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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

THE HINDU ANALYSIS

17 JUNE 2026

Curated from *The Hindu* — UPSC Prelims & Mains Focus

TOPICS COVERED TODAY

- 1 Centre Blocks Telegram App till NEET (UG) Re-examination GS 2
- 2 World Suffers from Shortage of Trust — PM at G7 GS 2
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1 Centre Blocks Telegram App till NEET (UG) Re-examination

GS 2

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POLITY / IT ACT

WHY IN NEWS

At the National Testing Agency's (NTA) request, the Centre is blocking the messaging app **Telegram** in India until Monday — described by the NTA as a response to the organised use of the platform by cheating rackets to defraud candidates appearing for the **NEET (UG) 2026 re-examination** scheduled on 21 June 2026.

- A few hours after the government's order, one telecom operator had already blocked access to the service.
- This is the **first time** a messaging app operating at such scale is being blocked in India by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), even for a limited period.
- The agency said several Telegram groups were advertising **fake test papers** for the upcoming exam and defrauding candidates willing to pay for them.

SECTION 69A OF THE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY ACT, 2000

- Section 69A empowers the Centre to direct any government agency or intermediary to **block public access** to information generated, transmitted, received, stored or hosted on any computer resource.
- A related power (under Section 69) allows the government to **intercept, monitor or decrypt** any information through any computer resource.

GROUNDINGS FOR EXERCISING BLOCKING POWERS

- ▶ Sovereignty & integrity of India, defence of India, security of the State.
- ▶ Friendly relations with foreign states.
- ▶ Public order, or preventing incitement to a cognizable offence relating to these.
- ▶ For investigating any offence.
- ▶ **Intermediaries** include telecom, network, internet & web-hosting providers, search engines, online payment/auction sites, marketplaces and cyber cafes.
- ▶ Any request for blocking access must be based on **reasons given in writing**.

2 World Suffers from Shortage of Trust, PM Tells G7 Leaders

GS 2

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IR / GLOBAL SOUTH

WHY IN NEWS

PM Narendra Modi participated in a G7 outreach session on “**Forging New Partnerships and Rebuilding International Solidarity**”, stressing that the world today suffers not from a shortage of resources but from a **shortage of trust**.



PM Modi with G7 members and outreach-country leaders in Evian, eastern France. (AFP)

- Besides the G7 and India, partner countries **Brazil, Egypt, Kenya and South Korea** took part, along with the **World Bank** and **African Development Bank**.
- Mr. Modi met U.S. President **Donald Trump** for the first time since February 2025 at the session.
- On X, he wrote: mutual trust is the most important strategic asset today; the world does not suffer from a shortage of resources but a shortage of trust.

- India has sought to play a **leadership role for the Global South** — middle-income and poorer countries — stressing that it seeks partnership more than support.
- Mr. Modi highlighted India's efforts in **Africa**, including focus on training, water, agriculture, energy and capacity building.
- He urged countries to move **beyond the donor-recipient paradigm** and work as equals in development, rebuilding trust as the basis of future partnerships.
- India did **not sign** a communique on restructuring the development-finance ecosystem (backed by G7, Kenya, South Korea), but joined a call for a **coordinated Ebola response** and a **road map to fight cancer**.

G7 — QUICK FACTS

- ▶ An informal grouping of advanced economies: **USA, UK, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan** — the EU participates as a “non-enumerated” member.
- ▶ No charter or permanent secretariat; **presidency rotates** annually among members.
- ▶ Originated as G6 in 1975; Canada joined in 1976. (Russia's G8 membership was suspended in 2014.)
- ▶ India is a frequent **outreach/guest** invitee, reflecting its rising global stature.

SIDE DIPLOMACY

- Mr. Modi held bilaterals with Canadian PM **Mark Carney**, U.K. PM **Keir Starmer** and UAE ruler **Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan** on the sidelines.
- He hoped to accept Mr. Carney's invitation to visit Canada and complete a **trade deal** before year-end.

3 Centre Puts an End to Over-the-Counter Sales of Cough Syrups

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HEALTH / DRUG REGULATION

WHY IN NEWS

By a government notification, **medicinal syrups** — including cough syrups — can no longer be bought without a doctor's **prescription**. Over-the-counter (OTC) sale of such syrups will no longer be allowed.



Adulterated cough syrups have been linked to multiple child deaths in India and abroad.

