

## Current Affairs Capsule (02/July/2026)

### National News

#### Cabinet Approves ₹14,115 Crore for Two Highway Projects

The Union Cabinet has approved two major highway projects worth ₹14,114.81 crore—an 8.1-km six-lane tunnel in Delhi and a 117.7-km Kanpur-Kabrai Greenfield Highway in Uttar Pradesh. The Delhi tunnel, to be built under the Hybrid Annuity Mode (HAM), will connect the Dwarka Expressway with Nelson Mandela Marg and includes a 3.14-km twin-tube tunnel beneath the Southern Ridge Forest using Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM) technology. The Kanpur-Kabrai Highway will be developed by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) under the Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) model as part of the Bhopal-Kanpur Economic Corridor. Together, the projects will improve connectivity, generate significant employment, and reduce travel time between Kanpur and Kabrai from 3.5 hours to 1.5 hours.

#### Southern Birdwing Recorded in Telangana for First Time

The Southern Birdwing (*Troides minos*), India's largest butterfly and the state butterfly of Karnataka, has been recorded for the first time in Telangana at the Amrabad Tiger Reserve. Endemic to South India, the butterfly belongs to the Papilionidae family and is mainly found in the Western Ghats. Recognised by its black wings with yellow markings, it is classified as Least Concern on the IUCN Red List. The sighting in the Nallamala Hills, part of the Eastern Ghats, marks a significant addition to Telangana's biodiversity records and highlights the ecological importance of the Amrabad Tiger Reserve.

#### Centre Pauses WhatsApp Username Feature, Seeks Meta's Explanation

The Government of India has asked Meta to temporarily pause the rollout of WhatsApp's proposed username feature and provide a detailed explanation within three days. The feature would allow users to connect through unique usernames instead of sharing mobile numbers, enhancing privacy and offering greater flexibility for personal and business communication. However, the Centre has sought clarification on its functioning, privacy and security safeguards, compliance with Indian laws, risks of impersonation, and measures to prevent fraud and cybercrime. Until consultations are completed, Meta has been directed not to launch the feature in India. The government is examining concerns related to user identity verification, traceability during criminal investigations, protection against phishing and online scams, and adherence to India's digital governance framework.

### State News

#### Odisha Approves ₹2,295 Crore Deep Sea Fishing Mission

The Odisha Cabinet has approved the Deep Sea Fishing Mission, a major initiative to strengthen the state's Blue Economy, with an investment of ₹2,295.45 crore over a 10-year period (2026–2036). Implemented by the Fisheries and Animal Resources Development Department, the mission aims to promote sustainable deep-sea fishing, modernise marine fisheries infrastructure, boost seafood exports, enhance technology adoption, and improve livelihoods of coastal communities. It targets an additional 2 lakh metric tonnes of marine fish production annually, creation of over 50,000 jobs, and seafood exports worth around ₹5,000 crore per year by 2036. A key feature of the mission is the proposed Blue Economy Hub (B-Hub) to support research, innovation, and policy coordination. The initiative aligns with the broader concept of sustainable ocean resource use, balancing economic growth with environmental conservation while strengthening Odisha's role in India's Blue Economy.

#### Assam Wild Rice Site Declared Biodiversity Heritage Area

An NRAA-funded project on the in-situ conservation of wild rice (*Oryza rufipogon*) has achieved a major milestone with the Borjuli site in Sonitpur district, Assam, being declared a Biodiversity Heritage Site by the National Biodiversity Authority. Implemented by the ICAR–National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources (ICAR-NBPGR) in collaboration with the Assam State Biodiversity Board, the project aims to conserve valuable wild rice germplasm. NRAA CEO Dr. Chandra Shekhar Kumar highlighted that wild rice is an important genetic resource for developing climate-resilient, high-yielding, and nutritionally superior rice varieties, strengthening sustainable agriculture and long-term food security.

## Banking News

### NPCI Partners HSBC, JP Morgan for Cross-Border UPI

The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has partnered with HSBC India and JP Morgan Payments to introduce real-time foreign exchange (FX) conversion and settlement for cross-border UPI transactions. The initiative enables instant currency conversion, faster payment confirmation, real-time settlement between financial institutions, and greater transparency in exchange rates and transaction values. By reducing intermediaries and settlement delays, the new system will make international UPI payments quicker, more secure, and efficient while lowering settlement risks and improving customer experience. The partnership strengthens UPI's global acceptance by addressing a key challenge in cross-border payments and reinforces India's position in digital payments.

