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History, Art and Culture

Gandhi's "Indian Opinion" Journal

On **June 4, 1903**, Mahatma Gandhi launched the weekly journal "**Indian Opinion**" at Phoenix Farm near Durban, South Africa.

• **Purpose -** This publication was a crucial instrument in Gandhi's fight against racial discrimination, uniting the Indian community and articulating their grievances.

• **Multilingual Reach -** It was published in **four languages**: English, Gujarati, Hindi, and Tamil, ensuring wide resonance within the diverse Indian diaspora.

• **Satyagraha's Voice -** Through its pages, Gandhi documented injustices, exposed colonial hypocrisy, and developed his philosophy of non-violent resistance, or Satyagraha.

• **Phoenix Farm's Role -** Produced at his self-sufficient Phoenix Farm, the journal embodied Gandhi's ideals of communal living and collective effort.

• **Lasting Impact -** "Indian Opinion" was vital for mobilization, raising international awareness, and laying the groundwork for Gandhi's future leadership in India's independence movement.

Geography

Phytoplankton: Microscopic Marine Plants

Recent, U.S. research indicates that human activities release iron, enhancing phytoplankton blooms and accelerating nutrient consumption, potentially leading to **harmful Algal Blooms (HABs),** causing harmful toxins.

• **Phytoplankton -** Or microalgae, are microscopic marine plants. They're the ocean's food web foundation, using sunlight and inorganic nutrients to produce essential compounds and oxygen.

• **2 primary classifications** - Are dinoflagellates and diatoms. Dinoflagellates possess whip-like flagella for movement and are covered in intricate shells. Diatoms, conversely, have rigid shells composed of interlocking parts and navigate primarily via ocean currents.

• **Ecological Significance -** Phytoplankton provide a crucial food source for a vast array of marine organisms, from shrimp and snails to jellyfish, underpinning the entire aquatic food chain.

• **Global Impact -** These tiny organisms are monumental in their global contribution, estimated to produce approximately 50% of Earth's oxygen. They also play a pivotal role in the global carbon cycle, absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

• **Seasonal Growth Patterns -** Similar to terrestrial plants, phytoplankton exhibit seasonal growth variations, with their populations flourishing more in certain periods.

Polity & Governance

Unified Waqf Management, Empowerment, Efficiency, and Development (UMEED) Portal Launch

The Centre launches the **UMEED Portal** on June 6, 2025.

• Is a centralized digital platform for Waqf property registration and regulation?

• **Nodal Ministry -** Ministry of Minority Affairs.

• **It aims** - For transparent, time-bound registration, empowers beneficiaries with digital access, resolves disputes, and provides real-time data for policy.

• **New Registration Rules -** All Waqf properties must be registered within six months with geotagged data. Unregistered properties will be deemed disputed.

• **Waqf Act Reforms -** The Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025, mandates digital registration, empowers Waqf Tribunals to adjudicate unregistered properties, and introduces High Court appeals.

Jan Aushadhi Kendra Experiential Learning Program Program Launch

The Jan Aushadhi Kendra (JAK) Experiential Learning Program launched on June 1, by the Government of India, part of the 'Seva Se Seekhen' campaign.

• **Collaborative Initiative** - This program is a collaboration between the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports and the Department of Pharmaceuticals.

• **Overview & Target -** It places five youth volunteers from various platforms in each district's JAK for 15 days, offering hands-on learning in affordable medicine distribution.

• **Volunteer Roles -** Volunteers assist with daily operations, customer interaction, inventory management, and promote generic medicine awareness.

• **Participant Benefits -**Youth gain practical exposure, learn inventory and record-keeping, develop business and customer handling skills, and understand accessible healthcare.

• **Nationwide Impact -** The program aims for nationwide deployment in all states and Union Territories, fostering experiential learning and public health awareness.

International Relations and Issues

Israel Deploys Laser Defense

Israel has successfully deployed its **Magen (Shield of Light)** laser defense system in live combat, intercepting Hezbollah drones.

• **System Name & Developer -** Part of the Iron Beam program, Magen was developed by Rafael Advanced Defense Systems.

• **How It Works -** It uses high-energy laser beams to silently burn and disable aerial threats like drones, achieving thermal damage in seconds.

• **Key Features -** Magen offers speed-of-light interception at an ultra-low operational cost (around $5 per shot), high accuracy, and silent operation. It also features AI-integrated threat assessment.

• **Strategic Significance -** Israel is the **first nation** to effectively use a combat laser defense system in real war conditions.

• **Future Implications -** This deployment paves the way for various future laser systems, including vehicle-mounted, naval, and airborne versions like Lite Beam and Naval Iron Beam.

International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression

June 4th marks the International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression.

• **Core Purpose** - This day acknowledges the severe physical, mental, and emotional suffering of children globally due to aggression, violence, and abuse.