- The Ministry of Health & Family Welfare amended the **Drugs Rules, 1945** (under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940), removing the word **'syrups'** from the list of items exempted from the Act's provisions.
- Earlier, "syrups, lozenges, pills and tablets for cough" were exempted — so **lozenges, pills and tablets remain OTC**; only syrups now need a prescription.
- The amendment follows a **December 2025 draft notification**; objections from stakeholders and the public were considered before the final notification.

SAFETY CONCERNS

- The move comes after deaths linked to adulterated cough syrups, including **24 children in Madhya Pradesh** in September.
- Cough syrups exported from India have been linked to over **140 children's deaths in Africa and Central Asia since 2022**.

DIETHYLENE GLYCOL (DEG) & THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

- ▶ **DEG**: a colourless, sweet-tasting industrial chemical used in brake fluids and antifreeze; misused as a cheap solvent substitute in drug production due to its similarity to safe pharma compounds.
- ▶ Consumption can cause abdominal pain, vomiting, **kidney failure** and nervous-system damage, and may be fatal in high doses.
- ▶ **Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940**: regulates import, manufacture, sale & distribution of drugs and cosmetics via licences and permits, ensuring they are safe, effective and meet national standards.
- ▶ **Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945**: classify medications into schedules and set guidelines for their storage, sale, presentation and prescription.

4 Primed to Treat — The Kerala Story in Containing Nipah

GS 2

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HEALTH / ONE HEALTH

WHY IN NEWS

The emergence and swift control of a **Nipah virus** case in Kerala highlights two things: the State's ecological vulnerability to Nipah every monsoon (fruit bats being the host), and the **robustness of its health systems** in limiting spread to a single case.

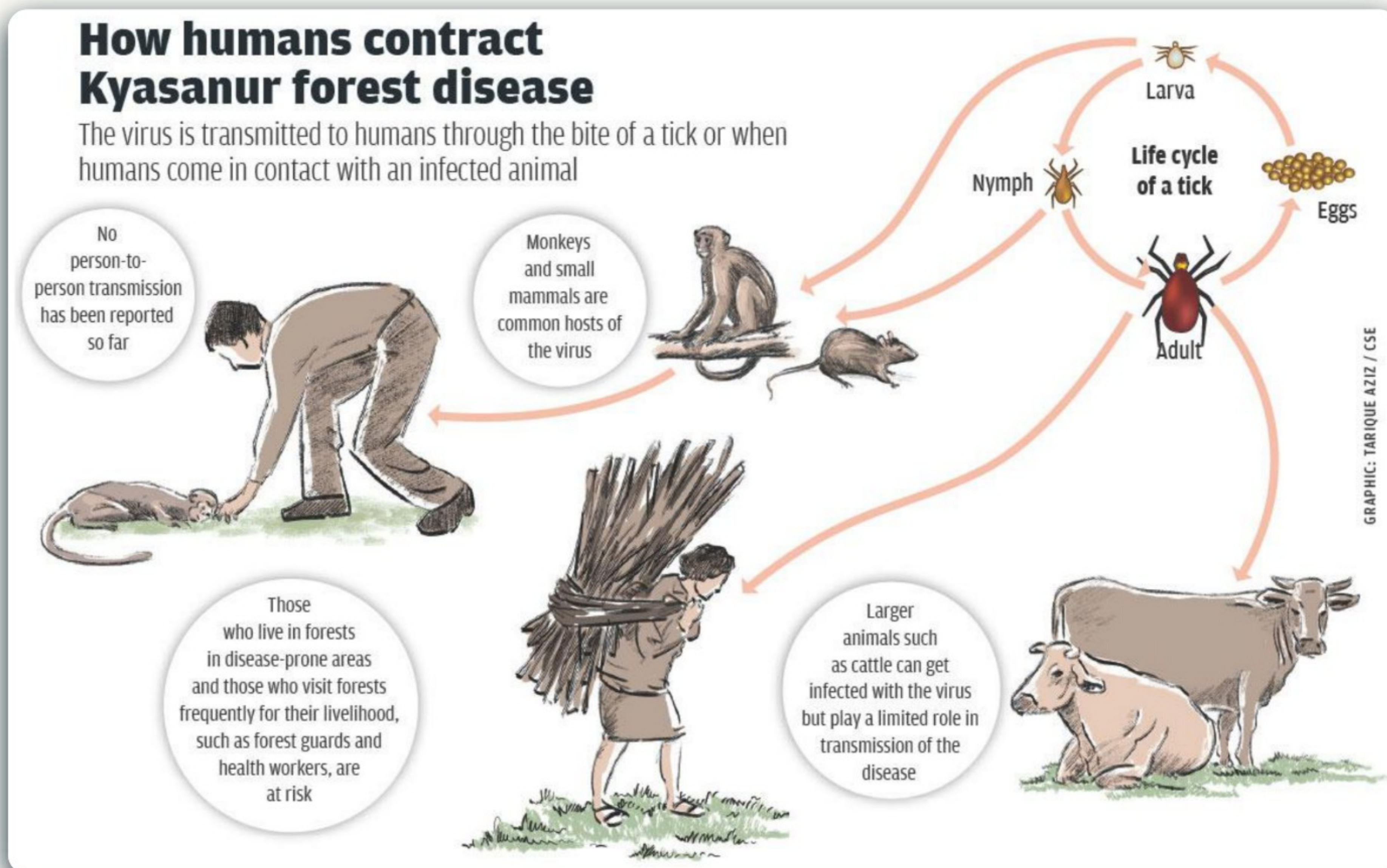
- The **WHO** classifies Nipah as a **priority pathogen** for its lethality and potential to cause outbreaks, even a pandemic. It is one of several pathogens WHO has flagged for Kerala — alongside **avian influenza** and **Kyasanur Forest Disease (KFD)**.
- Repeated outbreaks have been traced to **encroachment into fruit-bat habitats** on forest fringes — reinforcing the need for a **One Health** approach (environment + animal + human).
- Kerala's system maintains a high index of suspicion for acute encephalitis, watches for clusters and deploys containment protocols with clinical efficiency — a key lesson for pandemic preparedness.

