CURRENT AFFAIRS PULSE

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78	12	30
KEY ARTICLES	CATEGORIES	DAYS COVERED

INSIDE THIS EDITION

International	6
Economy	13
Banking & Finance	3
Polity & Governance	4
Defence	1
Science & Tech	6
Environment	17
Schemes & Committees	21
Agreements & MoUs	1
Summits & Conferences	2
Ranks & Reports	3
Awards & Honours	1

HIGHLIGHTS

INTERNATIONAL — 01 Sep | p. 3
26th SCO Summit at Bishkek Adopts Bishkek Declaration on Grouping's 25th Anniversary

ECONOMY — 16 Sep | p. 10
Cabinet Enhances EPFO Wage Ceiling to Rs 25,000, Widening Mandatory Social Security Cover

BANKING & FINANCE — 08 Sep | p. 16
Global Fintech Fest 2026 opens in Mumbai on agentic AI, tokenisation and quantum

POLITY & GOVERNANCE — 15 Sep | p. 19
Six States Sign Kishau Multipurpose Project Agreement on Tons River

SCIENCE & TECH — 12 Sep | p. 22
World's Longest Steel Slag Road at Raigarh Earns Guinness Record for CSIR-CRRI

ENVIRONMENT — 07 Sep | p. 28
Swachh Vayu Diwas 2026: 108 of 130 NCAP Cities Cut PM10 Below 2017-18 Levels

Contents

#	Category	Articles	Page
1	International	6 articles	3
2	Economy	13 articles	7
3	Banking & Finance	3 articles	16
4	Polity & Governance	4 articles	18
5	Defence	1 article	21
6	Science & Tech	6 articles	22
7	Environment	17 articles	26
8	Schemes & Committees	21 articles	37
9	Agreements & MoUs	1 article	51
10	Summits & Conferences	2 articles	52
11	Ranks & Reports	3 articles	54
12	Awards & Honours	1 article	56

Tap a category to jump to it.

1. International

6 articles

26th SCO Summit at Bishkek Adopts Bishkek Declaration on Grouping's 25th Anniversary

01 Sep

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi attended the 26th Meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization at Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic, held between 31 August and 1 September 2026 — the year the grouping completed 25 years.
- The summit adopted the Bishkek Declaration along with four MoUs and over twenty decisions and statements, covering climate, nuclear safety, energy conservation and combating drug addiction.
- Four India-led proposals found place in the Declaration: English as an official language in the SCO Charter, the Civilisation Dialogue Forum, a Young Scientists' Forum and a Young Authors' Conclave.
- India restated its three-pillar framing of the grouping — Security, Connectivity and Opportunity — pressed for no double standards on terrorism, and said connectivity efforts must respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of nations.
- India will host the first edition of the SCO Civilisation Dialogue Forum later in 2026.

QUICK FACTS

Event	26th Meeting of the Council of Heads of State (CHS) of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic, 31 August - 1 September 2026.
Chair for the year	the Kyrgyz Republic; the summit was chaired by President Sadyr Japarov.
Outcome documents	the Bishkek Declaration, four MoUs and over twenty decisions and statements; leaders also approved a Protocol on Amendments and Additions to the SCO Charter.
India-backed items in the Declaration	English as an official language in the SCO Charter, the Civilisation Dialogue Forum, the Young Scientists' Forum and the Young Authors' Conclave.

- The SCO was founded at Shanghai on 15 June 2001 and marked its 25th anniversary in 2026.
- The SCO Charter's existing official working languages are Russian and Chinese.
- India's stated vision for the grouping expands the acronym itself: S for Security, C for Connectivity, O for Opportunity.
- The SCO has two permanent bodies — the Secretariat at Beijing and the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) at Tashkent.
- The previous (25th) summit was held at Tianjin, China, on 31 August - 1 September 2025.

India and Belgium sign defence Letter of Intent, launch Investment Fast-Track Mechanism during De Wever visit

03 Sep

- Belgian Prime Minister Bart De Wever visited India from 2-4 September 2026, his first visit since taking office in February 2025.
- A Letter of Intent between the two Defence Ministries was signed, framing regular exchanges, staff talks, training and defence-industrial partnership.
- The India-Belgium Investment Fast-Track Mechanism was launched to resolve investment bottlenecks in both directions.
- Belgium reaffirmed support for India's permanent UNSC membership; the two agreed to back each other's non-permanent bids — India for 2028-29 and Belgium for 2037-38.
- The leaders set a goal of doubling bilateral trade over the next five years.

QUICK FACTS

Visiting leader	Prime Minister Bart De Wever of the Kingdom of Belgium, accompanied by the Minister of Defence and Foreign Trade, Theo Francken.
Defence	a Letter of Intent was signed between the two Defence Ministries, building on an understanding reached between the Defence Ministers in March 2025.
Economic	the India-Belgium Investment Fast-Track Mechanism was launched, with engagement between Belgium's sovereign wealth fund SFPIM and India's NIIF.

- Belgium was among the first European countries to establish diplomatic relations with India, in 1947; 2027 marks the 80th anniversary.
- The leaders recalled the sacrifice of more than 9,000 Indian soldiers in the Flanders Fields during the First World War.
- The inaugural India-Belgium Strategic Dialogue was launched in Brussels on 15 July 2026, co-chaired by India's External Affairs Minister and Belgium's Deputy PM and Foreign Minister.
- Belgium has appointed a Defence Attaché in New Delhi; India will appoint a resident Defence Attaché in Brussels.
- The Belgian frigate LEOPOLD I is to visit India from 5-8 November 2026.
- The historic Antwerp-Mumbai-Surat diamond trade link was reaffirmed.
- The two sides intend to explore a Belgium-India Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism.

India-Belgium Dialogue on the India-EU FTA: A Market of 2 Billion People

04 Sep

- The India-Belgium High-Level Dialogue on the India-EU Free Trade Agreement was held in Mumbai, with Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal, Belgian Prime Minister Bart De Wever and Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis.
- The FTA covers 2 billion people, about a quarter of global GDP, a third of world trade and a market of USD 24 trillion; all 27 EU member states are on board.
- Belgium's Prime Minister said tariffs on more than 95 per cent of Indian and European goods exports would be scrapped or reduced.
- India-EU trade has doubled over the last decade to nearly USD 140 billion; the Port of Antwerp-Bruges is projected as the gateway for Indian exports into Europe.
- Five areas were identified for India-Belgium cooperation: gems and jewellery, semiconductors, green hydrogen, defence and advanced manufacturing, and agriculture and food processing.

QUICK FACTS

Event	India-Belgium High-Level Dialogue on the India-EU FTA, held in Mumbai.
Participants	Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Belgium Bart De Wever, and Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis.
Combined market	2 billion people, about a quarter of global GDP, a third of world trade, USD 24 trillion.
Port of Antwerp-Bruges	Europe's second-largest seaport, created by the May 2022 merger of the ports of Antwerp and Zeebrugge.
Diamond axis proposed	Antwerp, Mumbai and Surat, extending to lab-grown diamonds and mutual recognition of certification.

- India-EU FTA negotiations were concluded on 27 January 2026 in New Delhi, after a process the Union Minister described as 25 years in the making.
- All 27 EU member states support early entry into force - unanimity the Minister called rare in the European context.
- Tariff outcome cited by the Belgian Prime Minister: duties on over 95 per cent of goods exports on both sides to be scrapped or reduced.
- India-EU trade has doubled in a decade to nearly USD 140 billion.
- India-Belgium diplomatic relations date to 1947; Belgium was among the first European countries to recognise independent India.

India seeks common BRICS trade platform, concrete Women's Advancement Fund

09 Sep

- Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Shri Piyush Goyal addressed the BRICS Women's Business Alliance Women-Led Development Conference in New Delhi as Chief Guest.
- He framed the entrepreneur's problem as three borders to cross - access to credit, access to buyers and markets, and access to predictable rules - and mapped BRICS action onto each.
- He called for a common BRICS trade platform, agreed in the Jaipur Consensus, carrying electronic trade documents, e-invoices, electronic bills of lading and e-customs declarations.
- He urged BRICS members to turn the proposed Women's Advancement Fund into a concrete initiative and to make the invoice discounting platform study reflect women exporters' actual needs.
- He stated that India's merchandise exports grew by more than 15 per cent during April-August, and that the economy grew 7.8 per cent at constant prices in the April-June quarter.

QUICK FACTS

Event	BRICS Women's Business Alliance (WBA) Women-Led Development Conference, New Delhi; Chief Guest was the Union Minister of Commerce and Industry.
Digital trade ask	a common platform for electronic trade documents, e-invoices, electronic bills of lading and e-customs declarations.

- Three barriers identified for women-led enterprises entering international trade: credit, buyers and markets, and predictable rules.
- Ask 1 - a common BRICS platform for international trade, so a product requirement in one member country is visible to the others, with financial intermediaries joining in.
- Ask 2 - the Women's Advancement Fund, emphasised in the Jaipur Consensus, to be made a concrete initiative.
- Ask 3 - the BRICS Business Council's study on an invoice discounting platform to reflect women exporters' real needs; the Council is headed by Anant Goenka.
- Ask 4 - sector-specific women-led business delegations between BRICS countries, and annual reporting of what worked and what did not.
- BRICS Trade Ministers have recommended the Strategy for BRICS Economic Partnership 2030 for endorsement by the leaders.
- India's merchandise exports grew over 15 per cent in April-August; GDP grew 7.8 per cent at constant prices in the April-June quarter.

Rajnath Singh in Colombo: MoUs on L-70 gun upgrade and NCC-NDC cooperation signed

09 Sep

- Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh visited Colombo on 9 September 2026, calling on President Anura Kumara Dissanayake and Prime Minister Dr Harini Amarasuriya and addressing the Sri Lankan Ministry of Defence.
- Two MoUs were exchanged: upgradation of six L-70 guns for the Sri Lankan Air Force under a Government of India grant, and cooperation between the National Cadet Corps and the National Defence Colleges of the two countries.
- Three Bailey Bridges built by the Indian Defence Forces were virtually inaugurated by the two leaders.
- President Dissanayake reiterated that Sri Lanka would never allow its territory to be used for activities inimical to India's security interests, and thanked India for relief under Operation Sagar Bandhu after Cyclone Ditwah.
- Singh framed maritime cooperation around the MAHASAGAR vision and proposed a joint Maritime Domain Awareness system and a joint maritime HADR mechanism.

QUICK FACTS

Visit	Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh in Colombo, 9 September 2026; met President Anura Kumara Dissanayake and Prime Minister Dr Harini Amarasuriya.
MoU 1	upgradation of six L-70 air defence guns for the Sri Lankan Air Force, funded under a Government of India grant; the guns had earlier been supplied to Sri Lanka by India.
MoU 2	academic cooperation between the National Defence Colleges of India and Sri Lanka, and formalisation of the NCC youth exchange programme.
High Commissioner of India to Sri Lanka	Shri Santosh Jha.

- Three Bailey Bridges constructed by the Indian Defence Forces were virtually inaugurated.
- Anura Kumara Dissanayake, leader of the National People's Power and of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna, assumed office as Sri Lanka's ninth Executive President on 22 September 2024; Dr Harini Amarasuriya is Prime Minister.
- Singh laid a wreath at the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) Memorial at Battaramulla; the IPKF was deployed under the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord of 29 July 1987 and completed its withdrawal by March 1990.
- India offered more ICCR scholarships to Sri Lankan women; the Indian Council for Cultural Relations was founded on 9 April 1950 by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and is an autonomous body under the Ministry of External Affairs.

India chairs BRICS in 2026; 18th Summit in New Delhi on 12-13 September

10 Sep

- India holds the BRICS Chairship for 2026, its fourth after 2012, 2016 and 2021, and hosts the 18th BRICS Summit in New Delhi on 12-13 September 2026.
- The Chairship theme is 'Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability', with the Global South's priorities at its centre.
- BRICS now has 11 full members accounting for 49.5% of world population, 40% of global GDP and 26% of global trade.
- More than 350 meetings across 25 cities were held during India's Chairship, producing outcomes in agriculture, health, energy, MSMEs and logistics.
- A Partner Country category created alongside the 2024-25 expansion drew ten countries in 2025 without altering full membership.

QUICK FACTS

Combined weight	49.5% of global population, 40% of global GDP and 26% of global trade.
Expansion	Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the UAE joined in January 2024; Indonesia became the eleventh member in January 2025.
Ten Partner Countries joined in 2025	Belarus, Bolivia, Cuba, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Nigeria, Thailand, Uganda, Uzbekistan and Vietnam.

- India assumed its fourth BRICS Chairship on 1 January 2026; the Presidency runs 1 January to 31 December and rotates annually in the order of the letters of the acronym.
- The 18th BRICS Summit is being hosted in New Delhi on 12-13 September 2026 under the theme 'Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability'.
- The 11 full members are Brazil, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Iran, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and the UAE.
- The acronym 'BRIC' was coined in 2001 in a Goldman Sachs Global Economics Paper, 'The World Needs Better Economic BRICs', authored by economist Jim O'Neill, then head of global economic research at the firm; it projected Brazil, Russia, India and China among the largest economies over five decades.
- BRIC was formally established as a political cooperation forum in 2006; the first BRIC Summit was held at Yekaterinburg, Russia, in 2009, after the 2008 global financial crisis pushed the four towards a common position.
- South Africa was admitted in 2010 and took part as a full member from 2011, turning BRIC into BRICS.
- India's earlier Chairships produced the 4th Summit (New Delhi, 29 March 2012, Delhi Declaration), the 8th (Goa, October 2016) and the 13th (virtual, 9 September 2021, BRICS@15).

2. Economy

13 articles

India's Q1 2026-27 Economy: 7.8% GDP Growth, Upward-Revised Series, 11.9% Investment Surge

01 Sep

- Real GDP grew 7.8% in Q1 of FY 2026-27 to Rs 81.36 lakh crore, against 6.9% in the same quarter of 2025-26; nominal GDP rose 10.3% to Rs 88.27 lakh crore.
- Real GVA rose 8.2% to Rs 73.82 lakh crore, and the quarter's outcome beat the Reserve Bank of India's own estimate of 7.0%.
- On the expenditure side, investment measured as Gross Fixed Capital Formation grew 11.9%, household consumption 7.1% and exports 12.0%.
- MoSPI revised real GDP growth upwards for the three preceding years — 2023-24 to 7.3%, 2024-25 to 7.2% and 2025-26 to 7.8% — using new price and production indices on a 2022-23 base.
- Momentum carried into July 2026: industrial production up 6.7%, combined merchandise and services exports of US$ 80.14 billion in the month, and bank credit to industry and services up 20.0% and 22.9%.

QUICK FACTS

Real GDP, Q1 FY 2026-27	Rs 81.36 lakh crore, growth of 7.8% (6.9% a year earlier) — the highest Q1 real growth in the four years from 2023-24 to 2026-27.
Nominal GDP	Rs 88.27 lakh crore, growth of 10.3% (8.1% a year earlier).
Real GVA	Rs 73.82 lakh crore, growth of 8.2%; nominal GVA Rs 80.53 lakh crore, growth of 11.5%.
Expenditure drivers	Gross Fixed Capital Formation 11.9%, Private Final Consumption Expenditure 7.1%, exports 12.0%.
Production side	tertiary sector real GVA up 10.0%, secondary sector 8.6%, manufacturing 9.2%.
Revised real GDP growth	2023-24 raised from 7.2% to 7.3%, 2024-25 from 7.1% to 7.2%, 2025-26 from 7.7% to 7.8%.

- The Reserve Bank of India had estimated 7.0% growth for the quarter.
- S&P Global Ratings affirmed India's 'BBB/A-2' sovereign ratings with a Stable Outlook in August 2026, after upgrading the long-term rating to 'BBB' in 2025 following an 18-year gap.

Districts as Export Hubs: DGFT-anchored convergence framework now spans over 770 districts

02 Sep

- A PIB Backgrounder sets out how the Districts as Export Hubs (DEH) initiative treats each district as a unit of export planning rather than only of production, building on the One District One Product concept.
- DEH is run by the Directorate General of Foreign Trade under the Department of Commerce, and covered more than 770 districts as on January 2026; draft District Export Action Plans existed for 590 districts as of March 2026, of which 249 had been formally adopted.
- It carries no separate outlay of its own — it is a convergence framework that routes existing central and state scheme funding towards district-level export bottlenecks.
- A focused, outcome-oriented phase began on 1 June 2026 covering districts across 27 States and Union Territories, supported by 24 DGFT Regional Authorities and 11 partner agencies.
- India's total exports of goods and services touched an all-time high of US$ 825.25 billion in 2024-25 and an estimated US$ 863.11 billion in 2025-26.

QUICK FACTS

Initiative	Districts as Export Hubs (DEH) — a district-led export promotion framework
Nodal ministry	Ministry of Commerce & Industry; policy direction from the Department of Commerce
Implementing agency	Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), which anchors implementation, coordinates stakeholders and monitors progress
Design	a convergence framework, NOT a funding scheme — it has no separate financial allocation and leverages ongoing central and state schemes
Coverage	more than 770 districts as on January 2026
Planning document	District Export Action Plan (DEAP), prepared by the District Export Promotion Committee (DEPC)
DEAP status (March 2026)	drafts prepared for 590 districts; 249 formally adopted by the respective DEPCs
Focused phase	began 1 June 2026, covering districts across 27 States and UTs with 24 DGFT Regional Authorities and 11 partner agencies
Predecessor concept	One District One Product (ODOP), which began as a Uttar Pradesh state initiative in 2018 around Moradabad's brass industry before being scaled nationally
India's exports of goods and services	US$ 825.25 billion in 2024-25 (all-time high), estimated US$ 863.11 billion in 2025-26
Stated national ambition	US$ 1 trillion in exports

MoSPI explains Q1 FY27 GDP: double deflation, a negative manufacturing deflator and the 2022-23 base year

02 Sep

- The Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation issued a detailed question-and-answer note, alongside a PIB Backgrounder, explaining the Q1 2026-27 GDP estimates released on 31 August 2026 under the updated series with 2022-23 as the base year.
- Two methodological changes drive the numbers: the base year revision, and the adoption of double deflation for manufacturing, under which output and intermediate consumption are deflated separately to obtain GVA at constant prices.
- Because manufacturing input prices rose faster than output prices in Q1 FY27, nominal GVA grew 7.7% against real GVA growth of 9.2%, producing an implicit GVA deflator of 1.5% — which does not mean manufacturing prices fell.
- The implied GDP inflation of 2.5% sits below CPI inflation of 3.9% and WPI inflation of over 9%; the GDP deflator is a derived ratio covering the whole economy and reflects more than 300 item-level deflators.
- The Q1 2025-26 figure moved from Rs 86.05 lakh crore under the old 2011-12 series to Rs 80.00 lakh crore through successive base-year, data and index revisions — the ministry states these are methodological revisions, not a manipulation to flatter current-year growth.

QUICK FACTS

New inputs to the series	the new Output Producer Price Index (PPI) and the Banking Services Price Index (BkSPI), both with base year 2022-23, plus updated administrative data
Method change	double deflation adopted for various industries under the manufacturing sector — the IMF describes double deflation as the preferred method for calculating GDP in volume terms
Manufacturing in Q1 2026-27	nominal GVA growth 7.7%, real GVA growth 9.2%, implicit GVA deflator 1.5%
Agriculture in Q1 2026-27	implied inflation +3.9%, with the output PPI for Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing up about 5%
Implied GDP inflation in Q1 2026-27	2.5%, against CPI inflation of 3.9% and WPI inflation of over 9%
Mining & Quarrying in Q1 2026-27	real GVA 2.4%, nominal GVA +22.3%
Nominal GDP, Q1 2026-27	Rs 88.27 lakh crore against Rs 80.00 lakh crore in Q1 2025-26 under the same 2022-23 series

- Updated series of annual and quarterly GDP estimates with base year 2022-23 released on 31 August 2026
- Quarterly GDP is compiled using the benchmark-indicator approach, drawing on hundreds of volume and value indicators
- The implicit GDP deflator is a derived number reflecting more than 300 individual item-level price deflators

India's Jute Sector: 76 Lakh Bales, Rs 5,925 MSP and the Policy Stack Behind It

07 Sep

- A PIB Backgrounder sets out the state of India's jute sector: 76 lakh bales of raw jute and 12.80 lakh MT of jute goods in FY 2025-26, with India the world's largest raw jute producer and maker of about 75% of global jute goods.
- Raw jute MSP for FY 2026-27 is Rs 5,925 per quintal, giving a 61.8% return over the all-India weighted average cost of production and about 147% above the FY 2014-15 level of Rs 2,400.
- The policy stack runs through the National Jute Development Programme (Rs 485.58 crore, FY 2021-22 to FY 2025-26), its JUTE-ICARE and Jute Diversification components, and the compulsory jute packaging law.
- Digital interventions include JUTE-SMART for sacking procurement and an ISRO-built Jute Crop Information System with the BHUVAN JUMP app and the PATSAN platform.