### RBI Launches Revamped Integrated Ombudsman Scheme Nationwide

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has implemented its revamped Integrated Ombudsman Scheme from 1 July 2026, replacing the 2021 framework to provide a free, faster, and more transparent grievance redressal mechanism. Based on the "One Nation, One Ombudsman" principle, the scheme covers scheduled commercial banks, eligible NBFCs, prepaid payment instrument issuers, and credit information companies. Customers can approach the RBI Ombudsman if their complaint remains unresolved after 30 days. The scheme offers online filing, non-adversarial dispute resolution, and compensation of up to ₹30 lakh for financial losses and ₹3 lakh for harassment and mental anguish.

### RBI Appoints Ravi Shankar as Executive Director

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has appointed Ravi Shankar as its new Executive Director with effect from 1 July 2026. Promoted from Adviser-in-Charge of the Department of Statistics and Information Management (DSIM), he brings over 30 years of experience in corporate and banking statistics, government securities, settlement systems, public debt management, and economic research. He has also served on several RBI committees focusing on macroeconomic statistics, financial sector analysis, economic policy, statistical methodology, and data governance, reflecting the RBI's confidence in his expertise in central banking and statistical analysis.

## Business News

### MECON Granted Miniratna Category-I Status by Government

The Ministry of Steel has granted Miniratna Category-I status to MECON Limited, recognising its strong financial performance and operational excellence. Established in 1959 and headquartered in Ranchi, Jharkhand, MECON is a Schedule 'A' Central Public Sector Enterprise under the Ministry of Steel, providing engineering, consultancy, project management, and contracting services across key sectors. The company earned the status after recording profits for three consecutive financial years and achieving a net worth of ₹535.42 crore as of 31 March 2026. Approved on 1 July 2026, the designation provides greater financial and operational autonomy, enabling faster decision-making, technology upgrades, business expansion, and improved competitiveness. Over six decades, MECON has played a vital role in India's industrial growth, contributing to the steel, mining, infrastructure, power, oil and gas, heavy engineering, and project management sectors.

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## Defense News

### Air Marshal Jasvir Singh Mann Assumes Southern Air Command

Air Marshal Jasvir Singh Mann, AVSM, VSM, assumed charge as the Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief (AOC-in-C) of the Southern Air Command on 1 July 2026 at Thiruvananthapuram, succeeding Air Marshal Manish Khanna. Commissioned into the fighter stream in 1989, he is a Pilot Attack Instructor with over 3,000 flying hours on aircraft including the Apache, MiG-21, Jaguar, MiG-29, Su-30, and Rafale. He has held several key operational and leadership appointments, including Assistant Chief of Air Staff (Operations–Offensive), Director General (Weapon Systems), and Senior Air Staff Officer at Western Air Command. He is a recipient of the Ati Vishisht Seva Medal and Vayu Sena Medal.

### Air Marshal Ashutosh Dixit Becomes Vice Chief of Air Staff

Air Marshal Ashutosh Dixit assumed charge as the Vice Chief of the Air Staff (VCAS) on 1 July 2026, succeeding Air Marshal Nagesh Kapoor. A fighter pilot commissioned in 1986, he has over 3,300 flying hours on more than 20 aircraft types and has commanded a Mirage-2000 squadron, a frontline fighter base, and a premier fighter training establishment. He has also served as Air Defence Commander, Senior Air Staff Officer, Director of Air Staff Requirements, and Chief of Integrated Defence Staff (CISC). Simultaneously, Air Marshal Tejinder Singh assumed charge as the Chief of Integrated Defence Staff (CISC).

### Lt Gen Rajesh Pushkar Takes Charge of Southern Command

Lieutenant General Rajesh Pushkar, AVSM, VSM, assumed charge as the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief (GOC-in-C) of the Southern Command on 1 July 2026, succeeding Lieutenant General Sandeep Jain, who became the Vice Chief of the Army Staff. After taking charge, he paid tribute at the Southern Command War Memorial and received a ceremonial Guard of Honour in Pune. A National Defence Academy alumnus commissioned into the 74 Armoured Regiment in 1988, Lt Gen Pushkar has nearly four decades of military experience. He has commanded an Armoured Regiment, Independent Armoured Brigade, Infantry Division, and the 2 Corps (Kharga Corps), besides serving with the Indian Military Training Team in Bhutan and as Defence and Military Attaché in Moscow. Headquartered in Pune, the Southern Command is responsible for operational preparedness, military training, logistics, disaster relief, and safeguarding southern and central India.

