



DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 06-06-2025

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Kulsi River

Syllabus: GS-1: Indian Geography – Rivers and Hydropower projects.

Context:

- Assam and Meghalaya governments have agreed to construct a **55 MW hydropower project** on the **Kulsi River**.
- The river is a known habitat of the **endangered Ganges River Dolphin** (*Platanista gangetica*), raising concerns regarding ecological impacts.

Kulsi River

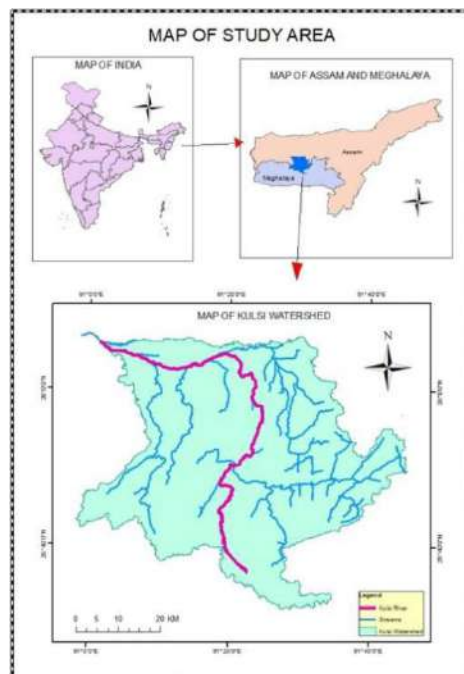
Location

- Flows through **West Khasi Hills (Meghalaya)** into **Kamrup district (Assam)**.

Origin & Course

- Originates in Meghalaya.
- Flows for approximately **60 km** before joining the **Brahmaputra River**.

Key Features



- **Small, shallow river.**
- Average width: **70-80 meters.**

- Rich in **biodiversity**.
- Critical habitat for **endangered species**, including the **Ganges River Dolphin**.

Gangetic Dolphin (*Platanista gangetica*)

Overview

- A **freshwater dolphin species** found in **South Asia**.
- One of only **five river dolphin species** globally.
- Locally called “**Susu**” (named after the sound made while surfacing for air).

Geographic Distribution

- Inhabits the river systems of:
 - Ganga
 - Brahmaputra
 - Meghna
 - Karnaphuli-Sangu
- Found across **India, Nepal, and Bangladesh**.

Key Biological Features

- **Blind species:**
 - Lacks functional lenses.
 - Navigates and hunts using **echolocation**.
- **Respiration:**
 - Surfaces every **30–120 seconds** to breathe.
- **Feeding habits:**
 - Predominantly consumes **fish**.
 - Prefers **counter-current flows** in main river channels.

Conservation Status

- **IUCN Red List:** Endangered.
- Declared **National Aquatic Animal of India** in **2009**.
 - Symbol of **freshwater ecosystem conservation**.

Concerns Regarding the Kulsi Hydropower Project

- Potential threat to **critical habitat** of the **Ganges River Dolphin**.
- Likely impacts:
 - Alteration of **river flow**.
 - Disruption of **breeding** and **feeding grounds**.
 - Impact on **biodiversity** of the riverine ecosystem.

Voter Turnout Reform

Syllabus: GS-2: Indian Polity – Elections.

Context

- The Election Commission of India (ECI) has introduced a **new digital reform** for **real-time voter turnout reporting** via the **ECINET app**.



About the Reform

What is the Reform?

- **Tech-driven voter turnout reporting system** enabling **real-time updates** from polling booths.
- Aims to:

- **Eliminate manual data relay delays.**
- **Strengthen public trust** in the electoral process.

App Used: ECINET

- **ECINET** is ECI's **integrated mobile application**.
- Consolidates **40+ internal apps and platforms**.
- Enables **presiding officers** to update **voter turnout every two hours** directly from polling stations.
- **Offline capability**: Data can be uploaded offline and synced later to handle **low-network areas**.

Key Features of the New System

- **Direct Data Entry**:
 - Presiding officers enter data directly into ECINET.
 - Eliminates need for routing through **sector officers** and **returning officers**.
- **Automatic Aggregation**:
 - Constituency-level aggregation ensures **faster and more accurate polling trend display**.
- **Public Availability**:
 - Approximate voter turnout percentages will be made public **soon after polling ends**, subject to connectivity.
- **Real-time Visibility**:
 - System reduces **time lag from hours/days to real-time or near-real-time** reporting.
- **Reduction in Manual Delays**:
 - Overcomes previous election delays where voter data was updated **days later**.

Significance for Governance

Enhances Electoral Transparency

- Responds to **public and political concerns** regarding potential **data manipulation**.