QUICK FACTS

FY 2025-26 output	76 lakh bales of raw jute and 12.80 lakh MT of jute goods; jute and mesta together rose from 88.02 lakh bales (2024-25) to 94.03 lakh bales (2025-26) per the Third Advance Estimate.
Producing states in order of area	West Bengal, followed by Bihar, Assam, Odisha and Jharkhand.
Agro-climate	sown March-April, harvested in 100-110 days, needs hot humid conditions with 700-1,500 mm rainfall, and is predominantly rainfed and grown by small and marginal farmers.

- India is the world's largest producer of raw jute and accounts for about 75% of estimated world jute goods production (as of July 2026).
- India had 120 composite jute mills as of December 2025, of which West Bengal alone housed 89 — the highest of any state.
- The sector directly employs about 3.70 lakh workers in organised mills and diversified units and supports nearly 40 lakh farm families.
- Mesta is a bast fibre crop grown as a cheaper alternative in drier zones; in trade, jute and mesta are together classified as raw jute.
- The Golden Fibre Revolution is the term for the push to raise and systematise jute output that gathered pace from the 1990s; 'Golden Fibre' comes from the crop's golden colour and silky lustre.
- Jute-viscose blended apparel developed by the National Jute Board and designed by NIFT New Delhi was worn by the Indian contingent at the 2026 Commonwealth Games.

Retail inflation at 4.82% in August 2026; wholesale inflation climbs to 9.92%

14 Sep

- Retail inflation measured by the Consumer Price Index was 4.82 per cent in August 2026, against 4.45 per cent in July.
- Food inflation measured by the Consumer Food Price Index was 5.95 per cent; rural inflation at 5.23 per cent ran well above urban at 4.31 per cent.
- Wholesale inflation measured by the WPI rose to 9.92 per cent from 9.78 per cent in July, driven largely by fuel and power at 22.93 per cent.
- Both indices now run on new base years — CPI on 2024=100 from February 2026 and WPI on 2022-23 from June 2026.
- The gap between the two is unusually wide because they measure different baskets at different stages of the supply chain.

QUICK FACTS

WPI major-group inflation in August 2026	Primary Articles 7.76 per cent, Fuel and Power 22.93 per cent, Manufactured Products 8.37 per cent.

- All India CPI inflation for August 2026 was 4.82 per cent (provisional), against 4.45 per cent in July 2026 (final); rural was 5.23 per cent and urban 4.31 per cent.
- Consumer Food Price Index inflation was 5.95 per cent in August 2026 — 6.13 per cent rural and 5.64 per cent urban.
- The CPI General index (combined) stood at 108.74 in August 2026 and the CFPI at 110.71.
- MoSPI revised the CPI base year from 2012=100 to 2024=100 and released the new series on 12 February 2026; data on the new base runs from January 2026.

- The revised CPI basket carries 358 weighted items — 308 goods and 50 services, up from 299 in all — with weights from the Household Consumption Expenditure Survey 2023-24.
- Prices are collected weekly from 1,407 urban markets and 1,465 villages by the Field Operations Division of the NSO; the August 2026 response rate was 100 per cent in both rural and urban markets.
- Division-wise, personal care, social protection and miscellaneous goods and services recorded the highest inflation at 15.17 per cent and restaurants and accommodation services 8.38 per cent; health was lowest at 1.34 per cent.
- Items with the highest inflation in August 2026 were silver jewellery (107.11 per cent), ginger (73.82), onion (48.27), garlic (43.60) and gold, diamond and platinum jewellery (35.53).
- Items with the sharpest price falls were tomato (-31.09 per cent), potato (-13.14) and motor car and jeep (-6.72).
- WPI inflation for August 2026 was 9.92 per cent year-on-year against 9.78 per cent in July; the All Commodities index moved from 110.0 to 110.8.
- The WPI Food Index, which carries a weight of 24.99 per cent, recorded 7.05 per cent inflation against 6.65 per cent in July.
- The WPI base year was revised from 2011-12 to 2022-23, with the new series released on 15 June 2026 and the basket expanded from 697 to 957 items.
- The final WPI index for June 2026 was revised from 110.2 to 110.3, taking that month's inflation from 9.87 per cent to 9.97 per cent.

PLFS August 2026: LFPR Rises to 55.6%, Rural Unemployment Falls to 4.1%

15 Sep

- The National Statistical Office released the Periodic Labour Force Survey Monthly Bulletin for August 2026 — the seventeenth in the monthly series.
- The overall Labour Force Participation Rate for persons aged 15 years and above rose to 55.6% from 55.4% in July 2026, and was 0.6 percentage point higher than in August 2025.
- The overall Worker Population Ratio rose to 52.8%, the highest level recorded since March 2026, driven by rural areas where it reached 55.8%.
- The overall Unemployment Rate was steady at 5.0%, while the rural Unemployment Rate fell to 4.1% — its lowest since January 2026.
- Overall female LFPR rose for a second consecutive month to 34.8%, led by rural female LFPR at 39.4%; urban indicators were flat or slightly down.

QUICK FACTS

Release	PLFS Monthly Bulletin for August 2026, the 17th in the series; bulletins from April 2025 to July 2026 were already out
Sample	3,70,160 persons surveyed — 2,11,353 rural and 1,58,807 urban

- All figures are for persons aged 15 years and above on the Current Weekly Status (CWS) approach, at the all-India level
- Overall LFPR 55.6% (55.4% in July 2026; 55.0% in August 2025)
- Overall WPR 52.8% — the highest since March 2026; rural WPR 55.8%, urban WPR unchanged at 47.0%
- Overall UR steady at 5.0%; rural UR 4.1%, the lowest since January 2026; urban UR 6.8%
- Overall female LFPR 34.8%, up for a second straight month; rural female LFPR 39.4%, urban female 25.4%
- Male UR declined for three consecutive months to 4.9% from 5.4% in May 2026
- The PLFS methodology was modified from January 2025 to yield monthly and quarterly estimates of labour force indicators

Cabinet Enhances EPFO Wage Ceiling to Rs 25,000, Widening Mandatory Social Security Cover

16 Sep

- The Union Cabinet approved raising the wage ceiling for mandatory EPFO coverage from Rs 15,000 to Rs 25,000 a month, on a proposal of the Ministry of Labour & Employment.
- More than 51 lakh additional employees are expected to come within mandatory provident fund, pension and insurance cover.

- The revision takes effect on 17 September 2026; the ceiling had last been raised in September 2014 and stayed unchanged through 2004-2014.
- Annual government outgo is estimated at about Rs 11,339 crore against existing budgetary support of about Rs 10,250 crore, or roughly Rs 56,696 crore over five years.

QUICK FACTS

- Decision taken by the Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister on 16 September 2026.
- Wage ceiling for mandatory EPFO coverage raised from Rs 15,000 to Rs 25,000 per month.
- Takes effect 17 September 2026, observed as Vishwakarma Jayanti and Sewa Divas.
- Employees drawing between Rs 15,000 and Rs 25,000 a month now enter statutory cover automatically on joining.
- Widened cover extends to all three EPFO schemes - provident fund, pension under EPS and insurance under EDLI.
- EPFO has about 7.98 crore contributing members across about 7.68 lakh contributing establishments.
- EPS pays pension to about 82 lakh pensioners.
- The proposal was recommended by the Expenditure Finance Committee on 16 June 2026 after inter-ministerial consultations.

Coal India Maps Rs 69,346 Crore Coal-to-Chemicals Push and Critical Minerals Entry

20 Sep

- The Ministry of Coal set out on 20 September 2026 Coal India Limited's diversification portfolio across five platforms: coal gasification and coal-to-chemicals, thermal power, renewables and storage, critical minerals and advanced materials, and diversified minerals including iron ore.
- Four coal-to-chemicals ventures carry an estimated combined cost of about Rs 69,346 crore - Talcher Fertilizers (urea), Bharat Coal Gasification and Chemicals (ammonium nitrate), Coal Gas India and the CIL-BPCL Chandrapur project (both synthetic natural gas).
- An Underground Coal Gasification pilot is running at the Kasta West Block of Eastern Coalfields Limited, with Phase I completed on 31 May 2025 and Phase II, begun 20 June 2025, due for completion in 2026.
- In power, CIL and Damodar Valley Corporation are building a 2x800 MW ultra-supercritical expansion at Chandrapura, Jharkhand, through a proposed 50:50 joint venture; around 550 MW of solar is already commissioned and a 20 MW floating solar project is coming up at Chilwa Taal, Gorakhpur.
- CIL has been awarded a 187.5 MW / 750 MWh battery storage project at Choutuppal, Telangana, and an 80 MW / 320 MWh Odisha portfolio secured through SECI, while pursuing graphite and rare earth assets and an R&D portfolio of 20 projects worth Rs 231 crore.

QUICK FACTS

Coal India Limited	incorporated 1 November 1975 after coal nationalisation; headquartered in Kolkata; eight subsidiaries; conferred Maharatna status in April 2011; under the Ministry of Coal.
Damodar Valley Corporation	created on 7 July 1948 under the Damodar Valley Corporation Act, 1948 - independent India's first multipurpose river valley project, spanning the Damodar basin across Jharkhand and West Bengal.
National Critical Mineral Mission	approved in January 2025, Ministry of Mines, with Rs 16,300 crore of central expenditure within a total outlay of Rs 34,300 crore over seven years.
Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI)	set up 20 September 2011 under the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy; the only CPSU dedicated to solar; routed CIL's Odisha battery storage capacity.
IREL (India) Limited	incorporated 18 August 1950, under the Department of Atomic Energy since 1963; a CIL partner on rare earths.

- Eastern Coalfields Limited (ECL) is the CIL subsidiary hosting the Kasta West Block Underground Coal Gasification pilot.
- Ultra-supercritical technology runs steam well above water's critical point (374 degrees Celsius, about 22.1 MPa), raising plant efficiency and cutting coal use and carbon dioxide per unit of electricity compared with subcritical units.
- National Coal Gasification Mission targets 100 million tonnes per annum of coal gasification capacity by 2030; about 22.6 MTPA is operational or under implementation.
- Viability Gap Funding for standalone Battery Energy Storage Systems is financed from the Power System Development Fund; the scheme was expanded in June 2025 by 30 GWh with Rs 5,400 crore of support.

- NaCCER, the National Centre for Coal and Energy Research, is the independent nodal R&D agency for the coal sector, with Phase I established at CMPDI headquarters, Ranchi.
- Coated spherical purified graphite (CSPG) of at least 99.95 per cent purity is the battery-anode material CIL plans to demonstrate with the Non-Ferrous Technology Development Centre.
- CIL's R&D policy of 2026 prioritises projects at Technology Readiness Level 4 and above.

Customs Duty on Crude Edible Oils Cut: Sunflower to Nil, Soybean and Palm to 5%

24 Sep

- The Basic Customs Duty (BCD) on crude sunflower oil was cut from 10% to nil, and on crude soybean oil and crude palm oil from 10% to 5%, announced on 24 September 2026.
- BCD on the corresponding refined oils was also lowered, but the 19.25% import-duty gap between crude and refined edible oils was kept to protect domestic refiners.
- The aim is to lower landed costs after a sharp rise in international edible oil prices and to contain food inflation.
- Industry was advised to cut its Price to Distributors (PTD) and Maximum Retail Price (MRP) at once so that consumers get the benefit.

QUICK FACTS

Crude sunflower oil BCD	10% to nil. Crude soybean oil and crude palm oil BCD: 10% to 5%.
Refined oils	BCD also cut; the crude-refined duty gap stays at 19.25%.
Why	international edible oil prices rose sharply, pushing up domestic landed costs and retail prices.
Advisory	edible oil associations asked to revise PTD and MRP immediately.

- Announced on 24 September 2026 by the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution (Department of Food and Public Distribution handles edible oil prices).
- The previous cut came on 30 May 2025, when BCD on crude palm, soybean and sunflower oil was halved from 20% to 10%. The effective duty, including AIDC and the Social Welfare Surcharge, fell from 27.5% to 16.5%.

Make in India at 12: Official Figures on Electronics, Defence, PLI and New Manufacturing Schemes

24 Sep

- Make in India, launched on 25 September 2014, completes 12 years. It now covers 27 sectors under Make in India 2.0: 15 in manufacturing and 12 in services.
- Electronics production grew nearly sevenfold, from about Rs 1.9 lakh crore (2014-15) to Rs 13.11 lakh crore (2025-26). Mobile-phone output grew about 32-fold.
- Indigenous defence production reached a record Rs 1.78 lakh crore in 2025-26, up from Rs 46,429 crore in 2014-15.
- PLI schemes in 14 sectors had drawn Rs 2.6 lakh crore of investment and created 14.6 lakh jobs as of June 2026. Cumulative FDI for 2014-15 to 2025-26 was USD 843 billion.
- New schemes: Semicon 2.0 (Rs 1,27,500 crore), Mobile Phone Manufacturing Scheme (Rs 62,500 crore), BHAVYA (Rs 33,660 crore, 100 industrial parks) and the rare-earth magnet scheme (Rs 7,280 crore).

QUICK FACTS

Nodal department	DPIIT (Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade), Ministry of Commerce & Industry. It was renamed from DIPP on 27 January 2019.
Make in India 2.0 covers 27 sectors	15 manufacturing and 12 services.

- Make in India was launched by PM Narendra Modi on 25 September 2014 at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi. Its logo is a lion made of cogwheels, derived from the national emblem.
- Manufacturing GVA grew at a CAGR of 10.88% between 2022-23 and 2025-26 (revised national accounts series). Manufacturing IIP rose 7.0% in April-July 2026.
- Crude steel output rose from 81.7 MT (2014-15) to 170.0 MT (2025-26).

- India's pharma industry ranks 3rd in the world by volume and 11th by value. Its 2025-26 turnover was Rs 5,08,630 crore.
- India is the world's second-largest mobile phone manufacturer by volume.

Centre to Borrow Rs 7.86 Lakh Crore in H2 FY27; Full-Year Dated Borrowing Lowered to Rs 15.99 Lakh Crore

25 Sep

- The Government, in consultation with the RBI, will borrow Rs 7,86,000 crore through dated securities in H2 (October 2026-March 2027). This includes Rs 15,000 crore of Sovereign Green Bonds.
- Full-year dated-securities borrowing for FY 2026-27 is now expected at Rs 15,99,506 crore, against the Budget Estimate of Rs 17,20,000 crore.
- H2 borrowing is spread over 23 weekly auctions in tenors of 3 to 50 years, with 10-year paper the largest share (26.3%).
- In Q3 the Government will raise Rs 23,000 crore a week through T-Bills, Rs 2,99,000 crore over 13 weeks. RBI has set the Centre's WMA limit for H2 at Rs 50,000 crore.

QUICK FACTS

H2 gross market borrowing	Rs 7,86,000 crore through dated securities, including Rs 15,000 crore of Sovereign Green Bonds (SGrBs). It runs over 23 weekly auctions, from 28 September 2026 to 5 March 2027.
Full year	dated-securities borrowing is now expected at Rs 15,99,506 crore, against a Budget Estimate of Rs 17,20,000 crore.
Tenors	3, 5, 7, 10, 15, 30, 40 and 50 years. SGrBs are issued as 30-year paper in five tranches of Rs 3,000 crore each.
Greenshoe	the Government may keep up to Rs 2,000 crore of extra subscription per security.
Retail	5% of the notified amount in every auction is reserved for non-competitive bids by specified retail investors.
WMA limit for H2 FY27	Rs 50,000 crore (H1: Rs 2,50,000 crore).
FY27 fiscal deficit target (Budget Estimate)	4.3% of GDP.

- The H1 plan (27 March 2026) was Rs 8.20 lakh crore over 26 auctions, including Rs 15,000 crore of SGrBs, after switches had cut the full-year figure to Rs 16.09 lakh crore.
- Switch auctions are held on the third Monday of each month, alongside buybacks, to smooth the redemption profile.

H2 FY27: MATURITY-WISE SPLIT OF DATED BORROWING

Tenor	Share	Typical auction size
3-year	6.9%	Rs 9,000 crore
5-year	12.1%	Rs 19,000 crore
7-year	9.1%	Rs 12,000 crore
10-year	26.3%	Rs 34,000-35,000 crore (the only paper in its week)
15-year	17.6%	Rs 23,000 crore
30-year (incl. SGrB)	9.2%	Rs 9,000 crore + Rs 3,000 crore SGrB
40-year	8.9%	Rs 14,000 crore
50-year	9.9%	Rs 13,000 crore

Source: MoF borrowing plan and issuance calendar, 25 September 2026. Weekly auctions total Rs 33,000-36,000 crore.

Rabi MSP for 2027-28: Safflower Gets Highest Rise of Rs 675, Wheat Rs 2,610

30 Sep

- The CCEA on 30 September 2026 fixed MSPs for all six mandated Rabi crops for Rabi Marketing Season 2027-28; wheat MSP is Rs 2,610 per quintal (up Rs 25).
- Safflower got the highest absolute increase (Rs 675 to Rs 7,215), followed by rapeseed & mustard (Rs 413) and lentil (Rs 390).

- Margin over cost is highest for wheat (106%) and lowest for safflower (50%), meeting the 2018-19 Budget norm of at least 1.5 times cost.
- Wheat procurement in 2014-15 to 2025-26 totalled 3,715 LMT against 2,254 LMT in 2004-05 to 2013-14.

QUICK FACTS

Decision	Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by the PM, 30 September 2026
Season	Rabi Marketing Season (RMS) 2027-28; all six mandated Rabi crops
Highest absolute increase	safflower Rs 675/quintal; then rapeseed & mustard Rs 413; lentil Rs 390
Smallest increase	wheat, Rs 25/quintal (Rs 2,585 to Rs 2,610)
Highest margin over cost	wheat 106%; lowest: safflower 50%
Benchmark	Union Budget 2018-19 — MSP at least 1.5 times the all-India weighted average cost of production
Recommending body	Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP), an attached office of the Agriculture Ministry

MSP FOR RABI CROPS, RMS 2027-28 (RS PER QUINTAL)

Crop	MSP 2027-28	Cost of production 2027-28	Margin over cost (%)	MSP 2026-27	Increase
Wheat	2,610	1,264	106	2,585	25
Barley	2,286	1,447	58	2,150	136
Gram	5,958	3,751	59	5,875	83
Lentil (Masur)	7,390	3,854	92	7,000	390
Rapeseed & Mustard	6,613	3,367	96	6,200	413
Safflower	7,215	4,810	50	6,540	675

Source: CCEA release, 30 September 2026. Cost includes all paid-out costs plus imputed value of family labour (A2+FL).

ASI 2024-25: Factory GVA Up 9.59%, Jobs Cross 2 Crore; Tamil Nadu Has Most Factories

30 Sep

- The Annual Survey of Industries (ASI) 2024-25, released by MoSPI on 30 September 2026, shows Tamil Nadu with the most factories (41,221) and the largest share of factory employment (14.99%), while Maharashtra leads in Gross Value Added (15.92%).
- GVA of the registered manufacturing sector rose 9.59% to Rs 26.94 lakh crore; industrial output rose 7.81%.
- Total persons engaged grew 7.19%, from 1.96 crore to 2.10 crore — more than 14 lakh added — and emoluments grew 12.08%.
- Establishments rose 2.64% to 2.67 lakh; fixed capital grew 10.54% and invested capital 11.10%.
- Basic metals, motor vehicles, chemicals, pharmaceuticals and food products together gave more than 45% of manufacturing GVA.

QUICK FACTS

ASI 2024-25	reference period April 2024 to March 2025; fieldwork October 2025 to June 2026; released as a factsheet by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) on 30 September 2026
Factories	2,66,931, up 2.64% from 2,60,061; of these 2,18,543 were in operation
GVA	Rs 26.94 lakh crore, up 9.59% from Rs 24.58 lakh crore; output Rs 165.24 lakh crore, up 7.81%
Total persons engaged	2.10 crore (2,09,96,913), up 7.19% from 1.96 crore; workers among them 1.67 crore
Emoluments	up 12.08% to Rs 8.03 lakh crore; net income up 9.68%; net profit up 7.73% to Rs 11.56 lakh crore
Capital	fixed capital up 10.54% to Rs 51.12 lakh crore; invested capital (fixed capital + physical working capital) up 11.10% to Rs 75.56 lakh crore
Most factories	Tamil Nadu 41,221; Gujarat 33,084; Maharashtra 27,379
Method	data collected through a dedicated web portal with no paper schedule, on an establishment (not enterprise) basis; results at State and major-industry level

– Top five industries by GVA, over 45% together: basic metals, motor vehicles, chemicals and chemical products, pharmaceutical products, food products

TOP FIVE STATES

State	ASI 2023-24	ASI 2024-25
Share of GVA		
Maharashtra	15.95	15.92
Gujarat	14.20	14.10
Tamil Nadu	10.26	10.90
Karnataka	7.47	7.31
Uttar Pradesh	6.80	6.64
Share of total persons engaged		
Tamil Nadu	15.24	14.99
Maharashtra	12.95	13.08
Gujarat	13.07	12.99
Uttar Pradesh	8.30	8.72
Haryana	6.08	6.44

Source: MoSPI press note on ASI 2024-25, Tables 1 and 2.

