

SANSKRITI IAS DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

22-07-2026

Mission Golden Spice



News On AIR

Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia & Meghalaya CM launch Lakadong Turmeric Mission Golden Spice

Union Minister for the Development of the North Eastern Region Jyotiraditya Scindia today launched the Lakadong Turmeric Mission Golden...



Why in News

- The **Union Minister for Communications and Development of North Eastern Region (MDoNER)** recently launched **Mission Golden Spice**, an integrated project for **Lakadong Turmeric** value-chain development in **Meghalaya**.

Mission Framework

- **Mission Golden Spice** is a convergence-based initiative for **turmeric cultivation and value-chain enhancement** in Meghalaya.
- The mission will be implemented over **2025–2030** through a two-phase strategy comprising **Value Chain Strengthening** and **Expansion & Scale-up**.
- It is jointly anchored by the **Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MDoNER)** and the **North Eastern Council (NEC)**.

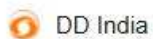
Institutional Convergence

- The mission integrates support from the **Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare**, **Ministry of Food Processing Industries** and **Ministry of Commerce**.
- It also involves **APEDA**, **Spices Board**, **National Turmeric Board**, **ICAR**, **MeitY**, **NABARD**, **SFAC** and the **Government of Meghalaya**.
- The convergence model aims to strengthen production, processing, branding and exports.

Lakadong Turmeric

- **Lakadong Turmeric** is primarily cultivated in the **Jaintia Hills** of **Meghalaya**.
- It contains an exceptionally high **curcumin content** of **7–12%**, significantly higher than ordinary turmeric.
- It is organically cultivated without chemical fertilisers and has a darker colour.
- Lakadong Turmeric received the **Geographical Indication (GI) Tag** in **2024**.
- It possesses **anti-inflammatory, antioxidant and neuroprotective** medicinal properties.

Salal Dam



All gates of the Salal dam on Chenab river opened amid heavy rain in Reasi

Authorities on Tuesday opened all gates of the Salal Dam in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district after heavy rainfall triggered a sharp rise...



Why in News

- Authorities opened all gates of the **Salal Dam** after heavy rainfall caused a sharp rise in water levels in the **Chenab River** and reservoir.

About Salma Dam

- **Salal Hydroelectric Power Station** is a **690 MW run-of-the-river** hydropower project on the **Chenab River** in **Reasi district, Jammu & Kashmir**.
- Construction began in 1970, and the project became operational in **1987**.
- It was the **first hydropower project** constructed by India under the **Indus Water Treaty** framework in Jammu and Kashmir.

- The project is owned and operated by the National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC).

Engineering Features

- The project consists of an **embankment dam** built mainly using **gravel, sand and clay**.
- The dam is approximately **100 metres high** and **1,200 metres long**.
- The reservoir has a storage capacity of nearly **1,200 million cubic metres**.

Power Distribution

- Jammu & Kashmir receives **12.5% free power** generated from the project.
- The remaining electricity is supplied to the **Northern Grid**, benefiting **Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh**.
- Jammu & Kashmir procures additional electricity from the project at notified tariff rates.

SMILE Scheme

Why in News

- The **SMILE Scheme** has rehabilitated

more than **10,200 persons engaged in begging** across **216 cities** in India.

Scheme Overview

- **SMILE (Support for Marginalized Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise)** is an umbrella **Central Sector Scheme** of the **Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment**.

 News On AIR

[SMILE Scheme Rehabilitates Over 10,200 Beggars Across 216 Cities](#)

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is implementing the Support for Marginalized Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise...



- The scheme seeks to realise the vision of "Bhiksha Vritti Mukta Bharat" (Begging-Free India) through a convergence-based rehabilitation approach.
- It aims to cover 295 cities by 2030-31, with emphasis on metropolitan, religious, tourist and historical cities.

Components

- The scheme includes the Central Sector Scheme for Comprehensive Rehabilitation for Welfare of Transgender Persons.
- It also includes the Central Sector Scheme for Comprehensive Rehabilitation of Persons Engaged in the Act of Begging.
- Both components provide rehabilitation, livelihood support, social security and welfare measures.

Governance & Implementation

- The scheme is implemented through coordination among the Central Government, State Governments, Union Territories, district administrations, Urban Local Bodies and implementing agencies.
- The SMILE-Beggary National Portal enables digital registration, monitoring and tracking of rehabilitation centres and shelter homes.
- The digital platform enhances transparency, service delivery and real-time monitoring of rehabilitation efforts.

A Government that Supports the Marginalized

my
GOV
मेरी सरकार

Smile-
SUPPORT FOR
MARGINALIZED
INDIVIDUALS
FOR LIVELIHOOD
& ENTERPRISE
LAUNCHED



Umbrella scheme to provide welfare measures to:

- Transgender community
- People engaged in the act of begging



Allocation of ₹365 Crore from 2021-26



Providing legal protection & social security



Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Award

PIB

Online Nominations Open for Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Award 2025

The Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports invites online nominations for the Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Award (TNNAA) 2025,...



