WEEKLY PIB COMPILATION

15 Sep – 21 Sep 2026

UPSC EDITION

16 key articles · 8 categories · 7 days

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Tap a category to jump to it.

1. Economy

3 articles

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.

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.

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

2. Banking & Finance

1 article

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

3. Polity & Governance

1 article

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

4. Science & Tech

2 articles

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.

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.

5. Environment

2 articles

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.

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

6. Schemes & Committees

5 articles

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.

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.

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.

7. 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

8. Ranks & Reports

1 article

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%).