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Current Events

15 June, 2018 – 30 June, 2018

1. NITI Aayog has released its report on **C**omposite **W**ater **M**anagement **I**ndex (**CWMI**).

   - The report ranks Gujarat at the top in managing its water resources in the reference year (2016-17) followed by Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra.

   - The worst states include Jharkhand, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

   - Among North Eastern and Himalayan states, Tripura has been adjudged number one in 2016-17 followed by Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim and Assam.

   - In terms of incremental change in the index (over 2015-16 level), Rajasthan holds number one position in general states and Tripura ranks at first position amongst Northeastern and Himalayan states.

   > The Composite Water Management Index report is a step in a direction that aims to create awareness among people and governments about the realities of water crisis in the country. It aims to enable effective water management in Indian states in the face of this growing crisis.
   >
   > The index would provide useful information for the states and concerned Central ministries and departments enabling them to formulate and implement suitable strategies for better management of water resources.
   >
   > NITI Aayog has ranked all states in the index on the composite water management, comprising 9 broad sectors with 28 different indicators covering various aspects of ground water, restoration of water bodies, irrigation, farm practices, drinking water, policy and governance.

2. IISc scholars have developed an artificial 'leaf' that'll help reduce carbon footprint and create biofuel. The researchers were able to replicate the process of photosynthesis by using a semi-conductor made from copper aluminum sulphate and zinc sulphide. This quantum leaf had a much better rate of energy conversation compared to natural leaves – 20% as compared to 0.4-0.5% in photosynthesis. This hold promising potential towards reducing carbon footprint.

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3. Gujarat government has expressed its inability to divert 434 MCM water for Maharashtra in Tapi basin as requested by Maharashtra as part of the Par-Tapi-Narmada inter-state river link project.

> Par-Tapi-Narmada inter-state river link project envisages transfer of surplus water of rivers in Maharashtra and south Gujarat to feed the command area of the Miyagam branch of Narmada canal. It will save water in Narmada dam, which will be taken to Saurashtra and Kutch.
>
> Besides providing irrigation benefits to the enroute command and Narmada command, the link will generate hydropower of the order of 93.00 Mkwh through the power houses installed at four dam sites viz. Jheri, Paikhed, Chasmandva and Chikkar and in two feeder canals taking off from Dabdar and Kelwan dams. The reservoirs will also provide flood relief to the people residing in downstream areas.

4. Russia has successfully launched a GLONASS-M positioning satellite using a Soyuz-2.1b carrier rocket from Plesetsk space center. With this launch, there are now 26 GLONASS satellites in orbit.

> GLONASS, which stands for Globalnaya Navigazionnaya Sputnikovaya Sistema, is Russia's version of Global Navigation Satellite Systems.
>
> List of Global Navigation Satellite Systems:
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> - Global Positioning System (GPS) of the United States of America.
> - Galileo of the European Union.
> - BeiDou of People's Republic of China
> - IRNSS or NAVIC of India.
> - Quasi-Zenith Satellite System (QZSS) of Japan.

5. 17 June: World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought. 2018 Theme: "**Land has true value – invest in it.**"

> Desertification is the degradation of land in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas. It is caused primarily by human activities and climatic variations. Desertification does not refer to the expansion of existing Deserts. It occurs because dryland ecosystems, which cover over one third of the world's land area, are extremely vulnerable to overexploitation and inappropriate land use. Poverty, political instability, deforestation, overgrazing and bad irrigation practices can all undermine the productivity of the land.
>
> The **U**nited **N**ations **C**onvention to **C**ombat **D**esertification (**UNCCD**) is the sole

legally binding international agreement linking environment and development to sustainable land management. The Convention addresses specifically the arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas, known as the drylands, where some of the most vulnerable ecosystems and peoples can be found.

6. 4th International Yoga Day 2018: This year, the theme is 'Yoga for peace'.

The International Yoga Day is celebrated every year on June 21. It was first introduced by the United Nations on June 21, 2015. The main aim is to create awareness worldwide on the importance of staying fit and healthy.

7. The indigenously upgraded artillery gun Dhanush has successfully completed final user trials and is ready for induction into the Army. It has been developed by Ordnance Factory Board (OFB). Dhanush is a 155-mm, 45-calibre gun with a maximum range of 40 km in salvo mode. It is an upgraded version of the Swedish Bofors gun procured by India in the mid-1980s.