FIVE-YEAR TREND

Indicator	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Factories (number)	2,50,454	2,49,987	2,53,334	2,60,061	2,66,931
Total persons engaged (crore)	1.61	1.72	1.85	1.96	2.10
GVA (Rs lakh crore)	16.17	20.48	21.97	24.58	26.94
Output (Rs lakh crore)	88.09	119.27	144.87	153.27	165.24
Fixed capital (Rs lakh crore)	36.94	37.26	41.22	46.24	51.12
Net profit (Rs lakh crore)	6.14	9.51	9.76	10.73	11.56

Source: MoSPI press note on ASI 2024-25, Table 3. Value figures converted from Rs lakh and rounded to two decimals.

3. Banking & Finance

3 articles

ECLGS 5.0: Rs 2.55 Lakh Crore Credit Guarantee Cover for MSMEs and Airlines

05 Sep

- ECLGS 5.0, approved on 5 May 2026, extends government-backed credit guarantees to businesses hit by external economic shocks, targeting an additional credit flow of up to Rs 2.55 lakh crore.
- It is run by the National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company (NCGTC) and covers MSMEs, eligible non-MSME borrowers and scheduled passenger airline companies through Member Lending Institutions.
- Guarantee cover is 100% for MSMEs and 90% for eligible non-MSMEs and airlines, with no guarantee fee payable by lenders.
- As on 20 August 2026, 6,73,979 guarantees worth Rs 2,50,024 crore had been issued; MSMEs accounted for 97.3% of guarantees by number and 80.79% by value.
- The scheme runs until 31 March 2027 or until Rs 2.55 lakh crore of guarantees are issued, whichever is earlier.

QUICK FACTS

Implementing agency	National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company (NCGTC), a wholly government-owned company incorporated on 28 March 2014 under the Department of Financial Services, Ministry of Finance.
Guarantee cover	100% for eligible MSMEs; 90% for eligible non-MSMEs and for scheduled passenger airlines. No guarantee fee is charged to lenders.
Additional credit for MSMEs/non-MSMEs	up to 20% of peak fund-based working capital outstanding in Q4 of FY 2025-26, capped at Rs 100 crore per borrower.
Airlines	up to 100% additional credit, capped at Rs 1,500 crore per borrower; the slab above Rs 1,000 crore needs proportionate promoter equity.
Loan tenure	5 years including a 1-year moratorium (MSMEs/non-MSMEs); 7 years including a 2-year moratorium (airlines).
Interest ceiling	EBLR-linked for MSMEs and MCLR-linked for non-MSMEs, up to 0.75% over the benchmark and never above 9% p.a.; NBFC loans capped at 13% p.a.

- ECLGS 5.0 approved by the Government on 5 May 2026; valid till 31 March 2027 or Rs 2.55 lakh crore of guarantees, whichever is earlier.
- Digital access is routed through the Jan Samarth Portal, the National Portal for Credit Linked Government Schemes launched on 6 June 2022.

Global Fintech Fest 2026 opens in Mumbai on agentic AI, tokenisation and quantum

08 Sep

- The 7th Global Fintech Fest is being held in Mumbai from 8 to 11 September 2026 and was inaugurated by the Prime Minister on 8 September.
- Its theme is 'Potential to Impact: Agentic AI | Tokenisation | Quantum — Trusted, Connected, Global Systems for Inclusive Finance'.
- The principal organisers are the Payments Council of India, the National Payments Corporation of India and the Fintech Convergence Council, with support from MeitY, the Department of Financial Services, the MEA's NEST Division, NITI Aayog, RBI, SEBI, IFSCA and PFRDA.
- UPI processed 2,365.8 crore transactions worth Rs 29.88 lakh crore in July 2026 and 24,509 million transactions in August 2026; it handles nearly half of global real-time digital transaction volume and is live in 11 countries.
- The Prime Minister set a four-point agenda for the sector: top-grade cybersecurity, ethical data protection standards, a regulator-industry innovation ecosystem, and a fintech consumer protection index.

QUICK FACTS

Theme 2026	'Potential to Impact' — built on agentic AI, tokenisation and quantum technologies.
Organisers	Payments Council of India, NPCI and the Fintech Convergence Council.
Jan Dhan accounts	59.15 crore as on 26 August 2026; Aadhaar enrolments crossed 144 crore by March 2026.

- Global Fintech Fest began in 2020; the 7th edition runs 8–11 September 2026 in Mumbai.
- India's Financial Inclusion Index rose from 43.4 in March 2017 to 70.0 in March 2026.
- Aadhaar e-KYC has processed over 2,458 crore transactions as on 29 June 2026; DigiLocker has 73.53 crore users and 936.03 crore issued documents.
- Cumulative Direct Benefit Transfer stood at Rs 53.26 lakh crore as of September 2026.
- UPI transaction volumes have grown nearly 12,000-fold since FY 2016-17, with 741 banks live on the platform.

New UPI Framework: MDR of 0.4% Only on Merchant Payments Above Rs 2,000

15 Sep

- A new UPI framework applies a Merchant Discount Rate only to specified person-to-merchant transactions above Rs 2,000; all person-to-person UPI transactions stay free irrespective of amount.
- The Ministry of Finance says about 96% of merchant transactions remain unaffected, because they are either below Rs 2,000 or covered by the zero-MDR framework for small merchants.
- The headline rate is 0.4% on P2M transactions above Rs 2,000, capped at Rs 300 for transactions of Rs 75,000 and above; essential thin-margin sectors pay a flat Rs 5 and capital market payments 0.02%.
- MDR is neither a tax nor a charge collected by the Government or NPCI — it is shared among banks, payment service providers and UPI app providers.
- The framework was introduced under the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007 after deliberations by the UPI Steering Committee, and 5% of MDR collections will fund UPI adoption among small merchants.

QUICK FACTS

Headline rate	0.4% on P2M above Rs 2,000, capped at Rs 300 for transactions of Rs 75,000 and above

- All person-to-person (P2P) UPI transactions remain completely free, whatever the amount — no transaction fee, platform fee or other charge may be imposed
- P2P accounts for 70% of total UPI transaction value and stays entirely outside the MDR framework
- P2M transactions up to Rs 2,000 remain free of MDR; MDR applies only to specified merchant transactions above that
- Small merchants, including street vendors, receiving up to Rs 1 lakh a month through UPI QR codes under the P2PM category keep zero MDR on all transactions
- MDR will apply to only about 4% of merchant transactions; roughly 96% are unaffected
- A dedicated fund for UPI adoption among small merchants will receive an amount equal to 5% of total MDR collections
- Introduced under the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007 after UPI Steering Committee deliberations; consistent with the Standing Committee on Finance's 32nd Report on a viable revenue model

4. Polity & Governance

4 articles

28th Western Zonal Council meets at Panaji; Zonal Councils shift from dispute-settling to scheme monitoring

07 Sep

- The 28th meeting of the Western Zonal Council was held at Panaji, Goa, chaired by Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Amit Shah.
- Zonal Councils are statutory advisory bodies created under Part III of the States Reorganisation Act, 1956 — not under Article 263, which covers the Inter-State Council.
- PIB placed the meeting count at 25 during 2004-14 against 71 since 2014, with 1,893 issues discussed and 1,445 resolved.
- The agenda was almost entirely scheme monitoring — AB-PMJAY, Poshan Abhiyaan, PACS computerisation, ERSS-112, Fast Track Special Courts — rather than inter-state dispute settlement.
- Members were urged to roll out the new Nyaya Sanhitas and to link urban cooperative banks to the cyber-fraud reporting system and I4C.

QUICK FACTS

Western Zonal Council members	Goa, Gujarat, Maharashtra and the Union Territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu.
Attending	Goa CM Pramod Sawant, Gujarat CM Bhupendra Patel, Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis and the Administrator of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu, Praful K. Patel.

- The Western Zonal Council's 28th meeting was held at Panaji, Goa, chaired by the Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation.
- Zonal Councils are statutory bodies set up under Part III of the States Reorganisation Act, 1956. There are five: Northern, Central, Eastern, Western and Southern.
- Section 16(1) of the 1956 Act provides that a Union Minister nominated by the President chairs a Zonal Council; the Union Home Minister chairs the Western Zonal Council.
- The idea was floated by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in 1956 during the debate on the States Reorganisation Commission report, to build 'the habit of cooperative working' among states.
- The Inter-State Council Secretariat services the Zonal Councils and was credited by PIB with an active role in resolving the issues raised.
- The North Eastern states are not covered by any Zonal Council — they are served by the North Eastern Council, a separate statutory body under the North Eastern Council Act, 1971.
- PIB described the region as the 'WEST engine' of growth: W for wealth and finance, E for exports and ports, S for start-ups and semiconductors, T for tourism and the blue economy.
- Agenda items included Fast Track Special Courts for rape cases against women and children, ERSS-112, food safety standards, AB-PMJAY participation by public hospitals, brick-and-mortar banking within a prescribed radius of every village, railway projects, environmental clearances, urban master planning, electricity supply, PACS strengthening, Poshan Abhiyaan and school dropout rates.

First regional review of Forest Rights Act implementation held for five southern states

10 Sep

- The Ministry of Tribal Affairs held the first Regional Review Conference on the Forest Rights Act, 2006 at Bengaluru on 10 September 2026, covering Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Telangana.
- Nationally, as on 30 June 2026, over 54 lakh Individual Forest Rights claims had been received, about 25.42 lakh titles distributed over nearly 238 lakh acres, over 10 lakh claims were pending and 19,845 Community Forest Rights stood recognised.
- States were asked for time-bound disposal of pending and rejected claims, faster recognition of Community Forest Resource rights and PVTG habitat rights, and entry of recognised rights into land records.

- The Ministry is building a National-level FRA Portal and asked States to connect their existing FRA records to it through APIs.
- A recent MoTA–MoEFCC joint advisory lets Community Forest Resource Management Plans be integrated with Forest Department working plans.

QUICK FACTS

Event	first Regional Review Conference on FRA implementation, Bengaluru, 10 September 2026, convened by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA) with the Tribal Welfare, Revenue and Forest Departments of the five southern States.
Act	Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 — passed December 2006, in force from 31 December 2007; MoTA is the nodal ministry.
Eligibility	forest-dwelling STs and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (OTFDs) occupying forest land before 13 December 2005; OTFDs must also show three generations (25 years each, i.e. 75 years) of residence and dependence.
Ministry of Tribal Affairs	set up in 1999 by bifurcating the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment; nodal ministry for ST development.
National FRA Portal	under development at MoTA to digitise FRA records; States asked to integrate their records through APIs.

- Individual titles are limited to land under actual occupation and can never exceed 4 hectares (Section 4(6)).
- Claims move Gram Sabha -> Sub-Divisional Level Committee -> District Level Committee; the DLC gives final approval.

Six States Sign Kishau Multipurpose Project Agreement on Tons River

15 Sep

- The Chief Ministers of Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Delhi and Haryana signed the Kishau Multipurpose Project agreement, in the presence of Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Amit Shah and Union Jal Shakti Minister C. R. Patil.
- A 232.6-metre-high concrete gravity dam will be built on the Tons River, which flows along the Uttarakhand-Himachal Pradesh border, with a storage capacity of 1,562 million cubic metres.
- The project has been declared a National Project: the Government of India will bear about 90% of the financial burden and the partner states the remaining 10%, in line with the 1994 basin agreement.
- It will irrigate 97,000 hectares and generate 1,476 million units of clean hydropower, with Delhi named the biggest beneficiary.
- The Government described it as the tenth inter-state water dispute settled since 2018, and said the agreement frees water for the Yamuna's environmental flow.

QUICK FACTS

Kishau Multipurpose Project	a 232.6 m concrete gravity dam on the Tons River, along the Uttarakhand-Himachal Pradesh border
Signatories	Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Rajasthan and Delhi — the six Upper Yamuna basin states

- Storage 1,562 million cubic metres; irrigation 97,000 hectares; 1,476 million units of hydropower
- Declared a National Project — about 90% of the cost on the Centre, 10% on the partner states as provided in the 12 May 1994 basin agreement
- The Tons is the largest tributary of the Yamuna, formed where the Rupin joins the Supin at Netwar and meeting the Yamuna near Kalsi
- Formal agreement on the project was reached on 16 June 2026; the six Chief Ministers signed on 15 September 2026
- Presented as the tenth inter-state water dispute resolved since 2018; the Yamuna's environmental flow had been left out when its waters were first allocated
- The Government stated a target of a clean Yamuna by 2029; the Yamuna joins the Ganga at Prayagraj

UPSC Turns 100: From the 1926 Public Service Commission to Articles 315-323

30 Sep

- The Union Public Service Commission completes 100 years on 1 October 2026; India's first Public Service Commission was constituted on 1 October 1926 with Sir Ross Barker as Chairman. Its two-day centenary celebration, 'Manthan', opened at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi on 30 September 2026.
- Lineage: Government of India Act, 1919, then the Lee Commission (1924), the Public Service Commission (1926), the Federal Public Service Commission (1 April 1937) and the UPSC (26 January 1950).
- Part XIV, Articles 315-323 of the Constitution governs the Commission; Members are appointed by the President and can be removed for misbehaviour only after a Supreme Court inquiry.
- Chairman Dr Ajay Kumar set out three guiding principles (Trust, Transparency and Technology) and proposed a Centre of Excellence to work with State Public Service Commissions.
- Applications rose from 42,727 in 1950-51 to a peak of 45,10,044 in 2022-23; women were 299 of the 958 candidates recommended in the Civil Services Examination 2025 (31.2%).

QUICK FACTS

First Commission	set up under the Public Service Commission (Functions) Rules, 1926, framed under Sections 96B and 96C of the Government of India Act, 1919; an advisory body of a Chairman and four Members at Metcalfe House, Delhi.
Headquarters since 1952	Dholpur House, Shahjahan Road, New Delhi, built in 1920 by the Maharaja of Dholpur.
Today	Chairman Dr Ajay Kumar (since 15 May 2025; former Defence Secretary) and eight Members. Sanctioned strength: a Chairman and ten Members since 1985.
Firsts	H.K. Kripalani, first Indian Chairman (1947); R.N. Banerjee, Chairman when it became the UPSC (1950); Rose Millian Bathew Kharbuli, first woman Chairperson (1992).
Satyendranath Tagore	first Indian in the ICS (cleared 1863). The ICS examination was first held in India in 1922, at Allahabad.
Manthan	sessions on 'Role of Civil Services in Viksit Bharat' and 'Innovations in Public Service' (keynote: Shaktikanta Das, Principal Secretary-2 to the Prime Minister); a compendium of 100 landmark verdicts is planned with NALSAR, Hyderabad.

- Sir Ross Barker, the first Chairman, came from the UK Home Civil Service; Members were appointed by the Secretary of State in London.
- Civil Services Day, 21 April, marks Sardar Patel's 1947 address at Metcalfe House calling the services the 'steel frame of India'.
- Since 2012-13 the Commission empanels IPS officers for State DGP posts, after Prakash Singh vs Union of India (Supreme Court, 2006).
- About 250 recruitment processes a year; examination calendar fixed 18 months ahead. Administrative link: Department of Personnel and Training, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions.

THEN AND NOW

Indicator	Then	Now
Applications, all examinations and selections	42,727 (1950-51)	45,10,044 (2022-23, the peak)
Indians in the ICS	78 of 1,255 officers (1919)	625 Indians to 575 Europeans (1940), the first majority
Examination centres	8 (1950)	86 (2026)
Women recommended, Civil Services Examination	3 of 83 (1952)	299 of 958 (2025); 11 of the top 25 ranks
SC candidates recommended, CSE	9 (1955)	158 (2025)
ST candidates recommended, CSE	2 (1956-57)	73 (2025)
PwBD candidates recommended, CSE	3 (2002)	42 (2025)
Disciplinary cases advised on	53 (1950-51)	446 (2023-24)

Source: PIB Backgrounder, 30 September 2026 (PRID 2316840).

5. Defence

1 article

DAC clears Rs 1.10 lakh crore in acquisitions, 98% from Indian industry

07 Sep

- The Defence Acquisition Council, chaired by the Raksha Mantri, accorded Acceptance of Necessity on 7 September 2026 to capital acquisition proposals worth about Rs 1,10,000 crore across all three services.
- About 98% of the approved procurement is to come from Indian industry.
- Army approvals cover CBRN Reconnaissance Vehicles, High Mobility Vehicles, Self-Propelled Mechanical Mine Layers, Advanced Light Helicopters, Trawl Tanks and the Sarvatra Bridge System.
- The Navy gets Arudhra Radars and the design, development and procurement of indigenous Marine Gas Turbines; the Air Force gets fighter, transport and helicopter capability upgrades plus a Ground-Based Multi-Purpose Jammer and the DEFSAC smart-card access system.

QUICK FACTS

- Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) is in-principle administrative approval to begin an acquisition case - not a contract, not a payment. Tendering, trials, commercial negotiation and CCS or ministry-level financial sanction all follow it.
- CBRN Recce Vehicles will detect, identify, monitor and mark areas contaminated with chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear agents.
- Marine Gas Turbines are warship propulsion units; designing them in India is aimed squarely at cutting dependence on foreign vendors.
- DEFSAC (Defence Forces Secure Access Card) replaces paper identity cards, passes and permits with an interoperable RFID-based smart card system.
- The Ground-Based Multi-Purpose Jammer is an electronic warfare system meant to jam adversary radars.

6. Science & Tech

6 articles

DoT's Financial Fraud Risk Indicator prevents over Rs 5,000 crore of suspected cyber fraud in 15 months

08 Sep

- The Department of Telecommunications says its Financial Fraud Risk Indicator (FRI) has helped prevent suspected cyber fraud losses of more than Rs 5,000 crore in the fifteen months since its launch on 22 May 2025.
- Cumulative prevention rose from Rs 139.16 crore in August 2025 to Rs 5,043.73 crore by August 2026, with over Rs 2,000 crore prevented in the four months from April 2026 alone.
- FRI is built on DoT's Digital Intelligence Platform and classifies mobile numbers as Medium, High or Very High risk using inputs from Sanchar Saathi, I4C's National Cybercrime Reporting Portal and telecom operators.
- The signal is shared with banks, payment service providers, insurers, securities intermediaries and pension entities, and is being extended to trading and demat accounts, insurance issuance and pension transactions.
- DoT has run over 25 training sessions covering 1,500 banks, financial institutions and regulators; more than 1,600 organisations are on the Digital Intelligence Platform.

QUICK FACTS

Financial Fraud Risk Indicator (FRI)	a risk-assessment framework of the Department of Telecommunications, launched 22 May 2025, that tells a financial institution in real time how likely a mobile number is to be linked to cyber crime.
Prevented losses	Rs 5,043.73 crore cumulatively as on August 2026, up from Rs 660 crore in the first six months and Rs 139.16 crore in August 2025.
Citizen advice in the release	heed payment warnings, call 1930 or use the National Cybercrime Reporting Portal in the first hour, and check the mobile connections issued in your name on Sanchar Saathi.

- FRI classifies mobile numbers into three categories — Medium, High and Very High risk.
- It is built under DoT's Digital Intelligence Platform (DIP), launched in 2024, which now links more than 1,600 stakeholders.
- Inputs come from citizen reports on Sanchar Saathi, the Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre's National Cybercrime Reporting Portal, and intelligence from telecom operators, banks and financial institutions.
- Over Rs 2,000 crore of the total was prevented in the four months from April 2026 alone, as bank and UPI-platform adoption deepened.
- The Mobile Number Revocation List (MNRL) on DIP shares numbers disconnected for cyber-crime involvement, failed re-verification or breach of connection limits, so banks can stop using them.
- Coverage is being extended from banking to securities market intermediaries (trading and demat accounts), insurers (policy issuance and claims) and pension ecosystem entities.

