

UN INDIA DIGEST

News and updates from the
26 entities of the UN Country Team

JULY 2025



UNITED NATIONS
INDIA



UNOPS leads a customised game of Snakes and Ladders under the under the Jal Jeevan Mission to promote awareness about water management, rain harvesting, and sanitation practises among children in Tamil Nadu. Photo: UNOPS

Marking World Refugee Day with everyday heroes

New figures from UNHCR show that more than 122 million people are now forcibly displaced – that's one in every 67 people on the planet. Against this sobering backdrop, the United Nations in India marked World Refugee Day 2025 under the theme 'Solidarity With Refugees: Celebrating Unsung Local Heroes'. Organised by UNHCR India, with the support of UNESCO, the day recognised the quiet efforts of individuals who support refugees in their everyday lives. Opening the event, Areti Sianni, Chief of Mission for UNHCR India, called for renewed commitment to refugee protection at a time of unprecedented need. At a panel discussion, some of the 'heroes' shared stories of working to improve lives of refugees and asylum-seekers.

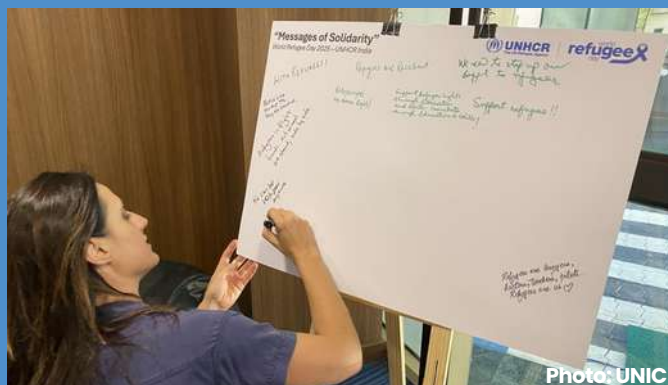


Photo: UNIC

Build-a-thon: AI for telecom innovation



Photo: ITU

Photo: ITU

With 5.5 billion people – 68% of the world's population – now online, there is growing demand for faster, smarter, and more reliable digital networks. At a meeting of the ITU Focus Group on AI-Native Networking, held in New Delhi between 11-13 June, experts and innovators from around the world gathered to identify key challenges, test practical ideas, and co-develop open solutions. Through collaboration, participants explored how AI can help networks manage themselves, respond more quickly to faults and improve service quality. The Build-a-thon, led by the Department of Telecommunications, is a significant step towards India's and ITU's shared goal of fostering ethical, and globally standardized AI.

The United Nations in India extends its deepest condolences to the families and loved ones of all those affected in the tragic plane crash in Ahmedabad on 12 June.

"I am deeply saddened by the terrible news of the plane crash in Ahmedabad, India. My heartfelt condolences to the families and loved ones of all affected."

– **United Nations Secretary-General**
António Guterres

"I am deeply saddened by the tragic crash of the Air India passenger plane in Ahmedabad. My thoughts are with the victims and all those affected. I extend my heartfelt condolences to Prime Minister and the people of India. May they find strength and solace during this difficult time."

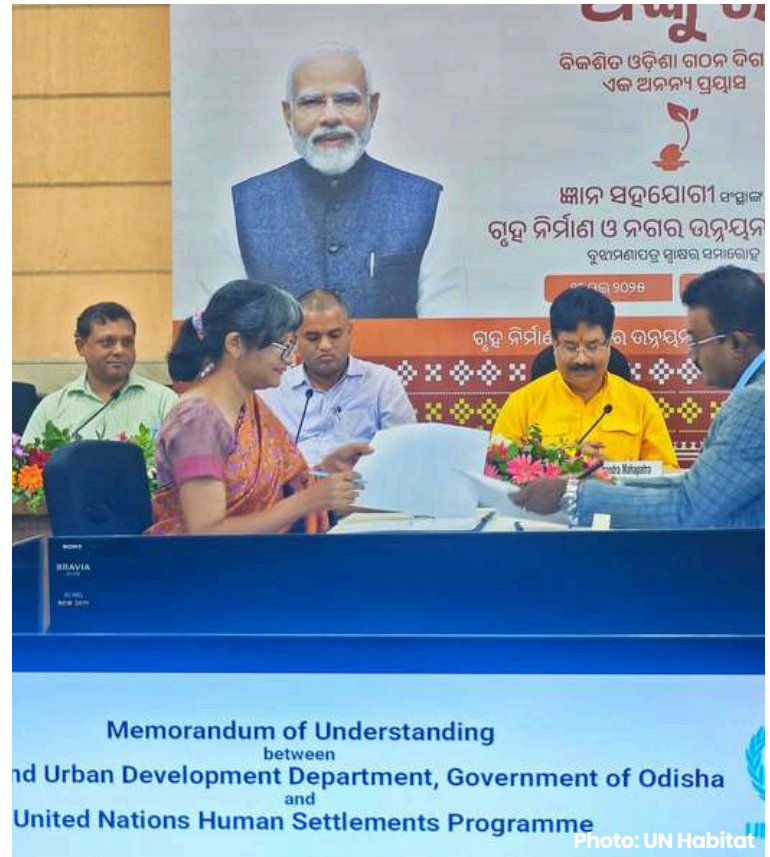
– **United Nations General Assembly President**
Philemon Yang

"No words can express the shock and sadness of such a horrible tragedy, so many lives lost. Our deepest, heartfelt condolences to all affected."

