UPSC Daily Current Affairs| Prelim Bits 06-06-2025

C CARES Version 2.0

Why in News?

Coal Mines Provident Fund Organization (CMPFO) has launched the C CARES Version 2.0 recently.

- It is an enhanced web portal of Coal Mines Provident Fund Organization (CMPFO).
- It is designed to improve the efficiency and transparency of ***Provident Fund and Pension disbursements for workers*** in the coal sector.
- **Developed by** - Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) with support from the State Bank of India.
- This upgraded platform connects coal workers, companies, and CMPFO, facilitating real-time claim tracking, automated ledger updates, and direct benefit transfers to workers' accounts.
- **Features** - Additionally, a mobile application has been introduced for CMPF members, enabling them
    - To manage their profiles,
    - Monitor claims,
    - Raise grievances, and
    - Check their provident fund balances, all while benefiting from a user-friendly chatbot for assistance.
- For coal companies and CMPFO, the system provides a prescriptive dashboard.
- The dashboard generates tailored reports, analyzes claim settlement trends, and enhances data-driven decision-making, ultimately leading to improved service delivery and faster claim resolutions.

Coal Mines Provident Fund Organization (CMPFO)
• It is an autonomous organization. • **Established in** - 1948 under the Ministry of Coal. • **Aim** – To administer provident fund and pension schemes for the coal sector workers.

Reference

PIB | C CARES Version 2.0

International Institute of Administrative Sciences

Why in News?

India wins the Presidency of International Institute of Administrative Sciences for 2025-28.

- It is a global federation comprising 31 Member Countries, 20 National Sections, and 15 Academic Research Centres, collaborating on scientific research in public administration.
- IIAS is not a formally affiliated body of the United Nations, it actively engages with the UN's work in the field of public administration.
- **Key member countries -** India, Japan, China, Germany, Italy, Korea, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Switzerland, Mexico, Spain, Qatar, Morocco, and Indonesia, among others.
- **Headquarters -** Brussels, Belgium.
- **Objectives** - It focuses on
    - Fostering collaborative and strategic initiatives with members and partners and
    - Ensuring that both academic and professional training programs receive accreditation that aligns with best practices in public management.
- Additionally, there is a commitment to producing and disseminating comprehensive content related to public governance research and practice, targeting a diverse range of audiences.
- The IIAS actively collaborates with the United Nations, engaging in the ***UN's Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA)*** and ***the UN Public Administration Network (UNPAN)*** to enhance its impact and reach in the field.
- **Significance for India** - India has been a Member State of the IIAS since 1998, represented by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances.
- It is the first time that India has secured the historic mandate for the Presidency of the IIAS.

Reference

The Hindu | International Institute of Administrative Sciences

Japan Develops Seawater-Dissolving Plastic

Prelims: Sustainable development| Science and technology | Current events of national and international importance

Why in news?

Recently, Japanese scientists from the RIKEN Center for Emergent Matter Science and University of Tokyo have developed a new type of plastic that dissolves in seawater within hours.

- The new type of plastic is as strong as petroleum-based plastics but breaks down into its original components when exposed to salt.
- **Material composition** – It is made from **biopolymers** like PLA (Polylactic Acid), PHA (Polyhydroxyalkanoates).
- It can be derived from **renewable sources** (corn starch, sugarcane) or modified petrochemicals.

- **Degradation mechanism** – The material is chemically designed to **respond to sodium ions and salinity** in seawater.
- Salt causes the **polymer structure to loosen and break down**.
- **Hydrolysis reaction –** Water molecules in saltwater **penetrate the polymer** and break the chemical bonds (**hydrolysis**), turning the plastic into smaller, harmless molecules.
- **Biological processing** – These smaller molecules are then **digested by marine bacteria**, preventing microplastic formation and allowing full assimilation into the ecosystem.
- **Durability** – Despite its biodegradability, it maintains **functional strength and usability**.
- **Potential applications** – It can be used like conventional plastic when properly coated.
- It is currently being explored for use in **packaging**, with growing interest from the industry.

Significance

- It leaves no residual trace after dissolving.
- No microplastics are formed, preventing harm to aquatic life and food chains.
- The material is non-toxic, non-flammable, and does not emit carbon dioxide.

> *The UN Environment Programme predicts plastic pollution will triple by 2040, adding 23–37 million metric tons of waste annually to oceans.*

Reference

DD News| Japan Develops Seawater-Dissolving Plastic

Demand For Regulation by Small Tea Growers

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance

Why in news?

