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World Oceans Day 2026 and India's Blue Economy Push

8 June 2026

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WHY IN NEWS

World Oceans Day is observed today, **June 8, 2026**, under the United Nations theme “**Reimagine: Beyond the World We Know, a New Relationship with Our Ocean.**” The day comes months after the landmark **High Seas Treaty came into force in January 2026** (on the 17th), and as India advances its **Deep Ocean Mission** and the **Samudrayaan** crewed-submersible programme, placing the blue economy and ocean conservation at the centre of policy.

WORLD OCEANS DAY

ATTRIBUTE	DETAIL
Date	June 8 (annual)
Origin	Proposed at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit
UN designation	2008 (UN General Assembly resolution 63/111)
2026 theme	“Reimagine: Beyond the World We Know, a New Relationship with Our Ocean”
2026 Action Theme	Strong Marine Protected Areas for Our Blue Planet
Linked SDG	SDG 14 (Life Below Water)

The 2026 theme asks humanity to shift from being passive inheritors of the ocean’s bounty to active guardians of its future, closing the perceived distance between people and a sea that supplies oxygen, food and climate stability.

THE HIGH SEAS TREATY COMES INTO FORCE

A defining backdrop to World Oceans Day 2026 is that the **High Seas Treaty (the BBNJ Agreement)** came into force in **January 2026** (on the 17th), after crossing 60 ratifications.

ASPECT	DETAIL
Full name	Agreement on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ)
Adopted	2023, under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)
In force	January 2026
Purpose	Conserve and sustainably use marine biodiversity in the high seas (areas beyond national jurisdiction)
Key tools	Marine Protected Areas on the high seas; environmental impact assessments; benefit-sharing of marine genetic resources

The high seas, covering nearly two-thirds of the ocean and lying beyond any country's Exclusive Economic Zone, were largely ungoverned for biodiversity until this treaty. It is central to the global **30x30** target of protecting 30% of land and sea by 2030.

INDIA'S BLUE ECONOMY AND THE DEEP OCEAN MISSION

ELEMENT	DETAIL
Deep Ocean Mission (DOM)	Approved 2021; nodal ministry: Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES); outlay around Rs 4,077 crore
Samudrayaan	India's crewed deep-ocean mission
Matsya-6000	Crewed submersible designed to carry 3 people to 6,000 metres depth
Builder	National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT)
Target resource	Polymetallic nodules (manganese, nickel, cobalt, copper) in the Central Indian Ocean Basin
Coastline	About 11,098 km (including islands)
Exclusive Economic Zone	About 2.37 million sq km

India's **Deep Ocean Mission** is the flagship of its blue-economy strategy, with the **Matsya-6000** submersible (built by NIOT) intended to take a three-person crew to 6,000 metres to study deep-sea biodiversity and assess mineral resources such as **polymetallic nodules**. India holds an exploration contract

from the International Seabed Authority for the Central Indian Ocean Basin.

THE CORE TENSION: MINING VERSUS CONSERVATION

Deep-sea exploration raises a sharp dilemma. The same seabed that holds critical minerals (vital for the energy transition) also hosts poorly understood, slow-growing ecosystems. The challenge for India and the world is to balance **resource ambitions** with the **precautionary protection** of marine biodiversity, the very balance the High Seas Treaty and Marine Protected Areas seek to strike.

UPSC RELEVANCE

Prelims

- World Oceans Day: **June 8**; proposed at the **1992 Rio Earth Summit**; UN-designated in **2008**
- 2026 theme: “**Reimagine: ... a New Relationship with Our Ocean**”; linked to **SDG 14**
- **High Seas Treaty (BBNJ)**: adopted 2023 under UNCLOS; **in force January 2026**
- **Deep Ocean Mission**: nodal ministry **MoES**; submersible **Matsya-6000** (3 crew, 6,000 m); built by **NIOT**
- Target: **polymetallic nodules** in the **Central Indian Ocean Basin**
- India’s coastline about **11,098 km**; EEZ about **2.37 million sq km**

Mains Angles

- ① **GS3 Blue Economy**: Examine the potential of India’s Deep Ocean Mission and the tension between deep-sea mineral extraction and marine biodiversity conservation.
- ② **GS3 Ocean Governance**: Discuss the significance of the High Seas Treaty (BBNJ) coming into force for global ocean conservation and the 30x30 target.
- ③ **GS3 Climate**: Assess the role of “blue carbon” ecosystems (mangroves, seagrass) in India’s climate strategy.

FACTS CORNER

FACT	DETAIL
World Oceans Day	June 8; UN-designated 2008; proposed at Rio 1992
2026 theme	“Reimagine: ... a New Relationship with Our Ocean”
High Seas Treaty (BBNJ)	Adopted 2023 (under UNCLOS); in force January 2026
30x30 target	Protect 30% of land and sea by 2030
Deep Ocean Mission	Approved 2021; MoES; about Rs 4,077 crore
Submersible	Matsya-6000 (3 crew, 6,000 m), built by NIOT
Target resource	Polymetallic nodules, Central Indian Ocean Basin
India coastline / EEZ	About 11,098 km / 2.37 million sq km
Linked SDG	SDG 14 (Life Below Water)

Sources: UN, Ministry of Earth Sciences, The Hindu

Source: World Oceans Day 2026 and India's Blue Economy Push — Ujyari.com | Free UPSC & State PCS Current Affairs

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