


# SANSKRITI IAS DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

18-06-2026

## National Statistical Commission (NSC)

 Business Standard

### Saibal Chattopadhyay named chairperson of National Statistical Commission

The government on Tuesday appointed Saibal Chattopadhyay as chairperson of the National Statistical Commission (NSC), the nodal body



### Why in News

- The Government of India recently appointed a new **Chairperson and three Members** to the **National Statistical Commission (NSC)**.

### Institutional Profile

- It was established in **2005** based on the recommendations of the **Rangarajan Commission (2000)**.
- It functions as the apex body for coordinating India's core statistical activities.
- It aims to ensure uniformity, credibility and quality in official statistics.

### Composition

- It consists of a **part-time Chairperson** and **four part-time Members** with expertise in statistics.
- The **CEO of NITI Aayog** serves as an ex-officio member.
- The **Chief Statistician of India (CSI)** acts as the Secretary of the Commission and is also Secretary of MoSPI.

### Functional Dimensions

- It identifies **core statistics** of national importance.
- It formulates national policies, priorities and quality standards.
- It standardises statistical concepts, definitions and methodologies.
- It prepares strategies for data collection, tabulation and dissemination.

## United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

 UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

Financing development: External flows of financial capital to developing countries and their cost

Financing development is becoming more difficult. External financial flows remain too costly, too volatile and too limited to support the...



### Why in News

- A recent **UNCTAD** report stated that developing countries could save nearly **\$500 billion annually** if they borrowed at interest rates similar to developed countries.

### Institutional Profile

- It is a permanent intergovernmental body established by the **UN General Assembly in 1964**.
- It is part of the **UN Secretariat**.
- Headquarters: **Geneva, Switzerland**.
- Membership: **195 countries, including India**.

### Key Publications

- **Trade and Development Report.**
- **World Investment Report.**
- **Least Developed Countries Report.**

### Developmental Role

- It supports developing countries in integrating fairly into the global economy.
- It provides trade, investment, finance and technology assistance.
- It facilitates consensus-building and policy research.

### Strategic Importance

- It helps countries diversify economies and reduce commodity dependence.
- It assists nations in addressing debt and financial volatility.
- It promotes inclusive and sustainable development.

## Mishmi Takin

ThePrint

### Elusive Mishmi Takin caught on camera in North Sikkim for first time

Gangtok, Jun 17 (PTI) The first-ever video footage of a herd of the elusive Mishmi Takin have been recorded in the Tingda Reserve Forest of...



### Why in News

- The first-ever video footage of a herd of **Mishmi Takin** was recorded in **Tingda Reserve Forest, North Sikkim**.

### Species Profile

- Scientific Name: **Budorcas taxicolor**.
- It is a species of **goat-antelope** belonging to the family **Bovidae** and order **Artiodactyla**.
- It is one of the four recognised subspecies of Takin.

### Habitat and Distribution

- It is native to the **Eastern Himalayas**.
- It occurs in **Arunachal Pradesh, northern Myanmar, southeastern Tibet and parts of China**.
- It inhabits forest valleys and rocky alpine regions up to **4,500 m** altitude.

### Physical Characteristics

- It has a stocky body with a large head and arched nose.
- Both sexes possess horns.
- Its coat ranges from **golden-yellow to dark brown**.
- Oily skin secretions protect it from cold and damp conditions.

### Conservation Status

- **IUCN Red List: Vulnerable (VU)**.

## India International Institute of Democracy and Election Management (IIIDEM)



INDIA INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF DEMOCRACY & ELECTION MANAGEMENT  
<https://iiidem.eci.gov.in>

IIIDEM: INDIA INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF DEMOCRACY ...

IIIDEM caters to the training needs of the core election personnel who are involved in the conduct of Presidential & Vice-Presidential Elections, Elections to ...

### Why in News

- IIIDEM completed **15 years** of service in electoral training and management.

### Institutional Profile

- It was established in **June 2011** by the Election Commission of India (ECI).
- It functions as a global centre for electoral training and research.
- It is located at **Dwarka, New Delhi**.

