

MORNING EDITION • 25 JUNE 2026

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THURSDAY, 25 JUNE 2026 • DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

PART I • HEADLINES TO ECONOMY



TOP HEADLINES

GS1 • GS2 • GS3

- 1 EAM Jaishankar delivers keynote at Jeju Forum, South Korea; India-ROK Special Strategic Partnership 2026–2030 roadmap finalised with FM Cho Hyun. **GS2**
- 2 Supreme Court rules courts cannot impose timelines on President/Governors for assent to state Bills; "deemed assent" held unconstitutional. **GS2**
- 3 JPC on One Nation One Election: simultaneous polls could save ₹7 lakh crore and boost GDP by 1.6%; report tabled in Parliament. **GS2**
- 4 DRDO successfully tests multi-layer Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) system capable of intercepting ICBM-class threats; NASM-MR naval missile maiden flight successful. **GS3**
- 5 RBI holds repo rate at 5.25% (neutral stance); FY2027 GDP forecast revised to 6.6% amid West Asia conflict and energy price risks. **GS3**
- 6 India Semiconductor Mission 2.0 announced with ₹1,000 crore allocation for FY2026–27; focus on industry-led R&D and future-ready workforce. **GS3**
- 7 NSA Ajit Doval meets Chinese FM Wang Yi in New Delhi; both sides affirm gradual normalisation and structured bilateral dialogue mechanism. **GS2**
- 8 ISRO–DAE collaboration to develop artificial heating systems for 100–200 day lunar lander survival; India hosts BRICS Space Agencies Meeting in Bengaluru. **GS3**
- 9 India ranks 13th in QS World Future Skills Index 2027; IndiaAI Mission (₹10,372 crore outlay) drives AI ecosystem growth. **GS3**
- 10 Digital India: internet connections cross 102.86 crore; rural development budget up 211% over decade to ₹2,73,108 crore in FY2026–27. **GS3**

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GS2

Constitutional Bodies · Governor's Powers

25 June 2026

Supreme Court: Courts Cannot Impose Timelines on President/Governor for Assent to Bills; "Deemed Assent" Unconstitutional

What happened: The Supreme Court of India has ruled that constitutional courts cannot prescribe fixed timelines for the President or Governors when acting on Bills passed by state legislatures under Articles 200 and 201. The Court also declared that the concept of "deemed assent" — where silence by a constitutional head is treated as automatic approval — is contrary to the constitutional framework, settling long-running disputes from Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Punjab, and Telangana.

Why it matters for UPSC: This ruling directly addresses the constitutional relationship between state legislatures and Governors — a perennial GS2 topic. It clarifies the scope of judicial review over constitutional heads and federalism dynamics. The three options available to a Governor under Article 200 (assent, withhold, reserve for President) are directly testable in Prelims.

⚡ KEY FACTS

- ▶ Article 200: Governor may grant assent, withhold assent, or reserve a Bill for the President's consideration. No timeline is specified.
- ▶ Article 201: When a Bill is reserved for President — the President may give assent or direct the Governor to return it to the legislature.
- ▶ Several states (Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Punjab, Telangana) had moved the Supreme Court alleging Governors withheld assent indefinitely as a political tool.

💡 TEACHING HOOK

Remember the "3-option rule" for Governors under Article 200: **A-W-R** (Assent · Withhold · Reserve for President). The SC confirmed there's no "4th option" of indefinite silence. For Mains: the Governor–state legislature conflict is a flashpoint for cooperative vs. competitive federalism analysis.

📄 PYQ LINKAGE

UPSC Prelims 2022: "Which of the following is/are constitutional powers of the Governor?" (Article 200 reference). Mains GS2 2018: "Examine the constitutional provisions relating to the role of Governors in state legislation and discuss recent controversies."

GS2

Electoral Reforms · Federalism · Parliament

25 June 2026

JPC on One Nation One Election: Simultaneous Polls to Save ₹7 Lakh Crore, Boost GDP by 1.6%; Report Submitted

What happened: The Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) examining the One Nation One Election (ONOE) proposal has submitted its report stating that simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and all State Assemblies could save approximately ₹7 lakh crore in election-related expenditures. The report also projects a GDP growth boost of up to 1.6 percentage points by reducing the frequency of Model Code of Conduct (MCC) periods, which currently impede policy announcements for 150–180 days per year.

