

12/08/2026 Daily Current News

1. *Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowships and Awards:*

Context: The Hon'ble President of India will confer the Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowships and Awards for the years 2024 and 2025 to 115 artists in a special investiture ceremony scheduled for Thursday, 13 August 2026 at 11:30 a.m. at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi.

About Sangeet Natak Akademi awards:

- ❖ The Akademi Awards have been conferred since 1952.
- ❖ These honours not only symbolize the highest standard of excellence and achievement, but also recognize sustained individual work and contribution.
- ❖ The Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards are the highest national recognition conferred on practising artists.
- ❖ Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards are given to the artists from the field of Music, Dance, Theatre, Traditional/Folk/Tribal Music /Dance/Theatre, Puppetry and Overall contribution/scholarship in the Performing Arts etc.
- ❖ The Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowship is the highest honour conferred by Sangeet Natak Akademi without distinction of nationality, race, caste, religion, creed, or sex.
- ❖ The honour of Akademi Fellow carries a purse money of Rs.3,00,000/- while the Akademi Award carries a purse money of Rs 1,00,000/- , besides a Tamrapatra and Angavastram.

About Sangeet natak academy:

- ❖ The Sangeet Natak Akademi is India's national academy for music, dance and drama.
- ❖ It was created by a resolution of the Ministry of Education, Government of India, in 1952 with Dr P.V. Rajamannar as its first Chairman.
- ❖ It is presently an Autonomous Body of the Ministry of Culture, Government of India and is fully funded by the Government for implementation of its schemes and programmes.

2. *Support for Marginalized Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise (SMILE):*

Context: The Central Government has taken comprehensive measures to strengthen the care, rehabilitation and social reintegration of persons engaged in begging through the Support for Marginalized Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise (SMILE) – Comprehensive Rehabilitation of Persons Engaged in the Act of Begging (SMILE-Beggary) Scheme. Since inception of the SMILE-Beggary Scheme on 23 October 2023 and up to 31 July 2026, a total of ₹45.59 crore has been released under the Scheme. This includes ₹40.04 crore released to implementing authorities/cities, with the balance utilised towards administrative and other scheme-related expenditure.

About SMILE scheme:

- ❖ It is a Central Sector Scheme of the Government of India.

- ❖ Objective: To provide comprehensive rehabilitation of persons engaged in begging through a dignity-based and livelihood-oriented approach.
 - ❖ Coverage: Currently operational in 216 cities, with a target to expand to 295 cities and rehabilitate 35,000 persons by FY 2030–31.
 - ❖ Two Sub-Schemes: Comprehensive Rehabilitation for Welfare of Transgender Persons and Comprehensive Rehabilitation of Persons Engaged in the Act of Begging.
 - ❖ Comprehensive Rehabilitation: Includes identification, rescue, shelter, healthcare, counselling, and rehabilitation of beneficiaries.
 - ❖ Livelihood & Social Reintegration: Provides skill development, education, sustainable employment, and supports mainstreaming beneficiaries with dignity and self-reliance.
 - ❖ Convergence-Based Implementation: Implemented through coordination among the Central Government, States/UTs, District Administrations, with convergence with schemes such as DAY-NULM, NRLM, and Mission Vatsalya.
 - ❖ Digital Monitoring: Uses the SMILE-Beggary National Portal for registration, monitoring, and tracking of rehabilitation centres and beneficiaries.
4. Kolleru Lake: Context: The Supreme Court-appointed Central Empowered Committee (CEC) has issued directions over.

3. *National Clean Air Programme (NCAP):*

Context: As per Government data, more than 80 % of NCAP cities continue to exceed prescribed National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) limits. Cities like Delhi, Kolkata, Surat, Ahmedabad, Pune and Guwahati have exceeded NAAQS continuously since 2023.