World's Longest Steel Slag Road at Raigarh Earns Guinness Record for CSIR-CRRI

12 Sep

- A 1.85-km road at Raigarh, Chhattisgarh, built by CSIR-Central Road Research Institute with Jindal Steel, won the Guinness World Record for the 'World's Longest Road Built with Processed Steel Slag Aggregates'.
- The technology turns steel slag, a steel-making by-product, into road aggregates; the Minister said it can cut construction cost by about 40% and give four times the strength of conventional roads.
- CSIR-CRRI and Jindal Steel signed a Technology Transfer Agreement and launched the 'Steel Grit' brand.
- CSIR-CRRI has a work order for a 40-km steel slag road from Jindal Steel's Angul plant in Odisha.

QUICK FACTS

Record	'World's Longest Road Built with Processed Steel Slag Aggregates' - 1.85 km, Raigarh, Chhattisgarh (conferred 12 September 2026).
Partners	CSIR-Central Road Research Institute (CSIR-CRRI), New Delhi, and Jindal Steel Limited.
Claimed benefits	about 40% lower construction cost, four times the strength, and major maintenance only after about 15 years in suitable applications.
Same event	virtual inauguration of the road, Technology Transfer Agreement (CSIR-CRRI and Jindal Steel), launch of the 'Steel Grit' brand, and a scientific documentary.
Next project	a 40-km road in Odisha for Jindal Steel's Angul plant.

- The Minister urged adoption beyond MoRTH - by Railways, state governments and private builders - framing it under 'Waste to Wealth'.
- CSIR is about to enter its 85th year (founded 26 September 1942).

First OPU-IVF Calf Born in Uttarakhand's Badri Cattle via ICAR-NDRI and GBPUAT Pantnagar

12 Sep

- A Badri female calf, produced through Ovum Pick-Up and In Vitro Fertilization (OPU-IVF), was born on 11 September 2026 after a Badri embryo was transferred into a Sahiwal recipient cow.
- The work is a collaboration of ICAR-National Dairy Research Institute (Karnal) and G. B. Pant University of Agriculture and Technology (Pantnagar), funded by the Uttarakhand Biotechnology Council, Haldi.
- Oocytes came from genetically valuable Badri donor cows; semen came from a superior Badri bull supplied by the Uttarakhand Livestock Development Board.
- The programme, begun in 2023, has also produced cloned Badri embryos; OPU-IVF and cloned embryos are next to be transferred into Sahiwal, crossbred and Badri recipients.
- Badri, a small hill breed registered by ICAR-NBAGR in 2016, is Uttarakhand's first registered cattle breed.

QUICK FACTS

Calf	healthy Badri female, born 11 September 2026 at the Academic Dairy Farm through OPU-IVF and embryo transfer.
Surrogate	a Sahiwal recipient cow carried the Badri embryo; a second (crossbred) recipient was expected to calve within 5-7 days.
Partners	ICAR-NDRI, Karnal (Haryana) and GBPUAT, Pantnagar (Uttarakhand); funding from the Uttarakhand Biotechnology Council, Haldi.
Semen source	a genetically superior Badri bull from the Uttarakhand Livestock Development Board (ULDB, headquartered in Dehradun).
Next phase	cloning of elite, high-yielding Badri cows - cloned Badri embryos already generated.

- Programme started 2023 under then GBPUAT Vice-Chancellor Dr M. S. Chauhan; ICAR-NDRI Director is Dr Dheer Singh.
- The PIB release calls Badri Uttarakhand's state animal; standard GK lists the Alpine musk deer as the state animal - check the framing if asked.

India's data centre capacity reaches 1.57 GW; policy push builds digital infrastructure

14 Sep

- A PIB Backgrounder sets out how infrastructure status, fiscal incentives and clean-energy measures are building India's data centre ecosystem.
- Installed data centre power capacity has grown from about 375 MW in 2020 to 1.57 GW as of August 2026, with nearly 8 GW projected by 2030.
- Data centres were placed in the Harmonised Master List of Infrastructure Sub-sectors in Union Budget 2022-23, opening cheaper long-term credit.
- Union Budget 2026-27 announced a tax holiday for notified foreign cloud service providers using India-based data centre infrastructure until 2047.

- The Central Electricity Authority projects data centre electricity demand could reach 17 GW by 2031-32.

QUICK FACTS

Installed data centre power capacity in India	about 375 MW in 2020, 1.57 GW as of August 2026, projected to reach nearly 8 GW by 2030.

- A data centre is a secure facility housing computing, storage and networking equipment, with power, cooling, security and management systems running continuously.
- Investment of nearly USD 70 billion is already under way in the sector, with a further USD 90 billion in announced projects.
- Infrastructure status came in Union Budget 2022-23 through inclusion in the Harmonised Master List of Infrastructure Sub-sectors, notified by the Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance.
- Union Budget 2026-27 introduced a tax holiday for notified foreign cloud service providers using India-based data centres, covering Tax Years 2026-27 to 2046-47.
- The Central Electricity Authority, Ministry of Power, projects data centre electricity demand could reach 17 GW by 2031-32.
- The National Informatics Centre runs National Data Centres at its Delhi headquarters and at Pune, Hyderabad and Bhubaneswar, plus 37 smaller data centres in state capitals.
- BIS technical committee LITD 31 covers cloud computing, information technology and data centres; it has issued standards on Power Usage Effectiveness, Carbon Usage Effectiveness, Cooling Efficiency Ratio and Water Usage Effectiveness.
- The Bureau of Energy Efficiency has notified the Energy Conservation Building Code 2017 and the Energy Conservation and Sustainable Building Code 2024.
- Groundwater extraction for industrial purposes, including data centre cooling, is regulated under Ministry of Jal Shakti guidelines.
- Cooling routes now in use include direct-to-chip liquid cooling, adiabatic cooling, immersion cooling and closed-loop liquid cooling systems.
- International bandwidth reaches India through roughly 17 submarine cables landing at 14 cable landing stations across five cities — Mumbai, Chennai, Cochin, Tuticorin and Thiruvananthapuram.

Semicon 2.0 Unveiled at SEMICON India 2026: Six Pillars, Rs 1,27,500 Crore

17 Sep

- The Prime Minister inaugurated the fifth edition of SEMICON India at Yashobhoomi, New Delhi on 17 September 2026, themed 'Silicon to Systems: Building the Ecosystem' and running to 19 September.
- Semicon 2.0, approved by the Union Cabinet on 15 July 2026 with an outlay of Rs 1,27,500 crore, widens the mission from fabs and packaging to six pillars covering design, equipment and materials, advanced packaging, applied R&D and talent.
- Investment commitments of about Rs 1 lakh crore have been received and close to 1 lakh jobs are expected across the ecosystem over the next two to three years.
- Commercial lines were launched at CDIL Semiconductor, Mohali and Suchi Semicon, Surat, taking operational commercial ATMP units to five of the twelve approved under Semicon 1.0.

QUICK FACTS

Six pillars of Semicon 2.0	design, machines and materials, fabs, advanced packaging, applied R&D, and talent development.
Nodal agency	the India Semiconductor Mission, set up 15 December 2021 as an independent business division of Digital India Corporation under MeitY.

- SEMICON India 2026, the fifth edition, was held at Yashobhoomi - the India International Convention and Expo Centre, Dwarka, New Delhi - whose Phase 1 was dedicated on 17 September 2023.
- Twelve units approved under Semicon 1.0, above Rs 1.64 lakh crore, across Gujarat, Assam, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, Punjab and Andhra Pradesh; five are in commercial production.
- Taiwan accounts for over 60 per cent of global chip production and nearly 90 per cent of advanced chips.
- India's semiconductor demand is projected at USD 110 billion by FY2030 and above USD 200 billion by FY2035.
- The Semiconductor Laboratory (SCL), Mohali makes flight-grade chips: its Vikram processor flies on launch vehicles, Chandrayaan-3's lander carried an Indian-made camera chip, and Aditya-L1 uses SCL radiation-hardened ADCs.
- Six ChipIN Regional Centres were announced to widen access to chip-design infrastructure.

SEMICON India 2026 Closes with 56 MoUs and RISC-V Grand Challenge Awards

19 Sep

- SEMICON India 2026, the fifth edition of India's flagship semiconductor conference, ran from 17 to 19 September 2026 at Yashobhoomi, New Delhi, on the theme 'Silicon to Systems: Building the Ecosystem'.
- The three days produced 56 MoUs, announcements and strategic initiatives — 41 in the first two days and 15 at the concluding session.
- Winners of the Digital India RISC-V Grand Challenge, run under the Chips to Startup Programme, were announced; three teams shared Rs 60 lakh for solutions built on the indigenous SHAKTI and VEGA processors.
- The Prime Minister virtually inaugurated commercial production lines at CDIL Semiconductor, Mohali, and Suchi Semicon, Surat, taking operational commercial units to five of the twelve projects approved under Semicon 1.0.
- Semicon 2.0 was outlined, with an outlay of Rs 1,27,500 crore across six pillars.

QUICK FACTS

SEMICON India 2026	fifth edition, 17-19 September 2026, at Yashobhoomi (India International Convention and Expo Centre), Dwarka, New Delhi.
Theme	'Silicon to Systems: Building the Ecosystem'.
Scale	over 600 exhibitors including about 300 international companies, representatives of 52 countries, over 150 speakers, 51,656 registrations and cumulative footfall of about 40,000.
Six Country Roundtables held	India-USA, India-Japan, India-Singapore, India-Europe, India-South Korea and India-Malaysia.
Semicon 2.0 outlay	Rs 1,27,500 crore, structured around six pillars — design, machines and materials, new fabs, advanced packaging, research, and talent development.
Digital India RISC-V Grand Challenge	1,236 teams and 5,045 participants; Rs 60 lakh in prize money to three teams.
SEMICON India Hackathon	3,808 team registrations from 881 colleges and 1,053 ideas; winning teams from VIT Vellore and IIT Madras.

- Six Country Pavilions — Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, the Netherlands, Singapore and Sweden — plus 12 State Pavilions.
- Operational commercial semiconductor units rose to five of the twelve projects approved under Semicon 1.0.
- EY and the India Semiconductor and Electronics Association released 'Semicon India 2.0: From Capacity Creation to Ecosystem Leadership', projecting the market to grow from nearly USD 64 billion in 2026 to USD 200 billion by 2035.

7. Environment

17 articles

Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari crosses 1.58 crore groundwater recharge structures, merges with Catch the Rain

03 Sep

- Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari (JSJB), launched on 6 September 2024, builds low-cost groundwater recharge and water storage structures and revives defunct borewells.
- In June 2026 it was merged with the Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain campaign as JSJB: Catch the Rain.
- As of 3 September 2026, more than 1.58 crore artificial groundwater recharge structures had been constructed.
- It was one of four thematic pillars at the Ministry of Jal Shakti's first Departmental Summit, held in New Delhi on 1-2 September 2026.

QUICK FACTS

JSJB 1.0	more than 27 lakh structures built by May 2025.
JSJB 2.0	launched June 2025; more than 1.5 crore recharge structures built by May 2026.
Merged with Jal Shakti Abhiyan	Catch the Rain in June 2026 as JSJB: Catch the Rain.
As of 3 September 2026	more than 1.58 crore artificial groundwater recharge structures.
The Summit's four pillars	JSJB: Catch the Rain, water infrastructure projects, source sustainability of drinking water, and rural water supply under Jal Jeevan Mission 2.0.

- Launched 6 September 2024 by the Ministry of Jal Shakti, which was itself formed in May 2019 by merging the water resources and drinking water ministries.
- Guided by the 3Cs — Community, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Cost — under a Whole-of-Government and Whole-of-Society approach.
- The Ministry's first Departmental Summit was held in New Delhi on 1-2 September 2026 to strengthen cooperative federalism.
- The Prime Minister proposed a 'Jal Utsav' for public awareness, inter-state study visits, and robust water data governance.

India's Geothermal Push: National Policy and Puga Valley's First Wells

04 Sep

- A PIB Backgrounder sets out India's geothermal roadmap: the National Policy on Geothermal Energy, notified in September 2025, with the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy as nodal ministry.
- ONGC Energy Centre commissioned India's first two geothermal wells at Puga Valley, Ladakh, in July 2026 - each 1,000 metres deep, at an altitude above 14,000 feet.
- The wells enable reservoir evaluation and pave the way for India's first 1-MW demonstration geothermal power project.
- Geological Survey of India has mapped 381 hot springs and 10 geothermal provinces; India's theoretical potential is nearly 10.6 GW, with 42 promising sites.
- Global installed geothermal capacity stood at 15.67 GW at the end of 2025; Indonesia, the US, the Philippines, Turkiye and New Zealand hold about 67% of it.

QUICK FACTS

Geothermal energy	heat from the Earth's interior, tapped as hot water or steam to generate power or for direct heat use.
Geological Survey of India (GSI)	381 hot springs mapped, 10 geothermal provinces identified, 42 sites promising for power and direct heat.
India's theoretical geothermal prospect	nearly 10.6 GW (about 10,600 MW).

- National Policy on Geothermal Energy notified September 2025; nodal ministry is the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE).

- India's first two geothermal wells commissioned July 2026 at Puga Valley, Ladakh, by the ONGC Energy Centre; 1,000 m deep each.
- Puga Valley lies in Ladakh's south-eastern Changthang region, above 14,000 feet, known for hot springs and underground heat reserves.
- The wells lead to India's first 1-megawatt demonstration geothermal power project.
- Unlike solar and wind, geothermal is weather-independent and available round the clock - a baseload renewable.

NBA Crosses Rs 200 Crore in Access and Benefit-Sharing Disbursement

05 Sep

- Cumulative Access and Benefit-Sharing (ABS) disbursements by the National Biodiversity Authority have crossed Rs 200 crore.
- The NBA has sanctioned Rs 8.23 crore to 27 State Biodiversity Boards and 5 Union Territory Biodiversity Councils from the utilisation of bitter gourd, okra, chilli and onion.
- The proceeds came from seed companies Nunhems India, East West Seeds India and Bayer Science and Innovation for access to these biological resources.
- Because the resources were sourced through the open market and could not be traced to identifiable farmers or communities, the money is distributed by area under cultivation as published by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.
- Madhya Pradesh (Rs 1.17 crore) and Maharashtra (Rs 1.01 crore) are the largest recipients; funds must be used for purposes listed in Section 32(2) of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002.

QUICK FACTS

Recipients	27 State Biodiversity Boards and 5 Union Territory Biodiversity Councils.
Crops involved	Bitter Gourd (Momordica charantia), Okra (Abelmoschus esculentus), Chilli (Capsicum annuum) and Onion (Allium cepa).
Paying entities	Nunhems India Pvt. Ltd., East West Seeds India Pvt. Ltd. and Bayer Science and Innovation Pvt. Ltd.
Distribution basis	area under cultivation, as published by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, because the resources were obtained through the open market or traders.
Largest recipients	Madhya Pradesh Rs 1,17,39,914 and Maharashtra Rs 1,01,30,649; Maharashtra's share reflects more than 49 per cent of India's onion cultivation area.

- Cumulative ABS disbursement by the National Biodiversity Authority has crossed Rs 200 crore; the current tranche is Rs 8.23 crore.
- Funds must be used under Section 32(2) of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002 — People's Biodiversity Registers, in-situ and ex-situ conservation, restoration of degraded ecosystems, Biodiversity Heritage Sites, capacity building of BMCs and community livelihoods.
- The disbursement supports India's obligations under the CBD, the Nagoya Protocol and Target 13 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

16th National Meet of State Biodiversity Boards: States Told to Align With Amended Framework

06 Sep

- The 16th National Meet of State Biodiversity Boards and Union Territory Biodiversity Councils, organised by the National Biodiversity Authority, was held at Chandigarh on 6-7 September 2026.
- States and UTs were asked to align their rules, institutional mechanisms and implementation processes with the framework as amended by the Biological Diversity (Amendment) Act, 2023 and the Biological Diversity Rules, 2024.
- The Union Environment Minister called for making the country's more than 2.76 lakh Biodiversity Management Committees functional and for People's Biodiversity Registers to become dynamic local planning instruments.
- The NBA has shared over Rs 200 crore of Access and Benefit Sharing funds with farmers, local communities, BMCs, State Biodiversity Boards, UT Biodiversity Councils and research institutions.

- India has submitted its 7th National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity and its 1st National Report on the Nagoya Protocol, and its updated NBSAP 2024-2030 is aligned with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

QUICK FACTS

Event	16th National Meet of State Biodiversity Boards (SBBs) and Union Territory Biodiversity Councils (UTBCs), Chandigarh, 6-7 September 2026, organised by the National Biodiversity Authority.
Access and Benefit Sharing	the NBA has shared over Rs 200 crore of ABS funds with farmers, local communities, BMCs, SBBs, UTBCs and research institutions.
Legal framework as it now stands	Biological Diversity Act, 2002, as amended by the Biological Diversity (Amendment) Act, 2023, operationalised through the Biological Diversity Rules, 2024.
International reporting	India has submitted the 7th National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity and the 1st National Report on the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing.

- Presided over by the Governor of Punjab and Administrator of Chandigarh, the Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, and Haryana's Minister for Environment, Forest and Wildlife.
- Three-tier biodiversity architecture under the Biological Diversity Act, 2002: NBA at the national level, State Biodiversity Boards in States, and Biodiversity Management Committees at local body level.
- More than 2.76 lakh Biodiversity Management Committees exist nationwide; the Minister's call was to make them functional and effective rather than merely constituted.
- India's updated National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) 2024-2030 is aligned with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, including the global 30-by-30 conservation target.

Swachh Vayu Diwas 2026: 108 of 130 NCAP Cities Cut PM10 Below 2017-18 Levels

07 Sep

- On the International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies, observed on 7 September, MoEFCC held Swachh Vayu Diwas 2026 and conferred the 5th Swachh Vayu Sarvekshan awards on the best-performing cities and, for the first time, wards.
- Under the National Clean Air Programme, 108 of 130 cities recorded lower annual PM10 in FY 2025-26 than in 2017-18: 72 cut it by more than 20%, 26 by more than 40%, and 14 met the National Ambient Air Quality Standards.
- Lucknow topped Category 1, Rourkela Category 2 and Kalinganagar Category 3; ward-level assessment covered over 7,400 wards, with Ward 70 of Lucknow first in Category 1.
- A Compendium of Best Management Practices under NCAP was released, and a first-of-its-kind dialogue brought mayors and local body representatives from 63 NCR cities to take a Clean Air Pledge.

QUICK FACTS

5th Swachh Vayu Sarvekshan city winners	Lucknow (Category 1, population above 10 lakh), Rourkela (Category 2), Kalinganagar (Category 3).
Ward winners	Ward 70 Lucknow (Category 1, population above 30,000), Wards 30 and 36 Bhubaneswar (Category 2), Ward 13 Rourkela (Category 3); 69 more wards, three from each of 23 States/UTs, were also awarded.

- The International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies is observed on 7 September; the UN General Assembly designated it in 2019. India marks it as Swachh Vayu Diwas.
- Swachh Vayu Diwas 2026 was presided over by NGT Chairperson Justice Prakash Shrivastava as chief guest, with Secretary (EFCC) Tanmay Kumar, CAQM Chairperson Rajesh Verma and CPCB Chairperson Amandeep Garg present.
- In the 2025 Survekshan the toppers had been Indore (Category 1), Amravati (Category 2) and Dewas (Category 3).
- A Compendium of Best Management Practices under NCAP was released, covering road dust, vehicular and industrial pollution, waste management, greening and public outreach.
- Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav administered a Clean Air Pledge at the first large-scale dialogue with mayors and local body representatives from 63 NCR cities.
- The Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) is the NCR's emergency air-quality framework: four stages of progressively stricter curbs on dust, construction, industry and vehicles, running from 'Poor' (AQI 201-300) to 'Severe+' (AQI above 450), coordinated by CAQM.

DRI seizes leopard pelts, star tortoises and pangolin scales in six operations

09 Sep

- The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence conducted six operations across India over ten days against illegal wildlife trafficking, arresting thirteen persons.
- Seizures: two leopard pelts, 180 live Indian Star Tortoises, 12 live Tokay Geckos, around 24 kg of pangolin scales and 500 grams of tiger bones.
- Operations spanned Koraput (Odisha), Bengaluru (Karnataka), Ri-Bhoi (Meghalaya), Sidhi (Madhya Pradesh) and Keokhali and Karbi Anglong (Assam).
- Every species involved is listed in Schedule I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972; pangolins are additionally in CITES Appendix I and the Tokay Gecko in Appendix II.
- Seized wildlife and accused persons were handed to State Forest Departments; the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau identified the tortoise species.

QUICK FACTS

Enforcing agency	Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI), the apex anti-smuggling agency of Indian Customs.
Total seizure	two leopard pelts, 180 live Indian Star Tortoises, 12 live Tokay Geckos, around 24 kg pangolin scales, 500 g tiger bones.