Why it matters for UPSC: ONOE requires constitutional amendments to Articles 83, 85, 172, 174, and 356 — a highly testable UPSC topic. Debates around federalism (imposing uniform timelines on states), minority representation, and voter fatigue make this a rich Mains essay and GS2 topic. India held simultaneous elections from 1951–1967 before the cycle broke.

⚡ KEY FACTS

- ▶ ONOE was recommended by the Kovind High-Level Committee (2024); implementation would require amendments to at least 5 constitutional articles.
- ▶ MCC applies during election periods — multiple overlapping state elections now impose MCC for 150–180 days annually, curtailing governance.
- ▶ India held simultaneous elections in 1951, 1957, 1962, and 1967; the synchronised cycle broke due to early Assembly dissolutions.

💡 TEACHING HOOK

ONOE constitutional amendments: Articles **83+85** (Lok Sabha term & dissolution), **172+174** (State Assembly term & dissolution), **356** (President's Rule extension). Think: "8385 for the two houses, 356 for the safety valve." The JPC's ₹7 lakh crore figure = nearly India's annual defence budget × 5.

📖 PYQ LINKAGE

UPSC Mains 2018 GS2: "Simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies will limit time and money spent in electioneering but will reduce the government's accountability. Discuss." Prelims 2020: Q on Model Code of Conduct provisions and Election Commission powers.



INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

GS2

GS2

India's Foreign Policy · Indo-Pacific

25 June 2026

Jaishankar at Jeju Forum: India-South Korea Formalise 2026–2030 Special Strategic Partnership Vision; Keynote on Indo-Pacific Order

What happened: EAM S. Jaishankar completed a four-day visit to Mongolia and South Korea (June 22–25, 2026), delivering the keynote address at the Jeju Forum for Peace and Prosperity. He held bilateral meetings with South Korean FM Cho Hyun and National Security Director Wi Sung-lac. Both nations finalised the Joint Strategic Vision 2026–2030, implementing commitments made during President Lee Jae-myung's state visit to India in April 2026. Cooperation areas: shipbuilding, defence co-production, fintech, startups, clean energy, and coordinated Indo-Pacific engagement.

Why it matters for UPSC: India-South Korea ties connect to Act East Policy, Indo-Pacific strategy, semiconductor supply chains, and defence exports. EAM's keynote at Jeju Forum (South Korea's premier multilateral dialogue platform) reinforces India's role as a voice for the Global South in Asian security architecture. This is a direct GS2 Mains and Prelims-relevant development.

⚡ KEY FACTS

- ▶ India-South Korea established diplomatic ties in 1973; elevated to Special Strategic Partnership in 2015.
- ▶ Bilateral trade target: USD 50 billion by 2030; South Korea is a key player in India's semiconductor and shipbuilding ambitions.
- ▶ Jeju Forum (est. 2001): South Korea's premier multilateral peace and prosperity dialogue — comparable to Davos for East Asia.

💡 TEACHING HOOK

India's four "Special Strategic Partnerships" (SSP): **AJKU** — **A**ustralia, **J**apan, **K**orea (South), **U**AE. Regular bilateral partnerships are at a lower tier. The 2026–2030 vision document elevates the India-Korea SSP with five-year implementation milestones — a format now used in QUAD and I2U2 frameworks too.

📖 PYQ LINKAGE

UPSC Mains 2017 GS2: "India's foreign policy has shifted from 'Look East' to 'Act East'. Analyse." Prelims 2021: Q on India's multilateral engagement in the Indo-Pacific. Mains 2022 GS2: "Analyse India's role in shaping the emerging security architecture of the Indo-Pacific."

GS2

India-China Relations · Bilateral Diplomacy

25 June 2026

NSA Doval Meets Chinese FM Wang Yi: India-China Affirm Gradual Normalisation Post-Galwan, Structured Dialogue Mechanism Agreed

What happened: National Security Adviser Ajit Doval held high-level talks with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in New Delhi on June 22, 2026. Both sides noted substantive progress toward gradual normalisation of relations following the 2020 Galwan Valley standoff

and the phased disengagement from friction points along the Line of Actual Control (LAC). They agreed on a structured, multi-level dialogue mechanism to prevent future escalation. Key issues discussed: border infrastructure, patrolling rights, and trade imbalance.