Why in News

- The **Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports** has invited online nominations for the **Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Award (TNNAA) 2025**.

Award Profile

- The **Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Award** is India's highest national honour for achievements in adventure sports.
- The award recognises exceptional accomplishments in **land, water, air adventure** and **lifetime achievement**.
- It enjoys a status **equivalent to the Arjuna Awards** and is presented along with the **National Sports Awards**.

Award Categories & Eligibility

- Awards are conferred in **Land Adventure, Water (Sea) Adventure, Air Adventure** and **Lifetime Achievement** categories.
- Normally, **one award** is given in each category.
- The **Minister of Youth Affairs & Sports** may approve additional awards in deserving years.

Objectives & Benefits

- The award promotes **endurance, risk-taking, teamwork and quick decision-making** among youth.
- It encourages greater participation in adventure activities across the country.
- Awardees receive a **bronze statuette, certificate, blazer with silken tie (or saree), and ₹15 lakh cash prize**.

Disporum yobinorum

EM EastMojo

New Arunachal plant species named after Yobin tribe

A remote corner of Arunachal Pradesh bordering Myanmar has yielded yet another species new to science, with botanists discovering a...



Why in News

- Botanists have discovered a new flowering plant species, **Disporum yobinorum**, in **Vijaynagar, Changlang district, Arunachal Pradesh**, near the **Myanmar** border.

Taxonomic Significance

- **Disporum yobinorum** is a newly identified **flowering plant species**.
- The species is named after the **Yobin community**, recognising their contribution to scientific exploration.
- The **Yobin** are also known as the **Lisu** in Myanmar and China.

Geographical & Ecological Features

- The species grows in **moist evergreen forests** at elevations of **1,100–1,500 m**.
- It occurs along **streamside habitats** rich in native vegetation.
- The discovery site forms part of a **transboundary biodiversity landscape** shared with **Myanmar's Kachin State** and **China's Yunnan**.

Conservation Dimensions

- Fewer than **40 individual plants** have been recorded from a single location.
- Researchers have recommended its classification as **Data Deficient** under the **IUCN Red List** criteria.

Harishchandragad Fort

PTI Press Trust of India

Four Mumbai tourists injured in landslide at Harishchandragad fort in Ahilyanagar

MUMBAI: July 20 Four tourists from Mumbai were seriously injured during a landslide while they were descending the Harishchandragad fort in Ahilyanagar...



Why in News

- A recent landslide at Harishchandragad Fort in Maharashtra injured several tourists, highlighting concerns over visitor safety.

Historical Importance

- The fort is located in Ahmednagar (Ahilyanagar) district, Maharashtra, in the Western Ghats.
- It stands at an elevation of approximately 1,422 metres.
- The fort dates back to the 6th century CE under the Kalachuri dynasty.
- The Marathas captured the fort from the Mughals in 1747 CE.



Architectural Features

- The Harishchandreshwar Temple dedicated to Lord Shiva is the fort's most prominent monument.
- The temple is built in the Hemadpanti architectural style.
- The temple houses a Shivling and a large Nandi sculpture.
- Ancient caves carved during the 11th century CE are also present within the fort complex.

Geographical & Cultural Relevance

- The Konkan Kada is a famous semicircular overhanging cliff overlooking the Konkan region.

- The cliff is known for the rare atmospheric optical phenomenon called the **Brocken Spectre**.
- The fort contains microlithic remains, indicating prehistoric human habitation.
- The **Matsya Purana, Agni Purana and Skanda Purana** mention the fort, highlighting its religious significance.

Other Important News of the day

Persons in News

Batukeshwar Dutt

Why in News

- National leaders paid tribute to revolutionary **Batukeshwar Dutt** on his **death anniversary**.

Freedom Struggle

- **Batukeshwar Dutt (1910–1965)** was a prominent revolutionary associated with **Bhagat Singh** and **Chandrashekhar Azad**.



- He joined the Hindustan Republican Association (HRA) and later participated in revolutionary activities against British rule.

Central Legislative Assembly Bombing

- On **8 April 1929**, **Bhagat Singh** and Batukeshwar Dutt threw non-lethal bombs in the **Central Legislative Assembly**.
- The act protested the Public Safety Bill and Trade Disputes Bill introduced by the British Government.
- They raised the slogan "Inquilab Zindabad" and voluntarily courted arrest.