NIPAH VIRUS (NIV) — KEY FACTS

- ▶ A highly infectious **zoonotic virus**, first identified in 1998–99 in Kampung Sungai Nipah, Malaysia.
- ▶ **Reservoir:** fruit bats (Pteropodidae); **pigs** as intermediate hosts. Belongs to the **Henipavirus** genus, **Paramyxoviridae** family.
- ▶ Capable of **human-to-human transmission**; symptoms range from influenza-like signs to acute encephalitis, convulsions, coma and death; asymptomatic infections also occur.
- ▶ **No approved vaccine**; treatment relies on supportive care and isolation. Kerala has used monoclonal antibodies and antivirals (e.g. Remdesivir), reducing mortality from **91% (2018) to ~33% (2023–25)**.

KYASANUR FOREST DISEASE (KFD)

- A zoonotic illness colloquially called “**monkey disease**”, caused by the **KFD Virus (KFDV)**, affecting humans and monkeys.
- First identified in **1957** in a sick monkey from the Kyasanur Forest, **Karnataka**; 400–500 human cases per year since; spread across the Western Ghats.
- Maintained in nature mainly in **hard ticks** (*Haemaphysalis spinigera*), monkeys, rodents and birds; humans infected via **tick bite** or contact with an infected animal.



How humans contract Kyasanur Forest Disease. (Graphic: Tarique Aziz / CSE)

KFD — OCCURRENCE, SYMPTOMS & PREVENTION

- ▶ **Season:** transmission begins late November to June, peaking December–March.
- ▶ **Symptoms:** chills, frontal headache, body ache and high fever for 5–12 days; case fatality rate 3–5%.
- ▶ A **formalin-inactivated KFDV vaccine** exists and is used in endemic areas; ICMR is in talks with Indian Immunologicals for a new vaccine.
- ▶ Forest department distributes **DEPA oil** (N,N-diethyl phenylacetamide) as a tick repellent for exposed skin.

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The U.S.–Iran ‘Peace Deal’ Confronts Spoiler Israel

GS 2

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WEST ASIA / EDITORIAL

WHY IN NEWS

The signing of a **U.S.–Iran peace memorandum** offers a rare chance to reduce tensions in one of the world’s most volatile regions — but its transformation into a permanent agreement depends on whether **Israel** accepts a regional order in which Iran is no longer a permanent enemy.

