



DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 20-06-2025

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Operation Sindhu

Syllabus: GS-2: International Relations – Conflicts in Middle Asia.

Context:

- The Government of India initiated Operation Sindhu to evacuate Indian nationals from Iran amid escalating tensions in the region.

Operation Sindhu – India's Evacuation Mission from Iran (June 2025)

Background and Context

- **Reason for Launch:** Escalating conflict between **Israel and Iran** raised fears of military strikes, putting Indian nationals in danger.
- **Primary Objective:** Evacuate Indian citizens, especially **students**, from conflict-hit regions in **Iran**.
- **Number of Indian Nationals in Iran:** Approx. **4,000**, including a large student population.

Evacuation Process

- **First Phase:** Successfully evacuated **110 students**, primarily from **Jammu and Kashmir**.
- **Route:**
 - Evacuees **moved via land** from **northern Iran to Armenia**.
 - A **special flight** from **Armenia to New Delhi** completed the journey.
- **Arrival in India:** Early hours of **June 19, 2025**.

Role of Authorities

- **Indian Embassy:** Played a **key role in coordination**, facilitation, and logistical arrangements.
- **Iranian Officials:** Provided **support and security assurance**; highlighted Indo-Iran cooperation during the crisis.

Challenges Faced

- **Injuries:** Some students reported **injuries due to airstrikes** in Tehran.
- **Living Conditions:** Reports of **lack of access to basic services and communication issues** with the Indian Embassy.

Diplomatic and Strategic Dimensions

- **India's Regional Diplomacy:**
 - **Positive engagement** with **Armenia, Turkmenistan, and Iraq** helped facilitate evacuation.
 - **Strained relations** with **Turkey and Azerbaijan** limited evacuation options.
- **Diplomatic Balancing:** India needed to **protect its nationals** while navigating a **sensitive geopolitical environment**.

Future Measures

- **Advisory Issued:** Citizens in Iran advised to **stay in contact** with the Indian Embassy and **use emergency helplines**.
- **Continued Monitoring:** Indian authorities to **track regional developments** and prepare for **further evacuations** if needed.

India-Armenia Relations

Syllabus: GS-: Bilateral Relations.

Context:

Amid escalating hostilities between Iran and Israel, the Indian Embassy in Tehran on Tuesday helped at least 110 stranded students leave the country, facilitating their passage into Armenia through the Nurdaz-Agarak border crossing.

India-Armenia Relations and Their Strategic Importance Amid Iran-Israel Crisis

- Rising tensions between Iran and Israel triggered a regional crisis.
- India launched **Operation Sindhu** to evacuate its nationals from Iran.
- Indian airspace was shut; evacuation had to be carried out through land routes.

Key Evacuation Routes Considered:

- **Iran-Iraq Border:** Risky due to instability and airspace issues.
- **Iran-Turkmenistan Border:** Difficult terrain and limited access.
- **Iran-Armenia Border:** Chosen as the safest and most practical route.

- 44 km of shared border between Iran and Armenia.
- Highway from Tehran to the Nurdaz–Agarak border crossing (~730 km).
- Outcome: Over 110 Indian students evacuated through Armenia.

India–Armenia Bilateral Relations

Historical and Diplomatic Ties:

- Diplomatic relations established in 1992.
- Cultural and historical connections, including trade and religious linkages.
- Joint philatelic issues symbolizing cultural unity.

Diplomatic Support:

- Armenia supports India's position on bilateral resolution of the Kashmir issue.
- Supports India's bid for permanent membership in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

Defence and Strategic Cooperation

Major Defence Deals:

- Since 2022, India has become Armenia's largest military supplier.
- Key deals include:
 - PINAKA multi-barrel rocket launchers
 - Akash-1S surface-to-air missile systems
 - Anti-tank guided missiles
- Defence trade valued at approximately \$250 million.

Recent Developments:

- Delivery of the first Akash-1S battery to Armenia in November 2024.
- Second batch scheduled for delivery in June 2025.
- Demonstrates India's credibility as a defence exporter.

Geostrategic and Economic Significance

Connectivity and Trade:

- Armenia plays a role in the **International North–South Transport Corridor (INSTC)**.
 - This corridor connects India to Europe via Iran and Armenia.
 - Aims to reduce transit time and cost for trade.

Strategic Leverage:

- Armenia provides India a foothold in the volatile Caucasus and West Asia regions.
- Offers logistical access in emergencies, such as evacuation scenarios.

Geopolitical Implications

Regional Realignment:

- While Pakistan and Turkey support Azerbaijan, India aligns with Armenia.
- Reflects a shift in India's strategic approach in the region.

