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School of Research Based Learning & Competition

Current Affairs - 24 June 2026

PRADHAN MANTRI RASHTRIYA BAL PURASKAR



- It is nation's **highest civilian honour for children**.
- It is **presented annually** by the **President of India** on **Veer Bal Diwas**.
 - **Veer Bal Diwas** is **observed annually on December 26** in memory of Sahibzada Zorawar Singh and Sahibzada Fateh Singh.
- It recognises exceptional achievements in **six distinct categories namely**: Bravery, Social Service, Environment, Sports, Art and Culture, Science and Technology
- **Eligibility for Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar**:
 - **Citizenship**: A child should be an Indian Citizen.
 - **Age**: A child **above the age of 5 years** and **not exceeding 18 years** (as of 31st July of respective year).
 - The act/incident/achievement should have been **within 2 years of the last date of receipt** of application/nomination for the year of consideration.
 - The **number of awards will be 25**, however, any relaxation to this maximum number may be permitted at the discretion of the National Selection Committee.
- **Nomination**:
 - A child **may be nominated in more than one category**, although the committee reserves the right to consider only one application.
 - Any **individual or institution can nominate a child**. Children **may also apply through self-nomination**.
 - Recommendations are also invited from certain government entities and offices.
- Each awardee is given a medal, a cash prize of **1 Lakh** and **certificate**.
- **Selection Committee**: The **awardees are selected by a committee** constituted by the **Union Minister for Women and Child Development** and headed by the Secretary of the Ministry.

CROSS & CLIMB ROHTAK

School of Research Based Learning & Competition

Current Affairs - 24 June 2026

INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANISATION



- It is a **specialized agency of the United Nations** which is responsible for measures to improve the safety and security of international shipping and to prevent pollution from ships.
- **Background:** It was established as the **Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization (IMCO)** in 1948, became a specialized agency of the United Nations in 1959 and was renamed **International Maritime Organization** in 1982.
- It is the **global standard-setting authority** for the **safety, security** and **environmental performance of international shipping**.
- **Mandate:** Its main role is to create a regulatory framework for the shipping industry that is fair and effective, universally adopted and universally implemented.
- **Governance of the organisation:**
 - **Assembly:** It is the **highest Governing Body of the IMO**. It consists of all Member States, and it **meets once every two years** in regular sessions. The Assembly is responsible for approving the work program, voting the budget and electing the Council.
 - **Council:** It is the **Executive Organ** of the IMO and consists of **40 elected members**, and is responsible, under the Assembly, for supervising the work of the Organization.
 - **Committees:** The **five policy-making committees** are responsible for the development, review, updating, and approval of the organization's guidelines and regulations.
- **Funding:** Funding for the organization comes from **contributions by member states**, as well as **voluntary donations** and **commercial activities**.
- **Members:** It currently has **176 Member States**. (India has been a member since 1959)
- **Headquarters:** London.

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School of Research Based Learning & Competition

Current Affairs - 24 June 2026

FCRA RULES 2025 - TIGHTER OVERSIGHT OF FOREIGN-FUNDED NGOS

- The Union Home Ministry has **amended** the Rules under the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA), **2010**, introducing stricter compliance requirements for NGOs receiving foreign funds.
- The amendments aim to make registrations purpose-specific, enhance transparency, tighten monitoring of foreign contributions, and strengthen accountability mechanisms.

FCRA 2010:

- It regulates acceptance and utilisation of foreign contributions.
- Prevent foreign funding from adversely affecting sovereignty, integrity, security, public interest, electoral politics and communal harmony.
- Ensure transparency and accountability in foreign-funded activities.
- **Constitutional linkages:**
 - **Article 19(1)(c):** Freedom to form associations.
 - Reasonable restrictions under **Article 19(4)** in the interests of sovereignty, integrity and public order.

Key Changes in FCRA Rules:

- **Purpose-specific registration:**
 - **Earlier**, NGOs seeking foreign funding only had to register under one of five broad categories: Social, Economic, Educational, Cultural, and Religious.
 - The amended rules now prescribe **specific activity** lists under each category. NGOs must select activities only from the approved schedule while applying for registration or prior permission.
- **Geographical restrictions:**
 - Registration certificates will now explicitly mention approved purpose(s), and States/Union Territories of operation.
 - Existing FCRA-registered organisations must, **within one year**, indicate the purposes and geographical areas they intend to retain.

