

CURRENT AFFAIRS: 15.06.2026

Our indigenous air defence shield Project Kusha will be a game changer, says Rajnath Singh

Its importance has already been demonstrated during Operation Sindoor, he says in Hyderabad

Defence Minister described Project Kusha as a “game changer” for India’s security architecture while inaugurating the Advanced Weapon System Complex at DRDO’s Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Missile Complex in Hyderabad.

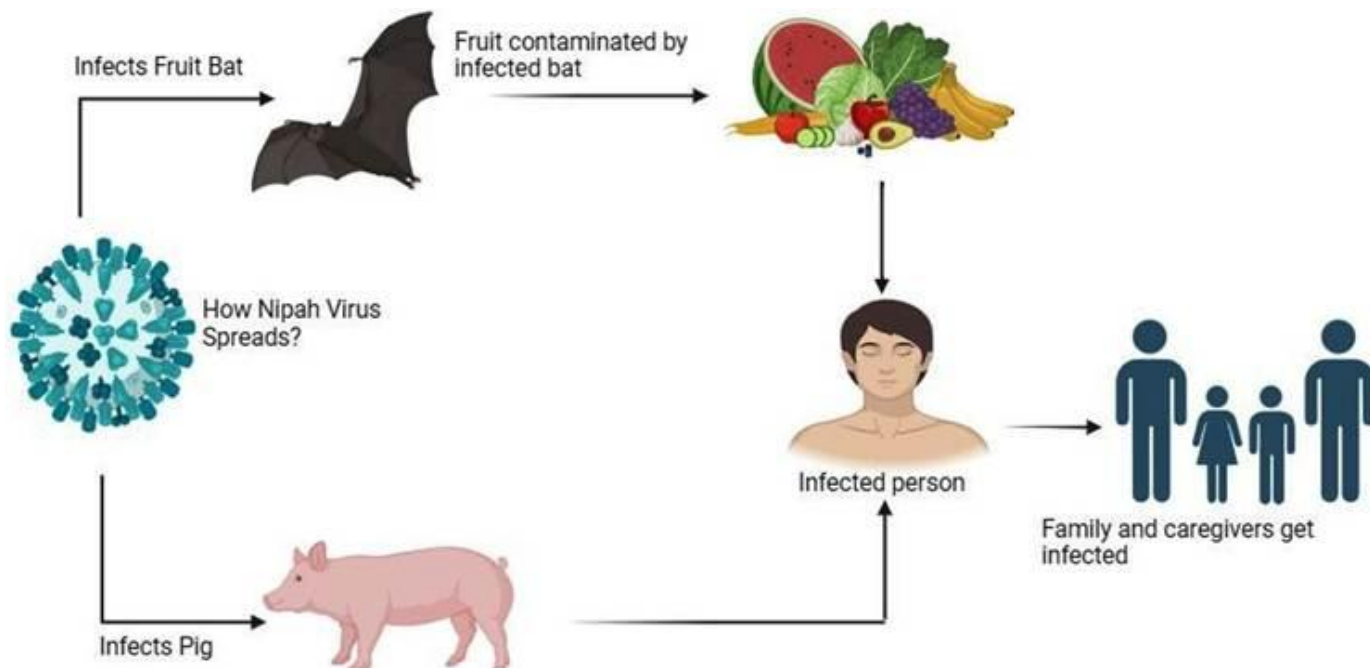
- **About Project Kusha:** Project Kusha, also known as the Extended Range Air Defence System, is an indigenous long-range surface-to-air missile system being developed by DRDO to provide layered air defence against multiple aerial threats.
- **Key Features:** The system is expected to have three interceptor variants — M1 with around 150 km range, M2 with around 250 km range, and M3 with around 350–400 km range — enabling multi-tier interception.
- **Threat Coverage:** Project Kusha is designed to counter fighter aircraft, stealth platforms, drones, cruise missiles, precision-guided munitions and certain ballistic missile threats.
- **Operational Role:** The system is expected to be integrated with the Indian Air Force’s Integrated Air Command and Control System, allowing real-time coordination between military and civilian radar networks.
- **Broader Defence Architecture:** Project Kusha is expected to complement other air defence assets such as QRSAM (Quick Reaction Surface-to-Air Missile), VSHORADS (Very Short-Range Air Defence System), ballistic missile defence systems and future directed-energy weapons as part of India’s evolving multi-layered air and missile defence architecture.
- **Strategic Significance:** It will strengthen India’s indigenous air defence capability, reduce dependence on foreign platforms such as the S-400, and support strategic autonomy in defence technology.

All effort to check further transmission of Nipah: Minister

The patient at Government Medical College Hospital, Kozhikode, is stable and on ventilator support

Recently, a **new Nipah virus case has been reported** in Kozhikode, **Kerala**, prompting immediate contact tracing, quarantine measures, and heightened surveillance to prevent human-to-human transmission.