Defence Diplomacy:

- Defence exports to Armenia enhance India's image as a reliable partner.
- Strengthens India's presence in Central and West Asian geopolitics.

Diplomatic Gains:

- Armenia's backing on Kashmir and UNSC matters reinforces India's global standing.
- Establishes mutual trust and long-term cooperation potential.

Conclusion

- India's proactive diplomacy with Armenia has yielded significant strategic dividends.
- The Iran–Israel crisis highlighted the practical importance of this relationship.
- Future cooperation is likely to deepen across defence, connectivity, and diplomacy.

Performance Grading Index (PGI) 2.0 Report

Syllabus: GS-2: Social Sector - Education

Context:

- Released by Ministry of Education for the years 2022–23 and 2023–24.
- Evaluates and ranks States/UTs on school education performance.
- **Chandigarh** topped the index; **Meghalaya** ranked lowest.

About PGI 2.0

- **What:** Evidence-based assessment framework to evaluate school education quality across States/UTs.
- **Launched:** 2017 (PGI), updated to PGI 2.0 in line with **NEP 2020** and **SDG-4**.
- **Published by:** Ministry of Education, Government of India.
- **Coverage:** 6 domains, 73 indicators:
 - Learning Outcomes
 - Access
 - Infrastructure & Facilities
 - Equity
 - Governance Processes
 - Teacher Education & Training
- **Grading:** Out of 1000 points; 10 performance bands from **Daksh (Top)** to **Akanshi-3 (Lowest)**.

Key Findings

- **Top Performer:** Chandigarh (703 points, *Prachesta-1 band*) — strong in governance & infrastructure.
- **Lowest Performer:** Meghalaya (417 points, *Akanshi-3*) — weak in access and learning outcomes.
- **No State in Top Bands:** No State/UT reached *Daksh* (951–1000) or *Utkarsh* (881–950).
- **Performance Changes:**

- 24 States/UTs improved in 2023–24.
- 12 States/UTs recorded a decline.

Positive Trends

- **Score Improvements:** 24 States/UTs gained, indicating post-pandemic recovery.
- **Access Gains:**
 - **Odisha:** Achieved *Daksh* in Access — high enrolment, retention, reduced dropouts.
 - **Bihar, Telangana, Jharkhand:** Significant improvements among disadvantaged groups.
- **Equity:**
 - Gender parity improving.
 - SC/ST and minority gaps in enrolment/learning narrowing.
- **Infrastructure Progress:**
 - **Delhi, J&K, Telangana:** Upgraded toilets, electricity, digital classrooms.
- **Learning Outcomes:**
 - Chandigarh, Punjab, Puducherry scored higher in Learning Outcomes.
- **Governance Improvements:**
 - Digital tools, UDISE+ integration, transparency in fund use seen in UTs like Chandigarh.

Negative Trends

- **No High Achievers:** No State crossed *Utkarsh* or *Daksh* — indicates quality of education is lagging.
- **Learning Gaps:**
 - NAS 2021 highlights poor foundational literacy and numeracy.
- **Regional Disparities:**
 - Gap of ~286 points between Chandigarh (703) and Meghalaya (417).
- **Decline in 12 States:**

- Notable declines in Bihar, Karnataka, West Bengal, Ladakh, Andaman & Nicobar.
- **Infrastructure Shortages:**
 - Aspirational districts still lack basic facilities — labs, libraries, toilets.

Way Forward

- **Improve Learning Outcomes:** Prioritise foundational literacy & numeracy (as per NEP 2020).
- **Enhance Access:** Retain marginalised children; ensure equity in enrolment.
- **Strengthen Governance:** Expand digital monitoring, accountability mechanisms.
- **Upgrade Infrastructure:** Invest in labs, libraries, digital tools in low-performing regions.
- **Promote Equity:** Address gender, caste, and geographical disparities to ensure inclusivity.

Conclusion

- **PGI 2.0** is a comprehensive tool aligned with NEP 2020 and SDG 4.
- Shows progress, but highlights urgent need to:
 - Bridge learning gaps,
 - Improve governance and infrastructure,
 - Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education by 2030.

Reverse Flipping

Syllabus: GS-3: Indian Economy – Capital Market.

Context:

Sebi's new ESOP rules and reverse-flipping impact on IPO-bound startups.

Flipping

Flipping, also called **externalised structure**, refers to the process of shifting the **ownership of an Indian company to a foreign entity**, along with the **transfer of key**

assets like intellectual property (IP), even when the operations, employees, and markets largely remain in India.

Key Features:

- The Indian company becomes a **wholly owned subsidiary** of the foreign company.
- Operational activities continue in India, but **strategic control shifts abroad**.