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School of Research Based Learning & Competition

Current Affairs - 24 June 2026

Enhanced Disclosure Requirements:

- NGOs must now provide additional information, including:
 - Website details.
 - Social media accounts.
 - Detailed activity reports.
 - Publications issued by the organisation or its key functionaries.
 - Information regarding ultimate donors when funds are routed through donor-advised funds or intermediary channels.
- The government argues that these changes will improve uniformity and prevent duplication in FCRA filings.

Significance of the Amendments:

- **Potential benefits:**
 - Greater transparency and accountability in foreign-funded activities.
 - Improved monitoring of fund utilisation.
 - Better alignment between approved objectives and actual activities.
 - Enhanced safeguards against misuse, diversion, or opaque funding channels.
 - Stronger oversight of activities affecting national security and public order.
- **Concerns raised:**
 - Increased compliance burden for NGOs.
 - Higher registration and operational costs due to category- and geography-specific approvals.
 - Concerns over shrinking operational space for civil society organisations dependent on foreign funding.

Conclusion:

- The latest FCRA amendments represent a significant shift from broad-based regulation to activity-specific, geography-specific and compliance-intensive oversight of foreign-funded NGOs.

CROSS & CLIMB ROHTAK

School of Research Based Learning & Competition

Current Affairs - 24 June 2026

FIBRE-OPTIC DRONES AND THE FUTURE OF ASYMMETRIC WARFARE

- **Asymmetric warfare** refers to a conflict in which opposing sides possess significantly different military capabilities, resources, or technologies.
- Common features of asymmetric warfare include:
 - Use of guerrilla tactics and irregular forces.
 - Reliance on low-cost technologies.
 - Exploitation of vulnerabilities in conventional military systems.
 - Emphasis on mobility, surprise, and adaptability.

Drone Warfare and Its Evolution

- The increasing availability of commercial drone technology has transformed modern battlefields. Initially, drones were primarily used for:
 - Surveillance and reconnaissance
 - Target acquisition
 - Intelligence gathering
- Over time, they evolved into offensive platforms capable of carrying explosives, conducting precision strikes, and functioning as loitering munitions.
- The Russia-Ukraine conflict demonstrated how inexpensive drones could challenge tanks, artillery systems, and even advanced air defence networks. This has accelerated innovation in drone technology worldwide.

About Fibre-Optic Drones

- Fibre-optic drones are unmanned aerial vehicles connected directly to their operators through a **fibre-optic cable** rather than relying on radio-frequency (RF) communication or satellite navigation systems.
- The drone carries a spool containing a thin fibre-optic cable that unwinds during flight. Through this cable, data and control signals are exchanged between the drone and its operator in real time.
- Key characteristics include:

CROSS & CLIMB ROHTAK

School of Research Based Learning & Competition

Current Affairs - 24 June 2026

- High-speed data transmission
- Real-time video and operational feedback
- Reduced dependence on GPS and radio communications
- Ability to operate over distances reportedly ranging from **5 km to 30 km**
- Since communication occurs through a physical cable, these drones emit virtually no radio signals, making them significantly harder to detect.

Limitations of Fibre-Optic Drones

- Strong winds and adverse weather conditions
- Heavy rainfall
- Physical obstacles such as trees, buildings, and terrain features
- Breakage of the fibre-optic cable during flight
- A snapped cable can immediately disrupt communication and render the drone ineffective

Implications for India

- India's conflict with Pakistan in the aftermath of the **Pahalgam terror attack** highlighted the increasing role of drone swarms in regional security challenges.
- The emergence of fibre-optic drones presents new operational concerns because traditional electronic jamming may prove ineffective against them.
- Experts suggest that India should focus on:
 - Developing advanced radar and sensor systems
 - Strengthening hard-kill counter-drone capabilities
 - Integrating AI-enabled detection systems
 - Enhancing mobile air defence networks
 - Utilising platforms such as the **Light Combat Helicopter (LCH)** and **Light Combat Aircraft (LCA)** for counter-drone operations
- As drone technology continues to evolve, adapting defence strategies will become increasingly important for maintaining battlefield superiority.

