Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF) will champion deep-tech, AI, green tech, and industrial innovation through low-interest financing, crucial for startup competitiveness. Other key approvals include ₹1,853 crore to widen the Paramakudi–Ramanathapuram highway (with progress on the Dhanushkodi segment), and the launch of the Khelo India Policy 2025, replacing the National Sports Policy to boost grassroots sports.

33. Indian Railways Launches RailOne Superapp & Overhauls Booking Systems

Indian Railways has introduced RailOne, a unified superapp (Android and iOS) developed by CRIS that consolidates reserved, unreserved, and platform ticket bookings, live train tracking, PNR status, coach position finder, food ordering, refunds, Rail Madad integration, parcel tracking, an R-Wallet for secure payments, and single sign-on via IRCTC or UTS credentials. The streamlined interface supports multilingual and Divyangjan accessibility, aiming to simplify the fragmented app experience.

Alongside the app launch, Indian Railways is implementing key booking reforms starting July 1, 2025:

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- Reservation charts will be finalised 8 hours before departure (previously 4); early morning trains will have charts ready by 9 PM the previous day.
- Tatkal bookings will be restricted to Aadhaar/DigiLocker verified users, with OTP verification mandatory by month-end.
- A next-generation PRS to debut by December 2025, capable of 150,000 bookings/min and 4 million enquiries/min, with enhanced inclusivity features.

34. GST Collection Slows but Holds Steady

India's Goods and Services Tax (GST) collection for June 2025 reached ₹1.85 lakh crore, marking a YoY increase of 6.2%—the slowest growth seen since June 2021. The figure represents a decline from May's ₹2.01 lakh crore, reflecting a post-fiscal-year normalisation. Collections include approximately ₹34,600 crore in CGST, ₹43,268 crore in SGST, ₹93,300 crore in IGST, and ₹13,500 crore in cess. Elevated refunds (up 28.4% YoY) led to a net tax intake of around ₹1.59 lakh crore—for a more precise economic reading, see detailed breakdowns.

35. INS Tamal Commissioned—India Ends Foreign-Built Warship Era

The Indian Navy commissioned the INS Tamal (F71), a Talwar-class stealth frigate, on July 1, 2025, at Kaliningrad's Yantar Shipyard in Russia. This final Project 1135.6 warship is the last Indian vessel built abroad, featuring approximately 26–30% indigenous systems, including BrahMos missiles. Captain Sridhar Tata commands the ship, which will join the Western Fleet, signifying a strategic shift towards self-reliant, in-house naval production.

36. Bihar CM Launches “Mukhyamantri Pratigya” Scheme: ₹4,000–₹6,000 Monthly Stipends for Youth

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has introduced the Mukhyamantri Pratigya Yojana under the “7 Nischay-2” initiative, offering monthly stipends to support youth skill development and internships from 2025–26 to 2030–31. The scheme provides ₹4,000 per month for Class 12 pass-outs, ₹5,000 for ITI/diploma holders, and ₹6,000 for graduates/postgraduates undertaking internships. Additionally, trainees working outside their home district will receive ₹2,000 extra,

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and those outside Bihar will get ₹5,000 more (for up to three months). Approximately 100,000 youths are expected to benefit, with funds disbursed directly via DBT to encourage employability and youth empowerment.

37. Deepika Padukone to Receive Star on Hollywood Walk of Fame – Class of 2026

Bollywood icon Deepika Padukone has been selected to receive a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in the Motion Pictures category, making her the first Indian actress to earn this honour. The announcement was made on July 3 during a live press conference at Ovation Hollywood, confirming her place among a star-studded Class of 2026 alongside Miley Cyrus, Timothée Chalamet, Emily Blunt, Marion Cotillard, Rachel McAdams, Franco Nero, and Gordon Ramsay. The selection by the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce followed committee deliberations on June 20 and final approval on June 25, with Padukone's name revealed in a ceremony hosted by Walk of Fame veterans such as Eugenio Derbez. Known for her roles in major Bollywood hits as well as her Hollywood debut in *xXx: Return of Xander Cage* (2017), Padukone stands out for her international influence—highlighted by her inclusion in *Time*'s 100 Most Influential People and appearances at global events like Cannes and the Met Gala.