- Six operations in ten days; thirteen persons arrested.
- 07.09.2026 - one leopard pelt recovered at Jeypore, Koraput district, Odisha.
- 07.09.2026 - 180 live Indian Star Tortoises concealed in six cloth covers, recovered near Gandhinagar, Bengaluru; species identified by the WCCB as Geochelone elegans.
- 07.09.2026 - 14.68 kg dried pangolin scales in three carry bags from a Bolero truck in Ri-Bhoi district, Meghalaya.
- 05-06.09.2026 - one leopard skin recovered in Sidhi district, Madhya Pradesh, in coordination with the State Forest Department; four persons intercepted.
- 05.09.2026 - 12 live Tokay Geckos recovered at Keokhali, Assam; handed to the Biswanath Wildlife Division.
- 28.08.2026 - about 9 kg pangolin scales and roughly 0.5 kg tiger bone with skull and teeth seized in Karbi Anglong district, Assam; three persons apprehended.

GIB Soft Release Centre opened at Naliya; Kachchh mangrove cover crosses 27,600 hectares

14 Sep

- The Union Environment Minister inaugurated a Soft Release Centre for the Great Indian Bustard at Naliya in Kachchh district, Gujarat.
- A chick from the second 'jump-start' egg-replacement attempt has survived beyond the critical first three months in the wild.
- Around 11 sq km of grassland infested with invasive Prosopis juliflora has been restored and 30 km of predator-proof fencing raised over 15 sq km.
- The Sayara Van Kavach was inaugurated — over 10,000 saplings of 47 native species on a 9.46 sq km site using the Miyawaki method.
- Under MISHTI, mangrove plantation in Kachchh has reached 27,652 hectares against a 29,250-hectare target for 2023-24 to 2026-27.

QUICK FACTS

- The Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change inaugurated a Soft Release Centre for the Great Indian Bustard at Naliya in Kachchh district, Gujarat, on 14 September 2026.
- The centre is built to support conservation, monitoring and the gradual adaptation of captive-reared GIBs to the natural environment.
- Around 11 sq km of grassland infested with the invasive Prosopis juliflora has been restored in the Kachchh GIB landscape.
- Thirty kilometres of predator-proof fencing has been raised, covering 15 sq km.

- In the 'jump-start' intervention, infertile eggs laid by wild GIB females are replaced with viable eggs from the conservation breeding programme; the chick from the second such attempt has survived past the critical first three months in the wild.
- Thirty-three new patrolling and rescue vehicles were flagged off for divisions under the Kachchh Forest Circle.
- The Sayara Van Kavach covers a 9.46 sq km site and uses the Miyawaki method of dense multi-layered afforestation, with over 10,000 saplings of 47 native species suited to saline, low-water conditions.
- The Van Kavach is expected to lower local temperatures by 1.5-2 degrees Celsius, aid groundwater recharge and check soil erosion; a memorandum of understanding with the Deendayal Port Authority for plantation was exchanged at the site.
- Under MISHTI, mangrove plantation in Kachchh has been completed over 27,652 hectares against a cumulative target of 29,250 hectares for 2023-24 to 2026-27, including 12,450 hectares in the Kori Creek area.
- About 3.49 lakh mangrove seedlings have been raised at the Jakhau Mangrove Nursery; the species planted at the site was Avicennia marina.
- The Great Indian Bustard (Ardeotis nigriceps) is listed as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List and placed in Schedule I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 — the highest level of legal protection.
- Officials of the Wildlife Institute of India, the Gujarat Forest Department and the Border Security Force took part; about 50 BSF personnel joined the mangrove plantation at Jakhau.

World Circular Economy Forum 2026 Opens at Gandhinagar, First Time in South Asia

15 Sep

- Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav and Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel inaugurated the World Circular Economy Forum 2026 at Gandhinagar, running 15-18 September under the theme 'Circular Economy: Transition for People and Prosperity'.
- The Gujarat Chief Minister said this is the first time the Forum has been hosted in South Asia; the Union Minister's own account described it as the 10th edition of the Forum.
- India's Extended Producer Responsibility coverage was disclosed: as of August 2026, more than 83,000 producers and 4,802 recyclers were registered under various EPR frameworks, with nearly 482.24 lakh metric tonnes of waste processed across regulated streams.
- Over 3,600 stakeholders from 62 countries are attending, with an exhibition of 135 national and international exhibitors.
- The Forum is jointly organised by the Central Pollution Control Board, the Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra, the Government of Finland, MoEF&CC, the Government of Gujarat and the Gujarat Pollution Control Board.

QUICK FACTS

Event	World Circular Economy Forum (WCEF) 2026, Gandhinagar, Gujarat, 15-18 September 2026
Theme	'Circular Economy: Transition for People and Prosperity'
Co-organisers	Central Pollution Control Board, Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra, Government of Finland, MoEF&CC, Government of Gujarat, Gujarat Pollution Control Board
EPR status as of August 2026	83,000+ producers and 4,802 recyclers registered; 482.24 lakh metric tonnes of waste processed
Participation	over 3,600 cross-sectoral stakeholders from 62 countries; 135 exhibitors at the expo
Two publications released	'Best Practices for Reuse of Treated Sewage' and 'Driving Sustainability — A Guide to India's Circular Economy and EPR Initiatives'
Finland's stated ambition	keep resource consumption below 2015 levels by 2035; the Netherlands aims to be fully circular by 2050

- Described in the release as the 10th edition and, per the Gujarat Chief Minister, the first WCEF hosted in South Asia
- India-Finland relations have been elevated to a strategic partnership, focused on digitalisation and sustainability

India's First Soil Carbon Payments Reach 2,550 Farmers in Punjab and Haryana

17 Sep

- India's agricultural carbon market has reached the farm: more than 2,500 smallholders in Punjab and Haryana are receiving over Rs 2.9 crore in digital payments for adopting regenerative farming practices.

- The Direct Benefit Transfer to 2,550 farmers was initiated at Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana by Dr M. L. Jat, Secretary, Department of Agricultural Research and Education and Director General, ICAR.
- The payments come under 'Aadi', a Grow Indigo farmer carbon programme launched in 2019 with technical guidance from ICAR, which rewards Direct Seeded Rice, reduced tillage and crop residue management practised between 2019 and 2022.
- Credits were issued under Verra's VM0042 methodology after independent verification; the first issuance covered about 30,000 acres and more than 50,000 carbon credits.

QUICK FACTS

Practices rewarded	Direct Seeded Rice (DSR), reduced tillage and crop residue management, adopted on enrolled fields between 2019 and 2022.

- This is the first instance in India of farmers being paid for carbon stored in their soil; the payments were released at Punjab Agricultural University (PAU), Ludhiana.
- The programme is 'Aadi', a Grow Indigo farmer carbon programme launched in 2019 with technical guidance from the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR).
- Direct Seeded Rice sows paddy seed straight into the field, skipping nursery raising, puddling and transplanting - it lowers irrigation demand and the methane released from continuously flooded fields.
- Greenhouse-gas reductions and soil-carbon gains were measured and independently verified before credits were issued, under Verra's VM0042 'Improved Agricultural Land Management' methodology.
- Farmers chose between an assured upfront payment and 75 per cent of the net carbon revenue after the credits were sold; Grow Indigo released the money from its own funds before the credits were sold.
- ICAR-Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), New Delhi contributed to greenhouse-gas accounting, crop-simulation modelling and soil-sampling protocols; Grow Indigo also works with ICAR-ATARI Zone-I, hosted on the PAU campus at Ludhiana, which oversees 72 Krishi Vigyan Kendras.
- The 16th BRICS Agriculture Ministers' Meeting (Indore, June 2026, under India's chairship) agreed to establish a BRICS Network of Centres of Excellence on Agroecology and Regenerative Agriculture, coordinated initially by ICAR-Indian Institute of Farming System Research (IIFSR), Modipuram; the BRICS New Delhi Declaration of September 2026 welcomed it.
- Farmers who joined after 2022 fall in the next monitoring cycle and will be paid as their credits are issued.

Project Rhino Launched on World Rhino Day to Support Rhino Range States

22 Sep

- On World Rhino Day (22 September 2026), the Prime Minister announced Project Rhino, which gives range states financial and technical support for rhino protection, habitat management, genetic improvement and population studies.
- Assam holds nearly 80% of the world's greater one-horned rhinos, and Kaziranga's anti-poaching work was singled out.
- Rhinos are back or well protected in parts of Bihar and West Bengal, and the reintroduction at Dudhwa (Uttar Pradesh) was called a success.

QUICK FACTS

Project Rhino	support to range states for protection, habitat management, genetic improvement and understanding population dynamics (announced 22 September 2026). The release gives no outlay
Species	greater one-horned (Indian) rhinoceros, Rhinoceros unicornis
Status	IUCN Vulnerable; Schedule I, Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972; CITES Appendix I
Assam	nearly 80% of the world population (about 3,260 of 4,075, per the International Rhino Foundation's 2026 State of the Rhino report)
Kaziranga	over 2,600 rhinos, the largest single population; Assam recorded no known rhino poaching in 2025
Range states named	Assam, West Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh
World Rhino Day	22 September; announced by WWF-South Africa in 2010, it covers all five rhino species

6th Cycle of Tiger Reserve Management Evaluation Covers All 58 Reserves, Adds Solid Waste Criterion

25 Sep

- The 6th cycle of Management Effectiveness Evaluation of Tiger Reserves (MEE-TR 2026) began on 25 September 2026. For the first time it covers all 58 Tiger Reserves.
- MEE-TR 2026 adds 'Solid Waste Management' as a separate criterion. It covers waste from forest chowkis, from tourism and biomedical waste from wildlife rescue centres.
- The NTCA runs the exercise with the Wildlife Institute of India, using a framework adapted from the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas. The Technical Manual for MEE 2026 was released at the inception workshop.
- Earlier cycles, held every four years from 2006 to 2022, assessed 28, 39, 43, 50 and 51 reserves. In 2022 Periyar (Kerala) scored highest, at 94.38%.

QUICK FACTS

What	the inception workshop for the 6th cycle of MEE-TR, launched in New Delhi on 25 September 2026 by Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav.
Coverage	all 58 Tiger Reserves, the first cycle to evaluate every reserve. The 58th was Madhav (Madhya Pradesh), notified in March 2025.
New criterion	Solid Waste Management. It covers forest-chowki waste, tourism waste and biomedical waste from wildlife rescue centres.
Organisers	the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) with the Wildlife Institute of India (WII).
Framework	adapted from the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) framework. It scores six elements: Context, Planning, Inputs, Processes, Outputs and Outcomes.
Evaluators	independent multidisciplinary teams. The Technical Manual of MEE 2026 sets the framework.
Area	over 85,000 sq km has been demarcated for tiger conservation, according to the Minister.
The Minister's suggestions	involve local ecological and sociological experts and local youth, and make area-based assessments of human-wildlife conflict.

MEE CYCLES SO FAR

Cycle	Year	Tiger Reserves evaluated
1st	2006	28
2nd	2010	39
3rd	2014	43
4th	2018	50
5th	2022	51
6th	2026 (launched 25 Sep)	58, all reserves

Source: PIB release, 25 September 2026.

India's First Port-Based e-Methanol Plant: Foundation Stone Laid at Deendayal Port, Kandla

26 Sep

- The foundation stone of India's first port-based e-methanol plant was laid at Deendayal Port Authority (DPA), Kandla, Gujarat, on 26 September 2026.
- The 150 tonnes-per-day plant costs Rs 2,300 crore. It is a joint venture of DPA and Assam Petro-Chemicals Ltd (APCL), Namrup, with capital shared 76:24.
- It will make e-methanol from renewable power, water and biogenic CO2 and supply it to ships on the Asia-Europe International Trade Corridor.
- Phase I (50 TPD, Rs 1,200 crore) is due by January 2027 and Phase II (100 TPD, Rs 1,100 crore) by March 2027.
- The project is linked to India's Net Zero 2070 goal and the aim of becoming a top-five ship-owning nation by 2047.

QUICK FACTS

Fleet goals	100 new ships to be added to India's merchant fleet over five years, and India to rank among the world's top five ship-owning nations by 2047.

- India's first port-based e-methanol plant is at Deendayal Port Authority (DPA), Kandla, Gandhidham (Kutch), Gujarat. Its foundation stone was laid on 26 September 2026.
- Capacity is 150 tonnes per day (TPD) and the investment Rs 2,300 crore. The project is expected to create more than 3,500 direct and indirect jobs.
- Partners are DPA and Assam Petro-Chemicals Ltd (APCL), Namrup, Assam. Their capital contribution is in the ratio 76:24.
- Inputs are renewable power, water and biogenic CO2. The output will bunker ships on the Asia-Europe International Trade Corridor.
- Per the release, the projected cost is US$750 per tonne, against a global rate of US$1,300 per tonne.
- Kandla was declared a Major Port in 1955 and renamed Deendayal Port from 25 September 2017. It became Deendayal Port Authority under the Major Port Authorities Act, 2021, effective 3 November 2021.
- MNRE has recognised DPA, V.O. Chidambaranar (Tamil Nadu) and Paradip (Odisha) as green hydrogen hubs under the National Green Hydrogen Mission.

CAQM Revises GRAP to 48 Actions; BS-III/IV Vehicle Curbs Extended to Sonipat

29 Sep

- The 30th Full Commission meeting of the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM), held on 28 September 2026, approved a revised Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) schedule for NCR with 48 actions: 25 in Stage I, 8 in Stage II, 10 in Stage III and 5 in Stage IV.
- Curbs on BS-III petrol and BS-IV diesel four-wheelers (LMVs) now extend to Sonipat, besides Gurugram, Faridabad, Ghaziabad and Gautam Budh Nagar; BS-IV and older goods vehicles carrying essential commodities lose their exemption in Stages III and IV.
- Actions on DG sets and entry of BS-IV-and-below buses from NCR states move up from Stage II to Stage I.
- Web-portal dust monitoring of construction and demolition sites (plots of 500 sq m or more) now reaches beyond municipal limits, and the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet approved two full-time Technical Members for CAQM.

QUICK FACTS

Meeting	30th Full Commission of CAQM, 28 September 2026, chaired by Chairperson Rajesh Verma.
Revised GRAP	48 actions — Stage I 25, Stage II 8, Stage III 10, Stage IV 5. Repeated Stage I actions on dust, municipal solid waste and transport were merged.
Moved to Stage I from Stage II	DG-set curbs and entry of BS-IV-and-below buses from NCR and adjoining states.
Stage III relaxation	pothole repair allowed under Action No. 1.
C&D dust	Direction Nos. 11-18 (11 June 2021) amended; the 500 sq m threshold is unchanged.
Advisory No. 18 (10 September 2026)	physical sports competitions in NCR in November-December to be rescheduled.

- LMV curbs (BS-III petrol, BS-IV diesel) now cover Sonipat plus Gurugram, Faridabad, Ghaziabad and Gautam Budh Nagar.
- Essential-goods exemption removed for BS-IV-and-below LGVs and MGVs in Stage III and trucks/HGVs in Stage IV; Stage III explicitly bars entry into Delhi of diesel BS-IV-and-below LGVs and MGVs registered outside Delhi.
- Citizens' Charter under every GRAP stage expanded with more do's and don'ts.
- New full-time Technical Members (ACC-approved; three years or age 70, whichever is earlier): Mukesh Sharma and Trilok Singh Panwar.

DELHI-NCR GREENING TARGETS, 2026-27

Area	Target	Achieved
Delhi	58,01,386	62,00,527
Uttar Pradesh (NCR)	1,71,44,900	1,85,59,812
Rajasthan (NCR)	1,07,09,754	1,16,13,092
Haryana (NCR)	1,20,00,000	60,00,000
Overall	4,60,54,740	4,13,68,929

Source: PIB release (PRID 2316597). Figures reproduced as released; the four state rows do not sum exactly to the overall totals. Haryana is the only NCR state below target (50%).

India's First PRAMAAN Certificates Issued Under Indian Forest and Wood Certification Scheme

29 Sep

- The first PRAMAAN certificates under the Indian Forest and Wood Certification Scheme (IFWCS) went to the Andhra Pradesh Forest Development Corporation (APFDC) for 33,000 hectares of plantations and to Govind Mohapatra, a farmer linked to the Odisha Bamboo Development Agency; Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav presented them in New Delhi.
- PRAMAAN stands for Programme for Recognition and Accreditation of sustainable Management practices for Agroforestry And Natural forestry resources. It is the brand of the IFWCS, which MoEFCC launched in December 2023 and which IIFM Bhopal operates.
- Certification rests on independent audit by bodies accredited by the National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies (NABCB) of the Quality Council of India; forest management certification is assessed against the Indian Forest Management Standard in the National Working Plan Code 2023.
- The scheme is pitched as India's answer to deforestation-free sourcing rules in export markets, such as the EU Deforestation Regulation.

QUICK FACTS

Event	first PRAMAAN certificates handed over, New Delhi; organised by IIFM Bhopal, the scheme's operating agency.
Recipients	APFDC (plantations over 33,000 ha) and Govind Mohapatra, a farmer associated with the Odisha Bamboo Development Agency (OBDA). Both passed a field and management audit.
Significance	IFWCS moves from policy framework (December 2023) to field-level certification of both forest plantations and tree-based farming.
Pipeline	several state forest departments, forest development corporations, farmers and industries have applied for FM, TOF and CoC certification.
Beneficiaries named	rural and tribal communities, smallholders, women SHGs and marginal landholders in NTFP collection, agroforestry and tree-based farming.

– Accreditation architecture benchmarked against international certification frameworks.

Cabinet Approves Green Energy Corridor Phase-III: 135 GW Evacuation, 50 GWh Battery Storage

30 Sep

- The Union Cabinet approved Green Energy Corridor Phase-III (GEC-III) on 30 September 2026 to strengthen intra-state transmission for evacuating up to 135 GW of renewable energy.
- GEC-III also funds 50 GWh of Battery Energy Storage Systems; total outlay is Rs 1,86,405 crore with Central Financial Support of Rs 54,082 crore, to be set up by FY 2032-33.
- Greenfield lines will be bid out under Tariff Based Competitive Bidding (BOOM model); State Transmission Utilities are the implementing agencies.
- The scheme is linked to India's target of 900 GW installed non-fossil capacity by 2035.

QUICK FACTS

Scheme	Green Energy Corridor Phase-III (GEC-III); approved by the Union Cabinet on 30 September 2026
Purpose	strengthen the Intra-State Transmission System (InSTS) to evacuate up to 135 GW of renewable energy across States/UTs
Storage	50 GWh of Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) at RE generator end or other grid-critical locations
Total outlay Rs 1,86,405 crore	Rs 1,36,378 crore for InSTS + Rs 50,000 crore for BESS
Central Financial Support	Rs 54,082 crore (about 29% of outlay) to offset intra-state transmission charges
Completion target	FY 2032-33
Implementing agency	State Transmission Utilities (STUs); Transmission Service Providers bid under TBCB on a Build-Own-Operate-Maintain (BOOM) model
Linked target	900 GW installed non-fossil capacity by 2035 (release); COP26 'Panchamrit' pledge of 500 GW non-fossil capacity by 2030

National Coastal Mission 2.0 Guidelines Launched: Rs 767 Crore Scheme Till 2030-31

30 Sep

- Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav launched the implementation Guidelines for National Coastal Mission 2.0 (NCM 2.0) in New Delhi on 30 September 2026.
- NCM 2.0 is a Central Sector Scheme with an approved outlay of Rs 767 crore, running to 2030-31 across nine coastal States and four Union Territories.
- It subsumes the earlier National Coastal Mission (2021-22 to 2025-26) with effect from 16 May 2025.
- Largest component: Rs 250 crore for green coastal infrastructure on eroding coasts and for coastal zone and marine spatial plans covering about 1,000 km.
- A Project Steering Committee chaired by the Secretary, MoEFCC is the apex body; the Central Pollution Control Board is the Central Nodal Agency for funds.