### Core Functions

- It promotes professional standards in election management.
- It develops training and capacity-building programmes.
- It encourages electoral research and innovation.
- It promotes democratic values globally.



India International Institute of  
Democracy & Election Management


### Strategic Pillars

- Strengthening national programmes.
- Expanding international engagement.
- Promoting research and knowledge development.
- Supporting sustainable democracy.

### International Linkages

- It collaborates with **International IDEA** and other institutions.
- It conducts the **International Election Visitors' Programme (IEVP)**.
- It runs **MIEMP** with **Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS)**.

## World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought 2026

 Welcome to the United Nations

### [Secretary-General's video message on World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought 2026](#)

Rangelands are vast open spaces found in every climate, on every continent. They cover half the Earth's land surface, supplying vital food...



### Why in News

- **World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought** was observed globally on **17 June**.

### Observance Profile

- It raises awareness regarding desertification and drought mitigation.
- It was proclaimed alongside the establishment of **UNCCD**.
- **2026 Theme: "Rangelands: Recognize. Respect. Restore."**

### Understanding Rangelands

- Rangelands cover nearly **50% of Earth's land surface**.
- They support livestock, wildlife and ecosystem services.
- They store significant amounts of carbon and act as freshwater catchments.
- They support nearly 2 billion people worldwide.

### Indian Context

- Indian rangelands occupy around 121 million hectares.
- Approximately **40% of India's land area** is used for grazing.
- Around **100 million hectares** remain underutilised.

#### UNCCD: Important Facts

- It is the only legally binding agreement linking environment and sustainable land management.
- It was adopted on **17 June 1994** and entered into force on **26 December 1996**.
- It is one of the **three Rio Conventions** along with **UNFCCC** and **CBD**.
- Headquarters: **Bonn, Germany**.
- Total Parties: **197 (196 countries + European Union)**.

## Mombasa Declaration

AP AP News

### 15 countries in Kenya adopt the Mombasa Declaration to fight illegal fishing

Fifteen countries have adopted the Mombasa Declaration to combat illegal fishing, which experts say costs the global economy up to \$50...



### Why in News

- Fifteen countries adopted the **Mombasa Declaration** to combat illegal fishing.

### Institutional Significance

- It was adopted during the **11th Our Ocean Conference (OOC)** in **Mombasa, Kenya**.
- It seeks to strengthen global fisheries governance.

### Core Objectives

- It targets **Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing**.
- It promotes transparency in vessel ownership and licensing.
- It encourages cross-border data sharing.

### Number of countries in Kenya to adopt the Mombasa declaration

**15** Fifteen countries from Africa, Asia, Europe, the Caribbean, and the Pacific adopted a declaration to step up efforts to combat illegal fishing. The **Mombasa declaration** calls on governments to improve access to information on fishing vessels, ownership and licensing. PTI

### International Linkages

- It supports the **Global Charter for Fisheries Transparency**.
- It promotes low-cost governance reforms.
- It modernises vessel registries and fishing authorisations.

### Our Ocean Conference:

- It was launched in **2014** by the **US Department of State**.
- It focuses on marine protection, blue economy and climate action.
- The 2026 theme was **"Our Ocean, Our Heritage, Our Future."**

## REWARD Programme



PIB

<https://www.pib.gov.in> > PressReleasePage

### [Second National Level Consultation Meeting on the ...](#)

2 days ago — The consultation aims to deliberate on the draft National **Technical Guidelines** and to incorporate expert inputs for strengthening watershed ... [Read more](#)

Missing: news | Show results with: news

### Why in News

- **NRAA** organised discussions on technical guidelines under the REWARD Programme.

### Programme Profile

- REWARD stands for **Rejuvenating Watersheds for Agricultural Resilience through Innovative Development**.
- It is a watershed development programme implemented during **2021–2026**.

### Institutional Framework

- It is implemented in **Karnataka and Odisha**.
- The nodal agency is the Department of Land Resources (DoLR), Ministry of Rural Development.
- It receives assistance from the **World Bank**.

