

24/07/2026 Daily Current News

1. *Expendable Turbo Jet Engine technology:*

Context: The first indigenous Expendable Turbo Jet Engine of 350 kg thrust class, designed by DRDO's Gas Turbine Research Establishment (GTRE), has been successfully developed. GTRE had identified Azad Engineering, Hyderabad as Industry partner for the manufacturing and assembly of the engine. On July 22, 2026, the engine was successfully realised and delivered to GTRE by Azad Engineering, a landmark achievement for India's aerospace and defence ecosystem.

About Expendable Turbo Jet Engine technology:

- ❖ Mastered by only a handful of nations, jet engine technology is widely regarded as one of the most sophisticated engineering disciplines in the world, demanding exceptional precision, advanced metallurgy, and uncompromising manufacturing standards.
- ❖ Definition: An Expendable Turbojet Engine (ETE) is a small, low-cost jet engine designed for one-time use, mainly in missiles and loitering munitions.
- ❖ Purpose: It provides continuous thrust to propel the missile over long distances at subsonic or low-supersonic speeds.
- ❖ Working Principle: Air enters the engine, is compressed, mixed with fuel, combusted, and expelled through a nozzle, producing thrust based on the turbojet principle.
- ❖ Applications: Used in cruise missiles, kamikaze (loitering) drones, target drones, and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) where engine recovery is unnecessary.
- ❖ Limitations: Since it is not reusable, it has a limited operational life and is less fuel-efficient than modern turbofan engines.
- ❖ Importance for India: Indigenous ETE technology reduces dependence on imports, strengthens self-reliance under Atmanirbhar Bharat, and enhances India's long-range precision strike capability.

2. *Kusha missile:*

Context: DRDO conducts successful maiden flight-test of 'Kusha' Long-Range Surface-to-Air Missile

About Kusha missile:

- ❖ Developed by: Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO).
- ❖ Maiden flight test: Successfully conducted on 23 July 2026.
- ❖ Test location: APJ Abdul Kalam Island, off the coast of Odisha.
- ❖ Target used: An electronic target simulating a high-speed, high-altitude aerial threat.
- ❖ Result: The target was successfully intercepted.
- ❖ Type: Long-Range Surface-to-Air Missile (LR-SAM) system.
- ❖ Capabilities: Can neutralise fighter aircraft, missiles, UAVs, and large enemy aircraft.
- ❖ Coverage: Effective over a wide range and altitude envelope.
- ❖ Indigenous components: Missiles, radars, and command & control systems developed by DRDO laboratories and industry partners.
- ❖ Significance: Strengthens India's multi-layered air defence and Atmanirbhar Bharat in defence technology.

3. *‘Clean Toilet Picture’ scheme:*

Context: With an objective to further enhance cleanliness and user experience at toilet facilities along the National Highways, NHAI has extended its citizen-centric initiative, the ‘Clean Toilet Picture Challenge’ till 30th June 2027.

About ‘Clean Toilet Picture’ scheme:

- ❖ Launched by NHAI in September 2025 to encourage National Highway users to report unclean toilets at NHAI-managed toll plazas.
- ❖ Extended in 2026 to ensure continued public participation and improve cleanliness of highway toilet facilities.
- ❖ Participants must upload clear, geo-tagged, and time-stamped photographs of unclean toilets through the Rajmargyatra Mobile App, along with their name, location, Vehicle Registration Number (VRN), and mobile number.
- ❖ Eligible users receive a ₹1,000 FASTag recharge, credited to the linked VRN after successful verification.
- ❖ Each VRN is eligible for only one reward during the scheme period; the reward is non-transferable and cannot be redeemed for cash.
- ❖ If multiple reports are submitted for the same toilet on the same day, only the first valid submission is considered for the reward.
- ❖ The scheme applies only to toilets constructed, operated, or maintained by NHAI; toilets at fuel stations, dhabas, and other non-NHAI facilities are excluded.
- ❖ All submissions are verified through AI-assisted screening and manual validation; around 429 commuters have been rewarded with ₹1,000 FASTag recharges in 2026 so far.