Recently, the North East Confederation of Small Tea Growers' Association (NECSTGA) submitted a memorandum to the Chairperson of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Commerce regarding their demand for regulation and support measures.

> *North East Confederation of Small Tea Growers' Association (NECSTGA) is established in June 2024 in Golaghat, Assam.*

- **Regulation of Leaf Agents –** It advocates the Tea Board of India to regulate leaf-dealing agents to ensure transparency and fair pricing.

- It also addresses concerns over **quality deterioration** due to unscrupulous blending practices.
- **Weather-based crop insurance –** It calls for the implementation of **weather-based crop insurance** to mitigate risks from climate change-induced challenges like droughts and heavy rainfall.
- **Minimum support price (MSP)** – It urges the government to establish an **MSP** for tea, akin to other crops like paddy and wheat, to ensure sustainable income for growers.
- **Extension of Tea Board Schemes** – It seeks for the expansion of **Tea Board of India's schemes** to all north-eastern states beyond Assam, including Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, and Manipur.
- It stresses the need for streamlined financial assistance procedures and direct payment systems to benefit small growers.
- **Addressing import concerns** – It alarms over the recent surge in tea imports from countries like Kenya and Nepal, which undermines local production and pricing.
- Reports a 288% increase in Kenyan tea exports to India between January and October 2024.
- **Language and Communication Barriers** – It emphasizes the need for Tea Board officers proficient in regional languages to enhance communication and training effectiveness.
- **Land documentation challenges** – It advocates for the acceptance of **village council-issued land documents** in states like Nagaland, where traditional land ownership structures exist, to facilitate access to Tea Board benefits.

> *Small tea growers under NECSTGA contribute approximately **54%** of the region's tea production*

Reference

The Hindu| Small tea growers seek regulation

Clean Plant Programme

Prelims: Agricultural development |Current events of national and international importance

Why in news?

Recently the Union Government launched the 'Clean Plant Programme' during India's first international Agri Hackathon held in Pune.

> *International Agri Hackathon 2025 will bring together stakeholders from industries and govt, along with young innovators, startups and researchers to develop new, fast and economical solutions to tackle pressing agricultural*

challenges.

- **Clean Plant Program (CPP)** – It is a program to address critical issues in horticulture by providing access to high-quality, virus free planting material.
- **Objective** – To provide **disease-free horticultural plants** to farmers across India, enhancing quality and productivity in the horticulture sector.
- **Nodal Ministry** – Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.
- **Launch** – It was first announced in Union Finance interim Budget speech in February 2023 and approved by the cabinet in August 2024.
- It is developed under Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture.
- **Pan-India implementation** – A total of **9 Clean Plant Programmes (CPC)** will be initiated across the country.

CPC Location	Crop
Pune, Maharastra	Grapes
Bikaner, Rajasthan	Citrus fruits
Nagpur , Maharastra	Citrus fruits
Solapur, Maharastra	Pomegranate
Bengaluru, Karnataka	Mango, Guava, Dragon Fruit and Avocado
Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir	Temperate Fruits - Apple, Almond, Walnuts, etc.
Mukteshwar, Uttarkhand	Temperate Fruits - Apple, Almond, Walnuts, etc.
East India	Tropical and Subtropical Plants
Lucknow	Mango, Guava, Litchi

- **Nursery support** – Modern nurseries will be set up alongside Clean Plant Centres with financial support of,
  - Rs 3 crore for large nurseries
  - Rs 5 crore for medium-sized nurseries
- These nurseries will produce 8 crore disease-free seedlings annually.
- **Global collaboration** – The Centre plans to collaborate with countries like **Israel** and **the Netherlands** for technological support and innovation.
- **Bridging science and farming –** Lab to Land Initiative- to bring scientific research directly to farmers.
- Around 16,000 scientists across India will engage directly with farmers to ensure timely dissemination of innovations in seed quality, productivity, and disease management.

Significance

- Increased crop yields by providing virus-free planting material.
- Enhanced income opportunities to farmers from higher quality fruits.
- Improved nurseries to cater need of the farmers.
- Global market strengthening with access to disease-free, high-quality fruits.
- Reduced dependence on imports by reducing reliance on imported planting materials.

Reference

Hindustan Times | Centre launches Clean Plant Programme

One Liners 06-06-2025

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 Rs 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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