8. The Banks Board Bureau (BBB) has recommended 22 general managers to be elevated as executive directors at various public sector banks. The Appointments Committee of Cabinet headed by Prime Minister will take the final decision in this regard.

Banks **B**oard **B**ureau (**BBB**) was set up in February 2016 as an autonomous body– based on the recommendations of the RBI-appointed Nayak Committee. It was the part of Indradhanush Plan of government. Its broad agenda was to improve governance at state-owned lenders. Its mandate also involved advising the government on top-level bank appointments and assisting banks with capital-raising plans as well as strategies to deal with bad loans.

9. The Centre will set up the country's biggest data centre in Bhopal with a capacity to host five lakh virtual servers. It will be set up by the **N**ational **I**nformatics **C**entre (**NIC**). This will be the fifth National Data Centre after the ones at Bhubaneswar, Delhi, Hyderabad and Pune.

National Informatics Centre (NIC), under the Department of Information Technology of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, is a premier Science and Technology Organization, at the forefront of the active promotion and implementation of **I**nformation and **C**ommunication **T**echnology (**ICT**) solutions in the government.

NIC has set up state-of-the-art National Data Centers to provide services to the Government at all levels. These Data Centers combine round-the-clock operations and management of systems with onsite skilled personnel. The

National Data Centers host Government websites, services and apps.

10. The **W**orld **H**ealth **O**rganization (**WHO**) has released its new **I**nternational **C**lassification of **D**iseases (**ICD**-11). Highlights:

- ICD-11 identifies health trends and statistics worldwide, and contains around 55,000 unique codes for injuries, diseases and causes of death.

- It has been over a decade in the making, provides significant improvements on previous versions. Also for the first time, it is completely electronic and has a much more user-friendly format. And there has been unprecedented involvement of health care workers who have joined collaborative meetings and submitted proposals.

The first international classification edition, known as the International List of Causes of Death, was adopted by the International Statistical Institute in 1893. WHO was entrusted with the ICD at its creation in 1948. The ICD is revised periodically and is currently in its 10th revision.

ICD is the foundation for the identification of health trends and statistics globally. It is the international standard for defining and reporting diseases and health conditions. It allows the world to compare and share health information using a common language.

ICD defines the universe of diseases, disorders, injuries and other related health conditions. These entities are listed in a comprehensive way so that everything is covered. It organizes information into standard groupings of diseases

11. Concerned over funds sent abroad under the 'maintenance of close relative' category of the **L**iberalized **R**emittance **S**cheme (**LRS**), the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has narrowed the definition of relatives to check the flow of funds. funds under the 'maintenance of close relative' category can be sent only to immediate relatives such as parents, spouses, children and their spouses.

Under **L**iberalized **R**emittance **S**cheme (**LRS**), all resident individuals can freely remit $250,000 overseas every financial year for a permissible set of current or capital account transactions.

Permitted: Remittances are permitted for overseas education, travel, medical treatment and purchase of shares and property, apart from maintenance of relatives living abroad, gifting and donations. Individuals can also open, maintain and hold foreign currency accounts with overseas banks for carrying out transactions.

> **Not permitted**: The rules do not allow remittances for trading on the foreign exchange markets, margin or margin calls to overseas exchanges and counterparties and the purchase of Foreign Currency Convertible Bonds issued by Indian companies abroad. Sending money to certain countries and entities is also barred. Under LRS, people can't send money to countries identified as 'non cooperative' by the Financial Action Task Force. Remittances are also prohibited to entities identified as posing terrorist risks.

12. **C**entral **W**ater **C**ommission (**CWC**) has entered into a Collaboration Agreement with Google for flood forecasting. This would enable the Government as well as disaster management organisations to identify well in advance the locations and population, which are at risk from floods and require warnings and information. CWC and Google will share technical expertise in the fields of artificial intelligence, machine learning, geospatial mapping and analysis of hydrological observation data to collaborate on:

    - Improving flood prediction systems, which will help provide location-targeted, actionable flood warnings.
    - High priority research project utilizing Google Earth Engine to help visualize and improve flood management.
    - A cultural project to build online exhibitions on the Rivers of India.

13. **Cop Connect:** a mobile application developed by Telangana police for their internal communication purpose. It has been developed on the lines of WhatsApp. Police have developed this app keeping in view the safety of their information besides having hassle free communication.