– **United Nations in India Resident Coordinator Shombi Sharp**

Shaping an urban, inclusive future in Odisha

Odisha's urban population is projected to triple over the next decade. To support this transition, UN-Habitat has signed an agreement with the Government of Odisha's Housing and Urban Development Department to create inclusive, resilient cities by nurturing citizen-driven models of urban development. Under the Atal Network for Knowledge, Urbanisation, and Reform initiative, UN Habitat will work to strengthen community-centric approaches to urban planning in the state to realise the vision of Viksit Odisha and Viksit Bharat 2047. The initiative will scale up existing efforts including the Urban Resilient and Accelerated Advancement with Sustainable and Transformative Actions framework for climate-resilient urban planning, the Young Gamechangers Initiative, which equips urban youth with digital tools to build accessible public spaces, and the development of a Circular Economy for Plastic Waste.



Transforming waste to scale up the circular economy

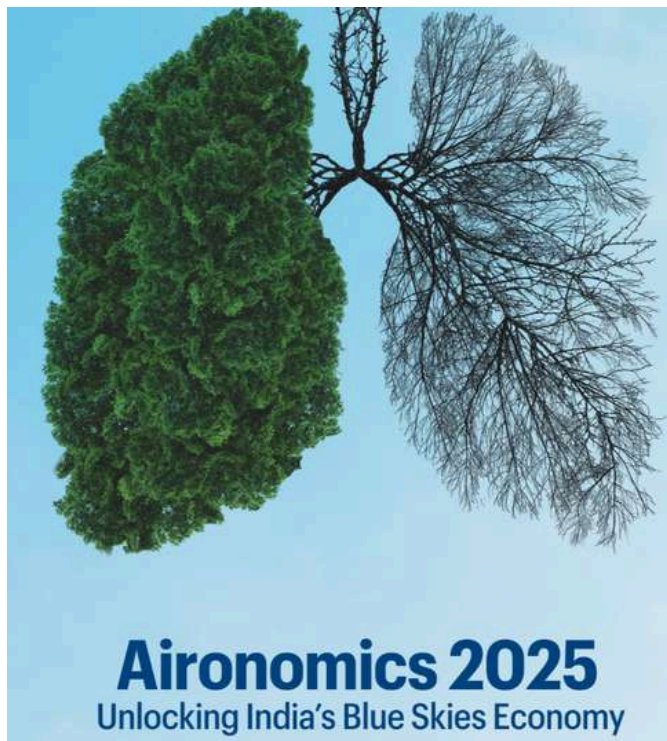
India burns millions of tons of crop stubble and discards large amounts of textile waste every year, fuelling air pollution and climate risk. But what if this waste could power the next generation of climate-friendly paper, packaging, and textiles? UN India, environmental non-profit Canopy, and Invest India brought together leaders from government, finance, and industry for a roundtable in Delhi to explore exactly that. The conversation focused on building a potential billion-dollar blended finance platform to scale low-carbon, circular fibre infrastructure, turning agricultural and textile residues into climate solutions. With the right investment and policy push, India hopes to transform a waste burden into a global advantage.

Folding disability inclusion into disaster resilience

The rights and needs of persons with disabilities are often overlooked in disaster preparedness, response and mitigation efforts. In a bid to reverse this trend, the National Disaster Management Authority in partnership with UN in India, UNICEF India and organizations of persons with disabilities organized a workshop to devise an inclusive disaster management framework. The guidelines call for an integration of physical, digital, and communicational accessibility into early warning systems, evacuation protocols, shelters, disaster preparedness and human action. A document highlighting women's important role in disaster risk reduction was released on the sidelines of the workshop with support from UN Women.



Photo: NDMA



Investing in clean air solutions to save lives

Advancing clean air solutions helps combat climate change and promote the Sustainable Development Goals. Phase two of the Air Quality Action Forum, an initiative by UN Environment Programme and Paytm Foundation to enable data-driven, technology-led solutions to support India's clean air mission, was launched at Aironomics 2025 Summit hosted by the Bharat Climate Forum, Dalberg Advisors and the Council for International Economic Understanding in New Delhi. UN India Resident Coordinator Shombi Sharp joined Chief Minister of Delhi Rekha Gupta, government leaders, policymakers, civil society members, financial institutions, private sector representatives, industry experts and officials from United Nations agencies and the World Bank to urge collective action for cleaner air at the summit.



