

## UPSC Daily Current Affairs| One Liners 14-06-2025

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#### Polity & Governance

##### Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG)

*The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) has decided to involve experts from empanelled chartered accountancy (CA) firms for the audit of about 350 Central autonomous bodies beginning this year.*

- The *CAG will hire external CA firms to audit around 350 Central autonomous bodies.*
- This frees up the CAG's limited internal resources.
- CA experts will work with CAG teams and CAG remains responsible.
- This is *part of the CAG's broader effort to boost its capabilities and adapt to India's economic growth* and the increasing number of audited entities.
- The CAG is also upskilling its audit staff through partnerships with top institutes.

##### PM e-Bus Sewa-Payment Security Mechanism (PSM) Scheme

- **Purpose** - The scheme aims to accelerate the adoption of electric buses in Indian cities.
- **Key Challenge Addressed** - It tackles the financial risk for private operators and manufacturers by guaranteeing payments for e-bus services.
- **Working mechanism (Payment Security)** - A dedicated fund (3,435.33 crore rupees outlay) is established.
- If Public Transport Authorities (PTAs) default on payments to e-bus operators, Convergence Energy Services Limited (CESL) pays from this fund.
- CESL then recovers the defaulted amount from the PTAs/State governments.
- **Impact** - This financial safety net encourages private investment in e-bus procurement and operation.
- **Target** - The scheme aims to support the deployment of over 38,000 electric buses across India from FY 2024-25 to FY 2028-29.
- **Coverage** - Provides payment security for up to 12 years.
- **Broader Goals** - Aligns with India's move towards sustainable, green urban mobility, reducing emissions and boosting public transport capacity.

#### International Relations and Issues

## **Iran's Nuclear Programme**

*Recently, the UN nuclear watchdog's Board of Governors voted that Iran's nuclear program had breached a 1974 agreement, a first since 2006.*

- **Enrichment Process** – Nuclear weapons require uranium enriched to 90%+ U-235. Iran uses centrifuges for this.
- **Past & Current Enrichment** – By 2010, Iran had 19.75% enriched uranium.
- After the U.S. left the 2015 nuclear deal (JCPOA) in 2018, Iran boosted enrichment to 60%, a critical threshold.
- **Weapons Capability** – Enriching from 60% to 90% requires significantly less effort.
- Experts estimate Iran could potentially produce weapons-grade uranium and a functional warhead within months, possibly even weeks, once 60% enriched uranium is available.
- **Uranium Stockpiles** – Some estimates suggest Iran already possesses enough uranium for 5-8 nuclear warheads.
- **Israel's Stance** – Israel, believed to be a nuclear state, has stated it won't hesitate to bomb Iran's nuclear facilities if necessary.

## **India-EU Foreign Trade Agreement**

*External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar recently announced that India and the European Union are making progress towards a "comprehensive, balanced, and meaningful" Free Trade Agreement (FTA).*

- **Elevated Strategic Partnership** – Both sides agree that the FTA will significantly elevate their strategic partnership, which is rapidly expanding.

## **Broader EU-India Engagement**

- During his visit, Mr. Jaishankar also met with Jozef Sikela, EU's Commissioner for International Partnerships, discussing several key areas:
  - **New Strategic Agenda** – Discussions covered the new EU-India Strategic Agenda.
  - **Connectivity and IMEC** – Focus was placed on advancing connectivity initiatives, including the India-Middle East-Europe Corridor Project (IMEC).
  - **Global Gateway Priorities** – Joint priorities under the Global Gateway initiative, such as clean energy, sustainable urbanization, and enhanced connectivity, were discussed.
  - **Trilateral Cooperation** – A trilateral cooperation arrangement was signed, expected to benefit the Global South.

## **Economy**

### **India's FY26 growth forecast**

*The World Bank has reduced India's growth forecast for FY 2025-26 to 6.3%. This is down from its January projection of 6.7%.*

- The cut of 0.4 percentage points is due to dampened export growth (from weaker global activity and trade barriers) and a slowdown in investment growth (due to global policy uncertainty).
- This new forecast, released on June 10, 2025, is lower than the RBI's 6.5% prediction for the same period.
- Despite the downgrade, the World Bank expects India to remain the fastest-growing major economy.
- Growth is projected to rise again in FY27 and FY28 to an average of 6.6% annually, driven partly by strong services activity.
- Globally, the World Bank forecasts growth to slow to 2.3% in 2025, the weakest since 2008 (excluding recessions), due to increased trade tensions and policy uncertainty.

