

10/07/2026 Daily Current News

1. *Quality Council of India (QCI):*

Context: The Quality Council of India (QCI) and the National Small Industries Corporation Limited (NSIC) today signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish a collaborative ecosystem aimed at strengthening quality, competitiveness and market access for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) across the country. The partnership brings together QCI's expertise in quality, accreditation and certification with NSIC's extensive MSME support ecosystem to accelerate the adoption of globally recognised quality standards and enhance the growth of Indian enterprises.

About Quality Council of India (QCI):

- ❖ Established: 1996 as national accreditation body.
- ❖ Mission: Lead nationwide quality movement.
- ❖ Nature: Non-Profit Organization under Societies Registration Act, 1860.
- ❖ Model: PPP – supported by GoI + industry bodies (ASSOCHAM, CII, FICCI).
- ❖ Nodal Agency: DPIIT, Ministry of Commerce.
- ❖ Chairman: Appointed by PM on industry recommendation.
- ❖ Key Role: Conducts Swachh Survekshan under Swachh Bharat Mission.

2. *Samriddh Gram:*

Context: The Department of Telecommunications (DoT), has been announced as the Global winner of the prestigious World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Prizes 2026 under Action Line C6 – Enabling Environment for its flagship project "Samriddh Gram: Integrated Phygital Service Delivery Model Enabled by BharatNet."

More details:

- ❖ The award was presented during the WSIS Forum 2026 held in Geneva, recognising India's innovative approach towards leveraging digital public infrastructure and telecom connectivity for inclusive rural development.
- ❖ Instituted under the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) process led by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the WSIS Prizes are among the world's most prestigious recognitions for projects harnessing Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to advance sustainable development.
- ❖ The WSIS Forum brings together governments, United Nations agencies, industry, academia, civil society and international organisations to promote people-centric, inclusive and development-oriented digital transformation.

About Samriddh Gram:

- ❖ Samriddh Gram is an integrated rural digital transformation initiative of the Department of Telecommunications built on the BharatNet backbone.
- ❖ At the heart of the initiative are Samriddhi Kendras, established as one-stop village-level hubs delivering integrated phygital services by combining reliable telecom connectivity, digital platforms and assisted physical service delivery.

- ❖ The Samriddh Gram initiative brings together a comprehensive range of citizen-centric services under one roof, spanning healthcare, education, agriculture, financial inclusion, skilling, e-Governance, and e-commerce.
- ❖ The Samriddh Gram Centre provides tele-consultation, diagnostic services through Health ATMs, and medicines through PM Jan Aushadhi Kendras; smart classrooms and AR/VR-based skill development; IoT-based soil testing, drone-enabled fertilizer and pesticide spraying, and mobile app-based smart irrigation solutions; CSC/e-Governance and Banking Correspondent services; e-commerce support for local products; FTTH and PM-WANI connectivity; CCTV-based village surveillance; and community-level digital facilitation, ensuring seamless access to essential services and promoting inclusive, technology-enabled rural development.
- ❖ The project demonstrates how BharatNet and last-mile telecom infrastructure can transform beyond connectivity into measurable socio-economic outcomes for rural citizens through an integrated service delivery model supported by local facilitation and community participation.

3. *National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA):*

Context: The 29th Meeting of the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) was held today at the Central Academy for State Forest Service (CASFOS), Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu.

More developments:

- ❖ Minister released two important NTCA publications: “Roadmap to Rescue: Strategic Roadmap for Establishment of Temporary/Transit Facilities for Rescue-Rehab-Release of Wild Animals in Tiger Landscapes” and “STRIDES 2026: Status of Tiger Reserves – Infrastructure, Development, Ecology & Social Parameters”
- ❖ The meeting also considered proposals for organising the Tiger Conclave as a national platform to mobilise financial resources for Tiger Reserves through Tiger Conservation Foundations by fostering partnerships with corporate entities, philanthropic organisations and other stakeholders.
- ❖ In addition, the Authority deliberated on organising STRIPES (Symposium on Tiger Research, Innovation, Policy, Ecology & Sustainability) as a national forum for disseminating research findings, sharing innovative management practices and facilitating knowledge exchange among Tiger Reserve managers, researchers and conservation practitioners to promote evidence-based management and replication of successful conservation interventions across Tiger Reserves.

