

22/07/2026 Daily Current News

1. *Mission Golden Spice:*

Context: The Union Minister for Communications and Development of North Eastern Region (MDoNER), Shri Jyotiraditya M. Scindia, together with the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Meghalaya, Shri Conrad K. Sangma, today launched the “Mission Golden Spice – Integrated Lakadong Turmeric Value Chain Enhancement Project”

About Mission Golden Spice:

- ❖ It is a ₹175.45-crore convergence-led initiative for turmeric cultivation and value-chain development in the State of Meghalaya.
- ❖ The Mission is designed as a phased, five-year roadmap (2025–2030), to be implemented in two phases — Value Chain Strengthening (Phase 1) followed by Expansion & Scale-up (Phase 2) — for promotion of Meghalaya's Unique Selling Proposition (USP), the GI-tagged Lakadong Turmeric.
- ❖ Anchored by MDoNER and the North Eastern Council (NEC), the Mission builds upon convergence with schemes and interventions of the Ministries of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Food Processing Industries and Commerce, along with APEDA, the Spices Board, the National Turmeric Board, ICAR, MeitY, NABARD, SFAC and the Government of Meghalaya for establishing an integrated turmeric value-chain ecosystem in the State.

2. *Qdenga Vaccine:*

Context: In a Landmark step towards strengthening India's efforts for the prevention and control of dengue, the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO), under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, has granted marketing authorisation for the Dengue Tetravalent Vaccine (Live, Attenuated) – Qdenga.

About Qdenga Vaccine:

- ❖ It is manufactured by Takeda GmbH, Germany and to be imported by M/s Takeda Biopharmaceuticals India Pvt. Ltd.
- ❖ This is the first dengue vaccine approved in the country for the prevention of dengue disease.
- ❖ Qdenga® is a live, attenuated tetravalent dengue vaccine developed using recombinant DNA technology.
- ❖ The vaccine is produced in Vero cells, with genes encoding serotype-specific surface proteins engineered into a dengue virus type-2 backbone.
- ❖ The product contains genetically modified organisms (GMOs). It is supplied as a freeze-dried powder for reconstitution and is administered as a subcutaneous injection.
- ❖ The vaccine is indicated for the prevention of dengue disease in individuals 4 to 60 years of age.
- ❖ The recommended immunisation schedule consists of two doses of 0.5 ml each, administered at an interval of three months (0 and 3 months).
- ❖ The vaccine has already received regulatory approval in 42 countries, including the European Union, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand, and has also received World Health Organization (WHO) prequalification.

3. *PM Vishwakarma (PMV) scheme:*

Context: In a significant step towards strengthening market access for traditional artisans, a PMV stall at Shaheed Bhagat Singh International Airport, Chandigarh, was inaugurated on 14th July 2026, marking the launch of second operational PMV stall at an airport. The stall has been set up with the support of the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) and a Self-Help Group (SHG).

About PM Vishwakarma (PMV) scheme:



The infographic for the PM Vishwakarma scheme features a central title 'PM Vishwakarma' in large red font, with the subtitle 'Central Sector Scheme to support traditional artisans & crafts people of rural and urban India' below it. On the left, under 'Highlights of the Programme:', it lists: Financial outlay of Rs. 13,000 crore; 18 Traditional trades to be covered in 1st instance; Artisans and Craftspeople to be provided recognition with PM Vishwakarma certificate and ID Card; Credit support upto Rs. 1 lakh (1st tranche) and Rs. 2 lakh (2nd tranche) with concessional interest rate of 5%; and Will provide Skill Upgradation, Toolkit Incentive and Incentive for Digital Transactions and Marketing support. On the right, under '18 Traditional trades to be covered in 1st Instance', it lists 18 trades from 1 to 18. At the bottom left, it says 'Cabinet Decision 16 August, 2023' next to a portrait of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The infographic is flanked by two circular images of artisans.