## **Environment**

### Species in Chilika Lake

- **Irrawaddy Dolphins** - Highly endangered, shy, and elusive dolphins characterized by a rounded nose.
- They are related to killer whales and typically only show their fins or upper body when surfacing.

**Chilika Lake** situated in Odisha is India's largest brackish water lake, and Asia's second largest.

- Birds
  - Black-tailed Godwits
  - Pied Kingfisher
  - Brahminy Kite
  - Indian Spot-billed Duck
  - Grey-headed Swamphen
  - Whiskered Tern
  - Chilika is a haven for both resident and migratory birds.

### Eurasian Otter

The Eurasian otter was recently spotted in the Lidder River in Srigufwara, south Kashmir.

- Totapuri, also known as Bangalore or Sandersha, is a popular mango cultivar.
- **Global Status** - The Eurasian otter is classified as 'Near Threatened' globally by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).
- **Once Thought Extinct in Kashmir** - For around three decades, the Eurasian otter (locally known as 'Vuder') was believed to be extinct in Kashmir.
- It was once abundant in the Valley's water bodies and a traditional part of the local ecosystem.
- **Rare Sighting** - A recent, rare sighting has occurred in the **Lidder River in Srigufwara, south Kashmir**.
- Villagers initially mistook it for a crocodile.
- Wildlife officials confirmed it as a Eurasian otter after reviewing videos and photographic evidence, and subsequently through CCTV surveillance.
- **Historical Presence in Kashmir** - Historically, significant otter populations were found in Dachigam, streams feeding Dal Lake, Rambhara stream, and the Lidder River.
- **Reasons for Decline** - The sudden disappearance of otters was attributed to:
  - Increased water pollution.
  - Hunting for their fur.
- **Revived Hopes** - This sighting is highly encouraging for wildlife officials.
- It's the **third reported sighting in Kashmir this year**, with others in Gurez Valley (May) and Heerpora (Shopian district).
- The return of the Eurasian otter could play a vital role in **restoring Kashmir's aquatic ecology**.

### Security

### **PASSEX Exercise (Indian and U.K. Navies)**

- **Location** - North Arabian Sea.
- **Participants** - The Indian Navy and the United Kingdom's Royal Navy.
- Indian Navy vessels:
  - Stealth frigate INS Tabar
  - An Indian Navy submarine
  - P-8I maritime patrol aircraft
- U.K. Navy Assets:
  - Aircraft carrier HMS Prince of Wales (part of their Carrier Strike Group)
  - Frigate HMS Richmond
- **Exercise Components** - The multi-faceted exercise included:
  - Unified control of integral helicopters.
  - Tactical maneuvers.
  - Coordinated anti-submarine operations.
  - Professional exchange of officers.
- **Significance** - Demonstrates deepening cooperation between the two navies.
- Showcases a shared commitment to maritime security.
- Highlights robust bilateral ties and dedication to a secure and stable maritime environment.

### **Miscellaneous**

#### **Totapuri Mango**

*Recently, Chittoor district in Andhra Pradesh banned the entry of Totapuri mangoes from other states, specifically impacting Karnataka.*

- Totapuri, also known as Bangalore or Sandersha, is a popular mango cultivar.
- **Appearance** - Distinctive for its elongated shape and a unique "parrot beak-like" tip.
- **Key Use** - Highly valued for its juice and pulp. It's widely used in mango drinks by major food and beverage processors, including multinational companies.
- **Growing Regions** - *Primarily cultivated in the border districts of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu.*
- **Processing Hub** - Andhra Pradesh's Chittoor district is a significant hub for mango processing and pulp extraction units, which procure Totapuri mangoes.
- **Reason for Ban** - Andhra Pradesh claims the ban is to protect its local farmers.
- Karnataka's Totapuri mangoes are cheaper (₹5-₹6/kg) than AP's (₹8/kg, plus a ₹4/kg government incentive). If cheaper mangoes enter, AP farmers fear distress.

#### **US National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB)**

*A team of NTSB investigators is traveling to India to assist the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) with the probe (Air India Express plane crash near Ahmedabad).*

- **Mission** - To make transportation safer by conducting objective investigations, studying safety issues, and advocating for safety recommendations.
- **Independence** - A congressionally mandated *independent agency*, crucial for unbiased investigations.
- **Structure** - Governed by *five Board Members*, nominated by the President and confirmed by the Senate for 5-year terms.
- A Chairman and Vice Chairman are also designated.
- **History** - Traces its origins to the *Air Commerce Act of 1926*, which tasked the U.S. Department of Commerce with investigating aircraft accidents. It gained full independence in 1974.
- **Scope** - Investigates civil aviation accidents, along with significant incidents in railroad, highway, marine, and pipeline transportation.



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