PLACES IN NEWS: WEEK 3 (15 June-21 june)

Topic 1: Kishau Multi-Purpose Dam

The Kishau Multi-Purpose Dam is a massive ₹15,000 crore infrastructure initiative that recently broke an eight-year deadlock. Declared a "National Project" back in 2008, it is designed to generate hydroelectric power, control floods, and supply critical drinking and irrigation water to Northern India.

The primary bottleneck for the project was a fierce dispute over **cost-sharing**. Because the dam physically sits on the border of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, these two states face the brunt of the negative impacts—submergence of villages, loss of biodiversity, and displacement of over 5,400 people. However, the downstream benefits (drinking water and irrigation) largely go to Delhi, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, and Rajasthan.

Issue:

Himachal Pradesh refused to pay its initially agreed-upon share for the power component (around ₹800 crore), arguing it was unfair to shoulder immense ecological and social costs while also paying heavily for the infrastructure that primarily benefits other states.

The Resolution

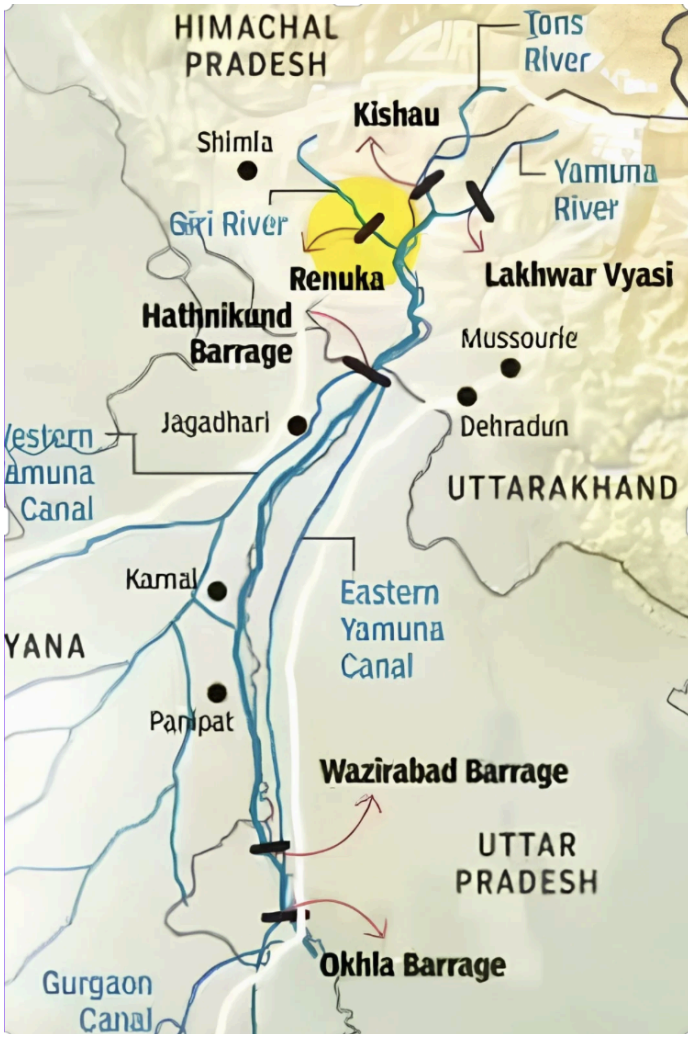
In June 2026, a high-level meeting chaired by the Union Home Ministry resulted in a consensus among the six basin states (**Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Haryana, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, and Rajasthan**). They agreed on a unique "Power-for-Water Trade" formula:

- **Water Component (90:10 Ratio):** The Central Government will fund 90% of the water component's cost as a central grant. The remaining 10% will be shared proportionally among the six basin states.
- **Power Component (The Dealmaker):** Himachal Pradesh agreed to allocate its share of the project's water to Delhi and Rajasthan. In return, **Delhi, Haryana, and Rajasthan will jointly pay the ₹2,000 crore required for Himachal Pradesh's share of the power generation costs.**
- **Power Distribution:** The 660 MW of electricity generated will be split equally (50:50) between Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh.

The Geography: The Tons River and the Yamuna Basin

The Kishau Dam is being constructed about 45 km upstream from Dakpathar town, directly straddling the geographical border between **Dehradun district (Uttarakhand)** and **Sirmaur district (Himachal Pradesh)**.

To understand the dam's significance, you have to look at the river it sits on:



The Profile of the Tons River

- **The Mighty Tributary:** The Tons River is the largest and longest right-bank tributary of the Yamuna River. In fact, at the point where the Tons meets the Yamuna (near Kalsi in Dehradun), **the Tons actually carries a larger volume of water than the Yamuna itself.**

- **Origin:** It originates at an elevation of around 6,315 meters from the Bandarpunch massif in the Himalayas. The river is primarily formed by the confluence of two main headstreams: the **Rupin** and the **Supin** rivers, which merge at Naitwar to form the Tons.

- **Course:** It flows through deep, steep "V" shaped valleys and rugged Himalayan terrain, functioning as the natural interstate boundary between Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand for a significant portion of its journey.