14. Indian Army is observing the year 2018 as the 'Year of Disabled Soldiers in Line of Duty'. The primary focus is towards alleviating the sufferings of these soldiers, who have done their duty with utmost dedication to the Nation and have been disabled for the life

15. The state of Jammu and Kashmir is all set to see a governor's rule following the resignation of chief minister Mehbooba Mufti.

> All other states, President's rule is imposed under the Article 356 of Constitution of India. In J&K, governor's rule is imposed as mentioned under Article 370. It will be imposed for six months and gives additional powers to the Governor, including the authority to legislate.

16. The **C**entre for **U**nited **N**ations **P**eace **K**eeping (**CUNPK**), India and the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect have jointly started the pilot "Training of

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Trainers (ToT) Course on Civilian Protection and the Responsibility to Protect (R2P)" in Delhi. The course is being attended by 30 officers including eight from Friendly Foreign Countries. The course is designed for mid-level military officials from the countries that are active "Troop Contributing Countries" to the UN peacekeeping operations.

Centre for United Nations Peacekeeping (CUNPK), has been set up in New Delhi, drawing on India's vast experience in the field of UN Peacekeeping. It functions under the directions of a Board of management under the Chairmanship of Vice Chief of the Army Staff.

United Nations Peacekeeping was created in 1948. Its first mission involved the establishment of the UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), which served to observe and maintain ceasefire during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. UN Peacekeeping maintains three basic principles: Consent of the parties, impartiality and non-use of Force except in self-defence and defence of the mandate. The UN Peacekeepers are led by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DKPO). UN Peacekeepers are from diverse backgrounds, from areas all around the world. They include police, military and civilian personnel. They are often referred to as Blue Berets or Blue Helmets because of their light blue berets or helmets. The United Nations Charter gives the United Nations Security Council the power and responsibility to take collective action to maintain international peace and security. For this reason, the international community usually looks to the Security Council to authorize peacekeeping operations.

17. Republic of Tajikistan and United Nations are jointly organizing a high-level Conference on "International Decade for Action: Water for Sustainable Development, 2018-2028". The Conference will discuss key water related issues of sustainable development goals adopted by UN member countries.

National **A**ssociation of **S**oftware and **S**ervices **C**ompanies (**NASSCOM**) is a trade association of Indian Information Technology (IT) and **B**usiness **P**rocess **O**utsourcing (**BPO**) industry. Established in 1988, NASSCOM is a non-profit organisation.

18. **India Smart Cities Awards:** There are 3 categories of awards- Project Award, Innovative Idea Award and City Award.

- The city award was given to Surat for showing great momentum in implementation of projects especially in the categories of urban environment, transport and mobility and sustainable integrated development.

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- The Innovative Idea award is being given to a project/idea particularly remarkable for its innovative, bottom-up and transformative approach towards achievement of sustainable integrated development. Joint winners in this category are Bhopal for their **I**ntegrated **C**ommand and **C**ontrol **C**entre (**ICCC**) and Ahmedabad for **S**afe and **S**ecure **A**hmedabad (**SASA**) Project.
- The Project awards are being given to most innovative and successful projects in seven categories:
    i. PMC Care from Pune under 'Governance' category.
    ii. Smart Place Making from Pune under 'Built Environment'.
    iii. Smart Class rooms from NDMC and Jabalpur, Smart Campus from Visakhapatnam, Lighthouse from Pune under 'Social Aspects' category.
    iv. B Nest Incubation Centre from Bhopal and Conservation of Rajasthan School of Arts from Jaipur under 'Culture and Economy' category.
    v. Public Bike Sharing from Bhopal, Pune, Coimbatore and Waste to Energy Plant in Jabalpur under 'Urban environment' category.
    vi. Integrated Transit Management System (TMS) from Ahmedabad and Surat under 'Transport and Mobility' category.
    vii. Smart Water Management through SCADA from Ahmedabad under 'Water and Sanitation' category.

19. The National Testing Agency, will also train paper setters to set better question papers and provide better model answers.

Union Cabinet, in November 2017, approved creation of the **N**ational **T**esting **A**gency (**NTA**) as an autonomous and self-sustained premier testing organization to conduct entrance examinations for **H**igher **E**ducation **I**nstitutions (**HEIs**) in the country.

It will be chaired by an educationist who will be appointed by the MHRD. The agency will have a board of governors who will represent the member institutions.