PM Vishwakarma
Central Sector Scheme to support traditional artisans
& crafts people of rural and urban India

Highlights of the Programme:

- Financial outlay of **Rs. 13,000 crore**
- 18 Traditional trades** to be covered in 1st instance
- Artisans and Craftspeople** to be provided recognition with PM Vishwakarma certificate and ID Card
- Credit support upto **Rs. 1 lakh (1st tranche)** and **Rs. 2 lakh (2nd tranche)** with concessional interest rate of 5%
- Will provide **Skill Upgradation, Toolkit Incentive and Incentive for Digital Transactions** and Marketing support

18 Traditional trades to be covered in 1st Instance

1. Carpenter (Suthar)
2. Boat Maker
3. Armourer
4. Blacksmith (Lohar)
5. Hammer and Toolkit Maker
6. Locksmith
7. Goldsmith (Sonar)
8. Potter (Kumhaar)
9. Sculptor (Moortikar, stone carver), Stone breaker
10. Cobbler (Charmkar)/Shoesmith/Footwear artisan
11. Mason (Rajmistri)
12. Basket/Mat/Broom Maker/Coir Weaver
13. Doll & Toy Maker (Traditional)
14. Barber (Naai)
15. Garland maker (Malakar)
16. Washerman (Dhobi)
17. Tailor (Darzi)
18. Fishing Net Maker

Cabinet Decision
16 August, 2023

- ❖ PM Vishwakarma (PMV) is a flagship scheme of the Government, designed to support traditional artisans and craftspeople through the three pillars of Samman, Samarthya, and Samriddhi.
- ❖ It was launched on September 17, 2023 by the Ministry of MSME.
- ❖ It aims to strengthen the Guru-Shishya Parampara or family-based practice of traditional skills by artisans and craftspeople working with their hands and tools.
- ❖ The scheme also aims at improving the quality as well as the reach of products and services of artisans and craftspeople.

4. *India's Renewable Energy Installed Capacity:*

Context: Renewable energy installed capacity in the country has increased from 76.38 GW in 2014 to 288.58 GW as on 30.06.2026. This information was submitted by the Union Minister of State for Ministry of New & Renewable Energy, Shri Shripad Yesso Naik in a written reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha today.

More details:

- ❖ So far, a total of 297.36 GW non-fossil fuel sources based electricity capacity has been installed in the country as on 30.06.2026. This includes 288.58 GW renewable energy capacity and 8.78 GW nuclear power capacity.

Source	Installed Capacity (GW)
Solar Power	162.15
Wind Power	57.44
Bio Power	11.75
Hydro Power	57.24
Total	288.58

5. *Allographa*:

Context: A team of researchers has unveiled five new species of lichen-forming fungi belonging to the genus *Allographa*, an important indicator of forest health and environmental quality because of their sensitivity to pollution and habitat changes, from the biodiversity-rich Western Ghats of India.

About *Allographa*:

- ❖ *Allographa* is a genus of script lichens or lichen-forming fungi (a fungus that teams up with algae or cyanobacteria to create a lichen), with elongated fruiting bodies in the family Graphidaceae. It has more than 200 species.
- ❖ Molecular knowledge of *Allographa* species from India, is limited, particularly from the Western Ghats, where many species had been identified primarily on morphological grounds.
- ❖ *Allographa* is a genus of crustose lichens belonging to the family Graphidaceae.
- ❖ It is commonly known as a script lichen because the fruiting bodies resemble written characters or script-like lines on bark.
- ❖ The lichen body (thallus) is thin, crust-like, and closely attached to the substrate, so it cannot be removed without damaging the surface.
- ❖ It grows mainly on the bark of trees in humid tropical and subtropical forests, including many parts of India.
- ❖ Reproduction occurs through ascospores produced in elongated fruiting bodies called lirellae.

- ❖ Ecologically, *Allographa* is an important bioindicator of air quality, as lichens are highly sensitive to atmospheric pollutants, especially sulphur dioxide and heavy metals.

6. *White-bellied heron*:

Context: India's rarest heron faces a silent end as a new dam ignores its home. Kalai-II Hydropower Project is a proposed 1,200 MW run-of-river hydroelectric project with pondage (small storage capacity) on the Lohit River, a major tributary of the Brahmaputra, located in Anjaw district, Arunachal Pradesh. It is being developed by Tehri Hydro Development Corporation India Limited

About White-bellied heron:

- ❖ White-bellied Heron (*Ardea insignis*) is the 2nd-largest heron in the world and belongs to the Ardeidae family.
- ❖ It inhabits free-flowing, fast-flowing eastern Himalayan rivers, feeding mainly on fish in river rapids.
- ❖ It has a long flexible neck, serrated bill, compact body, shorter legs, and extended toes, adapted for catching fish in turbulent waters.
- ❖ It is listed as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List and protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
- ❖ Fewer than 60 individuals remain in the wild, with Bhutan hosting about 45% of the global population.
- ❖ In India, it is found mainly in Arunachal Pradesh, especially around Namdapha Tiger Reserve, Kamlang Tiger Reserve, and the Lohit River.
- ❖ It is solitary, gives deep croaking calls at dawn and dusk, and nests in tall trees.
- ❖ It is an important bio-indicator of Himalayan freshwater ecosystems, reflecting river health, fish abundance, and habitat quality.
- ❖ Major threats include hydropower dams, habitat loss, altered river flows, hunting, human disturbance, and a very small genetic population.