• **UN Commitment** - It reinforces the United Nations' dedication to protecting children's rights, as outlined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

• **Call to Action** - The day urges global cooperation to prevent violence against children, uphold humanitarian law, and ensure accountability for rights violations.

• **Historical Origin** - Established on August 19, 1982, by the UN General Assembly, it initially responded to Palestinian and Lebanese children victims of aggression during the 1982 Lebanon War.

• **Global Scope** - While rooted in that conflict, the day now recognizes the suffering of all child victims of aggression worldwide.

IATA's 81st AGM in India

India recently hosted the International Air Transport Association's (IATA) 81st Annual General Meeting (AGM) and the World Air Transport Summit (WATS) at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi.

• **Marks a significant** - Return, as India last hosted the AGM 42 years ago in 1983. The Prime Minister of India addressed the event.

• **IATA -** Founded in Havana, Cuba, on April 19, 1945, IATA serves as the primary mechanism for inter-airline cooperation.

• **Mission** - Is to promote safe, reliable, secure, and economical air services globally. It is the successor to the International Air Traffic Association, established in 1919.

• **Membership** - Starting with 57 members from 31 nations, primarily in Europe and North America, IATA has grown substantially.

• **Reach** - Today, it boasts approximately 350 member airlines from 120 nations worldwide, collectively representing over 80% of global air traffic.

• **Head Office -** IATA's head office is located in Montreal, Canada.

• **Aims** - To promoting the growth of international air transportation and fostering collaboration among airlines & strengthen safety across all facets of air travel and to establish international air traffic rules and regulations.

• **First Indian Member** - Notably, SpiceJet was the first Indian airline to join IATA.

Economy

C CARES 2.0 Launched

Recently, Union Coal Minister launched C CARES Version 2.0. Developed by C-DAC for CMPFO, this upgrade signifies a major digital transformation for coal sector workers' Provident Fund and pension disbursements.

• **Aims to** - Streamline PF and pension processes, providing a unified digital link between workers, coal management, and CMPFO, ultimately enhancing transparency and user convenience.

• **Background -** Established in 1948, CMPFO serves over 3.3 lakh PF subscribers and 6.3 lakh pensioners. Version 2.0 builds upon the original C CARES, emphasizing real-time updates and direct transfers.

• **Features -** C CARES 2.0 offers digital and financial modules with real-time claim tracking and Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT). It also includes a mobile app for workers and an administrative dashboard for monitoring.

• **Initial Rollout -** Rolled out in five regional offices, including Godavarikhani and Asansol-I, with a nationwide rollout planned from July 1st, 2025.

• **Significance -** This initiative empowers coal workers with efficient services, reduces processing times, and aligns with the Digital India and 'Minimum Government, Maximum Governance' vision.

Environment

Caspian Gull

A Kozhikode-based ornithologist has announced the first-ever sighting of a Caspian Gull (*Larus cachinnans*), a rare migratory bird, in Kerala.

• **Identification -** Caspian Gulls are slender, with long legs, wings, and neck. Key identifiers include a slender bill, dark eye, pale legs, and a grey plumage between Herring and Yellow-legged Gulls.
• **Their distinctive** - wing patterns and "laughing" call are also crucial.
• **Breeding Grounds -** They primarily breed around the Black and Caspian Seas.
• **Expanding Range -** Their distribution is expanding westward into Europe.
• **Migration -** These gulls are migratory, wintering in southern Asia, the Middle East, and northeastern Africa.
• **Diverse Diet -** They are opportunistic feeders, consuming fish, invertebrates, small mammals, and carrion.
• **First Kerala Record -** A rare migratory Caspian Gull was recently sighted for the first time in Kerala, India.

Security

FPV Drones: Ukraine's Latest Weapon

Ukraine recently employed First-Person View (FPV) drones to attack Russia, reportedly destroying over 40 planes.

• **FPV Drones -** FPV drones are **unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs)** equipped with AI. This AI allows them to process real-time video, avoid obstacles, and perform missions like surveillance with precision.
• **The "first-person view"** - Means the pilot sees what the drone sees via a camera feed, often through specialized goggles.
• **Deployment and Range -** Before FPV drones, a reconnaissance drone surveys the target area. FPV drones have a smaller range, typically a few kilometers.
• **Advantages -** Their key benefits are low cost and deep strike capabilities while remaining largely undetected.
• **Challenges -** A major hurdle is the operator's limited external view, potentially causing disorientation. Sometimes, a visual observer is needed.
• **Features -** These drones boast GPS-independent navigation, a SmartPilot system for visual-inertial navigation, and LiDAR technology for enhanced precision.
• **Other Uses -** Beyond defense, FPV drones are also used for filming and other non-military purposes.

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