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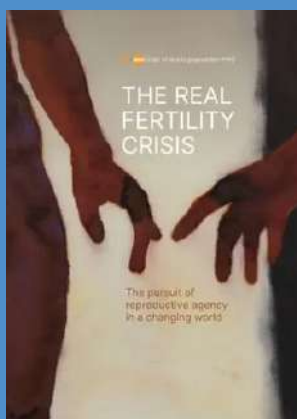




Photo: YuWaah



Photo: UNOPS



Innovative Life Jackets from Recycled Materials

Fourteen youths, including teachers, community women, and middle school students of Taj Eco Club from Farwads, Shantabed, and Agra, have collaborated on an innovative project to create life jackets using discarded materials. By repurposing plastic bottles, thermocol, and agricultural waste such as plastic mulch bags, they have designed a low-cost, sustainable alternative for flotation devices. This initiative not only promotes waste reduction but also provides a practical solution for communities near water bodies, ensuring safety and environmental responsibility.

Photo: UNICEF

Joining forces to beat plastic pollution

As negotiations continue for a global treaty to end plastic pollution, Team UN in India led several events across the country to tackle the problem under the broader call of World Environment Day.

- In Ahmedabad, more than 300 youth, experts and policymakers pledged to champion the cause of sustainable change at the Gujarat Climate Action Summit 3.0 led by UNICEF India.
- Twenty-one citizen-centric solutions to promote sustainable lifestyles were awarded under the 'Ideas 4 LIFE' initiative by UNICEF and YuWaah under the Government of India's broader Mission LIFE vision. The winners were selected from a pool of more than 1,300 entries.
- As part of the Tide Turners Plastic Challenge, the world's largest youth-led environmental movement changemakers working to innovate solutions to plastic pollution were honored at UN House.
- The UN Environment Programme released a Plastic Pollution Literacy Kit, a digital educational tool designed to empower everyone from schoolchildren to CEOs with practical knowledge to tackle the growing problem of plastic waste. [Access it here.](#)
- Journalists and content creators were equipped with tools to translate complex data on plastics into compelling stories at a workshop held in partnership with UNEP, Mongabay India and the Centre for Media Studies.
- At a roundtable with private sector leaders, UNEP joined industry players to urge renewed action to end plastic pollution in India.
- The UN Resident Coordinator and the country heads of UNEP and FAO called for urgent collective action to tackle the problem in a joint opinion column published in the Hindustan Times. [Click to read.](#)

PHOTO OF THE MONTH



UN Volunteers engage with members of the Marwada community in Gujarat's Kutch as part of an outreach session under the Land Neutrality Programme, a partnership between the Government of India and UNDP aimed at restoring degraded landscapes.
Photo: UN Volunteers



Photo: UNFPA

Crisis of fertility aspirations in new population report

UNFPA's 2025 State of World Population report, *The Real Fertility Crisis*, calls for a shift from panic over falling fertility to tackle unmet reproductive goals. The report underlines millions of individuals are not able to realise their real fertility goals. Nearly four in 10 people cite financial constraints as the main barrier to having the families they want. Others point to job insecurity (21%), housing challenges (22%), lack of reliable childcare (18%), poor health (15%), infertility (13%), and limited access to pregnancy care. The message is clear: when people exercise real choice, they are empowered to build the lives – and families – they aspire to have.

Sustainable farming backed by smart finance

From smart irrigation techniques boosting yields in water-scarce regions to carbon credits rewarding sustainable farming, FAO is working with Indian partners to make agriculture more climate-resilient. In June, FAO led a session on modern irrigation at a Ministry of Jal Shakti workshop, highlighting water-use efficiency, women-led Water User Associations, and smart policies. In Mumbai, FAO and National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development advanced carbon finance solutions for smallholders. A follow-up dialogue in Delhi explored making carbon markets more transparent and farmer-centric. These efforts aim to align innovation, finance, and policy for a more sustainable agrifood future.



Photo: FAO



Photo: UNIDO

Advancing clean energy efficiency solutions

Micro, small and medium enterprises are a key driver of growth in India, with the sector contributing 29% of the country's GDP. Ahead of MSME Day on 27 June, UNIDO, the Global Environment Facility and the National Institute for MSMEs launched a project to improve the efficiency of industrial boilers. An awareness session was held to engage local industries in improving thermal energy efficiency through the design, manufacture, and operation of industrial boilers for low-carbon MSMEs. In Rajasthan, UNIDO also led workshops to scale up solar energy and drive integration of clean energy solutions across MSMEs.

SPOTLIGHT: 'Yoga for One Earth, One Health'



Prime Minister Narendra Modi led a group of 300,105 participants in a yoga session in Visakhapatnam — setting a new Guinness World Record for the world's largest yoga gathering. Yoga sessions were held across India to mark 11 years since the UN designated 21 June as the International Day of Yoga in 2014.

Photos: PIB, AIR, Guinness World Records



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2025: United Nations turns 80

At a glance

8-11 July: ITU AI for Good Global Summit, Geneva

11 July: World Population Day

14-23 July: High Level Political Forum (India to deliver Voluntary National Review on 23 July)

15 July: Nelson Mandela International Day

18 July: World Chess Day

25 July: World Drowning Prevention Day

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