Promotes Digital Governance

- Aligned with India's broader **e-governance initiatives** within democratic processes.

Boosts Voter Trust

- **Quick data visibility** helps in building **public confidence** in the **ECI's impartiality**.

Strengthens Institutional Credibility

- Reinforces ECI's commitment to conducting **free and fair elections**.

Improves Data Accuracy

- **Direct digital entry** minimizes **human error** and reduces **inconsistent reporting**.

World Wealth Report

Syllabus: GS-3: Indian Economy – Key Concepts.

Context:

India saw an 8.8 percent rise in high-net-worth individual (HNWI) wealth in 2024, witnessing 378,810 millionaires with a total wealth of \$1.5 trillion by the end of last year, according to the World Wealth Report 2025 released recently.

World Wealth Report 2025

About the Report

- Released by: **Capgemini Research Institute**.
- Coverage: **71 countries**, accounting for:
 - **98%** of global Gross National Income (GNI).
 - **99%** of world stock market capitalization.

Definition of HNWI

- Individuals with **investable assets of \$1 million or more**, excluding:
 - Primary residence.
 - Collectibles.

- Consumables.
- Consumer durables.

Segmentation of HNWI's

Category	Wealth Band
Ultra-HNWIs	\$30 million or more
Mid-Tier Millionaires	\$5 million – \$30 million
Millionaires Next Door	\$1 million – \$5 million

Global Highlights (2024 Performance)

- **HNWI population** grew by **2.6%**.
- **Ultra-HNWIs** grew by **6.2%**, driven by:
 - Strong **stock markets**.
 - Optimism around **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** boosting portfolio returns.
- **Alternative investments** (private equity, cryptocurrencies) now form **15%** of HNWI portfolios.

Country-Specific Trends

United States

- Added **562,000 millionaires**.
- HNWI population grew by **7.6%**, reaching **7.9 million**.
- Wealth concentration:
 - **36%** of world's centi-millionaires (> \$100 million).
 - **33%** of world's billionaires.

Asia-Pacific

Country	HNWI Growth	Millionaires Added
India	5.6% in population; 8.8% in wealth	20,000
Japan	5.6%	210,000

Country	HNWI Growth	Millionaires Added
China	-1.0% (negative growth)	Decline in HNWI population

India-Specific Highlights

Metric	Data
HNWI Wealth Growth	8.8% in 2024
Total HNWIs	378,810 millionaires
Total HNWI Wealth	\$1.5 trillion

Breakdown of Indian HNWIs

Category	Number of Individuals	Combined Wealth
Millionaires Next Door (\$1–5M)	333,340	\$628.93 billion
Ultra-HNWIs (\$30M+)	4,290	\$534.77 billion

Summary

- The **World Wealth Report 2025** shows a **global rebound** in wealth growth, with India registering **strong growth** in both HNWI numbers and total wealth.
- Alternative investments are now a **mainstream component** of HNWI portfolios.
- The **U.S. remains dominant** globally, while **India and Japan** are leading the wealth growth story in Asia-Pacific.
- **China** showed a **decline** in HNWI population, contrasting with regional trends.

Fishing cats

Syllabus: GS-3: Wildlife Conservation.

Context:

- **For the first time in India**, three *endangered Fishing Cats* (*Prionailurus viverrinus*) have been collared.

- The collaring is part of a study to understand the species' *home range, behaviour, breeding, and prey patterns*.
- Conducted at **Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary (CWS)**, Godavari estuary, Kakinada district, Andhra Pradesh.



Project Details

Lead Institution and Team

- Led by **Wildlife Institute of India (WII)**, Dehradun.
- Project leader: **Conservation Biologist Bilal Habib**.

Equipment

- **Lightweight collars** with *Geographical Information System (GIS)* trackers.
- Expected functional duration: **1 year** (if undamaged).

Objectives

- Record **home range** of Fishing Cats in India (first such study).
- Understand **behavioural patterns, prey chart, breeding and feeding habits**.
- **Population enumeration** of Fishing Cats in CWS.
- Monitor **complete movements** of collared cats.
- Record **challenges faced during breeding**.

Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary

Location & Geography

- Located in the **Godavari estuary**, where the **Coringa River** meets the **Bay of Bengal**, in **Kakinada district, Andhra Pradesh**.

- About **40% of the sanctuary** consists of **sea-backwaters**; the rest is **intermingled with creeks** and regularly **inundated by tidal waters**.

Vegetation

- Comprises **extensive mangrove forests** and patches of **dry deciduous tropical forests**.
- It is the **second-largest stretch of mangrove forests in India** (after Sundarbans).

Flora

- Dominant **mangrove species**:
 - *Rhizophora* spp.
 - *Avicennia* spp.
 - *Sonneratia* spp.