38. India Clears ₹1.03 Lakh Crore Indigenous Defence Acquisitions

India's Defence Acquisition Council, led by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, has approved 10 capital procurement proposals totalling approximately ₹1.03 lakh crore (about US\$12.3 billion). All deals fall under the 'Buy (Indian-IDD)' category aimed at bolstering domestic defence production. The acquisitions include armoured recovery vehicles, electronic warfare systems, surface-to-air missile systems, integrated inventory management, and naval platforms such as mine counter-measure vessels and submersible autonomous vessels. These strengthen mobility, air defence, logistics, and maritime security across the Indian Army, Navy, and Air Force.

39. India Proposes WTO Retaliation Over U.S. Auto Tariffs

India has filed a formal notification with the World Trade Organisation (WTO) to impose retaliatory tariffs on American goods in response to the U.S.'s 25% safeguard duties imposed under Section 232 on auto parts and light-duty vehicles from India. The U.S. measures, which took effect

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on May 3, threaten approximately \$2.9 billion in Indian exports; New Delhi estimates its own counter-tariffs would recoup around \$725 million annually. India asserts that the U.S. actions violate WTO rules, were removed without the requisite prior safeguards consultations, and are unfair. Under WTO procedures, India is reserving the right to suspend tariff concessions equivalent to the harm suffered. While the move is procedural, it strengthens India's negotiating position amid ongoing bilateral trade talks with the U.S., which face a July 9 deadline set by President Trump. Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal emphasised that this WTO step is compatible with active negotiations and won't impede a mutually beneficial deal.

40. Shocking Confession in Karnataka: Sanitation Worker Alleges Involvement in 25-Year-Old Murders

A former sanitation worker from Dakshina Kannada, Karnataka, has made a chilling confession to local police, claiming he was coerced into burning and burying the bodies of rape and murder victims, including schoolgirls, over a 16-year period (1998–2014) in Dharmasthala and nearby areas. The man, identified as a Dalit and ex-temple employee, says he was threatened by influential temple staff and other powerful individuals, fearing he would be harmed, or worse, if he refused. He has formally lodged a complaint and submitted photographic evidence of exhumed remains to the Dharmasthala police, triggering the registration of a case under Section 211(a) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. Fearing retaliation, he requested inclusion under Karnataka's 2018 Witness Protection Scheme before fully naming his alleged co-conspirators, who claimed to be connected to the temple administration. Police and legal authorities are now verifying his claims, with a supervisory police report filed and early investigations underway. If confirmed, this could represent one of the most disturbing serial crime revelations in the state's recent history, exposing deep-rooted abuse of influence and systemic silencing of crimes.

41. World's First Port-Based Steel-Slag Road Launched at Hazira Port

Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone (APSEZ) has unveiled a groundbreaking 1.1 km road within Hazira Port, Gujarat, constructed entirely using processed steel slag aggregates—a first for any port globally, and a major milestone in circular-economy infrastructure. The sustainable pavement, linking the Multi-Purpose Berth (MPB-1) to the coal yard, was developed under Phase

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II of the Bulk & General Cargo Terminal expansion, in collaboration with CSIR-CRRI and the Ministry of Science & Technology. Its flexible pavement design, designed by CSIR-CRRI, enhances load-bearing capacity and durability while lowering both construction costs and environmental impact. While India already has two prior steel-slag roads, this is the first to be built inside a port, showcasing industrial waste conversion into high-performance infrastructure. APSEZ says the project aligns with the national “Waste to Wealth” drive and reflects their push toward green maritime logistics. The road was inaugurated by Dr Vijay Kumar Saraswat of NITI Aayog, alongside CSIR-CRRI leadership and Adani officials.

SPORTS

42. MS Dhoni Files Trademark for ‘Captain Cool’

Former India captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni has officially filed a trademark application for his renowned nickname “Captain Cool”, covering sports training, coaching services, and training centres. The application—submitted via Rithi Sports Management—was accepted and advertised in the official Trade Marks Journal on June 16, 2025, meaning no one else can use the nickname commercially in these categories once the trademark is fully registered. The move aligns with global trends: high-profile athletes and celebrities trademark their nicknames (e.g., Shah Rukh Khan’s “King Khan,” Virat Kohli’s “One8”) to protect their brand value and explore merchandising, academies, or digital ventures.

