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# World Blood Donor Day 2026 and India's Blood Transfusion Framework

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**SOCIAL ISSUES****SCIENCE & TECH****GS2**

CURATED &amp; WRITTEN BY

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## WHY IN NEWS

**June 14** is **World Blood Donor Day**, observed annually since 2004 under the **World Health Organization (WHO)**. The date marks the birth anniversary of **Karl Landsteiner**, who discovered the ABO blood group system. The **WHO theme for 2026** is “**One Drop of Humanity. Give Blood. Save Lives.**” The day is an occasion to revise India’s blood transfusion framework and the goal of universal voluntary donation.

## THE DAY AND THE SCIENCE BEHIND IT

DETAIL	PARTICULARS
Date	June 14 (annually since 2004)
Honours	Karl Landsteiner, discoverer of the ABO blood group system
Landsteiner’s Nobel	Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine, 1930
2026 theme	“One Drop of Humanity. Give Blood. Save Lives.”
Led by	WHO, with the IFRC, ISBT and donor organisations

Karl Landsteiner’s discovery of the ABO blood groups made safe transfusion possible by explaining why some transfusions succeeded and others were fatal. It remains one of the foundational discoveries of modern medicine.

## INDIA’S BLOOD TRANSFUSION FRAMEWORK

India regulates blood as a “drug” and runs a multi-tier governance structure.

LAYER	ROLE
<b>Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940</b>	Regulates blood and blood products as drugs
<b>National Blood Transfusion Council (NBTC)</b>	The apex policy and coordination body, under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
<b>State Blood Transfusion Councils</b>	Implement policy at the state level
<b>Indian Red Cross Society</b>	A major collector and promoter of voluntary donation
<b>e-Rakt Kosh</b>	The national online blood-bank management and availability portal

A landmark legal milestone was the Supreme Court’s ruling in **Common Cause v. Union of India (1996)**, which led to the ban on **professional (paid) blood donation**, pushing the system toward voluntary and replacement donation.

## THE VOLUNTARY DONATION GOAL

INDICATOR	DETAIL
WHO goal	100 percent voluntary, unpaid donation
India’s voluntary share	The large majority of collections, though short of 100 percent
Why it matters	Voluntary, repeat donors provide the safest blood supply

The shift from replacement donation (where a patient’s family donates in return) to **voluntary, non-remunerated repeat donation** is central to blood safety, because voluntary repeat donors have the lowest rates of transfusion-transmissible infections.

## THE ANALYSIS: FROM AVAILABILITY TO SAFETY AND EQUITY

- ❶ **Safety through voluntary donation.** The safest blood comes from voluntary, repeat, unpaid donors; moving fully away from replacement and any paid donation is the core public-health goal.
- ❷ **Equity of access.** Shortages and unequal access persist, especially for rare blood groups and in remote areas; rare-donor registries and better logistics are needed.
- ❸ **Self-sufficiency in blood products.** Beyond whole blood, India aims for self-sufficiency in plasma-derived medicines through domestic plasma fractionation.
- ❹ **Technology and trust.** Digital tools such as e-Rakt Kosh improve availability and transparency, while sustained donor engagement addresses the perennial challenge of converting one-time donors into repeat donors.

The way forward pairs **awareness and de-stigmatisation** (encouraging repeat voluntary donation) with **system strengthening** (rare-blood registries, component separation, plasma fractionation and digital availability), so that the supply is not only adequate but safe and equitable.

## UPSC RELEVANCE

- **GS Paper 2 (Governance and Health):** health infrastructure, regulatory bodies, public-health goals.
- **GS Paper 3 (Science):** the science of blood groups, transfusion.
- **Prelims:** World Blood Donor Day date and origin, Karl Landsteiner, the NBTC, the Drugs and Cosmetics Act.
- **Mains:** moving toward 100 percent voluntary donation and equitable access.

## FACTS CORNER

### 📌 FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGEPEDIA

#### THE DAY:

World Blood Donor Day: June 14, observed since 2004; WHO-led

Honours Karl Landsteiner (ABO blood groups; Nobel Prize 1930)

2026 theme: “One Drop of Humanity. Give Blood. Save Lives.”

#### INDIA’S FRAMEWORK:

Blood regulated under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940

Apex body: National Blood Transfusion Council (NBTC), under MoHFW; State Blood Transfusion Councils below it

Common Cause v. Union of India (1996): led to the ban on professional (paid) donation

e-Rakt Kosh: national online blood-bank portal

#### THE GOAL:

WHO target of 100 percent voluntary, unpaid donation for the safest supply

Sources: WHO, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

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