QUICK FACTS

Launched	Guidelines for NCM 2.0, by Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav, New Delhi, 30 September 2026
Type and size	Central Sector Scheme; approved outlay Rs 767 crore; period 2025-26 to 2030-31, aligned with the 16th Finance Commission cycle
Nine coastal States	Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, West Bengal
Four UTs	Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Puducherry, Lakshadweep
Apex body	Project Steering Committee chaired by the Secretary, MoEFCC; meets at least twice a year
Central Nodal Agency for fund flow	Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)
India's coastline	11,098.81 km, re-assessed from 7,516.6 km and promulgated in April 2025

– Subsumes the earlier NCM (approved 2021, for 2021-22 to 2025-26) with effect from 16 May 2025

NCM 2.0: WHERE THE RS 767 CRORE GOES

Component	Outlay (Rs crore)	Indicative implementing agency
1. Climate Resilient Blue Economy Growth (Rs 320 crore)		
Climate-resilient, environment-friendly coastal tourism infrastructure	100	NCSCM / State-UT governments
Pollution abatement, monitoring and control (deep sea discharge studies)	70	CPCB
Coral reef development and management	50	Zoological Survey of India with NCSCM
Marine Research, Conservation & Information Centre cum Oceanarium, Somnath (gap funding)	100	MoEFCC / Government of Gujarat / GEER Foundation
2. Coastal Vulnerability and Risk Reduction (Rs 250 crore)		
Green Coastal Infrastructure for highly eroding coastlines: criteria,	250 (with the row	NCSCM

Component	Outlay (Rs crore)	Indicative implementing agency
guidelines, demonstration projects	below)	
ICZMP and CMSP for about 1,000 km of coastline	Included above	NCSCM
3. Climate Change Adaptation with Mitigation Co-benefits (Rs 82 crore)		
Andaman & Nicobar Islands: biosphere management and climate action	62	A&N Forest and Environment Department
Conservation of coastal (sea water) dolphins	20	MoEFCC Wildlife Division / Wildlife Institute of India
4. Capacity Building and Outreach (Rs 15 crore)		
Environmental education, capacity building and awareness	15	MoEFCC
5. Project Management and Preparatory Expenses (Rs 100 crore)		
Committed liability from ENCORE (Enhancing Coastal and Ocean Resource Efficiency)	70	NCSCM / MoEFCC
Administrative and operational expenses including MIS	30	MoEFCC / NCSCM or other agency

Source: NCM 2.0 Implementation Guidelines, MoEFCC, September 2026. Figures are indicative; the Project Steering Committee may reapportion within Rs 767 crore with the Minister's approval.

New CAFE Norms Notified for 2027-32: Fuel Benchmark to Tighten 16.7% in Five Years

30 Sep

- The Ministry of Power notified new Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) norms for passenger vehicles on 30 September 2026, in force from 1 April 2027 to 31 March 2032.
- The fuel-consumption benchmark tightens every year, from 3.996 litres/100 km in 2027-28 to 3.3273 litres/100 km in 2031-32 — about 16.7%.
- The reference weight rises from 1,082 kg to 1,229 kg and the target line is flattened: softer for lighter cars, stricter for heavier ones.
- A new Carbon Neutrality Factor credits ethanol blends, biofuels and CBG; recognised fuel-saving technologies go from four to twelve; EVs, hybrids and flex-fuel vehicles earn super credits.
- Manufacturers selling fewer than 1,000 units a year stay exempt; credits can be carried forward, traded, or bought from the Bureau of Energy Efficiency.

QUICK FACTS

Benchmark	3.996 litres/100 km in 2027-28, tightened each year to 3.3273 litres/100 km in 2031-32 (about 16.7%)
Reference weight	1,082 kg under existing norms to 1,229 kg (about 13.6% higher); target line flattened — softer for lighter cars, stricter for heavier ones
M1 category, the class CAFE covers	passenger vehicles seating up to nine including the driver, gross vehicle weight up to 3,500 kg; petrol, diesel, LPG, CNG, hybrid and electric all count
Exempt	manufacturers with annual sales below 1,000 units
Test cycles	reporting under both the Modified Indian Driving Cycle (MIDC), India's existing lab cycle, and the Worldwide Harmonized Light Vehicles Test Procedure (WLTP), which tracks real-world driving more closely

- Notified by the Ministry of Power on 30 September 2026; applies 1 April 2027 to 31 March 2032 to new passenger vehicles manufactured or imported for sale in India, replacing the existing norms
- Super credits (volume derogation factors) for Battery Electric (BEV), Range-Extended Electric (REEV), Plug-in Hybrid (PHEV), Strong Hybrid (SHEV) and Flex-Fuel vehicles in the fleet-average calculation

8. Schemes & Committees

21 articles

Decentralised Grain Storage Plan: godowns built in 313 PACS, creating over 1.80 LMT of capacity

03 Sep

- The Decentralised Grain Storage Plan in the Cooperative Sector builds godowns and allied infrastructure at Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS) by converging four existing central schemes.
- Rolled out as a pilot on 31 May 2023 across 11 PACS in 11 states with 9,750 MT of capacity.
- As of July 2026, 1,012 PACS had been identified and godowns completed in 313 PACS, creating over 1.80 lakh MT of storage capacity.
- Viability measures cut the effective interest rate for participating PACS to 1%, and FCI may give assured hiring of eligible godowns.

QUICK FACTS

Nodal ministry	Ministry of Cooperation, created on 6 July 2021 by carving cooperation out of the Ministry of Agriculture.
Implementing agency	National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC), a statutory corporation set up by an Act of Parliament in 1963.
Progress to July 2026	1,012 PACS identified; godowns completed in 313 PACS; over 1.80 LMT of capacity created.
Land conditions	PACS should preferably own the land; it must not be waterlogged or in forest areas; leased land needs a lease longer than 20 years.

- Pilot launched 31 May 2023 in 11 PACS across Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Assam, Karnataka and Tripura.
- Silo-based cooperative storage is provided in 50 MT, 100 MT and 200 MT sizes.
- PACS are selected and approved by District Cooperative Development Committees (DCDCs) under a Standard Operating Procedure called the 'Margdarshika'.
- Foodgrain production (Third Advance Estimates, 2025-26): 376.563 million tonnes, up 5.3% over 357.732 MT the previous year.
- Storage structures must meet Warehousing Development and Regulatory Authority (WDRA) norms and carry the prescribed grain storage logo and colour scheme.

Vibrant Villages Programme: Rs 11,639 Crore Across Both Phases, 2,616 Border Villages

06 Sep

- A PIB Backgrounder consolidates the Vibrant Villages Programme, the Ministry of Home Affairs scheme for India's international land border villages, across its two phases with a combined outlay of Rs 11,639 crore covering more than 2,616 villages.
- VVP-I is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme for the northern border (Rs 4,800 crore, 662 priority villages); VVP-II is a fully Centre-funded Central Sector Scheme extending the model to all other land borders (Rs 6,839 crore, 1,954 villages).
- As of July 2026 the MHA had sanctioned 1,248 projects worth Rs 3,020.32 crore under VVP-I, including 111 road projects that will connect 134 villages with no earlier road access.
- The scheme works by convergence and saturation of existing schemes under Village Action Plans, with a High-Powered Committee chaired by the Cabinet Secretary empowered to relax guidelines for border conditions.

QUICK FACTS

Vibrant Villages Programme (VVP)	Ministry of Home Affairs scheme for comprehensive development of villages along India's international land borders; combined VVP-I and VVP-II outlay Rs 11,639 crore covering more than 2,616 villages.
VVP-I	announced in Union Budget 2022-23, launched at Kibithoo in Anjaw district, Arunachal Pradesh on 10 April 2023; a Centrally Sponsored Scheme with Rs 4,800 crore for 2022-23 to 2026-27.
VVP-II	approved by the Union Cabinet on 2 April 2025 and launched at Nathanpur village, Cachar district, Assam on 20 February 2026; a Central Sector Scheme funded fully by the Centre, Rs 6,839 crore till 2028-29.
VVP-I coverage	662 priority villages in 46 blocks across 19 districts of Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Uttarakhand and Ladakh (UT), with a population of about 1.42 lakh.
VVP-II coverage	1,954 villages in 334 blocks across 15 States and 2 Union Territories; northern-border blocks already under VVP-I are excluded to avoid duplication.
Delivery instrument	Village Action Plans with saturation of existing schemes; a High-Powered Committee chaired by the Cabinet Secretary may recommend relaxations in scheme guidelines for border villages.

- India's international land border runs over 15,000 km with seven neighbours — Bangladesh 4,096.7 km (longest), China 3,488 km, Pakistan 3,323 km, with Nepal, Myanmar, Bhutan and Afghanistan accounting for the rest.
- Rs 2,500 crore of the VVP-I outlay is earmarked for road connectivity; all-weather roads are built under PMGSY-IV of the Ministry of Rural Development.

9th Rashtriya Poshan Maah to launch from Varanasi with Anganwadi Centres at its core

08 Sep

- The 9th Rashtriya Poshan Maah will be launched on 9 September 2026 at the Rudraksh International Cooperation and Convention Centre, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh.
- Its central theme is 'Hamari Anganwadi, Hamari Jimmedari', built on five priorities: dietary diversity and protein, fresh hot cooked meals, community ownership through Anganwadi Management Committees, nutrition-linked early childhood development, and ten years of the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana.
- Poshan Maah is the September campaign of Mission Poshan 2.0, the unified nutrition mission of the Ministry of Women and Child Development that merged POSHAN Abhiyaan, Anganwadi Services (ICDS) and the Scheme for Adolescent Girls.
- As on 31 July 2026, the network covered 13.99 lakh Anganwadi Centres, 13.30 lakh Anganwadi workers and about 8.94 crore beneficiaries, tracked on the Poshan Tracker.
- The 8th edition, launched on 17 September 2025 from Dhar, Madhya Pradesh, recorded 14.33 crore activities in convergence with more than 20 Ministries.

QUICK FACTS

Theme 2026	'Hamari Anganwadi, Hamari Jimmedari' — shared community ownership of Anganwadi Centres.
Nodal ministry	Ministry of Women and Child Development; the campaign runs under Mission Poshan 2.0.

- Rashtriya Poshan Maah (National Nutrition Month) is observed every September; the 9th edition launches 9 September 2026 from Varanasi.
- Anganwadi Management Committees (AMCs), chaired by the Anganwadi Supervisor, were constituted under guidelines issued on 23 June 2026.
- 2026 also marks 10 years of the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana, India's maternity benefit programme.
- Poshan Pakhwada is the companion fortnight-long campaign held every April; the 8th edition ran 9–23 April 2026 on brain development in the first six years.
- Take Home Ration (THR) — pre-mixed, fortified supplementary food given to beneficiaries to consume at home, as distinct from the Hot Cooked Meal served at the Anganwadi Centre; raw ration is not permitted.
- The revised Home Visit Scheduler tracks 34 developmental milestones for children aged 0–3 years; the ECCE curricula are Navchetna (0–3 years) and Aadharshila (3–6 years).

PM SHRI: 13,092 Exemplar Schools Selected Against 14,500 Target

09 Sep

- A PIB Backgrounder set out the status of PM SHRI (Pradhan Mantri Schools for Rising India), the Centrally Sponsored Scheme launched on 7 September 2022 to develop over 14,500 exemplar schools aligned to NEP 2020.
- As of July 2026, 13,092 schools — about 90% of the target — have been selected across 36 States and UTs, covering 725 districts and 8,340 blocks/ULBs.
- The scheme carries a project cost of Rs 27,360 crore for 2022-23 to 2026-27, of which the Central share is Rs 18,128 crore.
- Schools are picked through a three-stage Challenge Mode using UDISE+ data, with final selection by an Expert Committee headed by the Secretary (School Education and Literacy).
- PM SHRI schools are meant to act as mentor institutions for neighbouring schools, marking a shift from infrastructure-led development to holistic, future-ready education.

QUICK FACTS

Target	strengthen more than 14,500 existing schools as exemplar institutions; over 20 lakh students to benefit directly.
Spatial footprint	725 districts and 8,340 blocks/urban local bodies.
Composition of the 13,092	1,305 primary, 3,102 upper primary, 3,141 secondary and 5,544 higher secondary schools.
Context	India's school system has 14.71 lakh schools and more than 24.69 crore students.

- PM SHRI expands to Pradhan Mantri Schools for Rising India; launched 7 September 2022 as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme.
- Implemented by the Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Education.
- Total project cost Rs 27,360 crore for the five years 2022-23 to 2026-27; Central share Rs 18,128 crore.
- As of July 2026, 13,092 schools selected across 36 States/UTs — around 90% of the target.
- Institutional mix includes 913 KVS schools, 620 NVS schools, 80 Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas and 4 NCERT schools.
- Selection is via a three-stage Challenge Mode; the challenge assessment needs a minimum 70% score for urban schools and 60% for rural schools.
- Final selection is made by an Expert Committee headed by the Secretary (School Education and Literacy), Ministry of Education.
- Project Approval Board-approved Central outlay rose from Rs 2,520 crore in 2023-24 to Rs 5,224 crore in 2026-27, an increase of about 107%.

DILRMP 3.0 to build GIS-enabled Land Stack with Rs 565.50 crore outlay

09 Sep

- The Department of Land Resources, Ministry of Rural Development, will launch the Operational Guidelines for DILRMP 3.0 (2026-2031) on 10 September 2026.
- DILRMP 3.0 runs as a Central Sector Scheme with an anticipated outlay of Rs 565.50 crore, covering all States and Union Territories over five years.
- The shift is from record digitisation to a GIS-enabled 'Land Stack' treated as Digital Public Infrastructure, integrating maps, ownership, registration and revenue court cases.
- Interventions include Universal Bhu-Aadhaar (14-digit ULPIN) for every land parcel, paperless registration, a Registration Repository, RCCMS for revenue courts and completion of the NAKSHA urban pilot.
- 75 Sub-Registrar Offices are to be upgraded into 'Registration Seva Kendras' at an outlay of Rs 37.5 crore.

QUICK FACTS

Scheme	Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP) 3.0, covering 2026-2031.
Implementing body	Department of Land Resources (DoLR), Ministry of Rural Development; rollout across all States and UTs.
Outlay	Rs 565.50 crore, as a Central Sector Scheme (100% Union funding).
Core idea	a GIS-enabled 'Land Stack' as Digital Public Infrastructure, integrating maps, ownership, registration and court cases in one interoperable system.
Universal Bhu-Aadhaar	a 14-digit Unique Land Parcel Identification Number (ULPIN) for every land parcel, first rolled out under DILRMP in 2021.
Predecessor	the National Land Records Modernization Programme (NLRMP), approved in 2008 as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme, recast as DILRMP with 100% central funding from 1 April 2016.
Monitoring	an upgraded DILRMP-MIS dashboard for real-time progress tracking.

- Operational Guidelines to be launched on 10 September 2026.
- 75 Sub-Registrar Offices to become 'Registration Seva Kendras' at Rs 37.5 crore.

PMMSY completes six years: fish output 197.75 lakh tonnes, exports Rs 73,890 crore

10 Sep

- The Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana completed six years on 10 September 2026; a PIB Backgrounder set out its production, export, employment and infrastructure record.
- Fish production rose from 141.64 lakh tonnes in 2019-20 to a record 197.75 lakh tonnes in 2024-25, and fisheries exports from Rs 46,663 crore in 2019-20 to Rs 73,890 crore in 2025-26.
- The scheme has a total outlay of Rs 20,750 crore and received a record Budget Estimate allocation of Rs 2,500 crore for 2026-27.
- Projects worth Rs 21,394.88 crore, with a Central share of Rs 9,510.89 crore, were approved between 2020-21 and 2025-26 (as of 11 August 2026).
- PMMSY is an umbrella scheme with Central Sector and Centrally Sponsored components; PM-MKSSY is its Central Sector sub-scheme.

QUICK FACTS

Fish production	141.64 lakh tonnes (2019-20) to 197.75 lakh tonnes (2024-25); exports: Rs 46,663 crore (2019-20) to Rs 73,890 crore (2025-26).
National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB)	established 10 July 2006, headquartered in Hyderabad, an autonomous body under the Department of Fisheries.

- PMMSY is implemented by the Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, from 2020-21; the Backgrounder puts its total outlay at Rs 20,750 crore (the Union Cabinet's 2020 approval was for Rs 20,050 crore).
- It completed six years on 10 September 2026 and was allocated a record Rs 2,500 crore in Budget Estimates 2026-27.
- It is an umbrella scheme with a Central Sector (CS) component, fully funded by the Centre, and a Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) component implemented by States and UTs.
- PMMSY was built on the earlier Blue Revolution scheme and was designed to close gaps across the fisheries value chain.
- The scheme is credited with direct and indirect employment for 58 lakh persons; the fisheries sector supports nearly three crore livelihoods.
- Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kisan Samridhi Sah-Yojana (PM-MKSSY): Central Sector sub-scheme under PMMSY, outlay Rs 6,000 crore, running 2023-24 to 2026-27 in all States and UTs.
- The scheme is mapped to Sustainable Development Goal 14 (Life Below Water).

DILRMP 3.0 guidelines launched: Rs 565.50 crore GIS Land Stack, universal Bhu-Aadhaar, Registration Seva Kendras

10 Sep

- Rural Development Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan launched the Operational Guidelines for DILRMP 3.0 at Krishi Bhawan on 10 September 2026.

- DILRMP 3.0 is a Central Sector Scheme with an outlay of Rs 565.50 crore for 2026–2031, 100% centrally funded and released in performance-linked phases through PFMS.
- Its core is a GIS-based 'Land Stack': State Land Stacks, linked through APIs, federate into a National Land Stack that joins cadastral maps, Records of Rights, registrations and court cases.
- Every land parcel gets a 14-digit Bhu-Aadhaar (ULPIN), and 75 high-footfall Sub-Registrar Offices become Registration Seva Kendras modelled on Passport Seva Kendras.
- Earlier phases digitised 99.90% of Records of Rights and 97% of cadastral maps and computerised 99% of Sub-Registrar Offices.

QUICK FACTS

DILRMP 3.0	Central Sector Scheme; Rs 565.50 crore; 2026–2031; all States and UTs; 100% central funding; monitored on the DILRMP-MIS dashboard by the Project Sanctioning & Monitoring Committee (PS&MC).
Nodal	Department of Land Resources (DoLR), Ministry of Rural Development. Secretary Narendra Bhooshan called 3.0 a shift to integrated Digital Public Infrastructure for land.
Shift	from isolated digitisation to full system integration: spatial accuracy, georeferenced maps and interoperability across departments.
Constitution	land records are a State subject (List II, Entry 18, 'maintenance of land records... records of rights'), while 'registration of deeds and documents' is in the Concurrent List (Entry 6), so the National Land Stack is federated and data stays with States.

Seven Years of PM Kisan Maandhan Yojana: 24.96 Lakh Farmers Enrolled

11 Sep

- A PIB Backgrounder marks seven years of the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Maandhan Yojana (PM-KMY), the contributory old-age pension scheme for small and marginal farmers.
- Enrolment reached 24,96,252 farmers as on 6 February 2026, with Haryana leading at about 5.75 lakh and Bihar next at over 3.46 lakh.
- Rs 540.66 crore had been utilised under the scheme since 2019, as on February 2026.
- Subscribers pay Rs 55 to Rs 200 a month depending on entry age; the Centre matches every rupee and LIC manages the pension fund.
- The assured pension is Rs 3,000 a month from age 60, with a 50 per cent family pension of Rs 1,500 for the surviving spouse.

QUICK FACTS

Benefit	a minimum assured pension of Rs 3,000 a month once the subscriber turns 60.
Eligibility	small and marginal farmers with cultivable landholding up to 2 hectares, aged 18 to 40, named in their State or UT land records as on 1 August 2019.

- PM Kisan Maandhan Yojana (PM-KMY) was launched on 12 September 2019 from Ranchi, Jharkhand, and completes seven years on 12 September 2026.
- It is a Central Sector Scheme of the Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, run in partnership with the Life Insurance Corporation of India.
- LIC is the pension fund manager — it holds the corpus, maintains pension records and makes the payouts.
- Contribution is shared 1:1 — the farmer pays Rs 55 to Rs 200 a month by entry age and the Centre matches it (Rs 55 + Rs 55 at age 18, Rs 200 + Rs 200 at age 40).
- Enrolment stood at 24,96,252 farmers as on 6 February 2026; Rs 540.66 crore utilised since 2019.
- Haryana leads with about 5.75 lakh enrolments, Bihar follows with over 3.46 lakh; Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh have each crossed 2.5 lakh and Chhattisgarh 2 lakh.
- On a pensioner's death the spouse gets a family pension of 50 per cent — Rs 1,500 a month — if not already a PM-KMY beneficiary.
- Enrolment is paperless at a Common Service Centre through a Village Level Entrepreneur; the farmer receives a Pension Account Number and a pension card.
- The contribution may be auto-debited from the bank account into which PM-KISAN benefits are credited.

National HPV Vaccination Campaign Crosses 80 Lakh Doses; Four States at Full Coverage

11 Sep

- More than 80 lakh (8 million) doses of HPV vaccine have been administered under the National HPV Vaccination Campaign since its launch in February 2026.
- The campaign gives 14-year-old girls a free, voluntary, single-dose HPV vaccination with parental consent at government health facilities.
- Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Mizoram have covered 100 per cent of their identified target cohorts; Uttar Pradesh has vaccinated the most girls, over 22 lakh.
- Coverage is tracked district-wise on the U-WIN digital immunisation platform, and sessions run under trained Medical Officers with 24x7 links for rare AEFI management.
- The annual cohort of 14-year-old girls is about 1.2 crore, as per Registrar General of India 2021 estimates.