43. Gukesh Wins Rapid, Finishes 3rd Overall at SuperUnited Rapid & Blitz (Zagreb)

At the 2025 Grand Chess Tour’s SuperUnited tournament in Zagreb, 19-year-old D. Gukesh dominated the rapid segment, scoring an impressive 14/18 points—winning five straight games after an initial loss to Jan-Krzysztof Duda and famously defeating World No. 1 Magnus Carlsen—finishing with six wins, two draws, and only one loss. His excellent form secured the rapid title, but he faltered in the blitz section, managing just 1.5/9 on the first day and losing seven consecutive games, which dropped him to third overall with 19.5 points. Meanwhile, Carlsen surged, scoring 7.5/9 in day one of the blitz, and went on to win the combined event with 22.5 points, followed by Wesley So with 20.

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44. Neeraj Chopra Triumphs at First-Ever NC Classic in Bengaluru

Olympic and World Champion Neeraj Chopra launched India's first international field athletics event—the Neeraj Chopra Classic, held on July 5 at Bengaluru's Sree Kanteerava Stadium. In front of a roaring home crowd of over 14,500 spectators, Chopra dominated the javelin competition with a third-attempt throw of 86.18 m, clinching gold at the World Athletics Gold-level meet. Kenya's former world champion Julius Yego secured silver with 84.51 m, while Sri Lanka's Rumesh Pathirage claimed bronze by reaching 84.34 m. The event's standout moment was Chopra's powerful recuperation after an opening foul, followed by consistent throws in the mid-80s (84.07 m and 82.22 m), showcasing his signature form and competitive grit. It featured a total of 12 elite javelin throwers, including top athletes like Thomas Röhler and Curtis Thompson; however, only eight qualified for the finals, with Chopra topping that group.

45. 14-Year-Old Suryavanshi Smashes Fastest Youth ODI Century

Indian U19 opener Vaibhav Suryavanshi, aged just 14, slammed a record-breaking 52-ball hundred against England U19 in Worcester, making it the fastest century in Youth ODI history. He finished with an electrifying 143 off 78 balls, including 10 sixes and 13 fours, and shared a 219-run partnership with Vihaan Malhotra (129) in a dominant win for India. The knock has sparked national and international attention, with acclaim from commentator Ravi Shastri, who hailed him as a generational talent.

46. India-Bangladesh White-Ball Series Deferred to 2026

The highly anticipated India tour of Bangladesh, comprising three ODIs and three T20Is scheduled for August 17–31, 2025, has been postponed to September 2026. The decision was mutually agreed upon due to Bangladesh's political instability and security concerns, as well as logistical scheduling challenges. The BCCI and BCB emphasised that the series will still proceed once conditions stabilise.

47. Historic Victory: India Clinches Maiden Test Win at Edgbaston to Level Series 1-1

India created history at Edgbaston, securing a commanding 336-run victory over England to level the five-match Test series at 1-1. This triumph marks India's first-ever Test win at the notorious Birmingham venue—a fortress they had failed to breach in eight previous attempts dating back nearly six decades. The victory was driven by captain Shubman Gill, who delivered a sensational

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performance, scoring 269 in the first innings and 161 in the second, accumulating a staggering 430 runs, the second-highest total by any batsman in a single Test. His twin centuries as captain in just his second Test demonstrate extraordinary composure and leadership. With Jasprit Bumrah rested, the bowling responsibilities fell to Akash Deep and Mohammed Siraj. Deep claimed 10 wickets in the match (6 in the second innings), while Siraj secured six in the first, dismantling England's batting lineup and overruling their decision to bowl first. England managed just 271 in the fourth innings, collapsing under pressure despite a brave effort from Jamie Smith (184* and 88).