### Financial Mechanism

- It follows the **Programme for Results (PforR)** model.
- Loan reimbursement depends on achieving Disbursement Linked Indicators (DLIs).

### Key Focus Areas

- Strengthening watershed institutions and policies.
- Promoting science-based climate-resilient watershed management.
- Enhancing livelihood opportunities.

Other Important News of the day

Places in News

Kishau Dam Project

News onair

Six states agree to sign MoU for Kishau Multi-Purpose Dam Project

Home Minister Amit Shah today chaired a crucial meeting in New Delhi, during which consensus was reached among six states on the...



Why in News

- The Centre and beneficiary states resolved an eight-year deadlock regarding the **Kishau Dam Project**.

Geographical Profile

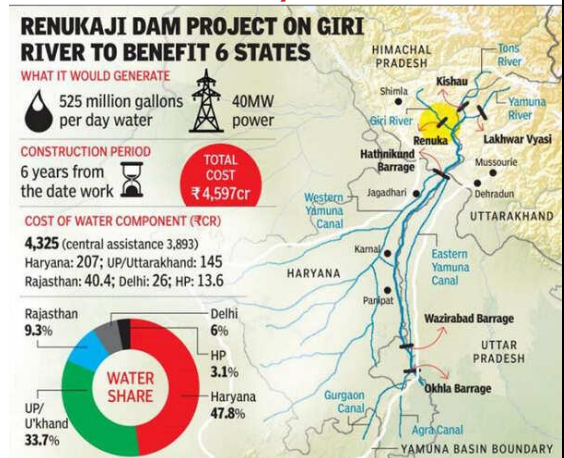
- It is a multipurpose dam proposed on the **Tons River**, a major tributary of the Yamuna River.
- It is located along the **Uttarakhand–Himachal Pradesh border**.

Technical Features

- It envisages a **236 m high concrete dam**.
- It will generate **660 MW (4×165 MW)** of hydropower.
- It will create irrigation potential for **97,000 hectares**.
- It will supply **517 MCM of water annually**.

Governance Framework

- Kishau Corporation Limited** was formed in **2017** by **Uttarakhand** and **Himachal Pradesh**.
- Beneficiary states are **Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Haryana, Uttarakhand** and **Himachal Pradesh**.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Centre will fund 90% of the water component cost.</li> </ul> <p><b>Strategic Significance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It will augment freshwater flow into the Yamuna during lean seasons.</li> <li>• It will strengthen water, energy and irrigation security in northern India.</li> </ul>
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<b>Organisation in news</b>	<b>World Gold Council (WGC)</b>
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<p> World Gold Council</p> <p><b>Central banks set to step up gold buying over the next year</b></p> <p>LONDON, 16 June, 2026 – The World Gold Council's annual Central Banks Gold Reserves Survey reveals that 89% of reserve managers expect...</p>	
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**Why in News**

- The **2026 Central Bank Gold Reserves Survey** projected increased gold accumulation by central banks globally.

**Institutional Profile**

- It is a non-profit organisation established in **1987**.
- It represents **29 major gold mining companies**.
- Headquarters: **London, United Kingdom**.

**Core Functions**

- It promotes sustainable growth of the gold industry.
- It develops gold standards and policy recommendations.
- It supports innovation and new uses of gold.

**Publications and Contributions**

- It publishes the **Gold Demand Trends** report.
- It provides quarterly analysis of gold markets.
- It created the world's first **Gold Exchange-Traded Fund (ETF)**.

**Important Facts**

- It covers markets accounting for nearly **75% of global gold consumption**.
- It is considered the global authority on gold markets.

**Environment**

**Kashmir Saffron**

 The New Indian Express

Iran war fuels global demand surge for Kashmir saffron; prices, exports rise amid output dip

According to traders, saffron that earlier sold at around Rs 250 per gram and Rs 2.5 lakh per kilogram is now being priced at approximately...



