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1. International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking

On the occasion of the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, Chief Minister Joseph Vijay flagged off an awareness run in Chennai on Friday (June 26) and participated in the run along with members of the public.

2. China Reaffirms Support for Bangladesh's Sovereignty

Bangladesh's sovereignty will be fully supported by China, and any foreign interference in Bangladesh's internal affairs will be firmly opposed, Chinese President Xi Jinping said.

- (i) Xi Jinping made these remarks during his meeting in Beijing with Bangladesh Prime Minister Tarique Rahman, who is on his first official visit to China since assuming office in February.
- (ii) Tarique Rahman also reaffirmed Bangladesh's strong support for the "One China" policy and recognized Taiwan as an integral part of China.
- (iii) During the meeting, both countries discussed expanding cooperation under China's flagship Belt and Road Initiative. Xi Jinping also proposed the creation of a new economic corridor linking Bangladesh, Myanmar, and China.
- (iv) As a major outcome of the visit, the two countries agreed to cooperate on the management and restoration of the Teesta River, one of Bangladesh's most important water resources. In addition, 13 Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) were signed in areas including trade, investment, and education.

3. India Tops World Junior Shooting Championship

At the World Junior Shooting Championship held in Germany, India secured the top position in the medal tally with 24 medals, comprising 7 gold, 8 silver, and 9 bronze medals.

4. Centre Plans to Strengthen NDPS Act

Union Home Minister Amit Shah stated that the Central Government plans to strengthen the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act by introducing amendments aimed at taking stricter action against drug traffickers and distributors and closing legal loopholes exploited by drug cartels. He

also urged states to share their views on the proposed amendments.

Addressing the 10th high-level meeting of the Narcotics Coordination Centre (NCORD) in New Delhi, Amit Shah said:

- (i) Security agencies are undertaking intensive measures to curb drug abuse and prevent drug trafficking across the country.
- (ii) Between 2004 and 2014, around 26 lakh kilograms of synthetic drugs were seized in India. However, between 2014 and 2026, seizures rose to 1.18 crore kilograms. The value of drugs seized between 2004 and 2014 was approximately ₹40,000 crore, whereas between 2014 and 2026, the value reached ₹1.84 lakh crore, indicating significant improvement in anti-drug enforcement.
- (iii) In this context, the Union Finance Ministry is reviewing the NDPS Act to strengthen legal provisions against drug traffickers and distributors.
- (iv) Amit Shah also introduced a three-pronged anti-drug strategy: "Detect, Disrupt, and Destroy", and called for a tougher approach against drug syndicates.
- (v) Three-Year Vision Plan (2026–2029):
A strategic roadmap for the next three years (2026–2029) was unveiled, focusing on:
 - Strengthening the capabilities of security agencies to combat synthetic drugs,
 - Preventing drug trafficking through the dark web,
 - Effectively addressing cross-border smuggling and other emerging narcotics-related threats.

5. India Launches Anti-Dumping Probe into Steel Imports

The Union Ministry of Commerce announced that it will initiate an anti-dumping investigation into low-priced steel imports from China, Russia, and Japan.

- (i) The investigation follows complaints filed by companies including JSW Steel, JSW Vijayanagar Metalics, and Jindal Steel.
- (ii) The complainants alleged that imports of hot-rolled steel products at artificially low prices are severely affecting domestic manufacturers.
- (iii) Accordingly, the Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR) will investigate import data from 2022 to 2025. According to the DGTR:
 - Preliminary findings indicate that steel products from China, Russia, and Japan have been imported into India at prices significantly below normal market value.
 - Evidence suggests that exporters from these countries may have engaged in dumping practices.
 - Therefore, a formal anti-dumping investigation has been initiated based on industry complaints and preliminary evidence.

In a separate notification, the DGTR stated that it is also investigating allegations of excessive imports of artificial kidney devices (dialysers) from China and Malaysia.

Anti-dumping investigations are conducted to determine whether large-scale low-priced imports are causing injury to domestic industries and to ensure fair trade practices.

6. Indigenous 'Netra' AEW&C System Receives Final Operational Clearance

India's indigenously developed 'Netra' Airborne Early Warning and Control (AEW&C) System has received the Final Operational Clearance (FOC) certification from the Indian Air Force.

- (i) At an event held in Bengaluru, Indian Air Force Chief Air Marshal Avdhesh Kumar Bharti unveiled the final operational clearance certificate for the system designed and developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- (ii) The project was approved in 2004, and after 22 years, the Indian Air Force has granted final operational clearance.
- (iii) The newly certified AEW&C system has been installed on six aircraft of the Indian Air Force.

7. India Among 35 Nations Signing AI Cooperation Declaration

India and 34 other countries signed a joint declaration on creating opportunities in Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies.

