



## **P.L.RAJ IAS & IPS ACADEMY**

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### **June 18, 2026 – Dinamani Newspaper – Tit bits**

#### **1. PM Modi Urges Trump to Ensure Safety of Indian Seafarers**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged U.S. President Donald Trump to ensure the safety of Indian seafarers.

(i) The Prime Minister raised this issue during bilateral talks with Trump on the sidelines of the G7 Summit in Évian-les-Bains.

(ii) This was the first in-person meeting and extensive discussion between the two leaders in the last one and a half years.

(iii) Modi raised the issue after three Indian sailors were reportedly killed in a recent U.S. military strike on a cargo vessel in the Arabian Sea region near Oman.

(iv) He also stressed that provisions ensuring the safety of seafarers should be included in the peace agreement scheduled to be signed between Iran and the United States on June 19.

#### **2. Tamil Nadu to Fast-Track ₹38,000-Crore Shipbuilding Project**

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Joseph Vijay stated that the State Government will take all necessary steps to expedite the implementation of the ₹38,000-crore advanced shipbuilding project planned in Thoothukudi.

#### **3. Russia-ASEAN Summit Begins to Strengthen Trade and Strategic Ties**

Russian President Vladimir Putin inaugurated a two-day summit aimed at strengthening trade and other relations between Russia and ASEAN nations.

(i) The summit is being held in Kazan to mark the 35th anniversary of dialogue relations between Russia and ASEAN.

(ii) Putin and Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., whose country currently chairs ASEAN, are jointly presiding over the summit.

(iii) Discussions will focus on expanding Russia's strategic relations with ASEAN member states—Philippines, Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Vietnam.

(iv) Putin is also expected to hold separate bilateral meetings with ASEAN leaders during the summit.

(v) While some ASEAN members, such as the Philippines, maintain close relations with the United States, others have strong trade and defense ties with China and Russia.

(vi) Following the rise in global fuel prices due to the Iran conflict, several ASEAN countries, including Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam, imported or expressed interest in purchasing Russian crude oil.

#### **4. U.S. Renames Indo-Pacific Command as Pacific Command**

The United States has removed "Indo" from the name of its Indo-Pacific military command, reverting it to the Pacific Command.

- (i) The Indo-Pacific region refers to the vast strategic area encompassing both the Indian and Pacific Oceans.
- (ii) The command was renamed the Indo-Pacific Command in 2018 during Trump's first term, recognizing the growing linkage between the Indian and Pacific Oceans.
- (iii) According to the U.S. Department of Defense, the original command, established in 1947 by Harry S. Truman, played a major role in shaping post-World War II regional security, including operations during the Korean and Vietnam Wars and numerous humanitarian missions.
- (iv) Officials clarified that the name change does not alter the command's operational jurisdiction.
- (v) The command will continue to monitor the maritime region stretching from the U.S. West Coast to India's western frontier and will maintain efforts to ensure free and open sea lanes with partner nations.

#### **5. Embraer and Adani Group to Set Up Aircraft Assembly Plant in India**

Brazilian aircraft manufacturer Embraer and the Adani Group have reportedly decided to establish a final assembly plant for regional transport aircraft in Dholera, Gujarat.

- (i) The two companies signed an MoU in January to manufacture regional transport aircraft in India under the Government's UDAN and Atmanirbhar Bharat initiatives.
- (ii) The facility will be located in the Dholera Special Investment Region near Ahmedabad.
- (iii) The plant is expected to gradually increase indigenous technological content, leading to complete aircraft manufacturing within India.
- (iv) Around 50 Embraer aircraft are currently in operation in India, including those used by the Indian Air Force, Government agencies, and commercial airlines such as Star Air.

#### **6. SpaceX to Acquire AI Firm Cursor for \$60 Billion**

SpaceX has reportedly agreed to acquire the popular AI technology company Cursor, co-founded by entrepreneurs of Indian origin, for approximately \$60 billion.

- (i) As part of the deal, X67, a wholly owned subsidiary of SpaceX, will be merged with Cursor.
- (ii) Following the merger, Cursor will be valued at \$60 billion and will operate as a wholly owned subsidiary of SpaceX.

#### **7. India-UK Free Trade Agreement to Take Effect on July 15**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that the India-United Kingdom Free Trade Agreement (FTA) will come into force on July 15.

- (i) In a post on social media, Modi described the agreement as a historic milestone in India-UK relations.
- (ii) He said the agreement would significantly boost bilateral trade and investment while creating opportunities for farmers, workers, MSMEs, startups, and innovators.
- (iii) Modi added that the agreement would contribute meaningfully toward achieving the vision of a developed India by 2047 and expressed satisfaction alongside UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer during the G7 Summit in France.

