



## **DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 24-06-2026**

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## **Strait of Messina**

**Syllabus: Prelims Bits – Maps.**

**Context:**

- Japan's Prime Minister emphasized bilateral cooperation in the ambitious plan to build a bridge across the Strait of Messina.

### **About Strait of Messina**

- A narrow water body in the Mediterranean Sea located in southern Italy.
- An example of a strait that runs through a country; separates mainland Italy from the island of Sicily.
- Named after the city of Messina, situated on the northeastern tip of Sicily.
- A 32 km-long strait connecting the Tyrrhenian Sea (north) with the Ionian Sea (south); both form part of the larger Mediterranean Sea.
- At its narrowest point, the strait is about 3.1 km wide.



### **Physical Characteristics**

- Generally narrow and shallow, with an average depth of about 90 m.
- Deepest point reaches approximately 250 m.
- Waters are characterized by strong currents, whirlpools, and tidal flows.

### Historical Significance

- Greatly feared by sailors in antiquity due to dangerous rocks and whirlpools.
- Associated with Scylla and Charybdis, personified as female monsters in Greek mythology.

### Ecological Importance

- Possesses a unique marine ecosystem due to strong water currents.
- Alternating and intense currents, abundant phosphorus and nitrogen, and low water temperatures support abundant and diverse marine species.
- Serves as an important migratory route for fish and other species entering the Mediterranean Sea.
- Functions as a major flyway, with several bird species passing through annually to reach their breeding grounds in Europe.

## **Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar (PMRBP)**

### Syllabus: GS-2; Welfare Schemes - Social Justice

#### Context

The Ministry of Women and Child Development has invited nominations for the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar 2026.

#### About

- Highest civilian honour for children in India.
- Awarded annually by the President of India on **Veer Bal Diwas (26 December)**.

#### Categories

- Bravery

- Social Service
- Environment
- Sports
- Art & Culture
- Science & Technology

### Eligibility

- Indian citizen.
- Age between 5 and 18 years.
- Achievement must have occurred within the preceding two years.

### Selection

- Selection Committee constituted by the Ministry of Women and Child Development.
- Chaired by the Secretary of the Ministry.

### Award Components

- Medal
- Certificate
- Cash Prize of ₹1 lakh



## **Green Hydrogen Certification Scheme (GHCI)**

**Syllabus: GS-3; Energy, Environment, Science & Technology**

### **Context**

The Union Minister for New and Renewable Energy recently launched the **Green Hydrogen Certification Portal of India (GHCI)** under the National Green Hydrogen Mission.

### **About the Scheme**

- Launched by the **Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE)**.
- Supports the implementation of the **National Green Hydrogen Mission**.
- Establishes a framework for certifying genuinely green hydrogen production.

### **Objective**

- Promote production and utilization of green hydrogen.
- Ensure credibility and transparency in the green hydrogen market.
- Facilitate reduction of carbon emissions.

### **Key Features**

- Hydrogen qualifies as "green" only if emissions do not exceed:
  - **2 kg CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent per kg of hydrogen**
- Eligible production pathways:
  - Electrolysis using renewable energy
  - Biomass conversion
- Independent verification by **Accredited Carbon Verification (ACV)** agencies recognized by the **Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE)**.

### **Types of Certificates**

1. Concept Certificate
2. Facility-Level Certificate
3. Provisional Certificate
4. Final Certificate

### **Significance**

- Enables access to carbon markets and carbon credits.

- Enhances investor confidence and market transparency.
- Supports India's net-zero and clean energy goals.

## **Walking on footpaths a fundamental right: SC**

**Syllabus: GS-2: Indian Polity –Fundamental Rights – SC Judgements.**

### **Context:**

- In **ManiyarIliyaz @ Shaik Riyaz vs. P. Ayyappan**, the Supreme Court of India declared the **right to walk on safe, demarcated footpaths as a Fundamental Right**, giving it priority over the movement of motor vehicles.
- The case arose from the death of a **5-year-old boy**, who was struck by a tanker while walking to school with his father.
- The Court used the case to address the broader issue of denial of pedestrian rights in India.

### **Pedestrian Safety Crisis in India**

#### **Alarming Statistics**

- Between **2015 and 2024**, total road fatalities increased by **21.24%**, whereas pedestrian deaths increased by nearly **163%**.
- Pedestrian deaths rose from **13,894 (2015)** to **36,526 (2024)**.
- Share of pedestrian deaths in total road fatalities increased from **9.5% to 20.61%**.
- Pedestrians account for the **second-highest share of road fatalities**, after two-wheeler users.
- Deaths continued to rise even during the **Covid-19 pandemic years**, indicating a structural problem.