Quick Bites:

- ☐ Building on its sustained efforts to promote responsible mine closure practices, the Ministry of Coal is set to release 'AAROH – Annual Report on Mine Closure' in New Delhi on 22nd July 2026. For the first time since independence, 42 coal mines have been scientifically closed, in accordance with approved mine closure plans.
- ☐ The “Meri Samiti Mera Patal” is an initiative which has been independently conceptualized and launched by Regional Institute of Cooperative Management (RICM), Chandigarh under National Council for Cooperative Training (NCCT). The objective of the “Meri Samiti – Mera Patal” is to empower and modernize Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS) by addressing their training needs, improving governance, and enhancing visibility.
- ☐ Operation Southern Readiness 26-2, a four-day multinational maritime security training engagement, commenced at Southern Naval Command, Kochi, on 20 Jul 2026. Hosted by the Southern Naval Command, the engagement is being conducted under the aegis of the Indian Navy-led Combined Task Force 154 (CTF 154), in partnership with Combined Maritime Forces

(CMF), and has brought together 254 participants from 26 countries, supported by 74 facilitators and four International Organisations, and Subject Matter Experts.

- ☐ As part of its BRICS Chairship 2026, India is set to convene the Sixteenth BRICS Health Ministers' Meeting in Chandigarh from 22–24 July 2026, bringing together Health Ministers and senior health officials from BRICS member countries to deepen cooperation on health security, digital health, pandemic preparedness and equitable access to quality healthcare.
- ☐ As part of the Government's continued efforts to strengthen India's creative sector and promote the emerging Orange Economy, the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting today launched the Pilot Phase of the 'Gems of India' Challenge, a structured national initiative to identify, nurture and promote grassroots digital creators from across the country.
- ☐ The Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports invites online nominations for the Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Award (TNNAA) 2025, India's highest national honour for outstanding achievements in the field of adventure.
- ☐ India has approved its first utility-scale 100 MWh Vanadium Redox Flow Battery Energy Storage System (VRFB BESS) for deployment at Khavda Solar Park in Gujarat. NTPC Renewable Energy Limited awarded the contract for the project on 20-21 July 2026, and the system is scheduled for deployment in 2027 with 10 years of operations and maintenance services. A vanadium redox flow battery is a type of rechargeable battery that stores energy in liquid electrolyte solutions containing vanadium ions.
- ☐ Ethanol ATMs are proposed dispensing kiosks in India for selling ethanol in canisters for cooking use. The Union Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas is preparing a policy for wider use of ethanol as a mainstream cooking fuel, with a target timeline around September 2026. Ethanol is an alcohol-based biofuel that is commonly produced from sugarcane, maize, and other biomass feedstocks. It is already used in India as a blending component in petrol under the ethanol blending programme.
- ☐ A sudden release of suspected methane gas killed at least 20 workers inside an under-construction tunnel of the National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC)'s Teesta State-VI Hydroelectric Project in Namchi district of Sikkim.

Practice questions:

Objective questions:

With reference to the 'Gems of India' Challenge, recently launched by the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, which one of the following best describes the primary purpose of the initiative?

- (a) Promote grassroots digital creators through structured national talent identification
- (b) Support technology start-ups through innovation funding and market access
- (c) Encourage GI product promotion through digital branding and marketing
- (d) Strengthen heritage tourism through community-led cultural content creation

The Tenzing Norgay National Award (TNNAA), recently seen in the news, is India's highest national honour in which of the following fields?

- (a) Adventure activities
- (b) Mountaineering research
- (c) Wildlife conservation
- (d) Sports coaching

With reference to the Qdenga vaccine, recently approved in India, consider the following statements:

1. It is the first dengue vaccine approved in India for the prevention of dengue disease.
2. It is a live, attenuated tetravalent dengue vaccine developed using recombinant DNA technology.
3. The recommended immunisation schedule consists of two doses administered six months apart.
4. The vaccine has received World Health Organization (WHO) prequalification.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) 1, 2 and 4 only
- (b) 1 and 3 only
- (c) 2, 3 and 4 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

With reference to the White-bellied Heron, consider the following statements:

1. It primarily inhabits free-flowing, fast-flowing Himalayan rivers.
2. It feeds mainly on fish found in river rapids.
3. It is an important bio-indicator of Himalayan freshwater ecosystems.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

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