QUICK FACTS

What it offers	a single dose of HPV vaccine, free of cost and voluntary, with parental consent, to 14-year-old girls at government health facilities.
Annual target cohort	about 1.2 crore girls aged 14, as per Registrar General of India 2021 estimates.
Above 90 per cent	Bihar, Andhra Pradesh and Assam. Above 85 per cent: Karnataka. Above 60 per cent: Chhattisgarh, Sikkim, Kerala, Telangana and Odisha.
Global base of experience	over 800 million HPV vaccine doses distributed worldwide.

- The National HPV Vaccination Campaign was launched by the Prime Minister in February 2026 and had crossed 80 lakh (8 million) doses by 11 September 2026.
- Full coverage of identified target cohorts achieved by Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Mizoram.
- Uttar Pradesh has vaccinated the largest number — more than 22 lakh adolescent girls.
- Delivery is monitored on U-WIN, letting programme managers see district-level coverage, spot gaps and trace missed beneficiaries.
- Every session runs under a trained Medical Officer, with facilities linked to 24x7 care for the rare Adverse Event Following Immunization (AEFI).
- HPV vaccines are now in the national immunisation programmes of 87 per cent of upper-middle-income, 78 per cent of lower-middle-income and 54 per cent of low-income countries.

PM-ABHIM: 10 Critical Care Blocks and 12 Public Health Labs Opened in Andhra Pradesh

12 Sep

- Union Health Minister J P Nadda opened 10 Critical Care Blocks and 12 Integrated Public Health Laboratories in Andhra Pradesh under PM-ABHIM.
- Nationally, 631 Critical Care Blocks have been sanctioned under PM-ABHIM; Andhra Pradesh has 24 CCBs (about Rs 606 crore) and 26 IPHLs (Rs 32.50 crore).
- The Centre approved Rs 1,271.80 crore for Andhra Pradesh across four components: CCBs, IPHLs, and urban and rural Ayushman Arogya Mandirs.
- The Minister cited more than 1.75 lakh Ayushman Arogya Mandirs, out-of-pocket expenditure down to 43.4%, and 23 AIIMS.
- He praised Andhra Pradesh's Sanjeevani programme (41 health parameters tested) as a possible national model.

QUICK FACTS

Inaugurated 12 September 2026	10 CCBs (at medical colleges and district hospitals, e.g. GMC Kadapa, AMC Visakhapatnam, KMC Kurnool, SMC Vijayawada) and 12 IPHLs (at area hospitals, e.g. Araku, Guntakal, Tuni).
Andhra Pradesh under PM-ABHIM	24 CCBs (about Rs 606 crore) and 26 IPHLs (Rs 32.50 crore) - Rs 647.51 crore combined; all 26 IPHLs are now complete (14 were already working).
Andhra Pradesh total approval	Rs 1,271.80 crore over the five-year scheme period, for four components.
National	631 CCBs sanctioned under PM-ABHIM across states and UTs.
PM-ABHIM	launched 25 October 2021 in Varanasi; outlay Rs 64,180 crore for 2021-22 to 2025-26; Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

– Andhra Pradesh's Sanjeevani programme offers doorstep testing for 41 health parameters.

Incentive Scheme for Domestic PNG Connections Rewards Gas Firms with Cheaper APM Gas

13 Sep

- The Incentive Scheme for Promotion of Domestic PNG Connections, launched on 18 August 2026 and in effect from 1 September 2026, rewards city gas companies for adding active, billed household connections.
- For every billed domestic connection above a fixed minimum per Geographical Area, a CGD entity gets an extra 200 SCM of low-priced domestic APM gas, replacing costlier LNG it buys for its CNG (Transport) segment.
- The payback period on a household connection is expected to fall from about ten years to nearly three; the scheme runs in two tranches over six months.
- India had 1.74 crore domestic PNG connections as of 18 August 2026, with PNGRB-authorised entities in 309 Geographical Areas covering the entire mainland.
- Supporting steps: an Accelerated Approval Framework with uniform Right-of-Way charges, a push for 5% VAT on natural gas, National PNG Drive 2.0 and a unified registration portal.

QUICK FACTS

Scheme	Incentive Scheme for Promotion of Domestic PNG Connections - launched 18 August 2026, effective 1 September 2026.
Duration	two tranches spread over six months.
Incentive	200 SCM (Standard Cubic Metres) of APM gas per incremental billed domestic connection above the Geographical Area's fixed threshold.
Payback on a household connection	from about 10 years to nearly 3 years.
Coverage base	309 Geographical Areas authorised by PNGRB, spanning the entire mainland; 1.74 crore domestic PNG connections (18 August 2026).
Regulator	Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB), a statutory body under the PNGRB Act, 2006, headquartered in New Delhi.

– The APM gas replaces imported LNG in the CGD entity's CNG (Transport) segment, cutting its sourcing cost.

PM Vishwakarma Completes Three Years, Meets 30 Lakh Artisan Registration Target

16 Sep

- PM Vishwakarma completes three years on 17 September 2026, having achieved its registration target of 30 lakh beneficiaries.
- A Central Sector Scheme with an outlay of Rs 13,000 crore for FY2023-24 to FY2027-28, covering 18 traditional family-based trades.
- It bundles recognition, skill training, a toolkit incentive, collateral-free credit, digital incentives and marketing support in a single framework.
- Over 24.37 lakh artisans have received basic training and 6.19 lakh loans worth about Rs 5,316 crore have been sanctioned.
- Beneficiaries are onboarded on the Udyam Assist Platform, entering the formal MSME ecosystem.

QUICK FACTS

- Launched on 17 September 2023 as a Central Sector Scheme of the Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises.
- Outlay of Rs 13,000 crore for FY2023-24 to FY2027-28, covering 18 notified traditional trades.
- Built on three pillars - Samman, Samarthya and Samriddhi - and aims to strengthen the Guru-Shishya parampara and family-based practice of traditional skills.
- Open to artisans aged 18 and above who work with hands and tools in a notified trade on a self-employment basis in the unorganised sector.
- Registration and benefits are limited to one member of a family; government servants and their family members are ineligible.
- Applicants must not have taken a loan under a similar credit-based self-employment scheme in the previous five years.
- Applications are accepted only through Common Service Centres, followed by three-tier verification - Gram Panchayat or Urban Local Body, District Implementation Committee, and Screening Committee.
- Trades covered include carpenter, boat maker, armourer, goldsmith, potter, mason, barber, washerman, tailor and fishing net maker.

PMAY-U Crosses 1.25 Crore Sanctioned Houses as PMAY-U 2.0 Runs Four Verticals

16 Sep

- PMAY-U, launched in June 2015, has sanctioned 1.25 crore houses across its two phases as on 9 August 2026, of which over 1 crore are completed.
- The mission period, originally up to March 2022, has been extended to 30 September 2026 to finish sanctioned projects.
- A restructured PMAY-U 2.0 was launched in September 2024 for 2024-2029, targeting 1 crore more urban families with up to Rs 2.50 lakh per unit.
- PMAY-U 2.0 runs four verticals - Beneficiary-Led Construction, Affordable Housing in Partnership, Affordable Rental Housing and the Interest Subsidy Scheme.
- Of the 1.25 crore houses sanctioned, 1 crore are in the name of women, sole or joint.

QUICK FACTS

Income eligibility	EWS up to Rs 3 lakh a year, LIG from Rs 3 lakh to Rs 6 lakh, MIG from Rs 6 lakh to Rs 9 lakh.

- PMAY-U was launched in June 2015 by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs to deliver all-weather pucca houses with basic civic amenities in urban areas.
- The original mission period ran to March 2022 and has been extended to 30 September 2026 to complete sanctioned projects.
- PMAY-U 2.0 was launched in September 2024 and runs from 2024 to 2029, targeting 1 crore additional urban poor and middle-class families.
- Financial assistance under PMAY-U 2.0 is up to Rs 2.50 lakh per unit.
- A beneficiary family - husband, wife and unmarried children - must not own a pucca house anywhere in India, and may use only one of the four verticals.
- A household owning a pucca house below 21 sq m may be considered for upgradation with expansion up to 30 sq m.
- Ownership or co-ownership in the name of a woman beneficiary is mandated under the mission.

Biometric Aadhaar Authentication Mandatory for Subsidised LPG Refills from 1 October 2026

19 Sep

- From 1 October 2026, a domestic LPG consumer must have completed Biometric Aadhaar Authentication to book a refill at the regulated Retail Selling Price with subsidy.
- As on 19 September 2026, 27.43 crore active domestic consumers — 89.9 per cent — had completed authentication and need do nothing further.
- Consumers who choose not to authenticate will be supplied LPG at market price without subsidy, in 5 kg or 10 kg cylinders, subject to local availability.

- The implicit subsidy was about Rs 210 per 14.2 kg cylinder in September 2026, having reached Rs 721 in June 2026.
- Accumulated under-recoveries of public sector oil marketing companies on domestic LPG exceeded Rs 62,000 crore as on 31 August 2026.

QUICK FACTS

Measure	Biometric Aadhaar Authentication (BAA) becomes a condition for booking a subsidised domestic LPG refill from 1 October 2026.
Coverage as on 19 September 2026	27.43 crore active domestic consumers authenticated, or 89.9 per cent.
Three ways to authenticate	by the delivery person at the door on the OMC app, at the distributor's showroom, or by the consumer on an OMC mobile app.
OMC apps named	IndianOil ONE for Indane, HelloBPCL for Bharatgas, HP PAY for HP Gas; self e-KYC tutorials are on the PMUY portal.
Outreach since October 2023	more than 12 crore SMS and WhatsApp messages, IVRS prompts at booking, and camps at distributorships and in rural areas.
Stated purpose	prevent diversion of subsidised domestic cylinders to commercial use and remove duplicate and ineligible connections.
LPG consumer helpline	1800 2333 555.

- Original deadline was 30 June 2026; it was extended seven times, finally to 14 September 2026.
- Non-authenticating consumers get LPG at market price, unsubsidised, in 5 kg or 10 kg cylinders subject to local availability.

Over 9 Lakh Community Resource Persons Anchor India's Rural Service Delivery

20 Sep

- A PIB backgrounder released on 20 September 2026 sets out consolidated national figures for India's rural frontline cadre: over 9 lakh Community Resource Persons (CRPs) under DAY-NRLM, plus ASHAs, Anganwadi Workers, Swachhagrahis and Awaas Mitras.
- Of the 9 lakh CRPs, about 4.08 lakh are livelihood CRPs working in agriculture, livestock, fisheries and forest produce; the remaining roughly 5 lakh work on financial inclusion, insurance, gender and community development.
- DAY-NRLM has mobilised more than 10 crore rural households into around 92 lakh Self-Help Groups, with Bank Sakhis having routed Rs 13.41 lakh crore of bank credit to SHGs since 2013-14.
- In health and nutrition, over 10.40 lakh ASHAs (as of 31 December 2025) and 10.58 lakh trained Anganwadi Workers (by March 2026) form the parallel frontline.
- The backgrounder frames the 'Community Cadre Approach' as a decentralised delivery mechanism in which cadres act as trainers, service providers, behaviour-change agents and scheme facilitators.

QUICK FACTS

DAY-NRLM	launched 2011 as the National Rural Livelihoods Mission by restructuring the Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana; renamed Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana in November 2015; Ministry of Rural Development.
Community Resource Person (CRP)	a trained cadre drawn from the community itself, paid activity-based incentives tied to service-delivery outcomes under the respective scheme guidelines.
SHG architecture under DAY-NRLM is three-tier	Self-Help Group at hamlet level, Village Organisation at village level, Cluster Level Federation above it.
Krishi Sakhi	farm-extension cadre; over 1.91 lakh mobilised as per the Annual Report 2025-26.
Pashu Sakhi	livestock cadre; about 1.70 lakh mobilised. Matsya Sakhi (fisheries): over 2,012. Van Sakhi (non-timber forest produce): about 2,993.
Udyog Sakhi and CRP-Enterprise Promotion	48,785 Udyog Sakhis support non-farm enterprise under the Start-up Village Entrepreneurship Programme.
BC Sakhi	1.48 lakh digital doorstep banking agents; 50,548 branch-level Bank Sakhis facilitate SHG credit linkage.
ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activist)	introduced in 2005 under the National Rural Health Mission; paid performance-based incentives, not a salary.
Anganwadi Worker	frontline of the Integrated Child Development Services, launched on 2 October 1975, now subsumed under Mission Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 (2021), Ministry of Women and Child Development.
Swachhagrahi	village-level sanitation motivator under Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen), with preference given to women; over 10.36 lakh functionaries and 36,342 master trainers trained.
Awaas Mitra	field facilitator under Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin (launched 20 November 2016), which targets 4.95 crore houses by March 2029.
Lakhpati Didi	DAY-NRLM initiative launched in 2023 to raise SHG women's annual household income above Rs 1 lakh; the original 2 crore target was raised to 3 crore in 2024-25.
Other DAY-NRLM cadres	Bima Sakhis take insurance to villages, Gender CRPs address gender-based violence and exclusion, and Convergence CRPs work under the PRI-CBO Convergence Project linking panchayats to community organisations.
Nal Jal Mitra	Jal Jeevan Mission cadre trained in plumbing, electrical work and pump operation to run and repair village water supply systems.

- Jal Jeevan Mission (launched 15 August 2019) works through Village Water and Sanitation Committees or Pani Samitis, in line with the 73rd Constitutional Amendment; over 5.33 lakh are operational.

India Reaches 5.69 Lakh ODF Plus Villages Under Swachh Bharat Mission-Grameen

20 Sep

- A PIB backgrounder of 20 September 2026 records that rural sanitation coverage rose from 39 per cent in 2014, when the Swachh Bharat Mission began, to 100 per cent by 2019, on the back of more than 10.28 crore toilets built across 36 states and union territories.
- As of 17 September 2026, India has 5.69 lakh ODF Plus villages, of which 5.25 lakh have reached ODF Plus Model status - the highest of the three ODF Plus stages.
- Solid waste management arrangements exist in 5.38 lakh villages and liquid waste management systems in 5.65 lakh villages; 12.22 crore individual household toilets have been built in all.
- 1,314 GOBARdhan biogas plants are operational across 582 districts, alongside 98,273 household-level biogas plants.
- Swachhata Hi Seva 2026 began on 17 September under the theme 'Swachhata Mein Sahbhag; Swachh Bharat, Viksit Bharat', following the 18.06 crore participants recorded in the 2025 edition.

QUICK FACTS

Nodal body	Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation under the Ministry of Jal Shakti - not the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, which runs the urban wing SBM-U.

- Swachh Bharat Mission launched 2 October 2014; the Grameen wing replaced the Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan of 2012.
- Rural India declared Open Defecation Free in 2019; coverage had been 39 per cent in 2014.

- SBM-G Phase II was approved in February 2020 for 2020-21 to 2024-25 with a total outlay of Rs 1,40,881 crore, of which Rs 52,497 crore comes from the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation and the rest is dovetailed from 15th Finance Commission grants, MGNREGS and revenue-generation models.
- Centre-State fund sharing under SBM-G Phase II: 90:10 for North-Eastern and Himalayan states and the UT of Jammu and Kashmir, 60:40 for other states, 100:0 for other union territories.
- ODF Plus has three progressive stages - Aspiring (manages either solid or liquid waste), Rising (manages both), Model (manages both plus visual cleanliness and ODF Plus messaging).
- SLWM under Phase II is monitored on four output-outcome areas: plastic waste, biodegradable solid waste including animal waste, greywater, and faecal sludge.
- GOBARdhan (Galvanizing Organic Bio-Agro Resources Dhan), launched in February 2018, converts cattle dung, crop residue and organic waste into biogas, compressed bio-gas and bio-slurry.
- Swachh Survekshan Grameen, first conducted in 2018, ranks districts on quantitative and qualitative sanitation parameters through an independent survey agency.
- Swachhata Hi Seva, an annual citizen-participation campaign, was launched in 2017; the 2026 edition includes shramdaan on 1 October ('Ek Din, Ek Ghanta, Ek Saath') and special Gram Sabhas on 2 October.
- Students in the 2026 campaign are being taught the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2026 through Swachhata Gyan Yatras and school Samvads.
- SBM-G targets Sustainable Development Goal 6 - clean water and sanitation for all by 2030.

AB PM-JAY at Eight Years: 13.25 Crore Admissions Worth Rs 2.03 Lakh Crore

22 Sep

- At its eighth anniversary, AB PM-JAY has funded about 13.25 crore hospital admissions worth Rs 2.03 lakh crore through over 38,000 empanelled hospitals (as of 31 August 2026).
- About 48.51 crore people, roughly 33% of India's population, hold Ayushman cards (as of 21 September 2026), and 1.36 crore seniors hold Ayushman Vay Vandana cards.
- The scheme offers Rs 5 lakh of cashless secondary and tertiary cover per family per year across 1,961 procedures in 27 specialties; the 2026-27 budget estimate is Rs 9,500 crore.
- It is one of four Ayushman Bharat pillars, alongside Ayushman Arogya Mandirs, ABDM and PM-ABHIM.

QUICK FACTS

Cover	Rs 5 lakh per family per year, cashless, for secondary and tertiary hospitalisation
Package	1,961 procedures across 27 medical specialties
Type	Centrally Sponsored Scheme; implemented by the National Health Authority under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
Beneficiary base	SECC 2011 deprivation (rural) and occupational (urban) criteria, plus earlier RSBY families
Expansions	ASHA/anganwadi families (March 2024, ~37 lakh families); all citizens aged 70+ (approved 11 September 2024)
Union budget estimate 2026-27	Rs 9,500 crore

- Launched 23 September 2018 at Ranchi, Jharkhand; 2026 marks eight years

WHO IS ELIGIBLE

Route	Criteria
Rural (SECC 2011 deprivation)	D1 one-room kucha house; D2 no adult aged 16-59; D3 female-headed with no adult male aged 16-59; D4 disabled member and no able-bodied adult; D5 SC/ST household; D7 landless manual casual labour
Urban (11 occupational categories)	Ragpicker, beggar, domestic worker, street vendor, construction worker, sanitation worker, home-based worker, transport worker, shop worker, electrician/mechanic, washer-man/chowkidar
Special inclusions	BOCW workers; road accident victims under PM-RAHAT; transgender persons under SMILE; PM CARES for Children; NAMASTE waste pickers and sanitation workers; PVTGs under PM-JANMAN

Source: PIB Backgrounder, 22 September 2026.

Next Phase of UDAN: 21 State/UT MoUs Signed, Challenge Mode for Aerodromes Launched

22 Sep

- The Ministry of Civil Aviation signed 21 MoUs with States/UTs and the Airports Authority of India on 22 September 2026 to implement the next phase of UDAN (Modified UDAN).
- A Challenge Mode Portal now lets States/UTs nominate airstrips and helipads for development; a Scheme Document for the next round of UDAN route bidding was also released.
- Modified UDAN targets 120 new destinations and 4 crore more passengers over ten years; the Cabinet approved it on 25 March 2026 with Rs 28,840 crore for 2026-27 to 2035-36.
- Since 2016 UDAN has operationalised 687 routes and 95 aerodromes, with over 3.66 lakh flights carrying about 1.71 crore passengers.

QUICK FACTS

MoUs	21, between the Ministry of Civil Aviation, the States/UTs and AAI (UDAN's implementing agency)
Launched the same day	the Challenge Mode Portal for Aerodrome Development and the Scheme Document for the next UDAN route-bidding round
Modified UDAN targets (10 years)	120 new destinations and 4 crore more passengers
Four pillars of Modified UDAN	passenger affordability, sustainable operations, a transparent Challenge Mode, and indigenous aircraft manufacturing
Build-up	PM inaugurated the next phase at Jodhpur on 4 July 2026; UDAN workshop on 16 July 2026
UDAN record so far	687 routes, 95 aerodromes, 3.66 lakh+ flights, ~1.71 crore passengers
Aviation jobs	~3 million (2014) to ~7.7 million, with potential of 25 million by 2040

Arogya Manthan 2026: NHA Launches Secure Data Environment, Claims Auto-Adjudication as PM-JAY Turns 8

25 Sep

- At Arogya Manthan 2026 (Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi, 25 September 2026), the National Health Authority launched the National Healthcare Providers Registry (NHPR) mobile app, a Secure Data Environment (SDE) and an Auto-Adjudication Framework for AB PM-JAY claims.
- The event marked eight years of AB PM-JAY (launched 23 September 2018) and five years of the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (launched 27 September 2021).
- PM-JAY status: over 60 crore beneficiaries covered, over 13 crore hospital admissions, treatment worth more than Rs 2 lakh crore, and over 49 crore Ayushman Cards.
- ABDM status: more than 97.8 crore ABHAs, over 121 crore health records linked, 5.6 lakh+ health facilities and about 11 lakh healthcare professionals registered.
- The SDE, built with IISc Bengaluru, lets approved entities analyse de-identified PM-JAY and ABDM data inside an isolated NHA environment.