NTA would initially conduct those entrance examinations which are currently being conducted by the **C**entral **B**oard of **S**econdary **E**ducation (**CBSE**). The examinations will be conducted in online mode twice a year in order to give adequate opportunity to candidates to bring out their best. Among the

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examinations that will be transferred to the NTA is the prestigious **J**oint **E**ntrance **E**xamination (**JEE**) for admission to engineering colleges like the IITs and NITs and the **N**ational **E**ligibility cum **E**ntrance **T**est (**NEET**) for admission to all medical colleges in the country, except AIIMS and JIPMER, Puducherry. In order to serve the requirements of the rural students, NTA would locate the centers at sub-district/district level and as far as possible would provide hands-on training to the students.

20. The Union ministry of health and family welfare has launched the **N**ational **H**ealth **R**esource **R**epository (**NHRR**).

NHRR project aims to strengthen evidence-based decision making and develop a platform for citizens and provider-centric services by creating a robust, standardised and secured Information Technology (IT)-enabled repository of India's healthcare resources. The **I**ndian **S**pace **R**esearch **O**rganisation (**ISRO**) is the project technology partner for providing data security. NHRR shall be the registry of authentic, standardised and updated geo-spatial data of all public and private healthcares.

This resource repository shall enable advanced research towards ongoing and forthcoming healthcare challenges arising from other determinants of health such as disease and the environment. It shall also enhance the coordination between central and state government for optimization of health resources, making 'live' and realistic state project implementation plans (PIPs) and improving accessibility of data at all levels, including state heads of departments, and thus decentralize the decision making at district and state level.

21. Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) has released its 2018 edition of the yearly report on the current state of armaments, disarmament and international security. Key findings:

- There are nine countries which have nuclear warheads. They include Russia, the US, the UK, France, China, Israel, India, Pakistan and North Korea.

- The US and Russia still constitute a major share of approximately 14,465 nuclear weapons that exist in the world. Both together account for nearly 92% of all nuclear weapons despite reducing their strategic nuclear forces pursuant to the implementation of the 2010 Treaty on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms.

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- China continues to modernize its nuclear weapon delivery systems and is slowly increasing the size of its nuclear arsenal. The country now has an estimated 280 nuclear warheads. In 2017 report, the number was 270.

- India and Pakistan have increased their stockpiles. India, which had estimated 120-130 nuclear warheads as per 2017 report, now has 130-140 warheads. Similarly, Pakistan, which had 130-140 warheads now, has increased to 140-150 warheads. Both countries are also developing new land, sea and air-based missile delivery systems.

- **Nuclear warheads in other countries**: UK (215 warheads), France (300 warheads), Israel (80 warheads) and North Korea (10-20 warheads). The figures for North Korea are uncertain.

> SIPRI is an independent international institute dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms control and disarmament. Established in 1966, SIPRI provides data, analysis and recommendations, based on open sources, to policymakers, researchers, media and the interested public. Based in Stockholm, SIPRI also has a presence in Beijing, and is regularly ranked among the most respected think tanks worldwide.

22. The United States withdrew from the United Nations Human Rights Council accusing it of a "chronic bias against Israel". The US problem with the body is twofold: the make-up of its membership and what it considers a disproportionate focus on allegations of human rights abuses committed by its ally, Israel.

> **UNHRC:** The UN body was established in 2006 with the aim of promoting and protecting human rights around the globe, as well as investigating alleged human rights violations. It is made up of 47 member states, which are selected by the UN General Assembly on a staggered basis each year for three-year-long terms. Members meet around three times a year to debate human rights issues and pass non-binding resolutions and recommendations by majority vote. The council also carries out the Universal Periodic Review of all UN member states, which allows civil society groups to bring accusations of human rights violations in member states to the attention of the UN.

23. '**Rani Rashmoni' commissioned into the Indian Coast Guard: F**ast **P**atrol **V**essel (**FPV**) equipped with advanced sensors and state-of-the-art equipment and are designed to perform multifarious tasks such as surveillance, interdiction, search and rescue, anti-smuggling and anti-poaching, operations. Other vessels: So far four such ships such as ICGS Rani Abbakka, ICGS Rani

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Avanti Bai, ICGS Rani Durgavati and ICGS Rani Gaidinliu, have been commissioned and are in active service at various locations.

24. **The US side has pressed the Indian side to sign the two foundational agreements for defence cooperation:** Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA), earlier known as the Communications and Information Security Memorandum of Agreement (CISMOA); and Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA).