About National Clean Air Programme (NCAP):

- ❖ Launch: MoEFCC launched NCAP in 2019 as a national strategy to improve ambient air quality.
- ❖ Coverage: It covers 130 cities across 24 States/UTs, including 122 non-attainment cities and 8 million-plus cities.
- ❖ Strategy: Implements city-specific Clean Air Action Plans, performance-linked funding, inter-ministerial convergence and a Jan Andolan approach.
- ❖ Target: Aims for up to 40% reduction in PM10 and PM2.5 concentrations or achievement of NAAQS by 2025–26.
- ❖ NAAQS: CPCB notified the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) in 2009, covering 12 pollutants, including PM10 and PM2.5; annual standards are 60 µg/m³ for PM10 and 40 µg/m³ for PM2.5.
- ❖ PRANA: Portal for Regulation of Air-pollution in NAC (PRANA) was launched to monitor and track implementation of NCAP.

4. *Nurturing Aspirations through Vocational Training for Young Adolescent Girls (NAVYA):*

Context: The government is strengthening skill development and employability among adolescent girls through the NAVYA programme.

About NAVYA Programme:

- ❖ Launched in 2025 as a joint initiative of MSDE and MWCD, implemented under PMKVY 4.0.

- ❖ Targets adolescent girls aged 16–18 years through industry-relevant vocational and career-oriented training.
- ❖ Provides On-the-Job Training (OJT) and focuses on futuristic job roles.
- ❖ Includes a Holistic Development Module covering digital literacy, financial literacy, career readiness and entrepreneurship.
- ❖ Expanded to 100 Aspirational Districts to improve skill development and employment opportunities for adolescent girls.

5. *QS World University Rankings 2027:*

Context: The QS World University Rankings 2027 listed 52 Indian higher education institutions, up from 11 in the 2015 edition. The rankings were released on 18 June 2026, and the Indian government linked the rise in representation to the National Institutional Ranking Framework, launched in 2015.

Highlights of QS World University Rankings 2027:

- ❖ The QS World University Rankings 2027 were released by QS Quacquarelli Symonds.
- ❖ Universities are assessed across five broad parameters: Research & Discovery, Employability & Outcomes, Global Engagement, Learning Experience, and Sustainability.
- ❖ Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) secured the 1st rank globally for the 15th consecutive year.
- ❖ India has 52 universities in the rankings, making it the world's fifth most represented higher education system.
- ❖ Indian Institute of Technology Delhi ranked 118th globally and became India's highest-ranked institution in the 2027 edition.
- ❖ Indian Institute of Technology Bombay and Indian Institute of Technology Madras also featured among the top 200 universities globally.
- ❖ The rankings serve as a globally recognized benchmark for assessing the quality, reputation, and international competitiveness of higher education institutions.

6. *National Climate Stack Innovation Challenge:*

Context: The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) announced the final winners of the National Climate Stack Innovation Challenge on 10 August 2026.

About National Climate Stack Innovation Challenge:

- ❖ The National Climate Stack Innovation Challenge was designed around digital tools for climate risk assessment in agriculture.
- ❖ The solutions used satellite data, artificial intelligence, and climate modelling to build applications for rural decision-making.
- ❖ The challenge was organised with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Dalberg Advisors and used the Data in Climate Resilient Agriculture (DiCRA) framework.
- ❖ SatSure Analytics India Private Limited won the first prize of ₹15 lakh for a climate vulnerability index that ranks villages across India by weather risk exposure.
- ❖ EXPERIQS Private Limited won the second prize of ₹10 lakh for a platform that monitors drought conditions and forecasts their impact on crop cycles.

- ❖ VARSAPRADAYA Private Limited won the third prize of ₹5 lakh for a digital engine that provides hazard scoring and irrigation planning inputs.

7. ***Moon Base Programme:***

Context: The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has invited the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) to join its Moon Base programme. The formal invitation was extended by the U.S. space agency at the ninth meeting of the India-U.S. Civil Space Joint Working Group (CSJWG), held recently in Bengaluru.