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Weekly Quiz (30th June – 6th July)

1. What new regional bloc is being considered as an alternative to SAARC?
 - a) South Asia Trade Union
 - b) Indo-Pacific Forum
 - c) China-Pakistan Strategic Union
 - d) A new South Asian regional group with China, Pakistan & others
2. Which country's PM, Paetongtarn Shinawatra, was suspended over an ethics probe?
 - a) Cambodia
 - b) Thailand
 - c) Vietnam
 - d) Laos
3. Where did India and France conclude Exercise Shakti 2025?
 - a) Paris
 - b) Camp Larzac
 - c) Strasbourg
 - d) Marseille
4. Why was the ISKCON temple in Utah in the news?
 - a) Fire outbreak
 - b) Vandalism
 - c) Hate crime shooting
 - d) Idol theft
5. Who will represent China at the BRICS 2025 Summit instead of Xi Jinping?
 - a) Han Zheng
 - b) Wang Yi

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- c) Li Qiang
 - d) Hu Chunhua
6. What award was PM Modi conferred in Ghana?
- a) Grand Commander of the State
 - b) Order of the Republic
 - c) Officer of the Order of the Star of Ghana
 - d) Ghana Leadership Medal
7. Why did Iran suspend cooperation with IAEA in July 2025?
- a) Nuclear deal expiration
 - b) Domestic political transition
 - c) U.S.–Israel airstrikes on nuclear sites
 - d) Internal sabotage of reactors
8. What caused Foxconn to recall Chinese engineers from India?
- a) Labour protests
 - b) Production delays
 - c) Beijing's export restrictions on skilled talent
 - d) Apple quality concerns
9. What historic legal decision did the Wisconsin Supreme Court make?
- a) Legalisation of euthanasia
 - b) Restoration of abortion access
 - c) Ban on capital punishment
 - d) Recognition of same-sex marriage
10. What rank did India achieve in the 2025 World Bank Gini Index report?
- a) 1st
 - b) 2nd
 - c) 3rd
 - d) 4th

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11. What is the estimated value of India's 52 military satellites programme?
 - a) ₹11,000 crore
 - b) ₹18,500 crore
 - c) ₹26,968 crore
 - d) ₹33,000 crore

12. Who has been selected for the ISS Expedition 75 in 2026?
 - a) Rakesh Sharma
 - b) Anil Menon
 - c) Peggy Whitson
 - d) Sunita Williams

13. What new Railways app was launched to unify ticketing and tracking services?
 - a) BharatRail
 - b) OneRail
 - c) RailOne
 - d) IndianTrack

14. Who was appointed as caretaker PM of Thailand after Paetongtarn's suspension?
 - a) Suriya Juangroongruangkit
 - b) Prayuth Chan-ocha
 - c) Hun Sen
 - d) Phumtham Wechayachai

15. What was Neeraj Chopra's winning throw at the NC Classic in Bengaluru?
 - a) 85.07 m
 - b) 86.18 m
 - c) 84.34 m
 - d) 87.11 m

16. Who made a 52-ball century, the fastest in Youth ODI history?
 - a) Vihaan Malhotra
 - b) Shubham Jaiswal

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- c) Vaibhav Suryavanshi
- d) Dev Mehta

17. What prompted the India-Bangladesh white-ball series postponement?

- a) Cyclone warning
- b) Stadium repairs
- c) Bangladesh political instability
- d) Scheduling conflict with Asia Cup

18. What shocking revelation came from a sanitation worker in Karnataka?

- a) Temple land scam
- b) Organ trafficking
- c) Forced cremation of murder victims
- d) Caste discrimination case

19. Where was the world's first port-based steel slag road built?

- a) Mumbai Port
- b) Hazira Port
- c) Paradip Port
- d) Kandla Port

20. Which Indian athlete filed a trademark for "Captain Cool"?

- a) Rohit Sharma
- b) Virat Kohli
- c) MS Dhoni
- d) Hardik Pandya

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Answer Key

1. d (New bloc including China, Pakistan, Bangladesh, etc.)
2. b (Thailand)
3. b (Camp Larzac)
4. c (Hate crime shooting)
5. c (Li Qiang)
6. c (Officer of the Order of the Star of Ghana)
7. c (U.S.–Israel airstrikes on nuclear sites)
8. c (Beijing’s restrictions on skilled export)
9. b (Restoration of abortion access)
10. d (4th)
11. c (₹26,968 crore)
12. b (Anil Menon)
13. c (RailOne)
14. d (Phumtham Wechayachai)
15. b (86.18 m)
16. c (Vaibhav Suryavanshi)
17. c (Bangladesh political instability)
18. c (Forced cremation of murder victims)

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19. b (Hazira Port)

20. c (MS Dhoni)