#### **Causes**

- Systematic denial of pedestrian space rather than merely speed or reckless driving.
- Footpaths are frequently:
  - Encroached by two-wheelers, vendors, parked vehicles, and garbage.
  - Non-existent in many urban areas.

## Supreme Court's Observations

### Beyond Motor Accident Law

- The Court separated the concept of footpaths from the narrow framework of motor accident law.
- A footpath is not merely a safety buffer; it possesses an independent identity and purpose.
- Walking is the most fundamental human activity, predating motorised transport by millennia.

### Critique of Road Infrastructure

- Road infrastructure has been designed predominantly for vehicles, marginalising pedestrians.
- Walkers are often treated as a “**nuisance for drivers.**”
- The Court termed this as “**elitism encoded in infrastructure.**”
- Expansion of motor vehicles shifted road design priorities away from pedestrians.

## Constitutional and Legal Foundations

### Article 21 – Right to Life

- Safe and unobstructed footpaths are essential for the dignified exercise of:
  - Right to Life.
  - Personal Liberty.
- Therefore, the right to walk is embedded within **Article 21.**

### Article 39(b) – Directive Principles of State Policy

- Footpaths constitute **material resources of the community.**
- Article 39(b) requires such resources to be distributed for the **common good.**
- Urban road space must balance the needs of both pedestrians and vehicle users.

### Tragedy of the Commons

- The Court invoked the concept of **Tragedy of the Commons.**
- Footpaths, as shared public resources, deteriorate when repeatedly encroached upon without accountability.

- Safe pedestrian spaces have become increasingly scarce in Indian cities.

### Walking and Constitutional Freedoms

- Walking is linked to:
  - Freedom of Speech and Expression.
  - Right to Peaceful Protest.
  - Right to Form Associations.
- Historical examples include:
  - Gandhi's **Dandi March**.
  - Modern political rallies and public demonstrations.

### Criticism of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988

- The Court observed that the **Motor Vehicles Act, 1988** is vehicle-centric.
- The Act treats vehicles as the primary subject, while human interests remain incidental.
- Pedestrians are recognised mainly as persons whom drivers must avoid hitting.

### On MoRTH Regulations, 2017

- Regulations require drivers to exercise caution around vulnerable road users.
- However, these provisions:
  - Are only guiding principles.
  - Do not recognise a fundamental right to walk.
  - Do not grant priority to pedestrians over vehicles.

### Judicial Concern

- Since 2012, the Supreme Court has attempted to accommodate pedestrian rights within the Motor Vehicles Act framework, with limited success.

### Duty-Bearers Identified by the Court

#### Primary Responsibility

- Urban Local Bodies (ULBs):
  - Urban Development Authorities.

- Municipal Corporations.
- Municipalities.
- Panchayats.

### Public Trust Doctrine

- Footpaths are held in trust by these institutions for public benefit.
- Failure to maintain and protect footpaths amounts to:
  - Constitutional failure.
  - Not merely an administrative lapse.

### Key Directions and Recommendations

#### Dedicated Statutory Law

- Parliament and State Legislatures should enact a dedicated law, similar to the **Right to Education Act**, to operationalise the right to walk.

#### Dedicated Regulatory Body

- Establishment of a full-time regulator to:
  - Plan pedestrian infrastructure.
  - Enforce pedestrian rights.
  - Ensure accountability.
  - Provide grievance redressal mechanisms.

#### Compensation in the Present Case

- Supreme Court restored and enhanced compensation to **₹11.44 lakh**.
- Amount to be paid within **two months**.
- Violation of the right to walk on demarcated footpaths enables citizens to seek constitutional and legal remedies beyond the Motor Vehicles Act.

#### Significance of the Judgment

- Reverses the traditional hierarchy of Indian roads that prioritised motorised users.
- Establishes that pedestrian rights are **not subordinate** to vehicle movement.
- Makes safe and unobstructed footpaths a **constitutional obligation** wherever motorised roads exist.

- Converts pedestrian-friendly infrastructure from a discretionary practice into a **constitutional duty** for public authorities.

## **Global Energy Transition Challenge**

**Syllabus: GS-3: Environment – Climate Change and Energy Security.**

### **Context:**

- At the mid-year climate talks in Bonn, Turkey proposed a global target of meeting at least one-third of the world's energy needs through electricity by 2035, highlighting the central role of electrification in achieving climate goals.