About National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA):

- ❖ NTCA is a statutory body under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), established in 2006 under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 (amended in 2006).
- ❖ Establishment: Constituted in 2006 under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 to strengthen tiger conservation in India.
- ❖ Project Tiger: Provides statutory backing to Project Tiger, a Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) for in-situ conservation of tigers in designated tiger reserves.
- ❖ Primary Objective: Ensure effective protection of tigers and their habitats through legally enforceable conservation measures.
- ❖ Federal Coordination: Promotes Centre–State accountability in tiger reserve management through Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs).

- ❖ **Parliamentary Oversight:** Ensures transparency and accountability in tiger conservation through parliamentary oversight.
- ❖ **Composition:** Chaired by the Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, with the Minister of State as Vice-Chairperson, along with Members of Parliament, the MoEFCC Secretary, and other members.
- ❖ **Tiger Conservation Plans:** Approves Tiger Conservation Plans prepared by State Governments for all tiger reserves.
- ❖ **Habitat Protection:** Evaluates ecological sustainability and discourages activities such as mining, industries, and other ecologically harmful projects within tiger reserves.
- ❖ **Tourism & Human–Wildlife Conflict:** Prescribes guidelines for tourism in core and buffer areas and promotes measures to mitigate human–wildlife conflicts.
- ❖ **Research & Monitoring:** Coordinates research, population estimation of tigers and prey, habitat monitoring, disease surveillance, patrolling, and scientific conservation programmes.
- ❖ **Eco-development:** Supports biodiversity conservation through eco-development, community participation, and capacity building of tiger reserve staff.
- ❖ **Statutory Powers:** Can issue binding directions to authorities and individuals for the protection of tigers and tiger reserves; also advises on diversion of tiger habitats, requiring approval of the National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) where applicable.

4. *Central Zoo Authority (CZA):*

Context: Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Shri Bhupender Yadav, chaired the 46th Meeting of the Central Zoo Authority (CZA), today in Coimbatore.

About Central Zoo Authority (CZA):

- ❖ **Definition:** The Central Zoo Authority (CZA) is a statutory autonomous body under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC).
- ❖ **Establishment:** It was established in 1992 under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
- ❖ **Primary Objective:** To enforce minimum standards for the housing, upkeep, healthcare, and scientific management of animals in Indian zoos.
- ❖ **Zoo Recognition:** Every zoo in India must obtain mandatory recognition from the CZA to operate legally; recognition is granted based on prescribed standards.
- ❖ **Monitoring & Regulation:** Evaluates and monitors zoos, and has the authority to grant or withdraw recognition for non-compliance.
- ❖ **Conservation Role:** Identifies endangered species for captive breeding and assigns breeding programmes to suitable zoos.
- ❖ **Research & Capacity Building:** Promotes research in captive breeding, ex-situ conservation, biotechnology applications, and conducts training programmes for zoo personnel.
- ❖ **Technical & Financial Support:** Provides technical, scientific, and financial assistance for improved zoo management and conservation initiatives.
- ❖ **Key Achievement:** Has significantly improved zoo standards in India and closed down substandard zoos through strict enforcement of legal provisions.

5. *Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanization (SMAM):*

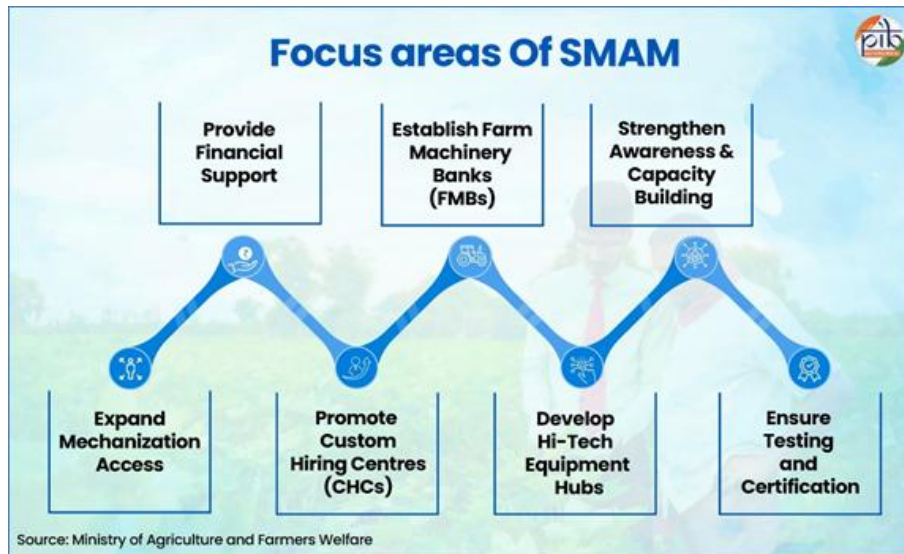
Context: To promote farm mechanization in India, the Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanization (SMAM) was launched in 2014–15, completing 10 years.

About Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanization (SMAM):

- ❖ It is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme under the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY). SMAM aims to “reach the unreached” by extending the benefits of mechanization to underserved sections.
- ❖ It includes small and marginal farmers, including women, Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), Farmer-Producer Organizations (FPOs), Self-Help Groups (SHGs), and rural entrepreneurs.

Category	Size-Class
Marginal	Below 1.00 hectare
Small	1.00-2.00 hectare
Semi- Medium	2.00-4.00 hectare
Medium	4.00-10.00 hectare
Large	10.00 hectare and above

- ❖ The scheme promotes the establishment of Custom Hiring Centres (CHCs). These are units comprising a set of farm machinery, implements, and equipment meant for hiring by farmers.
- ❖ It also supports the development of hubs for hi-tech and high-value agricultural equipment, and the distribution of farm machinery.
- ❖ Awareness generation through demonstrations and capacity-building initiatives is also undertaken.
- ❖ Special focus is placed on regions with low farm power availability and on addressing structural constraints such as small landholdings and high capital costs through affordable rental services via CHCs.
- ❖ Additionally, SMAM supports the performance testing and certification of agricultural machinery. Targeted Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) activities are undertaken to enhance adoption among stakeholders.



The **Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY)**, launched in 2007, is a flagship scheme that incentivizes states to increase public investment in agriculture and allied sectors. It provides states with **flexibility and autonomy** to design and implement projects tailored to local needs. The schemes encompass a broad range of interventions, including crop production, infrastructure development, mechanization, and value addition. In 2017-18, the Scheme was restructured as the **RKVY-RAFTAR (Remunerative Approaches for Agriculture and Allied Sector Rejuvenation)**, with an increased focus on strengthening both pre-and post-harvest infrastructure.

6. *ASTRA* missiles:

Context: Indonesia became the first country that signed a pact to import India's ASTRA missiles (Astra Mk 1).

About ASTRA missiles:

- ❖ It is Indigenous Beyond Visual Range Air-to-Air missile (BVRAAM).
- ❖ The missile is designed to engage and destroy highly manoeuvring supersonic aircraft.
- ❖ Developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- ❖ The missile has all weather day and night capability.
- ❖ Its range exceeds 100 kms and is equipped with state-of-the art guidance and navigation systems.
- ❖ Capabilities: The missile can engage targets at an altitude of up to 20 km and travels at a maximum speed of Mach 4.5 (about 4.5 times the speed of sound).
- ❖ It is equipped with inertial navigation, mid-course guidance updates, and terminal active radar homing, enabling highly accurate target tracking and interception even against fast-moving aerial threats.

7. *'ULLAS' (Understanding Lifelong Learning for All in Society) scheme:*

Context: Uttarakhand has become the sixth fully literate state under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and the 'ULLAS' (Understanding Lifelong Learning for All in Society) scheme. Uttarakhand joins Mizoram, Goa, Tripura, Himachal Pradesh and Sikkim.

About 'ULLAS' (Understanding Lifelong Learning for All in Society) scheme:

- ❖ Definition of Literates: Literates are those with reading, writing, basic math, digital, and financial literacy skills.
- ❖ Scheme Type: It is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme aligned with NEP 2020.
- ❖ Overall Target: Aims to educate 5 crore adults (1 crore/year) using the Online Teaching, Learning and Assessment System (OTLAS) system.
- ❖ Technology Backbone: OTLAS is a digital platform developed by NIC for online teaching, learning, and assessment.
- ❖ Duration: The scheme runs from FY 2022–23 to 2026–27.
- ❖ Nodal Ministry: Implemented by the Ministry of Education.
- ❖ Target Group: Adults aged 15 and above who missed out on formal education.
- ❖ Programme Components: Includes literacy, numeracy, life skills, vocational skills, and continuing education.
- ❖ Implementation Mode: Driven by volunteerism to instil social responsibility (Kartavya Bodh).
- ❖ Infrastructure: Samajik Chetna Kendras are set up using existing community spaces with schools as base units.
- ❖ Regional Access: Content is accessible in regional languages via DIKSHA and ULLAS apps/portals.
- ❖ Assessment: (Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Assessment Test (FLNAT) is held twice a year or on-demand in local schools for evaluation and certification.