4. *The PM-YASASVI (Prime Minister Young Achievers Scholarship Award Scheme for Vibrant India):*

Context: Minister of State reaffirmed the Government’s commitment to expanding educational opportunities for disadvantaged students through the PM-YASASVI scheme, highlighting scholarships and hostel support.

About PM-YASASVI:

- ❖ PM-YASASVI is an umbrella scheme of the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, implemented by the Department of Social Justice & Empowerment, providing scholarships and hostel facilities for socially and educationally backward students.
- ❖ It aims to promote educational empowerment of students belonging to OBC, EBC, and DNT communities by providing scholarships and hostel facilities, enabling them to overcome financial and geographical barriers and complete quality education.
- ❖ Evolution: The hostel component began in 1998–99, was revised in 2017–18, and later consolidated into the PM-YASASVI umbrella scheme.
- ❖ Objective: To remove financial and geographical barriers and ensure equitable access to secondary and higher education.

- ❖ Beneficiaries: Students belonging to OBCs, EBCs, and Denotified, Nomadic & Semi-Nomadic Tribes (DNTs); OBC applicants must belong to the Non-Creamy Layer.
- ❖ Scholarship Components: Covers Pre-Matric Scholarship, Post-Matric Scholarship, Top Class Education in Schools, and Top Class Education in Colleges.
- ❖ Hostel Provisions: Priority is given to rural post-matric and undergraduate students, with 5% reservation for Persons with Disabilities (PwDs).
- ❖ Hostel Construction Norms: Per-seat cost is ₹3.50 lakh (North-East), ₹3.25 lakh (Himalayan States), and ₹3.00 lakh (Rest of India), with completion mandated within 18 months to 2 years.
- ❖ Implementation Features: Allows hostel construction on existing government campuses/projects, avoiding the need for new land acquisition.
- ❖ Fund Release & Monitoring: Central assistance is released in a 50:45:5 ratio, with the final installment linked to occupancy verification; 0.25% of the budget is earmarked for third-party quality audits and impact assessment.

5. *Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY):*

Context: The Directorate of Monitoring and Appraisal under the Ministry of Jal Shakti (MoJS) has asked the Telangana government (Irrigation Department) to return the Central Assistance of ₹36.34 crore along with interest released, under the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY) for nine ongoing projects. The amount including interest totals ₹54.22 crore. In a letter, Director of M&A noted that the Telangana government had written to it in July 2023 for dropping the proposals submitted for 11 projects in the past and adjust the central assistance release to nine other projects.

About Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY):

- ❖ Launched in 2015 to provide assured irrigation and improve water use efficiency in agriculture.
- ❖ It is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme (Core Scheme) implemented by the Ministry of Jal Shakti.
- ❖ Funding pattern: 75:25 between Centre and States; 90:10 for North-Eastern and Himalayan States.
- ❖ Vision: "Har Khet Ko Pani" (Water to Every Farm) and "More Crop Per Drop".
- ❖ It aims to expand cultivable area under assured irrigation and improve farmers' access to water.
- ❖ It promotes precision irrigation (drip and sprinkler systems) to maximize water-use efficiency.
- ❖ The scheme encourages groundwater recharge, rainwater harvesting, and sustainable water conservation practices.
- ❖ It focuses on the integrated development of rainfed areas through the watershed approach.
- ❖ It promotes soil and moisture conservation, runoff control, and natural resource management.
- ❖ It encourages extension activities on water harvesting, efficient water management, and crop planning for farmers.
- ❖ It also explores the reuse of treated municipal wastewater for peri-urban agriculture.
- ❖ The scheme comprises Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme (AIBP), Har Khet Ko Pani (HKKP), and Watershed Development components.
- ❖ AIBP, launched in 1996, accelerates the completion of major and medium irrigation projects.
- ❖ PMKSY was formed by integrating AIBP, Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP), and On-Farm Water Management (OFWM).
- ❖ The scheme is implemented through State Irrigation Plans (SIPs) and District Irrigation Plans (DIPs), and since 2020, PMKSY assets are geo-tagged using a mobile application.

