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IN THIS ISSUE

International	3
Economy	4
Banking & Finance	1
Polity & Governance	1
Defence	1
Environment	5
Schemes & Committees	2

HIGHLIGHTS

INTERNATIONAL — 04 Sep | p. 3
India-Belgium Dialogue on the India-EU FTA: A Market of 2 Billion People

INTERNATIONAL — 01 Sep | p. 4
26th SCO Summit at Bishkek Adopts Bishkek Declaration on Grouping's 25th Anniversary

ECONOMY — 07 Sep | p. 5
India's Jute Sector: 76 Lakh Bales, Rs 5,925 MSP and the Policy Stack Behind It

BANKING & FINANCE — 05 Sep | p. 8
ECLGS 5.0: Rs 2.55 Lakh Crore Credit Guarantee Cover for MSMEs and Airlines

POLITY & GOVERNANCE — 07 Sep | p. 9
28th Western Zonal Council meets at Panaji; Zonal Councils shift from dispute-settling to scheme monitoring

DEFENCE — 07 Sep | p. 10
DAC clears Rs 1.10 lakh crore in acquisitions, 98% from Indian industry

ENVIRONMENT — 07 Sep | p. 11
Swachh Vayu Diwas 2026: 108 of 130 NCAP Cities Cut PM10 Below 2017-18 Levels

ENVIRONMENT — 06 Sep | p. 11
16th National Meet of State Biodiversity Boards: States Told to Align With Amended Framework

Contents

#	Category	Articles	Page
1	International	3 articles	3
2	Economy	4 articles	5
3	Banking & Finance	1 article	8
4	Polity & Governance	1 article	9
5	Defence	1 article	10
6	Environment	5 articles	11
7	Schemes & Committees	2 articles	15

Tap a category to jump to it.

1. International

3 articles

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 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.

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.

2. Economy

4 articles

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.

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 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.

3. Banking & Finance

1 article

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.

4. Polity & Governance

1 article

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.

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. Environment

5 articles

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

7. Schemes & Committees

2 articles

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.

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.