- Reports indicate the deal **opens the Strait of Hormuz unconditionally**, halts the war on all fronts (including Lebanon), **lifts Iranian oil sanctions**, unfreezes Iranian assets, and commits Iran not to produce nuclear weapons.
- Negotiations to commit Iran to **suspend enrichment** and give up enriched material — without being seen as a repackaged 2015 JCPOA — will take place over **60 days**. It is the beginning of a settlement rather than a full one.
- The Iran war reaffirmed that **military force alone** cannot resolve conflicts without a political settlement — whether in Ukraine, Gaza, Lebanon, Sudan or Iran.

ISRAEL’S LONG OPPOSITION

- No country has done more over three decades to oppose U.S.–Iran rapprochement; Israel portrays Iran as an **existential threat**.
- The **2015 JCPOA** placed stringent curbs and intrusive inspections on Iran’s nuclear programme, yet Israel remained opposed — suggesting motives beyond the nuclear issue alone.
- A successful rapprochement would shift global attention back to the **Palestinian issue** — occupation, West Bank settlements and the Gaza crisis.

SHIFTING REGIONAL ORDER

- ▶ **Saudi Arabia’s 2023 restoration** of ties with Iran signalled growing recognition that endless rivalry is costly; Gulf states increasingly prioritise stability and development.
- ▶ Israel retains influence via **AIPAC** and deep U.S. security ties; continued strikes in Lebanon reflect the Netanyahu government’s preference for military action.
- ▶ Saudi Arabia & UAE have worked at cross-purposes in Yemen, Sudan, Somalia; the UAE has **left OPEC**, signalling the end of Saudi writ on energy policy.
- ▶ **Russia and China** are content to watch the U.S. get bogged down; the Iran war gave China a preview of risks around the Taiwan Strait.

6

IORA Examining Canada's Request to be Observer

GS 2

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GROUPINGS / INDIAN OCEAN

WHY IN NEWS

Canada's application to become an **observer / dialogue partner** in the **Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)** is being examined at the **28th meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials** in New Delhi, IORA Secretary-General **Sanjiv Ranjan** told The Hindu.

- Mr. Ranjan said member states could benefit from Canada's inclusion given its expertise in varied **maritime domains** — safety, security and connectivity.
- He welcomed the potential **Iran–U.S. peace deal** that could end over 100 days of hostilities in the Strait of Hormuz.
- Priorities for IORA in the Indian Ocean include **disaster response and mitigation**, as climate-change impacts would be “disproportionate” in the region.



IORA — an inter-governmental organisation of Indian Ocean rim states, formed in 1997.

INDIAN OCEAN RIM ASSOCIATION (IORA)

- ▶ Established in **1997** as an inter-governmental organisation of states on the rim of the Indian Ocean to foster regional **economic cooperation**.
- ▶ Apex body: **Council of Foreign Ministers**, meeting annually. Secretariat at **Ebène, Mauritius**, headed by a Secretary-General appointed for three years.
- ▶ Membership has grown to **23 member states** and **11 dialogue partners**.
- ▶ Works by **consensus**; projects are undertaken **voluntarily**.

SIX PRIORITY AREAS OF FOCUS

- Maritime security; Trade & investment facilitation; Fisheries management.
- Disaster risk reduction; Academic & scientific cooperation; Tourism & cultural exchange.
- Two cross-cutting priorities: **Blue Economy** and **Women's Economic Empowerment**.

MEMBERSHIP BY REGION

- ▶ **Asia:** India, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Maldives, Oman, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, UAE, Yemen.
- ▶ **Africa:** Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique, Somalia, South Africa, Tanzania, Comoros, Mauritius, Seychelles.
- ▶ **Oceania:** Australia · **Europe:** France.
- ▶ **Indian Ocean Dialogue (IOD):** a Track-1.5 forum of scholars, experts and policymakers on strategic issues of the region.

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

Q. "The Indian Ocean is emerging as a critical arena for shaping a rules-based maritime order in the Indo-Pacific." Discuss the challenges faced by India in maintaining a free, open and inclusive Indian Ocean region. Suggest measures to strengthen India's role as a net security provider and promoter of a rules-based order.

प्रश्न: "हिंद महासागर, हिंद-प्रशांत क्षेत्र में नियम-आधारित समुद्री व्यवस्था के निर्माण का एक महत्वपूर्ण क्षेत्र बनकर उभर रहा है।" हिंद महासागर क्षेत्र में मुक्त, खुले और समावेशी समुद्री व्यवस्था बनाए रखने में भारत के सामने आने वाली चुनौतियों पर चर्चा कीजिए।

15 Marks · 250 Words

7 Exercise Pitch Black — IAF to Take Part

PRELIMS

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DEFENCE EXERCISES

WHY IN NEWS

The **Indian Air Force (IAF)** will participate in **Exercise Pitch Black 2026**, the Royal Australian Air Force's (RAAF) premier multinational air-combat exercise, to be held in Australia's **Northern Territory** from **20 July to August**.