CROSS & CLIMB ROHTAK

School of Research Based Learning & Competition

Current Affairs - 24 June 2026

KEY FACTS ABOUT VITAMIN B3



- Vitamin B3, or **Niacin**, is a **water-soluble vitamin**.
 - Water-soluble vitamins **dissolve in water**. Leftover amounts of the vitamin leave the body through the urine.
 - The **body keeps a small reserve** of these vitamins, **but they have to be taken on a regular basis** to maintain the reserve.
- It is **naturally present in many foods**, **added to some food products**, and available as a **dietary supplement**.
- **Functions:**
 - Niacin works in the body as a **coenzyme**, with other **enzymes dependent on it** for various reactions.
 - Niacin **helps to convert nutrients into energy**, **create cholesterol and fats**, **create and repair DNA**, and exert antioxidant effects.
 - Due to Niacin's **positive effects on cholesterol levels**, it may help prevent heart disease.
 - Additionally, it may **reduce oxidative stress and inflammation**, which are associated with atherosclerosis, or the hardening of the arteries.
- **Food Sources:** It is found in **many foods**, **both from animals and plants**.
 - Red meat: beef, beef liver, pork
 - Poultry
 - Fish
 - Brown rice
 - Fortified cereals and breads
 - Nuts, seeds
 - Legumes
 - Bananas

CROSS & CLIMB ROHTAK

School of Research Based Learning & Competition

Current Affairs - 24 June 2026

- **Deficiency:**
 - A severe **niacin** deficiency leads to **pellagra**, a condition that causes a **dark**, sometimes **scaly rash** to develop on skin areas exposed to **sunlight**; bright redness of the tongue; and constipation/diarrhea.
 - **Other signs** of severe niacin deficiency include:
 - **Depression**
 - **Headache**
 - **Fatigue**
 - **Memory loss**

RANTHAMBHORE TIGER RESERVE



- It is located in the Sawai Madhopur district of southeastern **Rajasthan**.
- It derives its name from the **Ranthambore Fort (a World Heritage Site)** situated within its precincts.
- It is located at the **junction** (great boundary fault) of the **Aravalis and Vindhyan ranges**.
- The area was once a **royal hunting ground** for the **Maharajas of Jaipur**.
- It is **one of the largest tiger reserves** in northern India.
- It boasts a spectacular landscape filled with **boulder-strewn highland plateaus**, **lakes**, and **rivers** dotted with **old forts and abandoned mosques**.
- **Rivers:** It is **bounded** to the north by the **Banas River** and to the south by the **Chambal River**.
- There are **several lakes** in the park known as **Padam Talab**, **Raj Bagh Talab**, and **Malik Talab**.
- **Vegetation:** It is **dry deciduous forests** and **open grassy meadow**.

CROSS & CLIMB ROHTAK

School of Research Based Learning & Competition

Current Affairs - 24 June 2026

- **Flora:** Pure sands of **Dhok tree** (*Anogeissus pendula*) interspersed with grasslands at the plateaus, and other species like *Acacia*, *Capparis*, *Zizyphus*, *Prosopis*, etc are found here.
- **Fauna:**
 - It consists of **leopard, caracal, jungle cat, sambar**, chital, chinkara, and wild boar.
 - **Peacocks, partridges, green pigeons**, parakeets, sparrows, prinias, warblers, etc. are examples of avifauna.

INDIAN NATIONAL CENTRE FOR OCEAN INFORMATION SERVICES



Indian National
Centre for Ocean
Information
Services

- It was established as an autonomous body in 1999 under the **Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES)** and is a unit of the **Earth System Science Organisation (ESSO)**.
- **Mandate:** It is mandated to **provide ocean information** and advisory services to society, industry, government agencies and the scientific community through sustained ocean observations and constant improvements through systematic and focussed research.
- It is a permanent member of **UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC)**.
- It established the **Indian Tsunami Early Warning Centre (ITEWC)** which provides tsunami alerts within 10 minutes, serving India and 28 Indian Ocean countries.
- **Headquarter:** It is located in Hyderabad, Telangana.
- **Initiatives of INCOIS:**
 - **Search and Rescue Aided Tool (SARAT):** It is to assist the **Indian Coast Guard**, Navy and Coastal Security Police, in **locating individuals or objects lost at sea**.
 - **SynOPS visualization Platform:** It integrates **real-time data** to strengthen response coordination during extreme events.