Why it matters for UPSC: India-China relations is one of UPSC's most reliably tested IR topics. The Doval-Wang Yi format (NSA-level engagement) signals the highest-priority diplomatic channel — relevant for understanding India's diplomatic architecture. Key UPSC angles: LAC management, border infrastructure competition, trade deficit (~USD 85 billion), and strategic rivalry in South Asia.

⚡ KEY FACTS

- ▶ India-China share a 3,488 km disputed border across three sectors: Western (Aksai Chin/Ladakh), Middle (Himachal Pradesh/Uttarakhand), Eastern (Arunachal Pradesh).
- ▶ Galwan Valley clash (June 15, 2020): 20 Indian soldiers killed — the most serious border clash since 1967's Nathu La clash.
- ▶ India's trade deficit with China: ~USD 85 billion in FY2026 — the largest bilateral trade deficit India has with any single country.

💡 TEACHING HOOK

India-China border: 3 sectors → **WME**: **W**estern (Ladakh/Aksai Chin), **M**iddle (Himachal & Uttarakhand), **E**astern (Arunachal/McMahon Line). The current "Galwan-to-Gradual" diplomatic arc is a tested Mains pattern. NSA-level talks = highest strategic dialogue channel (above Joint Secretary-level and Special Representative-level).

📖 PYQ LINKAGE

UPSC Mains 2020 GS2: "Assess the strategic and economic implications of the India-China border standoff." Prelims 2021 Q on Line of Actual Control and its three sectors. Mains 2016 GS2: "The relationship between India and China is as much about economic complementarity as it is about strategic rivalry. Discuss."

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DEFENCE & SECURITY

GS3

GS3

Defence Indigenisation · BMD · Maritime Security

25 June 2026

DRDO Tests Multi-Layer BMD System Capable of ICBM-Class Interception; Naval Anti-Ship Missile NASM-MR Successfully Flight-Tested

What happened: DRDO successfully conducted three consecutive flight tests on June 10–11, 2026, demonstrating a multi-layered Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) system capable of intercepting advanced missile threats including ICBM-class projectiles. India thereby joined an exclusive group of nations (US, Russia, Israel, China) with verified ICBM-level BMD capability. Separately, DRDO completed the maiden flight test of the Naval Anti-Ship Missile-Medium Range (NASM-MR), which will significantly enhance India's maritime strike capability and reduce dependence on foreign-origin anti-ship weapons.

Why it matters for UPSC: DRDO achievements are directly relevant to GS3 (Internal Security, Science & Technology, Defence) and Essay. Indigenisation under Aatmanirbhar Bharat in Defence is a key exam theme. NASM-MR links to India's evolving blue-water navy doctrine and maritime security challenges. The BMD programme also connects to India's nuclear deterrence posture.

⚡ KEY FACTS

- ▶ BMD Phase-I: PAD (Prithvi Air Defence) intercepts at high altitude (>40 km); AAD (Advanced Area Defence) at endo-atmosphere (15–30 km).
- ▶ BMD Phase-II (newly demonstrated): extends interception capability to ICBM-class threats — placing India in an elite global club.
- ▶ NASM-MR: Air-launched, medium-range (50–150 km) anti-ship missile; being developed for naval aviation platforms to strike surface vessels.

💡 TEACHING HOOK

BMD layers: **PAD = Exo-atmosphere** (outer layer, above 40 km) + **AAD = Endo-atmosphere** (inner layer, 15–30 km). Think "PAD cushion above, AAD net below." NASM-MR = Naval, Anti-Ship, Medium Range. For Mains: connect to Aatmanirbhar Bharat's negative import list in defence — both systems reduce foreign dependency.

📖 PYQ LINKAGE

UPSC Prelims 2019: "With reference to India's missile programmes, which of the following is/are indigenously developed?" Mains 2020 GS3: "Analyse India's progress in defence indigenisation under Aatmanirbhar Bharat and the key challenges that remain." Prelims 2022: Q on India's BMD capability.

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SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

GS3

GS3

Space Technology · ISRO · Lunar Exploration

25 June 2026

ISRO-DAE Develop Artificial Heating Tech for 100–200 Day Lunar Survival; India Hosts BRICS Heads of Space Agencies Meeting

What happened: ISRO, in collaboration with the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE), is developing artificial heating systems capable of protecting lunar lander electronics and instruments during extended lunar night periods — potentially allowing 100–200 day surface operations, compared to Chandrayaan-3 Vikram lander's 14-day operational life. Separately, India hosted the BRICS Heads of Space Agencies Meeting in Bengaluru on June 23–24, 2026, exploring space cooperation frameworks among BRICS nations.

