UPSC Daily Current Affairs| One Liners 06-06-2025

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History, Art and Culture

Ancient Astrolabe Discovered at Raigad Fort

Recent excavations at Raigad Fort by ASI and Raigad Development Authority unearthed an ancient copper-bronze astrolabe, or 'yantraraj', near Kushavarta lake.

• **Discovery offers** - Insights into the Maratha Empire's advanced astronomical knowledge.
• **Raigad Fort -** Situated in Maharashtra's North Konkan, Raigad Fort, Shivaji Maharaj's capital, is a strategically significant hill fort, known for its steep access and historical importance.
• **The Astrolabe's Features -** The rectangular astrolabe, dated to 1597 CE, bears Sanskrit and Devanagari inscriptions, along with tortoise/snake engravings, likely indicating north-south orientation for navigation and astronomical observations.
• **Historical Significance -** Its presence during Shivaji's era suggests astronomical influence on fort construction and maritime activities, potentially revealing administrative practices.
• **Excavation -** Over several years at 10-12 locations within the fort, including the ropeway station and marketplace, led to this significant find.
• **Research -** Research will illuminate Maratha naval and astronomical practices, enriching understanding of the period's technological advancements.

Geography

Assam-Meghalaya Hydropower Project on Kulsi River

Assam and Meghalaya will construct a 55 MW hydropower project on the Kulsi River, a critical habitat for the endangered Ganges River dolphin.

• **Kulsi River -** Originating in Meghalaya, the Kulsi River flows approximately 60 km through West Khasi Hills into Assam's Kamrup district, joining the Brahmaputra.
• **Gangetic Dolphin -** Known as "Susu," this endangered freshwater dolphin is one of five river dolphin species globally, found in the Ganga-Brahmaputra-Meghna systems.
• **Key Biological Features -** Blind, these dolphins use echolocation for navigation. They surface every 30-120 seconds to breathe and primarily eat fish, favoring counter-currents.
• **Conservation Status -** Listed as "Endangered" on the IUCN Red List, the Gangetic Dolphin was declared India's National Aquatic Animal in 2009.
• **Conservation Concerns -** The hydropower project raises concerns about its potential impact on the endangered Gangetic dolphin's habitat and the river's overall biodiversity.

Polity & Governance

UP Cabinet Approves Agniveer Quota

Recently, the UP Cabinet approved a 20% horizontal reservation for ex-Agniveers in UP Police direct recruitment, including Constable and Fireman roles.

• **Aim & Objective -** The policy aims to provide post-service career pathways for Agniveers and enhance police discipline.

• **Agneepath Scheme -** Launched in 2022, the Agneepath scheme recruits youth aged 17.5-21 for four-year military service as Agniveers.

• **Key Features -** The reservation is horizontal across existing categories, offering a 3-year age relaxation. Implementation begins in 2026.

• **Significance -** This decision offers socio-economic support for ex-Agniveers, enhances security efficiency, and sets a precedent for other states.

Raja Khas: Himachal's First Solar Village

Raja Khas village in Kangra district, Himachal Pradesh, has been recently been declared as state's first solar model village, aiming for rural energy self-reliance.

• Selected under the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana, this Indora block village achieved the highest solar power capacity among 43 villages.

• **Key Features** - It received a ₹1 crore central grant for solar infrastructure, including a power plant, street lights, and water heaters. All public institutions are solarized.

• **Community-Led Maintenance** - The initiative encourages community-led maintenance and widespread solar adoption.

• **Significance -** Clean Energy - It promotes clean, decentralized energy access, strengthening rural self-reliance and sustainability.

• **Replicable Model** - Raja Khas serves as a replicable model for green energy transition in hilly and rural areas, empowering local governance and climate-conscious decisions.

National Polio Surveillance Network (NPSN) Phase Out

Recently, Government of India, in coordination with WHO, plans to gradually phase out the National Polio Surveillance Network (NPSN) starting June 2025, reducing centers from 280 to 140 by 2026–27.

• **NPSN** - Established in 1997 as the National Polio Surveillance Project (NPSP), NPSN is India's key disease surveillance mechanism for polio and other vaccine-preventable diseases.

• **Organizations Involved** - The initiative is a joint effort between the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), Government of India.

• **Objective** -NPSN aims to support polio eradication by identifying and investigating Acute Flaccid Paralysis (AFP) cases and monitoring immunization campaigns.

• **Key Functions** - NPSN tracks AFP cases, supports vaccination, builds capacity for health officials, and now aids measles-rubella elimination and other vaccine-preventable diseases.

• **Integration with IDSP** - Over 200 field units with Surveillance Medical Officers (SMOs) are deployed nationwide, with eventual integration into the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP).

International Relations and Issues

World Environment Day

World Environment Day, observed annually on June 5th, is the UN's flagship initiative for global environmental awareness and action.