About Moon Base Programme:

- ❖ Lunar South Pole: Targeted because permanently shadowed regions (PSRs) may contain water ice, useful for life support, oxygen and fuel production.
- ❖ International Collaboration: The programme promotes cooperation among allied countries, with NASA inviting partners including ISRO to contribute expertise and technology.
- ❖ Key Infrastructure: Major components include lunar landers, habitats, power systems and in-situ resource utilisation (ISRU) technologies.
- ❖ Public–Private Partnership: Several technologies and systems are expected to be developed through public-private partnerships, reducing costs and accelerating innovation.
- ❖ Artemis Accords: The programme is aligned with the Artemis Accords, providing principles for peaceful exploration, transparency, data sharing and responsible resource utilisation.
- ❖ India's Contribution: ISRO's Chandrayaan experience and cost-effective mission capabilities could strengthen the scientific and technological aspects of lunar exploration.
- ❖ Benefits to India: Participation can enhance India's capabilities in human spaceflight, lunar science, deep-space exploration and advanced space technologies.

Artemis Accords:

- ❖ Artemis, named after the Greek Moon goddess, is a comprehensive agreement drawn up by the US to bring together nations that share a common vision for civil space exploration.
- ❖ It serves as a framework for cooperation and collaboration in space exploration, building upon the foundation of the Outer Space Treaty of 1967.
- ❖ The Artemis Accords were jointly launched by the United States Department of State and NASA on October 13, 2020, with seven partner countries, such as Canada, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, UAE, and the UK.
- ❖ On June 21, 2023, India became the 27th nation to sign the Artemis Accords.
- ❖ The Artemis programme includes plans for a base on the lunar surface, multiple spacecraft to ferry humans and cargo, an orbiting space station, and a constellation of satellites to help with navigation and communication.

Quick Bites:

- ☐ Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will release the autobiography of former President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, titled “Triumph of the Indian Republic: My Life, My Struggles”, on 12 August, 2026, at 9:30 AM at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi.
- ☐ The Ayush Grid project, launched by the Ministry of Ayush, has been envisaged as a comprehensive IT backbone for the Ayush sector with the objective of digitizing service delivery and strengthening transparency, efficiency and governance across healthcare, research, education, drug administration, capacity building and medicinal plants.
- ☐ PRAYATNA is a flagship initiative of the Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS) to foster scientific writing skills among Ayurveda PG/Ph.D Scholars. The scheme is aimed at improving the quality of publications in the Ayurveda sector for effective dissemination and high-impact publications.
- ☐ Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has taken up a program of National Importance namely, Network Program on Precision Agriculture (ICAR - NePPA) having 16 ICAR Research Institutes of different domains. Under this program, technologies are developed using sensors, remote sensing at different platforms (ground, airborne -Drone and satellite platforms), AI and ICTs in line with international best practices in precision agriculture.
- ☐ The “Tribhuvan” Sahkari University Act, 2025, mandates the University to provide qualified and trained manpower to meet the present and future needs of the co-operative sector by establishing its own schools and through affiliating institutes and also to standardise the course design and content, pedagogy, course delivery in co-operative education and training for professionalisation of workforce in the cooperative sector.
- ☐ The Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Fisheries Animal Husbandry and Dairying has been implementing a Central Sector Sub-scheme namely the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kisan Samridhi Sah-Yojana (PM-MKSSY) under the ongoing Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) for a period of four years from FY 2023-24 to FY 2026-27 at an estimated outlay of ₹6000 crore.
- ☐ Anemia Mukht Bharat Abhiyaan is a Government of India initiative aimed at reducing anemia through a 7×7×7 strategy, replacing the earlier 6×6×6 approach. Its key components include universal Hb testing using digital invasive hemoglobinometers, prophylactic and targeted therapeutic management based on anemia category, and segregation of nutritional and non-nutritional anemia for appropriate case-based treatment. It introduces a robust digital tracking system by shifting from the T3 approach—Test, Treat and Talk—to T4—Test, Treat, Talk and Track. The programme also promotes dietary diversification through the Eat Right approach and locally available iron-rich foods, adopts a whole-of-government convergent approach involving multiple ministries, and emphasizes Jan Bhagidari to transform anemia awareness from passive acceptance to active community ownership.
- ☐ To promote inland water transport in the country, 111 inland waterways across India have been declared as National Waterways (NWs) vide the National Waterways Act, 2016. As on date, 32 NWs are operational for the purpose of cargo and passenger movement. Further, in pursuance of the budget announcement for 2026-27 and based on studies, 19 additional new NWs have been identified predominantly for cruise tourism and passenger ferry operations over the next five years.