- **Nipah virus (NiV):** It is a **highly infectious zoonotic virus**, first identified in **1998–99 in Kampung Sungai Nipah, Malaysia**.
 - According to the **World Health Organization (WHO)**, it is transmitted from **animals to humans**, with **fruit bats (*Pteropodidae*)** as the natural reservoir and **pigs as intermediate hosts**. The virus belongs to the **Henipavirus** genus of the **Paramyxoviridae** family.
 - It has the **potential for human-to-human transmission**, making it a **serious public health threat that requires rapid surveillance and containment**.
- **Symptoms and Clinical Features:** Nipah infection usually begins with **influenza-like symptoms** such as **fever, muscle pain, sore throat, and respiratory distress**.
 - In severe cases, it can progress to **acute encephalitis**, leading to **convulsions, disorientation, coma, and even death**.
 - Importantly, **asymptomatic infections** are also reported, complicating containment efforts.
- **Diagnosis and Testing:** NiV is classified as a **Biosafety Level-4 (BSL-4) pathogen**, requiring testing in **high-security laboratories**.
 - Diagnosis is confirmed using **real-time polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR)**, **ELISA**, **serum neutralisation tests**, **histopathology**, and **virus isolation** techniques.
- **Seasonal Risk:** Kerala faces peak Nipah spillover risk from **April to September** due to fruiting trees, increased bat activity, breeding season and viral shedding, making seasonal alerts crucial for early detection.
- **Long-term Concern:** Since fruit bats are the reservoir of **Nipah virus in Kerala**, recurrent spillover events may be difficult to prevent; hence, the **State's focus remains on surveillance, rapid diagnosis**, infection control and swift containment.
 - **Treatment and Prevention:** There is **no approved vaccine** for Nipah virus in humans or animals.
 - Treatment relies on **intensive supportive care and isolation**. India, particularly **Kerala**, has improved outcomes by using **monoclonal antibodies and antiviral drugs such as Remdesivir**, reducing mortality from **91% in 2018 to around 33% by 2023–25**.



Varya AI Model

- **Context (PIB):** Varya is India's **indigenous AI video-generation model** (for creating text-to-video and image-to-video content), developed by **Avataar** with support from the IndiaAI Mission.
- It uses **distilled AI technology** to deliver affordable, culturally aware, and population-scale video creation capabilities.
- **AI distillation** (or **knowledge distillation**) is a machine learning technique in which a **smaller "student"** model learns from a **larger "teacher"** model, enabling faster and cheaper AI models.

Overview: Avataar.ai, selected under the IndiaAI Mission, developed Varya using national AI compute infrastructure, strengthening India's indigenous AI and deep-tech ecosystem.

Launch: Launched on **12 June 2026**, Varya enables AI-powered video creation across education, e-commerce, and content sectors through simple prompt-based story generation.

Features: Varya uses distilled video generation technology to reduce video creation from **50 steps to 4**, generating videos at around **Rs 0.48 per second** and up to **10 times** greater efficiency, while enabling users to create and extend videos through its **Idea → Video → Story** workflow using text prompts or images.

Design: Varya is trained on Indian cultural contexts and generates region-specific visuals reflecting festivals, traditions, and everyday life.

2026 Global Peace Index: Iceland Retains Top Spot, India Drop to 127th

In June 2026, Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) released the 20th edition of the Global Peace Index (GPI). As per the Index, **Iceland** retained its position as the world's most peaceful country for the **19th** consecutive year, with an overall score of **1.161**.

- However, India dropped **to 127th position** (in 2026) with an overall score of **2.409**, from 115th position (in 2025), marking a decrease of 2.9% in its overall score compared to the previous year.

About 2026 GPI:

Coverage: The latest edition of GPI has assessed **163** independent states and territories, ranking them according to their level of peacefulness, covering 99.7% of the world's population.

Key Indicators: The report used 23 qualitative and quantitative indicators to measure the state of peace across three main segments, including the level of Societal Safety and Security; the extent of Ongoing Domestic and International Conflict, and the degree of Militarization.

Top 5 Countries: Other than Iceland, New Zealand (rank 2nd; overall score of 1.343); Switzerland (rank 3rd ; overall score of 1.363); Slovenia (rank 4th; overall score of 1.369); and Ireland (rank 5th, overall score of 1.371) were among the top 5 countries in 2026 GPI.

Bottom 5 Countries: As per IEP's latest GPI, Russia ranked lowest in the index (163rd spot) with an overall score of 3.367 and emerged as the least peaceful country in the world; followed by Sudan (162nd), Democratic Republic Congo (DRC) (161st), Ukraine (160th) and Israel (159th).