QUICK FACTS

Arogya Manthan 2026	organised by NHA to mark the PM-JAY and ABDM anniversaries; inaugurated by Union Health Minister J.P. Nadda on 25 September 2026.
Five launches	NHPR Mobile App, NHCX Implementation Guide for Payers, Guidebook for a Model Digital Health Facility, the Secure Data Environment (SDE) application, and the Framework for Auto-Adjudication of Claims under AB PM-JAY.
SDE	approved entities work with de-identified data or run their code inside an isolated NHA environment, and outputs are reviewed before release. It draws on the 13 crore+ patient records PM-JAY has generated.
Auto-Adjudication Framework	technology- and data-driven processing of PM-JAY hospital claims.

- PM-JAY was expanded in October 2024 to cover every senior citizen aged 70+ irrespective of income (Ayushman Vay Vandana).
- ICMR has developed 150+ standard treatment workflows and guidelines.

STATES AND UTS RECOGNISED AT AROGYA MANTHAN 2026

Programme	Category	Recognised
AB PM-JAY	Highest card saturation among ASHA, AWW and AWH beneficiaries (large State / small State / UT)	Andhra Pradesh / Sikkim / Jammu & Kashmir
AB PM-JAY	Top claim settlement for inter-State portability	Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Gujarat
ABDM	Top-performing model districts, by district-population category	Bihar, Ladakh, Dadra and Nagar Haveli
ABDM	Most sub-centres using ABDM-enabled HMIS (small State/UT / medium / large State)	Chandigarh / Assam / Uttar Pradesh

Source: PIB release, 25 September 2026.

PM-RKVY Sanctions of Rs 1,200 Crore to 10 States; Khet Bachao Abhiyan from 22 October

29 Sep

- A nationwide Khet Bachao Abhiyan will run from 22 October to 30 November 2026 to promote balanced, Soil Health Card-based fertiliser use; it was announced at the National Agriculture Conference – Rabi Campaign 2026.
- Sanction letters worth over Rs 1,200 crore under the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (PM-RKVY) went to 10 states, led by West Bengal (Rs 290 crore), Haryana (Rs 198 crore) and Chhattisgarh (Rs 181 crore).
- The Centre will procure 100% of the tur, urad and masoor offered at MSP, with payment within 48 hours.
- Monthly virtual Centre-state reviews and a fixed annual calendar of pre-season meetings (kharif: 10 and 17 May; rabi: 10 and 17 September) were announced.

QUICK FACTS

Occasion	day two of the National Agriculture Conference – Rabi Campaign 2026, chaired by Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan.
PM-RKVY	over Rs 1,200 crore sanctioned to 10 states; largest West Bengal (Rs 290 crore), smallest Punjab (Rs 43 crore).
Khet Bachao Abhiyan	22 October-30 November 2026; balanced fertiliser use based on Soil Health Cards, protecting soil fertility and beneficial insects.
Minister's figures	farm growth up from 3% to 4.5% since 2015; average annual foodgrain addition up from ~40 lakh to 84 lakh tonnes; rabi foodgrain output up 205 lakh tonnes between 2023-24 and 2025-26.
New structures	a State Agriculture Team in each state (minister, secretary, SAUs, ICAR institutes, KVKs, ATMA, FPOs) and monthly district meetings under the Collector.

- Pulses in rice fallows to be pushed in Jharkhand, Bihar, Odisha and West Bengal after the paddy harvest.
- States directed to saturate eligible farmers with Kisan Credit Cards, run transparent Crop Cutting Experiments under crop insurance, act against spurious inputs and end forced tagging.

PM-RKVY SANCTIONS BY STATE

State	Amount (Rs crore)
West Bengal	290
Haryana	198
Chhattisgarh	181
Arunachal Pradesh	154
Bihar	114
Karnataka	104
Mizoram	75
Himachal Pradesh	64
Jharkhand	58
Punjab	43

Source: PIB release, Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare. The release gives the total as 'more than Rs 1,200 crore'; the ten listed amounts add up to Rs 1,281 crore.

Literacy for All: PLFS 2025 Puts Literacy at 81.1%; 10 States/UTs Declared Fully Literate

29 Sep

- India's overall literacy rate is 81.1% as per the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2025: urban 89% and rural 77.4% (age 7+).
- Ten States/UTs declared themselves fully literate in 2024-26 under ULLAS, against a new Ministry of Education definition that treats 95% literacy as full literacy.
- ULLAS has 4.03 crore registered learners and 52.20 lakh+ volunteers, against a target of 5 crore learners in 2022-27 (outlay Rs 1,037.90 crore).
- UDISE+ 2025-26: 24.72 crore+ students enrolled; secondary GER 71.7%, secondary dropout 7.0% and secondary retention 51.9%.
- Higher-education GER rose from 23.7% (2014-15) to 30% (2023-24), against NEP 2020's target of 50% by 2035.

QUICK FACTS

PLFS 2025 literacy (age 7+)	overall 81.1%, urban 89%, rural 77.4%.
Gender gap (age 7+)	urban males 93.1% vs females 84.8%; rural males 84.8% vs females 70.3%.
Fully literate, 2024-26	Ladakh, Mizoram, Goa, Tripura, Himachal Pradesh, Chandigarh, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Sikkim, Uttarakhand, Jammu & Kashmir.
Firsts	Ladakh was the first UT (June 2024) and Mizoram the first State (20 May 2025, 98.2%) declared fully literate under ULLAS.
ULLAS progress	4.03 crore learners registered, 3.3 crore+ have taken the FLNAT, 52.20 lakh+ volunteers.
Census record	18.32% (1951) to 74.04% (2011); female literacy 8.86% to 65.46%.

– New definition (Department of School Education and Literacy): reading, writing and computing with comprehension, plus life skills such as digital and financial literacy. 95% literacy in a State/UT counts as full literacy.

9. Agreements & MoUs

1 article

India-New Zealand FTA to enter into force on 20 October 2026

21 Sep

- The India-New Zealand FTA enters into force on 20 October 2026 (Vijaya Dashami); from that day 100% of India's exports to New Zealand become duty-free.
- The FTA was signed on 27 April 2026 at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, by Piyush Goyal and NZ Trade Minister Todd McClay; New Zealand's Parliament passed the enabling law on 16 September 2026.
- India kept dairy, sugar, edible oils and most meats out of tariff concessions; NZ apples, kiwifruit and Manuka honey get only Tariff Rate Quotas with a Minimum Import Price.
- New Zealand commits to facilitate USD 20 billion of investment into India, plus 5,000 skilled-worker and 1,000 Working Holiday visas a year.

QUICK FACTS

Entry into force	20 October 2026, announced by Piyush Goyal and Todd McClay on 21 September 2026
Signed	27 April 2026, Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi
NZ enabling legislation passed	16 September 2026
Bilateral merchandise trade	about USD 1.1 billion in 2025-26
Todd McClay	New Zealand's Minister for Trade and Investment

- Negotiations launched March 2025 and concluded December 2025 — about nine months
- Duty-free access for every tariff line of India's exports; NZ peak tariffs of up to 10% removed

10. Summits & Conferences

2 articles

BRICS Business Forum in Delhi Pushes Local-Currency Trade and Open Markets

11 Sep

- The BRICS Business Forum met in New Delhi on 11 September 2026, ahead of the 18th BRICS Summit at Bharat Mandapam on 12-13 September under India's Chairship.
- Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal asked members to open markets, simplify regulatory procedures and diversify supply chains, noting that BRICS accounts for nearly one-fourth of global trade.
- He urged BRICS countries to link their payment systems and trade in each other's local currencies, citing UPI's 250 billion-plus transactions a year.
- External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said 2026 marks 20 years of institutionalised BRICS cooperation and named supply-chain connectivity and trade facilitation as priorities.
- Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal said intra-BRICS trade rose from USD 84 billion in 2003 to nearly USD 1.2 trillion in 2024.

QUICK FACTS

India's figures cited	UPI handles over 250 billion transactions a year — more than half of global transaction volume — and is accepted in 11 countries.
Initiatives named at the Forum	the BRICS Economic Partnership Strategy 2030, a BRICS incubator network, a BRICS Startup Innovation Fund, BRICS Connect, an annual BRICS Trade and Investment Expo, and the Jaipur Consensus on MSME working capital.

- The BRICS Business Forum opened in New Delhi on 11 September 2026, a day before the 18th BRICS Summit (12-13 September 2026) at Bharat Mandapam.
- India holds the BRICS Chairship for 2026, with the theme 'Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability'.
- BRICS accounts for nearly one-fourth of global trade; intra-BRICS trade grew from USD 84 billion in 2003 to nearly USD 1.2 trillion in 2024.
- Goyal noted that non-tariff measures impose higher export costs than tariffs themselves for 88 per cent of countries.
- He called for open markets in raw materials and critical minerals, linked payment systems and trade settled in members' local currencies.
- More than 45 per cent of India's 2,50,000 recognised startups have at least one woman partner or director; two-thirds of small loans in the last decade went to women entrepreneurs.
- Jitin Prasada highlighted India's Semiconductor Mission 2.0, carrying about USD 13 billion in incentives, and called for UN-centred AI governance.
- Bharat Mandapam, the summit venue, is the convention centre at Pragati Maidan inaugurated on 26 July 2023; it hosted the G20 Leaders' Summit that September.

18th BRICS Summit: New Delhi Declaration Adopted as BRICS Marks 20 Years

12 Sep

- BRICS leaders adopted the 140-paragraph New Delhi Declaration at the XVIII BRICS Summit (New Delhi, 12-13 September 2026) under the theme 'Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability'.
- The summit marked 20 years of BRICS (2006-2026); two commemorative postage stamps were released.
- The Declaration condemned the 22 April 2025 terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir, opposed carbon border adjustment mechanisms, and called for UNSC, IMF, World Bank and WTO reform.
- PM Modi proposed a BRICS Continuity and Implementation Mechanism, a BRICS Reform Roadmap and a Seafarers Emergency Support Network.
- China will chair BRICS in 2027 and host the XIX Summit.

QUICK FACTS

Event	XVIII BRICS Summit, New Delhi, 12-13 September 2026; outcome document: BRICS New Delhi Declaration (140 paragraphs).
Theme	'Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability' - India's four chairship priorities.
Chairship scale	the Declaration records 400+ meetings and engagements in 30 Indian cities (the PM's opening remarks cited 350+ meetings in nearly 30 cities).
20th anniversary	BRIC was formalised at the first BRIC Foreign Ministers' Meeting on the UNGA sidelines, New York, September 2006. Stamps inscribed 'BRICS: Two Decades of Cooperation, 2006-2026'.
Members (10)	Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, UAE, Indonesia. Saudi Arabia was invited in 2023 but has not publicly confirmed accession.
Next chair	China (2027), host of the XIX Summit.

- India's fourth BRICS chairship, after 2012, 2016 and 2021; India took over the chair on 1 January 2026.
- The summit coincided with the UN Day for South-South Cooperation (12 September), marking the 1978 Buenos Aires Plan of Action.

11. Ranks & Reports

3 articles

NSO releases first district-level estimates of the unincorporated non-agricultural sector

10 Sep

- The National Statistics Office has for the first time released district-level estimates from a large-scale nationwide enterprise survey, covering India's unincorporated non-agricultural sector.
- The report, 'Unincorporated Sector at the District Level: Insights from ASUSE 2025', covers 757 of the 770 districts in the survey's sampling frame.
- The top 50 districts account for nearly one-third of all establishments, workers and Gross Value Added in the sector; the top 10 account for about one-tenth.
- Women make up one-third of the unincorporated workforce in 237 districts and more than half in 25 districts.
- In 280 districts, GVA per worker exceeds the all-India average of Rs 1,56,539.

QUICK FACTS

Publisher	National Statistics Office (NSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI); the report is on mospi.gov.in.
Source data	Annual Survey of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (ASUSE) 2025.
Coverage	757 of the 770 districts in the ASUSE 2025 sampling frame; Lakshadweep and Chandigarh are single-district UTs whose estimates were already published at UT level, and Delhi's districts were merged into single rural and urban strata, so no district estimates could be generated for it.
All-India GVA per worker in the sector	Rs 1,56,539.
Ownership types covered	proprietorship, partnership excluding Limited Liability Partnerships, co-operatives, and societies or trusts.
Method	multi-stage stratified sampling, with census villages as rural first-stage units (Panchayat wards in rural Kerala) and Urban Frame Survey blocks in urban areas; data collected on tablets by Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing, with a monthly reference period.

- This follows MoSPI's earlier first-time statistical profile of the unincorporated sector across India's 46 million-plus cities, identified on the basis of Census 2011 population.
- ASUSE covers unincorporated non-agricultural establishments in three sectors: manufacturing, trade and other services.
- The report publishes Relative Standard Errors so users can judge the reliability of each district estimate.

NSO releases first district-level labour market estimates from revamped PLFS

18 Sep

- The National Statistics Office (NSO) released 'Labour Market Snapshot of Selected Districts' on 18 September 2026 — the first district-level labour indicators ever published from the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS).
- District estimates became possible because the PLFS redesign of January 2025 made the district, not the NSS Region, the basic sampling stratum for most of the country.
- Among the 100 most populous districts, Surat (Gujarat) recorded the highest LFPR (68.6%) and WPR (67.8%), and Darbhanga (Bihar) the lowest.
- Ernakulam (Keralam) had the lowest youth NEET rate (9.6%); South Twenty-Four Parganas and Araria had the lowest unemployment rate (0.9%).
- About 57.8% of districts recorded a female LFPR of 40% or above; over 98% of districts had LFPR and WPR within 40-80%.

QUICK FACTS

Bulletin	'Labour Market Snapshot of Selected Districts', released by NSO, Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MoSPI), 18 September 2026.
Indicators	LFPR, WPR and UR for age 15+, and NEET for youth aged 15-29 — all under the usual status (ps+ss) approach.
Highest WPR	Surat 67.8%, Araria 67.4%, Banaskantha (Gujarat) 66.6%. Lowest LFPR and WPR: Darbhanga (Bihar).
Lowest UR	South Twenty-Four Parganas (West Bengal) and Araria, both 0.9%; Ahmedabad 1.1%.
Lowest youth NEET	Ernakulam 9.6%, Coimbatore 14.5%, Bengaluru (Urban) 15.0%.
State capitals	Shimla highest LFPR/WPR (70.0% / 65.1%); Thiruvananthapuram and Kolkata lowest UR (1.9% each); Srinagar lowest NEET (14.3%).

- First release of district-level estimates under PLFS; comparison with earlier NSS-Region-based estimates is not appropriate.
- Highest LFPR among the 100 most populous districts: Surat 68.6%, Araria (Bihar) 68.0%, Salem (Tamil Nadu) 67.8%.
- Highest female LFPR among States' ten most populous districts: Hamirpur, Himachal Pradesh (80.9%); lowest State toppers: East Delhi (18.9%) and Siwan, Bihar (24.7%).

NSO Domestic Tourism Survey 2025-26: Pilgrimage Leads Overnight Trips, UP Top Destination

23 Sep

- The NSO's Domestic Tourism Expenditure Survey (NSS 80th round, July 2025-June 2026) found that 48 of every 100 overnight trips in the past year were for pilgrimage and religious purposes. Uttar Pradesh took the largest share of visitor-trips (15.7%).
- Of overnight trips in the past 30 days, 89% were for social reasons, while business trips cost the most at Rs 5,949 per trip on average.
- Health and medical trips were the costliest of the 365-day trips: Rs 29,454 (rural) and Rs 41,649 (urban).
- Same-day trips rose from the 2014-15 survey: 65.1% of rural and 46.2% of urban households made at least one in the past 30 days.
- The findings are published as NSS Report No. 597, 'Domestic Tourism in India'. It is the third such NSS survey, after the 65th (2008-09) and 72nd (2014-15) rounds.

QUICK FACTS

Survey	Domestic Tourism Expenditure Survey (DTES), by the National Statistics Office, MoSPI. It ran in the NSS 80th round (July 2025-June 2026) under Schedule 21.1.
Report	NSS Report No. 597, 'Domestic Tourism in India', released on 23 September 2026
Sample	24,778 FSUs (14,371 rural, 10,407 urban) and 2,46,113 households. Data was collected on tablets (CAPI) using multi-stage stratified sampling.
Coverage	all of India except villages in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands that are hard to reach all year
Series	the third NSS tourism survey, after the 65th round (2008-09) and 72nd round (2014-15). The 80th round also ran a National Household Travel Survey.
Overnight trip	at least 12 hours across two calendar days (spanning midnight to 5 am), at most 180 days, outside the usual environment, returning home
Same-day trip	meets the other conditions but involves no overnight stay

TOP DESTINATION STATES (SHARE OF VISITOR-TRIPS)

Rank	365-day overnight trips	30-day overnight trips
1	Uttar Pradesh 15.7%	Uttar Pradesh 15.5%
2	Tamil Nadu 13.4%	Bihar 10.5%
3	Rajasthan 8.0%	Tamil Nadu 9.6%

Source: MoSPI press note, DTES July 2025-June 2026. Only the top three are listed in the release.

12. Awards & Honours

1 article

President Confers 72nd National Film Awards at Ekta Nagar; Anant Nag Gets Dadasaheb Phalke Award

22 Sep

- President Droupadi Murmu conferred the 72nd National Film Awards and the Dadasaheb Phalke Award for 2024 (on actor Anant Nag) at Ekta Nagar, Kevadia, Gujarat on 22 September 2026.
- It was the first time the ceremony was held outside Delhi; 'Article 370' won Best Feature Film, and Mammootty and Kartik Aaryan shared Best Actor.
- Entries: 400 feature films in 34 languages and 161 non-feature films in 24 languages; 22 feature and 23 non-feature awards conferred.
- The I&B Ministry invited States to bid tourist destinations as future venues, and fixed the next WAVES summit for October 2027.

QUICK FACTS

Edition	72nd National Film Awards, conferred by the President on 22 September 2026
Venue	Ekta Nagar (Kevadia), Gujarat, on the premises of the Statue of Unity; the first ceremony held outside Delhi
Dadasaheb Phalke Award 2024	Anant Nag, Kannada actor with 50 years in cinema and theatre, Padma Bhushan 2025
Entries	400 feature films (34 languages) and 161 non-feature films (24 languages)
Awards conferred	22 feature film and 23 non-feature film awards
Best Feature Film	Article 370; Best Direction: Rajkumar Periasamy (Amaran)

- Languages outside the Eighth Schedule honoured: Garhwali (Dholi) and Tulu (IMBU); Santhali film Angen won Best Debut Film of a Director
- Next WAVES (World Audio Visual and Entertainment Summit): October 2027

72ND NATIONAL FILM AWARDS: WINNERS NAMED IN THE RELEASE

Award	Winner	Film
Dadasaheb Phalke Award (2024)	Anant Nag	Lifetime contribution
Best Feature Film	—	Article 370
Best Actor in a Leading Role (shared)	Mammootty	Bramayugam
Best Actor in a Leading Role (shared)	Kartik Aaryan	Chandu Champion
Best Actress in a Leading Role	Yami Gautam	Article 370
Best Actor in a Supporting Role	Sanjay Mishra	Bhakshak
Best Actress in a Supporting Role (shared)	Sachana Namidass	Maharaja
Best Actress in a Supporting Role (shared)	Ropashree Varkady	Mithya
Best Direction	Rajkumar Periasamy	Amaran
Best Debut Film of a Director	Ravi Raj Murmu	Angen (Santhali)
Directorial debut recognised	Randeep Hooda	Swatantrya Veer Savarkar
Best Popular Film Providing Wholesome Entertainment	—	Kalki 2898 AD
Best Feature Film Promoting National, Social and Environmental Values	—	Captain Miller
Best Garhwali Film	Dinesh P. Bhonsle (director)	Dholi
Best Tulu Film	Shivadhwaj Shetty (director)	IMBU

Source: PIB releases of 22 September 2026. The release names only these awards and links out to the complete list of all 45 feature and non-feature awards; the full roster is not carried here.

THE LAST TWO EDITIONS

Edition	Ceremony	Venue	Dadasaheb Phalke Award
71st	23 September 2025	Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi	Mohanlal (award for 2023)
72nd	22 September 2026	Ekta Nagar, Kevadia, Gujarat	Anant Nag (award for 2024)

Source: PIB; President's Secretariat.