**8. Modi Proposes Global Connectivity Framework at G7**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi proposed creating a global framework that combines the strengths of G7 nations, India, and developing countries to promote trade and connectivity.

(i) During President Joe Biden's tenure, the India–Middle East–Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) was announced to improve trade and connectivity among India, Saudi Arabia, Israel, and Europe.

(ii) However, the project has remained stalled due to ongoing conflicts in West Asia.

(iii) Speaking at a G7-related event in Évian, Modi suggested expanding such initiatives to include Africa, Latin America, and Pacific Island nations.

(iv) He also proposed considering an international coalition to accelerate global trade and connectivity projects.

**9. India–EU Free Trade Agreement Expected by Year-End**

Following a meeting with Prime Minister Modi in France, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen announced that the India–European Union Free Trade Agreement is expected to be signed by the end of the year.

(i) Modi attended the three-day annual G7 Summit in Évian, where he held bilateral discussions with leaders of several countries and international organizations.

(ii) Under the agreement, tariffs on 99% of India's exports to the EU are expected to be reduced or eliminated, while 97% of EU exports to India will receive tariff concessions.

**10. Tamil Nadu and IN-SPACe Sign Agreement for Space Vehicle Technology Facility**

The Tamil Nadu Government and Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Center have signed an agreement to establish a Common Technology Facility Centre for space vehicles at Allikulam in Thoothukudi district.

(i) The agreement, signed during a conference held in Ahmedabad on June 11, was presented by Industries Minister Keerthana to Chief Minister Joseph Vijay.

(ii) It is expected to be a major milestone in creating a world-class ecosystem for space manufacturing in Tamil Nadu.

(iii) Under the agreement, IN-SPACe will provide equipment worth ₹100 crore, while the State Government will provide land, buildings, and supporting infrastructure.

(iv) The facility will offer advanced testing and certification services, including vibration, shock, thermal vacuum, electromagnetic interference, synchronization, pressure and flow testing, launch vehicle assembly, component integration, and hydroclave operations.

(v) These high-investment facilities will help industries reduce both the cost and time required to develop, test, and certify space systems and components.

(vi) The centre will be established near the upcoming rocket launch site at Kulasekarapattinam.

(vii) It is expected to position Tamil Nadu as one of India's leading hubs for space manufacturing and technological development, while contributing significantly to India's ambition of becoming a global

space manufacturing center.

II. Integration of AI with India's digital infrastructure is transforming the nation's financial landscape.

(i) India's Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)

- Over the last decade, India has established a world-leading Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI), which includes systems like Aadhaar, UPI, Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT), GSTN, and Account Aggregator.
- A recent significant addition is the Unified Lending Interface (ULI), designed to streamline credit access.
- The Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) system has successfully transferred over ₹51 lakh crore to citizens, saving more than ₹4.3 lakh crore by eliminating leakages and accurately identifying beneficiaries.

(ii) The Transformative Role of Artificial Intelligence

- India is entering a new phase where AI is being integrated into the existing DPI to create "intelligent" and "context-aware" financial systems.
- Unlike many developed nations that rely on private platforms, India's digital financial architecture is unique because it is built upon publicly accessible infrastructure that fosters large-scale innovation.

(iii) Revolutionizing Payments and Financial Inclusion

- UPI has created a global revolution in real-time payments, with its usage extending from large malls to small street vendors.
- In 2025, UPI accounted for 49% of all global real-time digital transactions.
- The Reserve Bank of India's Financial Inclusion Index has risen significantly from 53.9 in March 2021 to 67.0 in March 2025, reflecting improved access and quality of financial services.

(iv) Promoting Accessibility through Language

- AI-powered voice-based interfaces and multilingual systems are making digital finance accessible to senior citizens, street vendors, and those who are not tech-savvy.
- By using AI to provide services in regional languages, the digital divide is being bridged, allowing more people to manage their finances independently.

(v) Revolutionizing the Credit Sector

- Historically, formal credit was only available to those with documented credit histories and collateral.
- AI and the ULI now allow lenders to analyze vast amounts of alternative data, enabling small businesses, farmers, and first-time entrepreneurs to access loans more easily.
- AI systems improve the efficiency and speed of loan processing while enabling more accurate risk assessments for financial institutions.

(vi) Enhancing Security and Addressing Challenges

- AI plays a critical role in fraud detection by analyzing transaction patterns in real-time to identify suspicious activities within seconds.
- However, cybercriminals also use AI for sophisticated attacks, including deepfake voices and images for phishing.
- To counter these threats, India must continue to invest in advanced cybersecurity, digital literacy,

and resilient infrastructure.

(vii) Conclusion: Empowerment and Responsibility

- The ultimate success of AI in the financial sector depends on public trust and the creation of safe, inclusive systems.
- The goal is to move beyond just digitizing finance to creating a system that empowers every Indian through human-centric governance and continuous innovation.