Why it matters for UPSC: ISRO-DAE collaboration demonstrates the synergy between India's space and atomic energy programmes — both under the direct supervision of the Prime Minister. Extending lunar lander survival is critical for Chandrayaan-4 and the LUPEX (Lunar Polar Exploration) joint mission with JAXA. BRICS space cooperation is testable under GS2 (multilateral groupings).

⚡ KEY FACTS

- ▶ Chandrayaan-3's Vikram lander operated for ~14 Earth days (one lunar day), then entered sleep mode when lunar night fell; revival attempts in September 2023 failed.
- ▶ Lunar night temperature: drops to approximately -180°C ; duration: ~14 Earth days (half of a 28-day lunar cycle).
- ▶ LUPEX (Lunar Polar Exploration Mission): joint ISRO-JAXA mission targeting the lunar south pole, expected post-2026; long-duration survival tech is critical for this mission.

💡 TEACHING HOOK

The Moon's day-night cycle: **14 Earth days of sunlight + 14 Earth days of darkness = 28-day lunar cycle**. Chandrayaan-3 survived the "day" but not the "night" (-180°C). ISRO's nuclear-adjacent heating tech (DAE collaboration) aims to bridge this "14-day dark gap." Compare with NASA's RTGs (Radioisotope Thermoelectric Generators) used in Mars rovers — same principle.

📖 PYQ LINKAGE

UPSC Prelims 2024: "With reference to Chandrayaan-3, consider the following statements..." Mains 2023 GS3: "How does India's Chandrayaan programme contribute to our scientific understanding of the Moon? Discuss the significance of the lunar south pole landing." Prelims 2020: Q on ISRO-DAE institutional linkages.

GS3

Semiconductor Policy · AI · Digital Economy

25 June 2026

India Semiconductor Mission 2.0 Launched; India Ranks 13th in QS Future Skills Index; IndiaAI Mission at ₹10,372 Crore Scales Up

What happened: Budget 2026–27 announced India Semiconductor Mission 2.0 (ISM 2.0) with ₹1,000 crore allocation, emphasising industry-led research and workforce training to complement existing fab units being set up under ISM 1.0 in Gujarat (Dholera, Sanand) and Assam (Jagiroad). India simultaneously ranked 13th in the QS World Future Skills Index 2027, reflecting rapid improvement in AI-readiness. The IndiaAI Mission (₹10,372 crore approved in 2024) is building the foundational infrastructure — compute capacity, datasets, and application layers.

Why it matters for UPSC: India's semiconductor and AI policy represents a convergence of economic policy, technology sovereignty, and national security — ideal for integrated Mains answers. The semiconductor import bill (~USD 40 billion) and China-dominated global supply chain risks make this a strategic imperative. QS Future Skills Index data is useful as a comparative India-world anchor.

⚡ KEY FACTS

- ▶ ISM 1.0 approved three units: Tata Electronics (Dholera, Gujarat), Tata Semiconductor (Jagiroad, Assam), CG Power (Sanand, Gujarat).
- ▶ India's semiconductor import bill: ~USD 40 billion in FY2025; ISM aims to achieve 25% domestic supply by 2030.
- ▶ QS World Future Skills Index 2027: India at 13th (improved from 25th in 2025); measures AI readiness, digital skills, and workforce adaptability.

💡 TEACHING HOOK

India's semiconductor story has **3 Ts**: **T**ata (two fab units), **T**echnology sovereignty (import substitution), **T**alent (ISM 2.0 workforce focus). Pair with IndiaAI Mission: chips (ISM) = hardware supply; AI Mission = software demand. Together they form India's complete "digital stack" strategy for Mains.

📄 PYQ LINKAGE

UPSC Mains 2023 GS3: "Semiconductor chips are the backbone of the modern digital economy. Analyse India's semiconductor manufacturing ambitions and the challenges it faces." Prelims 2022: Q on semiconductor importance for critical technology sectors. Mains 2024: Q on AI governance and IndiaAI Mission.

