UPSC Daily Current Affairs| One Liners 24-06-2025

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Geography

Lightning Strickes

Tragically, **13 people died from lightning strikes in Bihar** in last week . The **Bihar government announced ₹4 lakh ex-gratia** for each bereaved family and urged adherence to safety guidelines.

What is Lightning? - Is a **natural electrostatic discharge** from thunderstorm clouds, generating extreme heat and thunder.

• **Prone Regions in India - Eastern and Northeastern states**, including Bihar, Jharkhand, and West Bengal, are particularly vulnerable.

• **How it occurs -** It results from charge separation in thunderclouds, leading to electrostatic build-up and a violent discharge when the electric field strength exceeds air's insulating capacity.

• **Deadly Hazard** - Lightning is a major natural disaster killer in India, causing over 2,000 deaths annually, disproportionately affecting outdoor workers.

• **Key Indian Initiatives -** India uses the Damini App for real-time alerts, a Lightning Detection Network, and IMD forecasts to mitigate risks.

• **Safety & Awareness -** The Lightning Resilient India Campaign and NDMA guidelines aim to reduce deaths through education and infrastructure.

International Relations and Issues

Operation Midnight Hammer

In a recent stunning move, the U.S. launched Operation Midnight Hammer against Iran's nuclear infrastructure, announced by President Donald Trump.

• **Precision Strikes -** The operation targeted Fordow, Natanz, and Isfahan, aiming to severely degrade Iran’s nuclear weapons capacity.

• **Covert Execution** - A highly classified mission, it involved B-2 Spirit stealth bombers launching from the U.S., employing deception tactics.

• **Coordinated Infiltration -** After an 18-hour flight with multiple refuelings, bombers linked with escort and support aircraft over the Middle East.

• **Pre-Strike Deception -** A U.S. submarine launched Tomahawk cruise missiles, coinciding with fighter aircraft maneuvers to confuse Iranian defenses.

• **Flawless Strikes -** All three sites were struck with pinpoint accuracy, with no U.S. casualties or retaliation.

• **Strategic Success -** The Pentagon hailed the mission as a "masterclass in stealth warfare," demonstrating U.S. power and precision.

Strait of Hormuz

The Strait of Hormuz, a vital 33 km-wide chokepoint connecting the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman, faces threats of blockage amidst US-Iran tensions, impacting global energy.

• **Critical Energy Lifeline** - Over one-quarter of global seaborne oil (20 million barrels daily) and 83% of LNG trade transit the Strait of Hormuz.
• **Economic Fallout** - A blockage would trigger a sharp surge in global oil and gas prices, increasing shipping costs and destabilizing markets.
• **Iran's Dilemma** - While Iran has historically avoided full blockage, doing so would jeopardize its own oil exports, particularly to China, and alienate allies.
• **US Military Presence** - The U.S. 5th Fleet in Bahrain provides a rapid response capability, though military engagement risks severe shipping disruptions.
• **India's Vulnerability** - India, importing 84% of its crude oil through the Strait in 2024, would face significant energy insecurity and economic volatility.
• **Limited Alternatives** - Existing alternative pipelines from Saudi Arabia and UAE cannot fully compensate for the Strait's vast transport volume, ensuring widespread impact.

GENIUS Act

The US Senate passed the GENIUS Act in June 2025, a landmark bill regulating stablecoins, signifying a major shift in US digital asset policy.

• **Stablecoin Overview** - Stablecoins, digital currencies pegged to traditional assets like the US dollar, boast a market capitalization of $251.7 billion in 2025.
• **GENIUS Act Features** - The act mandates anti-money laundering (AML) compliance, full reserve backing, and monthly audits for stablecoins to ensure transparency.
• **Market Impact** - Following approval, Circle Internet Group shares surged 33.82%, reflecting strong investor confidence in the regulated stablecoin market.
• **Treasury Outlook** - US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent forecasts stablecoin market growth to $3.7 trillion by decade-end, reinforcing USD supremacy.
• **Policy Comparison** - Unlike the STABLE Act's narrower reserve focus, the GENIUS Act provides a broader framework for stablecoin regulation.
• **Global Strategy** - Amid de-dollarization talks, the GENIUS Act aims to solidify the US dollar's dominance by promoting dollar-pegged stablecoins globally.

Samson Option

With Recent escalating regional conflicts, attention is on Israel's Samson Option, its presumed doctrine of massive nuclear retaliation against existential threats.