- (i) The agreement was reached at the second Pax Silica Summit held in Washington, D.C.. Representing India were S. Krishnan, Secretary of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, and Nagaraj Naidu from the Ministry of External Affairs and Indian industry.
- (ii) Earlier, countries including Argentina, Germany, Netherlands, Chile, Costa Rica, Greece, Kazakhstan, Panama, the European Union, and Italy had joined the initiative.
- (iii) The United States launched the Pax Silica Initiative in December last year to strengthen AI access, semiconductors, energy, and critical minerals supply chains. India joined the initiative during the AI Summit held in India in February. The initiative now includes 35 members, including India, Japan, Australia, United Kingdom, South Korea, Israel, and the United Arab Emirates.

8. Japanese Prime Minister to Visit India

Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi will visit India next week on a three-day official trip. Important discussions aimed at strengthening bilateral relations are expected during the visit.

According to the Ministry of External Affairs:

- (i) Accepting the invitation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Japanese Prime Minister will

participate in the 16th India-Japan Annual Summit, to be held in New Delhi from July 1 to July 3. The summit will focus on enhancing cooperation in trade, economy, defence, and investment, besides discussing regional and international issues of mutual interest.

- (ii) This will be Sanae Takaichi's first official visit to India as Prime Minister.
- (iii) Earlier, Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Japan in August 2025 and participated in the India-Japan Annual Summit held in Tokyo.

9. Centre Decriminalizes Minor Violations Under Drug and Food Safety Laws

The Central Government has removed criminal penalties for several minor and technical violations under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 and the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006.

- (i) However, stringent penalties for violations that pose risks to public health will continue.
- (ii) This move has been undertaken by the Union Health Ministry under the Jan Vishwas Act reforms, which seek to improve ease of doing business by replacing imprisonment for minor offences with monetary penalties.

According to the Health Ministry:

- Criminal proceedings for certain technical and procedural violations in the food, drug, and cosmetics sectors have been replaced with administrative adjudication mechanisms.
- Section 29 of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, which imposed fines of up to ₹1 lakh for using a Government analyst's report in advertisements relating to medicines or cosmetics, has been repealed.
- Minor violations involving cosmetics manufacturing or sales, small quality defects, and labeling or marking deficiencies will now be resolved through administrative processes.
- Violations relating to maintenance of sales records, submission of information, and false complaints against food safety officers have also been shifted from criminal prosecution to administrative resolution.
- At the same time, stringent punishments for manufacturing and selling adulterated cosmetic products that directly endanger consumers will remain in force.
- The imprisonment term for offences involving interference with goods seized under food and drug laws has been reduced from six months to three months.

10. Sweden's new legal ban on marriages between close relatives and the severe health consequences of this practice in India.

(i) Sweden's Landmark Legal Ban

- Sweden has officially banned marriages between close blood relatives to prevent genetic

disorders.

- The Swedish Parliament voted unanimously to pass this law.
- The new law comes into force on July 1, 2026.
- After the effective date, the Swedish Government will refuse to recognize such marriages performed in foreign countries (including India) when individuals apply for Swedish visas or citizenship.
- Marriages legally performed within Sweden before July 1, 2026, will continue to be recognized as valid.

(ii) The Indian Context and Traditions

- In India, marrying close relatives (such as first cousins) has been a traditional practice for generations.
- Families often encourage these marriages to prevent property from leaving the family or to stop children from choosing partners outside of the parents' preference.
- While the practice has declined in the modern digital age, it remains highly prevalent in South Indian states, with Tamil Nadu ranking first in such marriages, followed by Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.

(iii) Proven Medical and Genetic Risks

- A 2013 study published in the British medical journal The Lancet found that children of close relatives have double the risk of physical birth defects.
- Central Health Ministry data (1990–2005) shows that consanguineous marriages are a primary cause of hearing loss in children. In Karnataka, 30% of children with hearing defects were born to related parents, while the figure is 20% in both Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh.
- Annually, an estimated 6 to 8 lakh children in India are born with hearing impairments specifically due to marriages between close relatives.
- Several life-altering conditions are linked to this practice, including:
 - Cystic Fibrosis: Affecting lungs and digestion.
 - Thalassaemia: A severe blood disorder.
 - Tay-Sachs Disease: A fatal genetic disorder affecting the brain and nerves.
 - Physical and Mental Hurdles: Muscle weakness, loss of walking and speaking abilities, tremors, and various mental health issues.

(iv) Socio-Economic Factors

- Wealthy families use these marriages to keep assets within the family circle.
- Conversely, some families choose these marriages to reduce the high costs associated with typical Indian weddings.

- Caste-based matrimonial websites are noted as a modern tool that continues to facilitate these close-relative unions.

