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UPSC EDITION

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IN THIS ISSUE

Economy	5
Polity & Governance	1
Environment	8
Schemes & Committees	5
Ranks & Reports	1
Awards & Honours	1

HIGHLIGHTS

ECONOMY — 30 Sep | p. 3
Rabi MSP for 2027-28: Safflower Gets Highest Rise of Rs 675, Wheat Rs 2,610

ECONOMY — 30 Sep | p. 3
ASI 2024-25: Factory GVA Up 9.59%, Jobs Cross 2 Crore; Tamil Nadu Has Most Factories

POLITY & GOVERNANCE — 30 Sep | p. 7
UPSC Turns 100: From the 1926 Public Service Commission to Articles 315-323

ENVIRONMENT — 30 Sep | p. 8
Cabinet Approves Green Energy Corridor Phase-III: 135 GW Evacuation, 50 GWh Battery Storage

ENVIRONMENT — 30 Sep | p. 8
National Coastal Mission 2.0 Guidelines Launched: Rs 767 Crore Scheme Till 2030-31

SCHEMES & COMMITTEES — 29 Sep | p. 14
PM-RKVY Sanctions of Rs 1,200 Crore to 10 States; Khet Bachao Abhiyan from 22 October

SCHEMES & COMMITTEES — 29 Sep | p. 14
Literacy for All: PLFS 2025 Puts Literacy at 81.1%; 10 States/UTs Declared Fully Literate

RANKS & REPORTS — 23 Sep | p. 18
NSO Domestic Tourism Survey 2025-26: Pilgrimage Leads Overnight Trips, UP Top Destination

Contents

#	Category	Articles	Page
1	Economy	5 articles	3
2	Polity & Governance	1 article	7
3	Environment	8 articles	8
4	Schemes & Committees	5 articles	14
5	Ranks & Reports	1 article	18
6	Awards & Honours	1 article	19

Tap a category to jump to it.

1. Economy

5 articles

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.

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.

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.

2. Polity & Governance

1 article

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).

3. Environment

8 articles

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, guidelines, demonstration projects	250 (with the row below)	NCSCM
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

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

Area	Target	Achieved
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.

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.

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.

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

4. Schemes & Committees

5 articles

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.

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

Programme	Category	Recognised
		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.

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

5. Ranks & Reports

1 article

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.

6. 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.