	- The revolutionaries were defended by M. Asaf Ali and sentenced to life imprisonment. Later Contributions - Dutt participated in the Quit India Movement (1942) after his release. - He again underwent imprisonment during the freedom struggle. - He died on 20 July 1965 and was cremated at the Hussainiwala National Martyrs Memorial, Punjab, alongside Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev.
Places in News	Okinotori Island Why in News Japan disclosed that Chinese and Russian naval vessels conducted live-fire drills near Okinotori Island, drawing attention to its strategic importance. Geographical Profile Okinotori, also known as Parece Vela, is Japan's southernmost island. - It is an uninhabited coral atoll located in the Philippine Sea of the Pacific Ocean. - The atoll forms part of the Palau–Kyushu Ridge. - It is administered as part of the Ogasawara Islands. Strategic Significance - The island lies roughly midway between Taiwan and Guam. 

	• Its location makes it important for military deployment and international shipping routes. • Japan claims an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) around Okinotori under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). International Dispute • China disputes Japan's EEZ claim, arguing that Okinotori is merely a rock rather than a fully entitled island under UNCLOS. • The dispute has implications for maritime resources, navigation rights and Indo-Pacific geopolitics.
Environment	Allographa  ETV Bharat  <u>Scientists Discover Five New Lichen Fungi Species In Western Ghats</u> Researchers have identified five new Allographa lichen species in the Western Ghats, combining molecular science with traditional taxonomy... Why in News • Researchers have discovered five new species of lichen-forming fungi belonging to the genus Allographa from the Western Ghats. Scientific Profile • Allographa is a genus of script lichens belonging to the family Graphidaceae. • It consists of more than 200 species, although only a limited number have been reported from India. • Lichens represent a symbiotic association between a fungus and a photobiont such as green algae or cyanobacteria.

	Recent Discoveries - The newly discovered species include Allographa keralensis, A. paraconsanguinea, A. persistinspersa, A. semicarbonisata and one additional newly described species. - These species have been reported from the Western Ghats, one of the world's biodiversity hotspots. Ecological Importance - Lichens are highly sensitive to air pollution, climate change and habitat disturbance. - They are widely used as bioindicators of ecosystem health. - Lichens contribute to soil formation, nutrient cycling and provide food for several organisms.
Science and Technology	Electric Vertical Take-off and Landing (eVTOL) Aircraft  Business Standard India unveils its first air taxi prototype: Here's how eVTOLs work The ePlane Company, an IIT Madras-incubated startup, launched India's first electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) aircraft...  Why in News - An IIT Madras-incubated startup has unveiled India's first Electric Vertical Take-off and Landing (eVTOL) aircraft prototype. Technology Overview - An eVTOL is a battery-powered aircraft capable of vertical take-off and landing before transitioning to forward flight. eCTOL ✓ Clean geometry ✓ Optimised for efficient cruise operation ✓ Higher passenger numbers ✓ At cruise for longer eVTOL ✗ Complex geometry ✗ Compromised in cruise & TOL ✗ Lower passenger numbers ✗ Not at cruise for long

- It does not require conventional **airport runways**.
- It is designed primarily for **low-altitude urban air mobility** with seating for a limited number of passengers.

Technical Features

- Most eVTOLs employ **multiple electrically powered propellers** instead of a single large rotor.
- They operate through **multiple electric motors** powered by rechargeable batteries.
- Most designs use **Distributed Electric Propulsion (DEP)** technology, integrating propulsion with the aircraft structure.
- Multiple motors improve **efficiency, redundancy and operational safety**.

Applications

- eVTOL aircraft can be used as air taxis in urban areas.
- They have applications in **cargo transport, medical emergency services (EMS)** and **last-mile deliveries**.
- They are expected to become an important component of future **Urban Air Mobility (UAM)** systems.

Uttar Pradesh in News

Uttar Pradesh Approves 250 Electric Buses & Women's Hostel Projects

 The Indian Express

[Uttar Pradesh Cabinet approves purchase of 250 electric buses for state transport fleet](#)

The Uttar Pradesh Cabinet has approved the purchase of 250 electric buses for UPSRTC at a cost of Rs 425.50 crore and sanctioned new women's...



Why in News

- The **Uttar Pradesh Cabinet** approved the purchase of **250 electric buses** for **UPSRTC** and sanctioned new **women's hostel projects** in **Varanasi**.

Electric Bus Initiative

- 250 electric buses will be procured for UPSRTC at a cost of ₹425.50 crore (₹400 crore by the State Government and ₹25.50 crore by UPSRTC).
- The buses will operate on religious, tourist and urban routes, with preference given to Uttar Pradesh-based manufacturers.
- The initiative will help meet CAQM norms, under which only CNG, Electric and BS-VI vehicles can enter Delhi from 1 November 2026.

Women's Welfare

- A 500-bed Working Women's Hostel will be constructed in Varanasi under the Chief Minister Shramjeevi Mahila Chhatravas Yojana.
- The project is part of the plan to establish seven working women's hostels across Uttar Pradesh and will operate on a "No Profit, No Loss" basis.

Education

- A 112-bed women's hostel will be built at Basant Mahila Mahavidyalaya, a constituent college of Banaras Hindu University (BHU), under the Rapid Economic Development Scheme to expand accommodation for female students.