Geographical Impact of the Dam

- **Structure:** The project features a 236-meter-high Roller Compacted Concrete (RCC) gravity dam.
- **Reservoir:** It will create a live storage capacity of 1,324 Million Cubic Meters (MCM). By retaining massive monsoon flows in the upper catchment, it allows for a regulated, continuous release of clean water during the dry season, rejuvenating the downstream Yamuna.
- **Submergence:** The reservoir will flood approximately 2,950 hectares of land, submerging 8 villages in Himachal Pradesh and 9 in Uttarakhand, significantly altering the local geomorphology and requiring major compensatory afforestation

Topic 2: Arunachal Pradesh Glacial Lakes

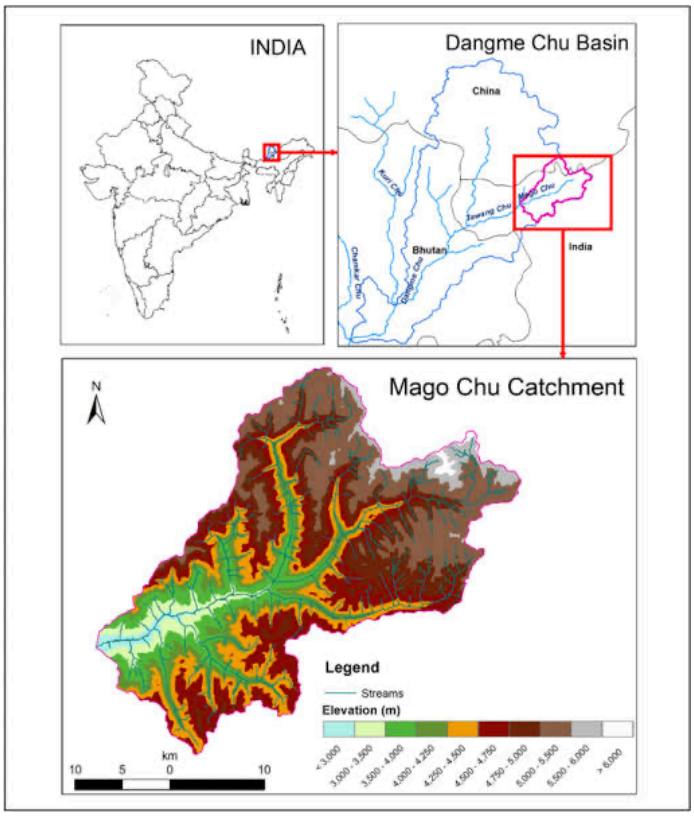
Context:

A recent satellite-based study by **Suhora Technologies** (using high-resolution imagery from ICEYE, PlanetScope, and LISS-IV satellites) analyzed **five high-risk glacial lakes situated in the Mago Chu basin** within the **Tawang district of Arunachal Pradesh.** This basin is a critical headwater zone for the Brahmaputra River system.

Key findings:

The study found that between **2016 and June 2026**, **four out of these five lakes** expanded significantly.

- **Sanhapo Lake:** "High Risk" by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), it is considered the highest-priority lake for hazard modeling and early-warning systems
- **Dharkha Tso ("High Risk")** also demonstrated consistent expansion over the decade
- Other 3 Lakes are unnamed and Two lakes categorized as "**Very High Risk**"



Glacial Lake Outburst Flood: (GLOF)

occurs when this natural moraine dam (a fragile, **natural wall composed of loose rock, boulders, soil, and ice debris dumped by the glacier.**) suddenly fails, releasing a catastrophic wall of water, mud, and debris downstream.

Topic 3: Dhanaura, Uttar Pradesh

The recent announcement regarding the Rs. 150 crore financial assistance for a **2G ethanol biorefinery in Dhanaura, Uttar Pradesh**, marks a significant milestone in India's advanced biofuel landscape.

- **The Developers**: The project is being spearheaded by Spray Engineering Devices Limited (SED) and will be established at the Wave Sugar facility in Dhanaura, Uttar Pradesh.

- **The Funding:** The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPNG) has approved Rs. 150 crore in financial assistance under the **Pradhan Mantri JI-VAN (Jaiv Indhan-Vatavaran Anukool fasal awashesh Nivaran) Yojana.**

- **Capacity:** The facility will be a commercial-scale, 91 KLPD (Kilo Litres Per Day) Hybrid Second-Generation (2G) Ethanol Biorefinery.

- **Second-generation (2G) ethanol**, is produced from non-food agricultural waste—in this case, utilizing the **leftover biomass from the sugar manufacturing process (like bagasse and crop stalks)** that is often otherwise burned.

Topic 4: Lebanon, Litani River, Buffer Zone

Lebanon is situated in the **Levant, a region along the eastern Mediterranean coast.**

Borders:

- It is bordered by the Mediterranean Sea to the west,
- Syria to the north and east, and
- Israel to the south.
- Lebanon does not share a border with Jordan.

Key Cities: Major coastal cities include the capital, Beirut, as well as Sidon (Saida), Tyre (Sour), and Tripoli in the north.

The Litani River and the Buffer Zone

- The Litani River is the l**ongest river in Lebanon** (approximately 140 km or 87 miles) and is unique because it flows entirely within the country's national boundaries.
- **Strategic Importance**:
    - The **river's lower course (the east-west section)** acts as a critical geographical marker.
    - Following the 2006 Lebanon War, **UN Security Council Resolution 1701** established a buffer zone between the Litani River and the Blue Line (the southern border).

BLUE LINE

- **The "Blue Line" is not an internationally recognized border but a "line of withdrawal."**
- **Establishment:** It was drawn by the United Nations in the year 2000 to determine whether Israel had fully withdrawn its forces from southern Lebanon, as mandated by UN Security Council Resolution 425 (passed in 1978).
- **Function:** Both Lebanon and Israel agreed to respect this line for the purpose of identifying the Israeli withdrawal, but both sides have reservations about its exact placement in certain areas. It serves as the de facto boundary and the primary line of friction in the current conflict.

The area between the Litani River and the Blue Line remains the most volatile zone in the region, patrolled by UNIFIL peacekeepers who are frequently caught in the crossfire of the escalating hostilities.