Air-to-air refuelling tankers — Pitch Black is the RAAF's largest international exercise.

- Australian High Commissioner to India **Philip Green OAM** announced India's participation on X, citing the exercise as an opportunity to strengthen **regional interoperability across the Indo-Pacific**.
- Per the Australian Defence Ministry, the exercise brings together **over 100 aircraft** and personnel from **19 allied and partner nations**.
- It provides a platform to enhance **operational interoperability**, strengthen military cooperation and refine air-combat tactics — the RAAF's largest international exercise.

PRELIMS POINTERS — KEY EXERCISES WITH AUSTRALIA

- ▶ **Pitch Black:** Multinational air-combat exercise hosted by Australia (RAAF).
- ▶ **AUSTRAHIND:** India–Australia bilateral army exercise.
- ▶ **AUSINDEX:** India–Australia bilateral naval exercise.
- ▶ **Malabar:** Quad navies (India, USA, Japan, Australia).

PRELIMS BOOSTER — 10 MCQS

Based on Today's Current Affairs · 17 June 2026

Q1. Which section of the Information Technology Act, 2000 empowers the Centre to block public access to information on a computer resource?

- (a) Section 66A (b) Section 69A
(c) Section 79 (d) Section 43A

Q2. Consider the following grounds under the IT Act for issuing blocking directions:

1. Sovereignty and integrity of India 2. Friendly relations with foreign states 3. Public order. Which are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

Q3. With reference to the G7, consider the statements:

1. It has a permanent secretariat. 2. The presidency rotates annually. Which is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q4. The word recently removed from the exemption list under the Drugs Rules, 1945 (requiring a prescription) is:

- (a) Lozenges (b) Tablets
(c) Syrups (d) Pills

Q5. Diethylene Glycol (DEG), linked to cough-syrup deaths, is primarily used as a/an:

- (a) Food preservative (b) Industrial solvent / antifreeze
(c) Vaccine adjuvant (d) Artificial sweetener (approved)

Q6. With reference to Nipah virus, consider the statements:

1. Its natural reservoir is fruit bats. 2. It belongs to the Paramyxoviridae family. 3. An approved human vaccine exists. Which are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

Q7. Kyasanur Forest Disease (KFD) is transmitted mainly through:

- (a) Mosquito bite (b) Hard ticks
(c) Contaminated water (d) Airborne droplets

Q8. As reported, the U.S.–Iran peace memorandum is said to include all EXCEPT:

- (a) Opening of the Strait of Hormuz (b) Lifting of Iranian oil sanctions
(c) Permanent ceding of Iranian territory (d) Unfreezing of Iranian assets

Q9. With reference to IORA, consider the statements:

1. It was established in 1997. 2. Its secretariat is in Mauritius. 3. It works on the principle of consensus. Which are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

Q10. Exercise ‘Pitch Black’ is a multinational air-combat exercise hosted by:

- (a) United States (b) Australia
(c) France (d) Japan

ANSWER KEY & EXPLANATIONS

- 1 (b)** Section 69A allows blocking of public access to information on any computer resource.
2 (d) All three are valid grounds, along with defence/security of the State and investigation of offences.
3 (b) The G7 has no charter or permanent secretariat; the presidency rotates annually.
4 (c) ‘Syrups’ was removed from the exemption list; lozenges, pills and tablets remain OTC.
5 (b) DEG is an industrial chemical used in brake fluids/antifreeze, misused as a cheap solvent.
6 (a) Reservoir is fruit bats and it belongs to Paramyxoviridae; there is no approved human vaccine.
7 (b) KFD spreads chiefly via hard ticks (*Haemaphysalis spinigera*) or contact with infected animals.
8 (c) Reports mention Hormuz opening, sanctions lifting and asset unfreezing — not ceding of territory.
9 (d) IORA (1997), secretariat in Ebène, Mauritius, working by consensus — all correct.
10 (b) Pitch Black is the RAAF’s premier multinational air-combat exercise in Australia.

THOUGHT OF THE DAY

“Mutual trust is the most important strategic asset today.”