(v) Recommendations for Reform

- Continuing this practice will prevent India from developing a healthy and robust human resource pool.
- There is an urgent need for the Central and State Governments to conduct massive awareness programs in Primary Health Centers, medical colleges, schools, and on social media.
- The public must be counseled on the long-term biological risks to protect future generations from preventable disabilities.

11. Analysis of the complex and unavoidable relationship between India and China.

(i) The Unchangeable Reality of Geography

- Former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's diplomatic philosophy - while you can distance yourself from an enemy or change a friend, you cannot change your neighbors because geography is permanent.
- This reality applies to both Pakistan and China; as two ancient civilizations, India and China share centuries of historical and cultural connections that cannot be ignored.

(ii) Historical Support and Modern Fractures

- Relations between the two nations were completely shattered following the 1962 Chinese aggression.
- It was India's support and insistence that paved the way for Communist China to gain a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, a fact that modern China has chosen to "forget".
- Ties deteriorated sharply again after the Galwan Valley clash on June 5, 2020, which led to India banning various Chinese apps and halting major investments.

(iii) The Persistent Trust Deficit

- A meeting between PM Modi and President Xi Jinping at the August 2024 BRICS summit (in Johannesburg) led to a temporary easing of border tensions and a reduction in hostile rhetoric from China.
- Despite recent high-level meetings between National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and Foreign Minister Wang Yi, a deep "trust deficit" remains the primary obstacle to normalization.
- China is currently pressuring India to resume full bilateral talks and trade while setting aside the border dispute, a stance that India finds difficult to accept.

(iv) Economic Interdependence and Global Pressure

- China is facing increasing economic pressure as both the United States and the European Union have moved to reduce their imports from China.

- Because of this, China is desperate for new markets to absorb its increased production, making a strengthened trade relationship with India a priority for Beijing.
- India remains wary of China's "friendship" due to Beijing's close military ties with Pakistan and its efforts to expand dominance in the Indian Ocean and the Bay of Bengal.

(v) The Necessity of Engagement

- Despite the tensions, India essentially needs China for critical resources, including minerals, fertilizers, and "Rare Earth Metals".
- For India to secure these essential supply chains, it is argued that the "mutual trust deficit" must eventually be resolved.

(vi) Conclusion: A Sun Tzu Strategy

- By referencing the ancient Chinese military strategist Sun Tzu from his work *The Art of War*: "He who knows when to fight and when not to fight will be victorious". The philosophy of knowing when to engage and when to resist is the exact strategy India must now employ to manage its relationship with China.

12. Psychological and social evolution of the "Work From Home" (WFH) culture, originally sparked by the pandemic and recently encouraged by the Government for economic reasons.

(i) The Prime Minister's Appeal

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently appealed to the nation to adopt work-from-home practices, not as a pandemic necessity, but as a strategic frugal measure to navigate the current national and international economic crises.
- While WFH was a compulsory lockdown measure during the COVID-19 era, it is now being viewed as a tool for economic resilience.

(ii) The Initial "Boon" Period

- Initially, employees, especially in the IT sector, welcomed the shift with great enthusiasm.
- WFH eliminated travel expenses and the need for expensive office attire.
- It allowed employees to enjoy hot, home-cooked meals and actively participate in their children's online education and daily upbringing.
- The "pub culture" and social anxieties associated with constant office presence temporarily subsided.

(iii) The Transition to a "Cage"

- The most significant drawback cited is the total erasure of the line between personal life and professional responsibilities.
- Employees found themselves in meetings at all hours, feeling like they were "riding two horses at once" and becoming exhausted.

- Employees carrying their laptops between the kitchen and dining table, much like a cat carrying its kitten, unable to escape the digital tether.
- For many, the initial freedom turned into a feeling of being in a "birdcage" leading to a longing to return to the physical office.

(iv) Challenges for Women and Families

- Female employees faced the hardest struggle, balancing professional meetings with household chores and children's interruptions.
- Household noises—such as pressure cookers, barking dogs, and family conversations—often intruded upon professional space, causing embarrassment and stress.
- Even with elders present, managing active children while trying to maintain a professional demeanor proved to be a major hurdle.

(v) Health and Biological Disruptions

- Working from India for international clients often requires adhering to foreign time zones, forcing employees to stay awake through the night.
- Working at night and trying to sleep during the day conflicts with human biology, leading to long-term health risks due to irregular sleep and eating patterns.

(vi) The Value of the Office Social Environment

- Humans are social beings who cannot thrive in isolation.
- The physical office provides vital social outlets: tea breaks, shared lunches, and celebrating milestones like birthdays, which foster deep friendships and mutual understanding.
- A well-maintained, modern office environment serves as a "second home" that motivates employees and provides a sense of collective growth and learning.

(vii) Conclusion

- While WFH may offer temporary economic benefits, the long-term cost is the loss of mental peace and social connection.
- The traditional office structure provides a necessary balance for a healthy human life.