Common Destinations for Flipping:

- Singapore
- United Arab Emirates (UAE)
- Cayman Islands
- United Kingdom
- United States

Reasons for Flipping:

- **Taxation benefits** offered by foreign jurisdictions.
- **Access to international capital markets**.
- **Higher company valuations**.
- Better **branding and global reach**.
- Stronger **intellectual property protection** in foreign markets.

Reverse Flipping

Reverse Flipping, also known as **internalisation**, is when a **start-up domiciled abroad relocates its legal structure back to India**.

Reasons for Reverse Flipping:

- **Potential to get listed** on Indian stock exchanges (NSE/BSE).
- Increased interest from **retail investors** in India.
- **Supportive economic policies** by the Indian government.
- Rapidly **expanding domestic market**.
- Increased **investor confidence** in India's start-up ecosystem.

Execution Structures:

- **Inbound Merger:** Merger of the foreign holding company into the Indian company.
- **Share Swap Arrangement:** Exchange of shares between Indian and foreign entities to transfer ownership.

Key Considerations:

- Legal, regulatory, and tax implications vary depending on:
 - Size of the company
 - Location of incorporation
 - Nature of business

UN Ocean Conference 2025

Syllabus: GS-3: Environment and Ecology – Conferences and Summits.

Context:

The United Nations Oceans Conference (UNOC), held in France, concluded with 56 out of the required 60 countries ratifying the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) agreement, also known as the High Seas Treaty.

UN Oceans Conference 2025 – Summary

Venue & Co-hosts:

- Held in **Nice, France**
- **Co-hosted by France and Costa Rica**

Theme:

- *“Accelerating action and mobilizing all actors to conserve and sustainably use the ocean”*

Objective:

- Accelerate global action to protect oceans, especially **international waters beyond national boundaries**
- Support **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 – Life Below Water**

Key Priorities of UNOC 2025 (Nice Ocean Action Plan)

➤ **Multilateral Processes:**

- Work toward completion and implementation of international ocean-related agreements (e.g., BBNJ).

➤ **Mobilising Finance:**

- Scale up resources for SDG 14 implementation.
- Promote sustainable **blue economy**.

➤ **Marine Science & Knowledge Sharing:**

- Strengthen marine scientific research.
- Improve policy-making based on evidence and data.

Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Treaty / High Seas Treaty

Background:

- Adopted in **2023** under the **United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)**.
- Focuses on **marine biodiversity conservation** in areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ).

Key Features:

- Creation of **marine protected areas (MPAs)** in high seas
- **Environmental impact assessments (EIAs)** for high-seas activities
- Regulate access to **marine genetic resources**
- Support **capacity-building** for developing nations

Link to Global Biodiversity Targets:

- Supports **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)** target to protect **30% of marine areas by 2030**

Ratification Status (as of June 2025)

- **160 countries signed**
- **56 ratified** (*needs 60 for treaty to take effect*)
- Once 60 ratify, a **120-day countdown** starts for treaty to become **legally binding**

Country Positions:

- **India** – In the process of ratification
- **USA** – Has not ratified yet
- **UN Target** – 70 ratifications by **September 2025**

Future Steps:

- First **BBNJ Conference of Parties (COP)** planned in **late 2026**

Challenges to BBNJ Treaty Implementation

- **Disputes over Benefit-Sharing:**
 - Difficulty in sharing profits from **marine genetic resources** in international waters.
- **Regulation of Extraction Activities:**
 - Lack of global consensus on regulating or banning extraction of exotic marine species.
- **Threats to Ocean Ecosystems:**
 - Risk of **deep-sea mining**, overfishing, and biodiversity loss without strict enforcement.

Key Achievements of UNOC 2025

Major Financial Commitments:

- **European Commission:** €1 billion – ocean conservation, sustainable fishing, marine science
- **Germany:** €100 million – clear munitions from Baltic & North Seas
- **New Zealand:** \$52 million – ocean governance in Pacific
- **Italy:** €6.5 million – marine surveillance and protection
- **Canada:** \$9 million – Ocean Risk and Resilience Action Alliance

Expansion of Marine Protected Areas:

- **French Polynesia:** World's largest MPA (~5 million sq. km)
- **Spain:** 5 new MPAs to protect **25%** of its marine territory

Global Coalitions and Initiatives:

- **High Ambition Coalition for a Quiet Ocean:**
 - 37 nations, led by Panama & Canada
 - Aim: Combat **ocean noise pollution**
- **One Ocean Finance Process:**
 - UN initiative to mobilize finance from **blue economy sectors**