• **Launched in** - 1972, it has become a powerful platform engaging over 150 countries.
• **Theme for 2025:** Beat Plastic Pollution
• **Host Country 2025 -**The Republic of Korea, particularly Jeju Province, will host World Environment Day 2025, recognized for its environmental policies and waste management.
• **"Beat Plastic Pollution" is Crucial -** With over 400 million tonnes of plastic produced yearly and only 9% recycled, plastic pollution profoundly impacts ecosystems, wildlife, and human health, persisting for up to 500 years.
• **How to Celebrate -** Individuals can participate in clean-up drives, reduce single-use plastics, plant trees, organize awareness campaigns, and share messages on social media using #WorldEnvironmentDay and #BeatPlasticPollution.
• **World Environment Day 2025 in India -** India is actively addressing plastic pollution with initiatives like afforestation drives in Andhra Pradesh, water conservation in Rajasthan, and youth programs in Assam.

India Wins International Institute of Administrative Sciences (IIAS)Presidency

India achieved a historic victory by winning the presidency of the IIAS, marking the first time the position was decided by ballot in the organization's 100-year history.

• **IIAS -** Is a global federation of 31 member countries and 20 national sections, dedicated to scientific research in public administration.
• **India's Role in IIAS** - A member since 1998, India actively contributes to IIAS and aims to promote "Maximum Governance – Minimum Government" under its presidency.
• **The Election Process -** The June 3, 2025, election saw India compete against Austria after initial candidates South Africa and Bahrain withdrew, with India winning decisively.
• **Future Initiatives** - India's presidency will focus on digital empowerment, institutional transformation, and bridging the North-South divide in public administration.
• **Significance of the Presidency -** This leadership role allows India to influence international governance standards and showcase its administrative innovations globally.

51st G7 Summit: Kananaskis, Canada

The 51st G7 Summit will convene from June 15-17, 2025, in Kananaskis, Alberta, Canada, marking its 50th anniversary. **Canada**

• **Aims** - To foster dialogue on climate change, economic stability, and global peace.
• **Why in News?** India will not participate for the first time in six years, reportedly due to strained diplomatic ties with host Canada. The summit will address critical global issues.
• **G7 Summit** - Comprises Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the UK, and the US. The EU also participates. It's a platform for high-level discussions on economy, security, health, and environment.
• **Key Leaders Attending -** Leaders like Prime Minister Mark Carney (Canada), President Emmanuel Macron (France), and President Donald Trump (US) will be present.
• **Invited Guest Nations** - Australia, Brazil, Mexico (unconfirmed), South Africa, and Ukraine are invited. Notably, India will be absent due to diplomatic tensions.
• **Focus Areas and Significance** - The summit will prioritize climate change, global economic recovery, digital governance, and peace. It reinforces multilateralism, reflects evolving alliances, and promotes tech and sustainability initiatives.

Environment

India's Ramsar Sites Grow to 91

Recently PM Modi lauded India's environmental conservation efforts as two new wetlands, Khichan in Phalodi and Menar in Udaipur (both Rajasthan), were designated as Ramsar Sites. This increases India's total to 91.

• **Khichan: A Avian Haven -** Khichan, a village in Phalodi, is renowned for its large congregations of Demoiselle Cranes, especially during winter months, making it a significant avian habitat.

• **Menar: Udaipur's Wetland Gem -** located in Udaipur, is a crucial wetland known for its rich biodiversity, particularly as a breeding and feeding ground for various migratory bird species.

• **Ramsar Site Recognition -** Inclusion in the Ramsar List signifies the international importance of these wetlands for biodiversity conservation.

• **Boosting Conservation Efforts -** This addition underscores India's commitment to protecting its vital wetland ecosystems.

• **A Step Towards Environmental Progress -** The increasing number of Ramsar Sites reflects India's continuous progress in safeguarding its natural heritage and promoting ecological balance.

Department of Biotechnology (DBT) Observes Swachhata Pakhwada 2025

DBT observed Swachhata Pakhwada from May 1st to 15th, 2025, at its headquarters and across all autonomous institutions and PSUs, aligning with the Swachh Bharat Mission.

• **Pledge Ceremony** - The Pakhwada commenced with a pledge ceremony led by the DBT Secretary, reaffirming commitment to cleanliness and civic responsibility.

• **Diverse Activities** - Over the fortnight, DBT and its associated bodies completed 188 activities, including Swachhata drives, e-waste bin installations, and health check-ups.

• **Community Engagement** - Activities extended to community engagement, such as environmental awareness drives in slum areas and 'Nukkad Natak' (street plays) by students promoting cleanliness.

• **Awareness and Well-being** - The Pakhwada also featured talks on single-use plastic, stress management, tree plantation drives, and a community run for health.

• **Monitoring and Awards** - Senior DBT officers monitored the initiative, conducting review meetings. A committee awarded the top three performing offices for their contributions.

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