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ECONOMY

GS3

GS3

Monetary Policy · RBI · Macroeconomics

25 June 2026

RBI Holds Repo Rate at 5.25%, Retains Neutral Stance; GDP Forecast for FY2027 Cut to 6.6% Amid Global Headwinds

What happened: The Reserve Bank of India's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) unanimously decided to hold the repo rate at 5.25% and maintain the 'neutral' monetary policy stance in its June 2026 meeting. The RBI revised India's FY2027 GDP growth forecast downward from 7.0% to 6.6%, citing risks from the prolonged West Asia conflict, elevated global energy prices, supply chain disruptions, and weather-related agricultural uncertainties. India's FY2026 GDP growth stood at 7.7%, making it the fastest-growing G20 economy. The impact of US tariff policies on Indian exports is estimated at 0.3–0.4% of GDP.

Why it matters for UPSC: RBI Monetary Policy Committee decisions are directly testable in both Prelims (committee composition, stance definitions) and Mains (inflation targeting, monetary transmission, growth-inflation trade-off). FY2026 GDP of 7.7% is a critical anchor data point for essays on India's economic trajectory.

⚡ KEY FACTS

- ▶ Repo rate: 5.25% (held); MPC composition: 6 members — 3 RBI officials (including Governor) + 3 external members appointed by Gol.
- ▶ RBI's inflation target: $4\% \pm 2\%$ (headline CPI) under the Flexible Inflation Targeting framework; MPC failures trigger explanation letters to Gol.
- ▶ India GDP FY2026: 7.7% growth — fastest G20 economy; FY2027 forecast: 6.6%; US tariff impact estimated at 0.3–0.4% of GDP.

💡 TEACHING HOOK

"Neutral Stance" = the MPC is neither biased towards cuts nor hikes — it is in "observe mode." Think of it as a **traffic signal on yellow**: ready to go green (cut rates to boost growth) or red (hike rates to control inflation) depending on incoming data. With 7.7% FY2026 growth but 6.6% FY2027 forecast, the MPC is wisely cautious.

📖 PYQ LINKAGE

UPSC Prelims 2023: "With reference to the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the RBI, which of the following statements is/are correct?"
Mains 2019 GS3: "Analyse the factors influencing inflation in India and examine the effectiveness of RBI's monetary tools." Prelims 2020: Q on repo rate and reverse repo rate definitions.

GS3

Digital Economy · Rural Development · Infrastructure

25 June 2026

Digital India Milestone: Internet Connections Cross 102 Crore; Rural Development Budget Surges 211% Over a Decade

What happened: India's Digital India programme has achieved historic milestones — internet connections grew from 25.15 crore (2014) to 102.86 crore (2026), and broadband connections rose from 6.1 crore to 99.56 crore in the same period. Optical fibre coverage expanded from 19.35 lakh route km (2019) to 42.36 lakh route km (2025). The Union Budget allocation for Rural Development surged 211% from ₹87,765 crore (2016–17) to ₹2,73,108 crore (2026–27). PMGSY has connected 99.6% of eligible habitations with all-weather roads.

Why it matters for UPSC: Digital India and rural connectivity are core GS3 topics (Infrastructure, Inclusive Growth, Welfare). The 102 crore internet figure and 211% budget surge are high-value data points for Mains answers and essays. Digital Divide remains a critical challenge — rural-urban gap, gender gap, and last-mile connectivity are recurring exam themes.

⚡ KEY FACTS

- ▶ Internet connections: 25.15 crore (2014) → 102.86 crore (2026) — a 4x growth in 12 years, surpassing many G20 nations in absolute numbers.
- ▶ PMGSY (launched 2000 under Atal Bihari Vajpayee): 99.6% of eligible habitations connected; focus now shifting to upgrading existing rural roads under PMGSY-III.
- ▶ Rural Development Budget FY2026–27: ₹2,73,108 crore — reflects a transformational 211% increase over the decade.

💡 TEACHING HOOK

India's digital growth: from **1 in 4** Indians online (2014) to **3 in 4** online (2026) — a 4x jump. For UPSC Mains, always balance this with Digital Divide issues: despite 102 crore connections, India's internet quality, affordability, and digital literacy gaps remain real challenges. Use "Digital India = access + ability + application" as your framework.

📖 PYQ LINKAGE

UPSC Mains 2021 GS3: "Analyse the contribution of the Digital India Mission in bridging the digital divide and transforming public service delivery." Prelims 2019: Q on BharatNet and optical fibre rollout. Mains 2020 GS3: "Discuss how rural connectivity infrastructure contributes to inclusive economic development."

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Governance

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Defence

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Digital India

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Semiconductors

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