**Why in News**

- Reduced saffron production in **Iran** and instability in West Asia have increased demand for **Kashmir Saffron**.

**Geographical Profile**



- It is mainly cultivated in **Pampore and adjoining areas of South Kashmir**.
- It received a **Geographical Indication (GI) tag in 2020**.
- Around **90% of India's saffron production** comes from Kashmir.

**Agricultural Characteristics**

- It is popularly called "**Red Gold**".
- The spice is obtained from dried stigmas of purple flowers.
- It occurs in three forms: **Lachha, Mongra and Guchhi**.

**Climatic Requirements**

- It grows at elevations of **1,500–2,000 m**.
- It thrives in dry, moderate and continental climates.
- Suitable soil types are **loamy, sandy and calcareous soils**.
- Optimum soil pH ranges between **5.5 and 8.5**.

<b>Science and Technolog y</b>	<div style="background-color: #e0f2f1; padding: 5px; border: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <b>Plastic-Eating Bacteria Break Down PVC Microplastics</b> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: flex-start;"> <div style="font-size: 0.8em;">  The Times of India         </div> <div style="text-align: right;">  </div> </div> <p style="margin-top: 5px;"><a href="#"><u>Scientists discover plastic-eating bacteria that can break down PVC, one of the world's hardest plastics</u></a></p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em; margin-top: 5px;">Science News: Plastic has a habit of staying around long after its useful life has ended. Some materials can be collected and recycled with...</p> </div> <p><b>Why in News</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Researchers from <b>Cairo University, Egypt</b> identified bacterial strains capable of degrading <b>Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC) microplastics</b>. The study was published in <i>Microbial Cell Factories</i> (June 2026).</li> </ul> <p><b>Scientific Profile</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PVC (Polyvinyl Chloride) is a chlorine-containing synthetic polymer used in <b>pipes, cables, flooring, packaging and medical devices</b>.</li> <li>• <b>Microplastics</b> are plastic particles smaller than <b>5 mm</b>.</li> </ul> <p><b>Key Findings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Stutzerimonas</i> sp. NH2 reduced PVC weight by over <b>23%</b>.</li> <li>• <i>Glutamicibacter nicotinae</i> NH27 also showed degradation ability.</li> <li>• A combined <b>bacterial consortium</b> reduced PVC weight by nearly <b>27%</b>.</li> </ul> <p><b>Experimental Observations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The bacteria were isolated from <b>plastic-contaminated soils</b>.</li> <li>• Treated PVC showed <b>cracks, grooves and structural changes</b> under microscopic and chemical analysis.</li> </ul> <p><b>Kay Facts</b></p>
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- This is the **first reported evidence** linking these two bacterial strains to **PVC microplastic degradation**.
- Plastic degradation by microbes is studied under **Environmental Microbiology**.
- A **bacterial consortium** is a group of **two or more bacterial species working together**.

## Uttar Pradesh in News

### Amangarh Tiger Reserve

ET TravelWorld

[UP's Amangarh Tiger Reserve extends tourism season by 15 days, open to visitors till June 30](#)

Explore the extended eco-tourism season at Amangarh Tiger Reserve in Uttar Pradesh, now open until June 30 for tiger sightings and jungle...



### Why in News

- The fourth eco-tourism season at **Amangarh Tiger Reserve** in Uttar Pradesh was extended by 15 days.

### Geographical Significance

- It is located in **Bijnor district, Uttar Pradesh**.
- It spans approximately **95 sq km**.
- It forms part of the **Terai-Bhabar ecosystem**.

### Historical Context

- It was originally a part of **Jim Corbett National Park**.
- After the creation of Uttarakhand, Amangarh remained with Uttar Pradesh.

### Biodiversity Profile

- Dominant flora is Sal (*Shorea robusta*).
- Other trees include **Khair (*Acacia catechu*)**, **Sheesham (*Dalbergia sissoo*)** and **Haldu (*Adina cordifolia*)**.
- It hosts **Tiger, Elephant, Swamp Deer, Bengal Florican and Osprey**.