### **Understanding Electrification**

- Electrification refers to the process of replacing direct fossil-fuel use with electricity across different sectors of the economy.
- It involves shifting activities such as transportation, industrial production, cooking, heating, and other energy-consuming processes from coal, oil, and gas to electricity.
- Electrification is a critical component of the global energy transition because most clean energy sources such as solar, wind, hydropower, and nuclear energy generate electricity rather than directly supplying usable energy.
- Achieving deep decarbonisation requires not only expanding renewable energy but also ensuring that end-use sectors increasingly rely on electricity.

### **Electrification and Climate Goals**

- Climate change is driven primarily by greenhouse gas emissions resulting from the combustion of fossil fuels.
- Reducing emissions requires replacing conventional energy sources with cleaner alternatives.
- Key distinction between energy sources:
  - Fossil fuels are direct sources of energy and can be used immediately through combustion.
  - Renewable energy sources generally need to be converted into electricity before they can be utilised.

- Therefore, a complete transition away from fossil fuels is not possible without widespread electrification.
- Tracking electrification levels has become an important indicator of progress toward climate goals and energy transition.

### **Current Status of Global Electrification**

- Despite the widespread presence of electricity in modern life, its contribution to overall energy consumption remains relatively limited.
- According to the International Energy Agency:
  - Electricity accounted for only 21% of global Total Final Energy Consumption (TFEC) in 2025.
  - The corresponding figure for India was about 23%.
- TFEC measures the energy ultimately consumed by end users and excludes energy used during extraction, conversion, transportation, and distribution processes.
- Global electricity generation increased from around 24 terawatt-hours (TWh) in 2015 to over 32 TWh in 2025.
- However, the share of electricity in final energy consumption increased only modestly from 17.7% to 21% during the same period.

### **Challenges to Rapid Electrification**

#### **Hard-to-Abate Sectors**

- Aviation and shipping
- Heavy-duty and long-haul transport
- Iron and steel manufacturing
- Cement production
- Glass and ceramics industries
- Certain residential heating applications

#### **Reasons**

- Require high-temperature processes or energy-dense fuels.
- Commercially viable electric alternatives are currently limited.
- Significant portions of global energy demand continue to rely on fossil fuels.

### **Clean Electricity Challenge**

- Electrification alone is not sufficient; the source of electricity also matters.
- According to IEA data:
  - Only about 42% of global electricity generation in 2025 came from non-fossil fuel sources such as renewables, hydropower, and nuclear energy.

### **Present Situation**

- Only 21% of final energy consumption is electrified.
- Only 42% of that electricity is generated from clean sources.
- Consequently, just over 8% of the world's total energy consumption currently comes from clean electricity.
- More than 90% of global energy use still depends on fossil fuels.
- These figures underline the scale of transition required to achieve international climate targets.

### **Turkey's Proposed Electrification Target**

- At the Bonn climate talks, Turkey proposed that countries collectively aim to meet at least 35% of global energy demand through electricity by 2035.
- Current global electrification levels are around 20–23%.
- The proposal is based on a roadmap prepared by the International Renewable Energy Agency.

### **IRENA Assessment**

- A 35% electrification rate by 2035 represents the minimum level required to keep the world on the 1.5°C pathway under the Paris Agreement.

### **Future Deliberations**

- The proposal is expected to be discussed at COP31, which Turkey and Australia will jointly host in Antalya.

### **Requirements for Achieving the Target**

- Annual investments of approximately \$1.2 trillion in electricity systems.
- Rapid expansion of renewable energy capacity.
- Large-scale deployment of battery storage systems.

- Modernisation of transmission and distribution networks.
- Electrification of transport and industrial sectors.

### **Key Constraints**

- Geopolitical conflicts.
- Supply chain disruptions.
- Economic uncertainties affecting investment flows and energy security priorities.

### **Implications for India**

- India is one of the fastest-growing renewable energy markets and already derives approximately 23% of its final energy consumption through electricity.

### **Potential Benefits**

- Reduced dependence on imported fossil fuels.
- Improved energy security.
- Lower greenhouse gas emissions.
- Expansion of electric mobility.
- Progress toward the net-zero target of 2070.

### **Requirements**

- Greater investments in renewable energy.
- Expansion of energy storage infrastructure.
- Development of smart grids.
- Industrial decarbonisation measures.