- ☐ India's exports of textiles and apparel, including handicrafts, registered a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of about 4.5% during the period from 2019–20 to 2025–26, increasing from ₹2,49,250 crore in 2019–20 to ₹3,25,339 crore in 2025–26.
- ☐ PM MITRA Parks are a government initiative with scheme outlay of Rs. 4,445 Crore for the period 2021-22 to 2027-28 to create world-class, integrated textile manufacturing hubs across seven states in India to boost investment, employment, and exports. These parks are inspired by the '5F' vision (Farm to Fibre to Factory to Fashion to Foreign) and aim to develop a complete textile value chain, from spinning to garmenting, with modern infrastructure and facilities. The seven selected locations are in Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Gujarat, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, and Maharashtra.
- ☐ Lake Mead is the largest reservoir in the U.S. by water-storage capacity and is located in the Mojave Desert. It is an artificial reservoir created in the 1930s by the construction of Hoover Dam on the Colorado River. The Colorado River also forms part of the international boundary between the United States and Mexico. Recently, Lake Mead reached its lowest water level since its filling nearly 90 years ago, reflecting the severe water stress affecting the Colorado River Basin.
- ☐ The National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL), a constituent of the Quality Council of India (QCI), launched India's first accreditation scheme for mobile food testing laboratories on 10 August 2026. The scheme was unveiled at the "Gunvatta Samanvaya – A Multilateral MoU Exchange Ceremony" held at Hotel Ashoka in New Delhi.
- ☐ V.O. Chidambaranar Port Authority in Thoothukudi, Tamil Nadu, became India's first major port to achieve Scope-2 Emission-Free status on 10 August 2026. The port also became the first in India to secure ISO 50001:2018 certification for its Energy Management System. Scope-2 emissions are indirect greenhouse gas emissions from purchased electricity, steam, heating, or cooling. A port can record zero Scope-2 emissions when its renewable energy generation exceeds its total electricity consumption during a defined period.
- ☐ India won one gold medal, three bronze medals, and one Honourable Mention at the 23rd International Linguistics Olympiad (IOL) held in Bucharest, Romania, in 2026. The eight-member Indian student contingent competed in the individual contest, where medals were awarded for solving language-analysis problems based on logic, grammar, and pattern recognition. Indian student Shrilakshmi Venkatraman won the individual gold medal with a score of 70.0.
- ☐ Lebanon's Parliament voted on 11 August 2026 to formally abolish the death penalty and replace it with life imprisonment with aggravated hard labour for future offences.

Practice questions:***Objective questions:***

Support for Marginalized Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise (SMILE) Scheme is meant for the rehabilitation of: (UPSC EPFO 2025)

1. Transgender persons
2. Persons engaged in the act of Begging

Select the answer using the codes given below :

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

With reference to the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP), consider the following statements:

1. It was launched by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change in 2019.
2. It covers 130 cities across 24 States/UTs.
3. It aims to achieve a uniform 50% reduction in PM10 concentration across all covered cities by 2027-28.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Consider the following statements regarding the Artemis Accords:

1. The Artemis Accords were jointly launched by the United Nations and NASA in 2020.
2. India was the first Asian country to sign the Artemis Accords.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

With reference to the Ayush Grid, which one of the following is its primary objective?

- (a) Establishment of a national insurance pool for Ayush treatments
- (b) Creation of an IT backbone for digitisation and governance of the Ayush sector

- (c) Regulation of international trade in medicinal plants
- (d) Establishment of dedicated Ayush hospitals in every district

Which Indian port recently became the country's first major port to achieve Scope-2 Emission-Free status?

- (a) Jawaharlal Nehru Port
- (b) Deendayal Port
- (c) V.O. Chidambaranar Port
- (d) Visakhapatnam Port

The 7×7×7 strategy is associated with which of the following government programmes?

- (a) Poshan Abhiyaan
- (b) Anemia Mukta Bharat Abhiyaan
- (c) Mission Indradhanush
- (d) National Health Mission

The National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL) is a constituent of:

- (a) Bureau of Indian Standards
- (b) Quality Council of India
- (c) National Accreditation Authority
- (d) Department of Consumer Affairs

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