• **What is it?** - The Samson Option refers to Israel's unconfirmed but widely believed policy of nuclear retaliation if facing an existential threat.
• **Biblical Reference** - Named after the biblical Samson, it signifies a 'last resort' act of apocalyptic retaliation, even if it means self-destruction.
• **Policy of Ambiguity** - Israel maintains "amimut" (deliberate ambiguity) regarding its nuclear arsenal, which analysts estimate to be between 80 and 400 warheads.
• **Seymour Hersh's Role** - The term gained prominence with Seymour Hersh's 1991 book, *The Samson Option*, solidifying its place in public discourse.
• **Purpose** - It's designed to ensure Israel's survival, a last-resort use of nuclear weapons against a non-nuclear adversary to avert defeat.
• **Not First Strike** - The Samson Option isn't for deterring a nuclear first strike, as Israel is the region's sole nuclear power.

Fattah hypersonic missile

In recent strikes on Israel, Iran deployed its Fattah hypersonic missile, demonstrating its capability to bypass advanced defense systems like Iron Dome and raising global security concerns.

• **Fattah** - Is a medium-range hypersonic ballistic missile developed by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), designed for precision strikes and evasion of air defense systems.

• **Developed** - In November 2022 and inducted into the IRGC's arsenal in 2023, it commemorates Hassan Tehrani Moghaddam.

• **Hypersonic Speed** - It travels at Mach 13 to Mach 15 (up to 15,000 km/h) with a range of 1,400 km, planned to extend to 2,000 km.

• **Advanced Evasion** - The Fattah boasts exceptional maneuverability, shifting direction mid-flight, and features a plasma shield for reduced radar detection and radio signal jamming.

• **Operational Use** - The missile was actively deployed by Iran in its 2025 strikes on Israel (Operation Honest Promise 3).

• **Future Variants** -An upgraded variant, Fattah-2, is currently under development with an extended range.

Environment

Reintroduction of king Cobra in Madhya Pradesh

The recent death of a **king cobra** at Bhopal's Van Vihar zoo has spurred discussions on reintroducing them in Madhya Pradesh to curb snakebite fatalities, though the plan faces significant ecological and feasibility challenges.

• **King Cobra Traits -** King cobras (Ophiophagus hannah), reaching 15 feet, prefer humid, dense forests and are found in India's Western and Eastern Ghats, and Northeast.

• **Historical Absence -** No confirmed historical records exist in Madhya Pradesh's dry deciduous forests, which lack sufficient water and dense vegetation for a stable population.

• **Taxonomic Shift -** Recent genetic studies identify four distinct king cobra lineages, with the Western Ghats population now classified as a separate species, Ophiophagus kaalinga.

• **Hybridisation Risk -** Introducing non-local king cobras, like those from the Western Ghats, risks hybridization, which can dilute genetic integrity and undermine conservation.

• **Census Challenges -** A proposed snake census lacks established protocols, rendering it unfeasible and unnecessary for effective conservation.

• **Expert Concerns -** Many experts question the scientific basis of reintroduction plans, citing poor captive breeding success and potential unintended ecological consequences.

Security

INS Tamal

Indian Navy will commission INS Tamal, a Krivak/Tushil class stealth multi-role frigate, at Kaliningrad, Russia.

• **Pivotal moment** - Being the last foreign-built warship to join India's fleet, signifying a major leap towards naval self-reliance under 'Atmanirbhar Bharat'.
• **Key Commissioning** - INS Tamal, built at Russia's Yantar Shipyard, will be commissioned on July 1, 2025, by Vice Admiral Sanjay J. Singh.
• **End of Imports** - This commissioning ends a two-decade era of Russian warship imports, reinforcing India's 'Make in India' initiative.
• **Advanced Capabilities** - The 125-meter, 3,900-ton frigate boasts stealth design, BrahMos missiles, and a crew of 250+.
• **Indigenisation Drive** - Starting with 26% indigenous content, the ship's Made-in-India systems have increased to 33%.
• **Domestic Construction-** Two sister frigates of the Triput class are being built in India at Goa Shipyard Ltd, with Russian collaboration.
• **Strategic Impact -** INS Tamal joins the Western Fleet, symbolizing India's growing defence autonomy and integrating cutting-edge technology.

Miscellaneous

International Olympic Day

June 23 marks **International Olympic Day**, celebrating the birth of the modern Olympic Games and promoting the values of excellence, friendship, and respect through sport.

• **Origins in Paris -** Established in 1948, this day commemorates the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) founding on June 23, 1894, by Baron Pierre de Coubertin in Paris.
• **Global Significance -** More than symbolic, it promotes **physical activity**, sportsmanship, and inclusion, inspiring healthier lifestyles worldwide.
• **2025 theme**, "Let's Move?" - A joint IOC and WHO initiative, urges everyone to combat inactivity with simple, enjoyable movements.
• **Community Celebrations -** The day sees Olympic Day Runs, cycling events, yoga sessions, and fitness workshops fostering unity and wellness.
• **Educational Outreach -** Schools and community centers host workshops, quizzes, and competitions to educate on Olympic history and values.
• **Digital Engagement -** Millions participate digitally using **#OlympicDay** and **#LetsMove**, amplifying the message of an active lifestyle.

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