- India hesitant to sign these agreements because widespread fears that the use of American C4ISR systems could compromise India's tactical operational security, enabling the US to keep track of Indian warships and aircraft.

COMCASA is a "technology enabler" to help transfer high-tech avionics, encrypted communication and electronic systems to India as well as ensure secrecy of its C4ISR (command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance) systems from leaking to other countries like Russia. This agreement would allow the interoperability of India and United States equipments.

BECA refers to Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geo-spatial Cooperation. This agreement would facilitate exchange of geospatial information between India and United States for both military and civilian use.

25. Union Power Ministry has launched a campaign to promote energy efficiency in the area of air-conditioning. This initiative is launched on voluntary basis to increase awareness and encourage consumers to adopt the guidelines. It will save energy and reduce greenhouse gases.

- Every one degree increase in the air-conditioner temperature setting results in saving of 6% of electricity consumed. The new campaign will result in substantial energy savings and also reduce greenhouse gas emission.

Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) was established in March 2002, as a statutory body by the Government of India under the Energy Conservation Act 2001. It is responsible for spearheading the improvement of energy efficiency of the economy through various regulatory and promotional instruments. The primary goal of BEE is to reduce the energy intensity in the Indian economy. It coordinates with State level agencies and energy consumers to perform functions and exercise powers that may be necessary for efficient use of

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energy and its conservation in India.

26. Maharashtra government recently began enforcing a ban on plastic, a decision it announced in March. The government had given the manufacturers, distributors, and consumers a period of three months to dispose their existing stock and come up with alternatives to plastic usage.

- Officials from **M**aharashtra **P**ollution **C**ontrol **B**oard (**MPCB**) and district and local administration have been authorised to implement it. For regulating this law at tourist locations, tourism police, or Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation has been made responsible.

- Under the notification products manufactured from plastic and thermocol have been covered under the ban. As a result usage of plastic bags with a handle and without handle, disposable cups, and plates, spoons, forks, glasses and containers is prohibited in the state. Plastic packaging used to wrap and store the product is also included in the ban.

27. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has come out with draft guidelines on constituting a board of management (BoM) in addition to the board of directors, for urban cooperative banks (UCBs), with the aim of strengthening the governance in these banks.

- Composition: It will consist of members with special knowledge and practical experience in banking to facilitate professional management and focused attention to banking related activities of UCBs. The circular also said that at least 50% of the members of the BoM should have specialization or practical experience in fields such as accountancy, agriculture, law. The chief executive officer of the bank will be an ex-officio member of the BoD and BoM and he will be under the general superintendence, direction and control of the board.

- Functions: The BoM will be responsible for credit, risk and liquidity management of the bank. It will be responsible for the day-to-day functions, including considering loan proposals, recovery of bad loans, borrowings and overseeing audit and inspection functions.

28. In a goodwill gesture, Seychelles has gifted a pair of giant Aldabra tortoise to India. The pair will be kept at Hyderabad Zoo.

Aldabra Giant Tortoise (Aldabrachelys gigantea) from the Aldabra Atoll in the Seychelles is said to be one of the largest species of tortoises on the planet. It is also one of the world's longest living animals, with one Aldabra Giant Tortoise

reaching the age of 255 years. The Aldabra giant tortoise's current IUCN conservation status is 'vulnerable'. The atoll has been protected from human influence and is home to around 100,000 giant tortoises, the world's largest population of the animal.

29. Dr. Lawrence Haddad and Dr. David Nabarro will receive the 2018 World Food Prize for their individual and complementary global leadership in elevating maternal and child undernutrition.

World Food Prize is considered one of the most prominent global awards for individuals whose breakthrough achievements alleviate hunger and promote global food security. It carries $250,000 cash prize. The Prize is presented each October on or around UN World Food Day (October 16).

30. India has announced it will increase for the next four years the money it pays to the Global Environment Facility (GEF), a mechanism to provide grants for environment projects. India will increase its commitments from $12 million to $15 million to the GEF's new four-year investment cycle, known as GEF-7.

Global Environment Facility was established on the eve of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit to help tackle our planet's most pressing environmental problems. It is an international partnership of 183 countries, international institutions, civil society organizations and the private sector that addresses global environmental issues. GEF funds are available to developing countries and countries with economies in transition to meet the objectives of the international environmental conventions and agreements. The World Bank serves as the GEF Trustee, administering the GEF Trust Fund.