



EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – JUNE 18, 2026

INTERNATIONAL

US Renames Indo-Pacific Command Back to Pacific Command

- The United States officially renamed the United States Indo-Pacific Command back to the United States Pacific Command on 16-17 June 2026.
- Originally established in 1947 by President Harry S. Truman, the command retained the Pacific Command name until 2018, when it was renamed to reflect the Indo-Pacific strategic framework.
- The latest change restores the historical designation without altering its mission, personnel, or operational area.
- Headquartered at Camp H. M. Smith, the command remains the oldest and largest U.S. unified combatant command, overseeing a region extending from the U.S. West Coast to India's western boundary.

STATE

Bengaluru Ranks Second in Asia's AI-Native Startup Clusters, Strengthening India's Innovation Leadership

- Bengaluru ranked second in Asia's AI-native startup clusters after Beijing in the Global Startup Ecosystem Report 2026 released at VivaTech in Paris.
- The city also secured 15th position among the world's top 40 startup ecosystems and achieved a valuation of \$153 billion.

- Bengaluru scored highly in AI innovation, research, development, and performance metrics.
- With 30 unicorns, around 600,000 AI professionals, and 606 AI-native startups, including 239 funded ventures, the city attracted \$39 billion in venture capital between 2021 and 2025, reinforcing its status as India's leading technology and innovation hub.

DEFENSE

Air Force to Join Exercise Pitch Black 2026 in Australia

- The Indian Air Force will participate in Exercise Pitch Black 2026, scheduled from 20 July to 7 August in Australia's Northern Territory.
- Hosted by the Royal Australian Air Force, the biennial exercise is among the world's largest multinational air combat drills. More than 100 aircraft and personnel from 19 countries, including India, the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and Japan, will take part.
- Conducted from key Australian air bases, the exercise focuses on advanced air combat integration, tactical training, and multinational coordination, enhancing interoperability and strengthening defence cooperation among participating nations.

SPORTS

Deepti Sharma Equals International Wicket Record

- Indian all-rounder Deepti Sharma equalled the record for the most wickets in women's international cricket during India's ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2026 match against the Netherlands.
- She reached 355 international wickets after dismissing Dutch opener Phebe Molkenboer.
- With this achievement, Deepti joined former Indian captain Jhulan Goswami and England legend Katherine Sciver-Brunt at the top of the all-time wicket-taking list.
- The milestone reflects her consistency, longevity, and impact across formats.
- Her record-equalling performance stands out as one of the major achievements of the tournament and highlights India's growing success in women's cricket.

IMPORTANT DAYS

Autistic Pride Day 2026 Observed Worldwide

- Autistic Pride Day was observed globally on 18 June 2026 to celebrate neurodiversity and promote acceptance, dignity, inclusion, and equal opportunities for autistic individuals.
- The 2026 theme, “Recognition, Representation, and Reform,” focused on improving visibility and systemic support for autistic communities.
- First observed in 2005, the day encourages society to view autism as a natural variation of human neurology rather than a disorder requiring correction.
- The observance highlights the strengths, talents, and contributions of autistic individuals while advocating better access to education, healthcare, employment, and public participation.
- The rainbow infinity symbol remains its key emblem.

World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought 2026

- The World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought was observed globally on 17 June 2026 with the theme “Rangelands: Recognize. Respect. Restore.”
- The observance highlighted the importance of grasslands, savannahs, shrublands, and tundra ecosystems in supporting biodiversity, food security, water conservation, and climate resilience.
- It also emphasized restoring degraded lands and supporting communities dependent on rangelands.
- In India, activities were conducted across 813 project areas under the Watershed Development Component of Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana 2.0.
- The initiative promoted sustainable land management, drought mitigation, ecosystem restoration, and long-term environmental sustainability.