Quick Bites:

- ☐ Union Minister of Health & Family Welfare Shri Jagat Prakash Nadda will lay the foundation stone of the ICMR Centre for High Altitude Medicine and Public Health Research at Keylong in Lahaul & Spiti district, Himachal Pradesh, on 11 July 2026. The Centre, being set up by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) under the Department of Health Research, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, will upgrade ICMR's existing field station at Keylong into a full-fledged, multidisciplinary hub for research, innovation and capacity building focused on India's high-altitude and climate-sensitive regions.
- ☐ The Global Status Report on Cancer 2026 released by World Health Organisation and International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), it is the first ever survey of people affected by cancer.
- ☐ Sabang Port: Sabang Port is located on Weh Island in Aceh Province, at the northern tip of Sumatra, Indonesia. It lies close to the Strait of Malacca, one of the world's busiest and most strategic maritime chokepoints connecting the Andaman Sea (Indian Ocean) with the South China Sea (Pacific Ocean). India and Indonesia have agreed to jointly develop the port to strengthen

maritime cooperation, enhance India's strategic presence in the Indo-Pacific, improve connectivity with Southeast Asia, support regional security, and promote trade under India's Act East Policy and SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) vision.

- ☐ Egyptian Vulture: The Egyptian Vulture is the world's smallest and the only known tool-using vulture, found across southern Europe, northern and central Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia, and the Indian subcontinent. It breeds later than other vulture species, often rubs its body with ferric oxide-rich soil, and plays a vital ecological role by scavenging animal carcasses. Its population is declining due to threats such as diclofenac poisoning, electrocution from power lines, and habitat degradation. It has become locally extinct in the Nilgiris and is disappearing from much of Tamil Nadu. It is listed as Endangered on the IUCN Red List and is protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
- ☐ CSIR-National Aerospace Laboratories (CSIR-NAL) in Bengaluru completed the design phase of the Saras MkII on 8 July 2026. The Saras MkII is an indigenous 19-seater light transport aircraft developed for smaller airports and regional air connectivity in India.
- ☐ Switzerland will host a global AI summit in Geneva on June 21-22, 2027. The summit is linked to international discussions on artificial intelligence governance, trustworthy AI, and multilateral cooperation among governments, international organisations, scientists, businesses, and civil society.
- ☐ An Indian delegation visited Kyrgyzstan from 4 July to 7 July 2026 for the inauguration of the International Centre for Civilizational Studies “Manas and Mahabharata” in Bishkek. The centre was established through cooperation between the Manas National Academy in Kyrgyzstan and the Centre for Studies of International Relations (CSIR) in New Delhi.
- ☐ The Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways plans to centralise the National Bridge Health Monitoring Software by involving the Indian Institute of Technology Madras and the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing. The system is linked to the Bridge Health Monitoring System, which uses sensors for real-time monitoring of bridges on the national highway network.
- ☐ India launched Awiqli, the world’s first once-weekly basal insulin, on 9 July 2026. The drug contains insulin icodec and is marketed by Danish pharmaceutical company Novo Nordisk. In India, Awiqli is approved for adults with Type 1 diabetes and Type 2 diabetes.
- ☐ Srikakulam district in Andhra Pradesh will get a full-fledged airport under the UDAN (Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagarik) scheme. The proposed airport is planned for Mandasa mandal in the Uddanam region, while Palasa has been earmarked for a domestic airport on 1,261 acres.

Practice questions:

Objective questions:

With reference to the Egyptian Vulture, which one of the following is correct?

- (a) It is the largest vulture species in the world.
- (b) It is listed as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List.
- (c) It is endemic to India.
- (d) It is the world's only known tool-using vulture.

India recently inaugurated the International Centre for Civilizational Studies "Manas and Mahabharata" in collaboration with which one of the following countries?

- (a) Kazakhstan
- (b) Uzbekistan
- (c) Kyrgyzstan
- (d) Tajikistan

With reference to the ULLAS (Understanding Lifelong Learning for All in Society) Scheme, consider the following statements:

1. It is a Centrally Sector Scheme fully funded by the central government under National Education Policy (NEP), 2020.
2. It targets children aged 15 years and below who missed formal education.
3. The scheme is implemented by the Ministry of Women and Child Development in collaboration with the Ministry of social justice.
4. It aims to educate 5 crore adults during the period 2022–23 to 2026–27.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) 1, 2 and 4 only
- (b) 2 and 4 only
- (c) 1 and 2 only
- (d) 4 only

With reference to the 'Quality Council of India (QCI)', consider the following statements (CSP 2017)

1. QCI was set up jointly by the Government of India and the Indian Industry.
2. The Chairman of QCI is appointed by the Prime Minister on the recommendations of the industry to the Government.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

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