6. *Taiwan Strait:*

Context: China began two days of live-fire drills from Thursday in some parts off the Taiwan Strait near the shores of its province of Fujian. The news comes a day after talks between U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on a range of issues, including Taiwan, which China claims as its own territory.

About Taiwan Strait:



- ❖ The Taiwan Strait separates continental Asia and the island of Taiwan
- ❖ It connects the South China Sea in the southwest with the East China Sea in the northeast
- ❖ It lies between Fujian Province of China and Taiwan
- ❖ It has an average width of about 180 km and narrows to around 130 km at its narrowest point
- ❖ It lies on Asia's continental shelf and is relatively shallow
- ❖ Average depth is about 490 ft, with a minimum depth of 82 ft
- ❖ Major ports include Amoy (Xiamen) in China and Kaohsiung in Taiwan
- ❖ Rivers like Jiulong and Min from Fujian drain into the strait
- ❖ Important islands include Kinmen and Matsu near China's coast, and Penghu (Pescadores), Xiamen, and Pingtan
- ❖ Penghu is the largest and most populous island in the strait
- ❖ Xiamen and Pingtan are administered by China, while Penghu, Kinmen, and Matsu are administered by Taiwan
- ❖ It is a major international navigation route with heavy cargo movement
- ❖ It is also an important fishing ground with rich marine biodiversity

Quick Bites:

- ☐ The 16th BRICS Health Ministers' Meeting concluded successfully today in Chandigarh under India's BRICS Chairship 2026, bringing together Health Ministers, Heads of Delegation, senior officials and public health experts from BRICS member countries to strengthen cooperation in addressing shared public health priorities and advancing a resilient global health architecture.
- ☐ The Bharat Renewable Energy Summit & Expo (BRESE) 2026 will be held from 2nd to 5th November 2026 at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi
- ☐ On 22 July 2026, the Centre appointed Anurag Jain as the Chief Executive Officer of NITI Aayog for a period of two years.
- ☐ Killai in Cuddalore district became Tamil Nadu's first fully operational Climate Resilient Village on 22 July 2026.
- ☐ China launched the Gravity-1 carrier rocket on 22 July 2026 and placed nine satellites into their designated orbits. The launch took place at 10:54 a.m. Beijing time from a maritime platform in the East China Sea, east of Shanghai. Gravity-1 is a solid-fuel carrier rocket developed by Orienspace, a private Chinese commercial launch company. The rocket is described as the world's most powerful solid-fuel rocket.
- ☐ China said on Thursday it tracked and drove away two Philippine vessels it accused of having "intruded into" waters near the disputed Scarborough Shoal despite warnings, the week's second incident in the South China Sea to involve both nations. A flashpoint that is one of Asia's most contested maritime sites, Scarborough Shoal is claimed by both the Philippines and China, which calls it "Huangyan Dao".

Practice questions:

Objective questions:

Killai, India's recently recognised Climate Resilient Village, is located in:

- (a) Andhra Pradesh
- (b) Kerala
- (c) Tamil Nadu
- (d) Odisha

With reference to the Kusha Missile, consider the following statements:

1. It can intercept fighter aircraft, missiles, UAVs, and large enemy aircraft.
2. It provides air defence over a wide range and altitude envelope.
3. It is India's first submarine-launched air defence missile.

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 'Clean Toilet Picture' scheme:

1. The scheme was launched by the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways in 2023.
2. The scheme covers toilets at all petrol pumps and roadside dhabas located on National Highways.

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

-----The END-----