Fauna

- **Endangered mammals**:
 - **Smooth-coated Indian otter** (*Lutrogale perspicillata*)
 - **Fishing cat** (*Prionailurus viverrinus*)
 - **Jackal** (*Canis aureus*)
- **Bird species** supported by mangrove habitat:
 - Black-capped kingfisher
 - Brahminy kite
 - Sea gulls
 - Reef heron
 - Sandpiper
- **Marine fauna**:
 - The **sea coast** of the sanctuary serves as an important **breeding ground** for the **Olive ridley turtle** (*Lepidochelys olivacea*).

Ecological Significance

- Plays a crucial role in **coastal protection** and **ecosystem stability**.

- Provides a unique habitat for a diverse range of **terrestrial, avian, and marine species**.
- Important site for **migratory birds** and **marine turtle conservation**.

About Fishing Cat

Category	Details
Scientific Name	Prionailurus viverrinus
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Twice the size of a house cat - Nocturnal - Diet: Fish, frogs, crustaceans, snakes, birds, carcasses - Breeds year-round - Excellent swimmer; lives near dense vegetation and water bodies
Habitat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Patchy distribution along Eastern Ghats - Estuarine floodplains, tidal mangroves, inland freshwater habitats - Key Locations: Sundarbans (West Bengal & Bangladesh), Chilika lagoon (Odisha), Coringa & Krishna mangroves (Andhra Pradesh)
Threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wetland habitat destruction - Shrimp farming affecting mangroves - Hunting for meat & skin - Ritual hunting by tribal communities - Occasional poaching - Trapping, snaring, poisoning
Protection Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IUCN Red List: Vulnerable (downlisted from Endangered) - CITES: Appendix II - Wildlife Protection Act, 1972: Schedule I
Conservation Efforts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chilika Development Authority: 5-year action plan - 2021: Fishing Cat Conservation Alliance study in northeastern Ghats, Andhra Pradesh - 2010: Fishing Cat Project in West Bengal - 2012: Declared State Animal of West Bengal; Calcutta Zoo enclosures - Odisha: NGOs and wildlife societies actively involved

Menar and Khichan Ramsar Site

Syllabus: GS-3: Ecosystem Conservation Measures

Context:

- India has added **two new Ramsar Sites—Menar** (Udaipur) and **Khichan** (Phalodi)—**ahead of World Environment Day**.
- Total Ramsar Wetlands in India now: **91**
 - **Highest in Asia**
 - **3rd globally**



New Ramsar Sites in India

Menar Wetland (Udaipur, Rajasthan)

- **Nickname:** *Bird Village*
- **Area:** 104 hectares
- **Biodiversity:**
 - 200 bird species
 - Notable species: **Eurasian coot, herons, spot-billed duck**
- **Community-Driven Conservation:**
 - Local residents **prohibit hunting/fishing**
 - Declared **Important Bird Area (IBA)** in **2016**
- **Tourism:**
 - Emerging **eco-tourism** destination on **Udaipur-Chittorgarh** route

Khichan Wetland (Phalodi, Rajasthan)

- **Famous for:** Migratory **Demoiselle cranes**
- **Ecological Significance:**
 - Wintering site for **large flocks of migratory birds**
- **Community Role:**
 - Strong **local traditions** to protect birds
 - Critical stop along the **Central Asian Flyway**

Ramsar Sites: Overview

What is a Ramsar Site?

- A **wetland of international importance** under the **Ramsar Convention (1971)**, Ramsar, Iran (under **UNESCO**).
- Recognizes wetlands that:
 - Provide **critical ecosystem services**
 - Support **biodiversity**
 - Sustain **local livelihoods**

India & Ramsar Convention

- **Signatory since:** February 1, 1982
- **First Ramsar Sites:**
 - **Chilika Lake** (Odisha)
 - **Keoladeo National Park** (Rajasthan), designated in **1981**

Current Status (as of June 2025)

- Total Ramsar Sites: **91**
- Coverage Area: ~**13.59 lakh hectares**
- **Global Ranking:**
 - **1st** in Asia
 - **3rd** globally
 - After **UK** (175) and **Mexico** (142)

Top Indian States (by Number of Sites)

- **Tamil Nadu** – 20
- **Uttar Pradesh** – 10
- **Rajasthan** – 4 (*post Menar&Khichan addition*)

Eligibility Criteria for Ramsar Sites

(Any 1 out of 9 criteria required)

- Supports **rare or endangered species**
- Hosts **significant bird populations**
- Provides **critical life cycle habitat** (e.g., **breeding** or **migration**)
- Exemplary **wetland ecosystem** or **unique hydrological characteristics**