### Air Marshal Tejinder Singh Assumes Charge as CISC#

Air Marshal Tejinder Singh has assumed charge as the Chief of Integrated Defence Staff to the Chairman Chiefs of Staff Committee (CISC). On taking over, he paid tribute at the National War Memorial in New Delhi and received a ceremonial tri-service Guard of Honour. Commissioned into the fighter stream of the Indian Air Force in 1987, he is a Category 'A' Qualified Flying Instructor with over 4,500 flying hours and has commanded a Fighter Squadron, a Radar Station, a premier Fighter Base, and served as Air Officer Commanding, Jammu & Kashmir. He previously headed the South Western Air Command and is a recipient of the Vayu Sena Medal (2007), Ati Vishisht Seva Medal (2022), and Param Vishisht Seva Medal (2026).

## Appointments News

### Shirish Godbole Appointed Indian REITs Association Chairperson

The Indian REITs Association (IRA) has appointed Shirish Godbole, CEO of Knowledge Realty Trust, as its new Chairperson, succeeding Alok Aggarwal. Established in 2023 under the guidance of SEBI and the Ministry of Finance, the IRA promotes the growth of India's REIT sector. Godbole pledged to strengthen the REIT ecosystem, enhance investor awareness, uphold governance and transparency, and support the sector's next phase of growth. Knowledge Realty Trust, backed by the Sattva Group and Blackstone, is India's largest listed REIT by market capitalisation.

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## Centre Extends Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri's Tenure by One Year

The Government of India has extended the tenure of Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri by one year, effective from 1 July 2026, ensuring continuity in the Ministry of External Affairs amid a dynamic global strategic environment. A 1989-batch Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer, Misri assumed office as Foreign Secretary on 15 July 2024, succeeding Vinay Mohan Kwatra. With over three decades of diplomatic experience, he has served in the Ministry of External Affairs, the Prime Minister's Office, and Indian missions in Brussels, Tunis, Islamabad, Washington, D.C., Sri Lanka, and Munich. He has also been Ambassador to Spain, Myanmar, and China, besides serving as Joint Secretary in the PMO, Private Secretary to Prime Ministers I.K. Gujral, Dr. Manmohan Singh, and Narendra Modi, and Deputy National Security Adviser (Strategic Affairs) from 2022 to 2024.

### Awards News

#### Sunil Bharti Mittal Receives 2026 USISPF Leadership Award

Sunil Bharti Mittal, Founder and Chairman of Bharti Enterprises, received the 2026 Leadership Award from the US-India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF) at its Annual Leadership Summit in Washington, D.C., for strengthening India-US economic ties and transforming India's telecom sector. He highlighted the importance of digital connectivity, innovation, and investment while expressing optimism that the proposed India-US trade agreement would soon be finalised. The award also recognised his role in building globally competitive businesses and promoting bilateral commercial cooperation.

### Summit & Conferences News

#### Environment Minister Stresses Sustainable Electric Mobility Transition

Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav inaugurated ASSOCHAM's National Conference on "Electric Mobility: Building India an Electric Mobility Hub for Viksit Bharat" in New Delhi, highlighting that India's EV transition must focus on green growth, resilient infrastructure, transparent governance, and a circular economy. The conference brought together policymakers, industry leaders, and automakers to discuss policy continuity, charging infrastructure, localisation, battery supply chains, financing, and innovation. The Minister also highlighted reforms such as the PARIVESH portal for faster environmental clearances and stressed battery recycling, critical mineral security, and sustainable manufacturing to position India as a global leader in clean mobility under the Viksit Bharat 2047 vision.

### Science & Tech news

#### India Approves First Satellite-Based Helicopter Landing Procedure

India has approved its first-ever Private Point-in-Space (PinS) instrument approach procedure for helicopter operations at Undavalli Heliport, marking a major milestone in aviation safety and navigation. Developed by the Airports Authority of India (AAI) and approved by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), the satellite-based PinS procedure enables helicopters to make safe and precise instrument approaches at heliports without conventional landing infrastructure, particularly during adverse weather and in remote areas. Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu said the initiative will enhance flight safety, operational efficiency, and all-weather accessibility while supporting emergency medical services, disaster relief, tourism, offshore operations, pilgrimage services, corporate aviation, and regional connectivity.