



INDIA GOVERNANCE WATCH

Viksit Bharat's Policy, Economic And Administrative Developments



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India Governance Watch

Viksit Bharat's Policy And Administrative Developments

(16th April, 2026 - 30th April, 2026)

Executive Summary

This document tracks the various key economic and policy decisions made by the Central Government between **16th April, 2026 and 30th April, 2026**. Some of the important announcements and policy updates are as follows:

I. Economic Growth And Structural Reforms

A. **Bharat Maritime Insurance (BMI) Pool Approved to Ensure Maritime Risk Coverage:**

The Union Cabinet has approved the creation of the BMI Pool as a domestic underwriting mechanism backed by a sovereign guarantee. The pool ensures continued access to **affordable maritime insurance** for Indian vessels amid rising geopolitical risks and volatility in global shipping routes, reducing dependence on foreign insurers and stabilising trade flows.

B. **Framework for Net Settlement of Funds for FPI Cash Market Transactions:**

SEBI has permitted net settlement of funds for outright buy or sell transactions by FPIs in the cash market, with implementation by 31st December, 2026. The framework is expected to improve settlement efficiency and reduce funding costs, especially during high-volume trading cycles, while securities settlement, STT, and stamp duty will continue on a gross basis.

II. Infrastructure, Technology And Sustainability

A. **Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Rules, 2026:**

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology has notified the Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Rules, 2026. The rules establish a **registration framework for e-sports** and notified social games, prescribe user safety and grievance redressal obligations, and set the procedure for inquiry and civil penalties.

B. **Approval of Two Multitracking Projects in Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh:**

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved two railway multitracking projects with a combined outlay of ₹ 24,815 crore, adding 601 km to the Indian Railways network by 2030-31 across 15 districts in Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh. The projects are expected to carry an additional 64.76 MTPA of freight, generate 274 lakh human-days of employment, save ₹ 4,028 crore annually in logistics costs, and reduce CO₂ emissions by 180.31 crore kg.

C. **Release of Consultation Paper on Regulatory Framework for Vehicle-to-Everything (V2X) Communication:**

TRAI has released a consultation paper on the regulatory framework for V2X Communication, following a request from the Department of Telecommunications, to enable **real-time communication between vehicles**, roadside infrastructure, and other transport ecosystem elements through Intelligent



Executive Summary

Transportation Systems. The framework seeks to address the road safety crisis, with approximately 1.73 lakh lives lost to road accidents in 2023 alone and around 92% of accidents attributed to human error.

III. Human Development And Social Welfare

- A. **SMILE-Beggary Survey Mobile Application Launched to Strengthen Rehabilitation Data Systems:** The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has launched the SMILE-Beggary Survey Mobile Application under the SMILE scheme to enable real-time digital data collection and monitoring of persons engaged in begging. The tool is expected to improve data accuracy, transparency, and timeliness, strengthening implementation of rehabilitation measures.

IV. National Security And Foreign Policy

- A. **India-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (FTA):** India and New Zealand have signed a comprehensive FTA providing **100% duty-free access for Indian exports** to New Zealand, while India will liberalise 70.03% of tariff lines covering 95% of trade, excluding sensitive sectors. The agreement covers 118 services sectors with MFN commitments, and includes provisions on organics, pharmaceuticals, AYUSH, and Geographical Indications, enhancing bilateral trade and regulatory cooperation.
- B. **India-Republic of Korea Framework for Partnership in Shipbuilding, Shipping and Maritime Logistics:** India and the Republic of Korea discussed a framework for cooperation in shipbuilding, shipping and maritime logistics, including greenfield shipbuilding clusters, yard expansion, port development and skill training. The partnership is expected to support long-term industrial collaboration and related MoUs in maritime education, research and heritage.

V. Rural And Agricultural Transformation

- A. **Extension Of PMGSY-III With Enhanced Outlay To Sustain Rural Connectivity Expansion:** The Union Cabinet has approved the continuation of PMGSY-III till March 2028 with an enhanced outlay of ₹ 83,977 crore, alongside extended timelines for bridge construction in hilly areas. The decision is aimed at sustaining rural connectivity expansion, improving access to markets and services, and supporting ongoing rural infrastructure development.



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I. Economic Growth And Structural Reforms

A. Policy Updates

1. Creation Of Bharat Maritime Insurance (BMI) Pool - Ministry of Finance

Status: Initiated | **Impact Level:** Medium | **Source:** [PIB](#)

The Union Cabinet has approved the creation of a domestic insurance pool - Bharat Maritime Insurance (BMI) to facilitate **continuous maritime insurance coverages**. The pool operates with a combined underwriting capacity of ₹ 950 crore, backed by a sovereign guarantee of ₹ 12,890 crore, with insurance policies issued by member insurers. BMI pool will ensure access to affordable insurance for Indian trade vessels carrying cargo to and from Indian ports, given the increased volatility in safety of waterways and geopolitical instability where maritime trade has been inflicted with increased risk of losses of cargo and vessels.

2. Expansion Of Resilience And Logistics Intervention For Export Facilitation (RELIEF) Scheme Coverage - Ministry of Commerce and Industry

Status: Initiated | **Impact Level:** Medium | **Source:** [Ministry of Commerce and Industry](#)

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry has expanded the RELIEF (Resilience and Logistics Intervention for Export Facilitation) scheme by adding **Egypt and Jordan** as eligible destinations for shipments. It also clarified that exporters obtaining a fresh Export Credit Guarantee Corporation (ECGC) Whole Turnover Policy on or after 16th March, 2026 qualify for support under the scheme which provides compensation of up to 95% of loss incurred due to war or political risk. Implemented through the ECGC, the scheme provides calibrated insurance and reimbursement assistance to mitigate extraordinary freight, insurance costs, and war-related risks from West Asia disruptions. These measures will strengthen export resilience, sustain trade flows across the extended West Asia-North Africa corridor, and better support Indian exporters, particularly MSMEs, navigating ongoing geopolitical and logistics challenges.

3. Companies (Registration Offices and Fees) Amendment Rules, 2026 - Ministry of Corporate Affairs

Status: Initiated | **Impact Level:** Medium | **Source:** [Gazette of India](#)

The Ministry of Corporate Affairs has notified the Companies (Registration Offices and Fees) Amendment Rules, 2026, amending the Companies (Registration Offices and Fees) Rules, 2014. The amendment **revises the fee structure for filing online KYC** under the Companies (Appointment and Qualification of Directors) Rules, 2014. It provides for no fee for filings within the prescribed timeline, ₹ 5,000 for delayed filing or reactivation of Director Identification Number (DIN), and ₹ 500 for each subsequent filing.



4. Dearness Allowance (DA) and Dearness Relief (DR) - Ministry of Finance

Status: Ongoing | **Impact Level:** Medium | **Source:** [PIB](#)

The Union Cabinet has approved an increase of 2% in Dearness Allowance (DA) for central government employees and Dearness Relief (DR) for pensioners, effective from 1st January, 2026. This **raises the DA/DR rate from 58% to 60%** of basic pay or pension, to help offset the impact of rising prices. The decision will benefit about 50.46 lakh employees and 68.27 lakh pensioners, with an estimated annual cost of ₹ 6,791 crore to the government.

5. RBI Amendments To NBFC Registration And Scale-Based Regulation Framework - Reserve Bank of India (RBI)

Status: Initiated | **Impact Level:** Medium | **Source:** [RBI](#), [The Hindu](#)

The RBI has amended its Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFC) rules to make the treatment of small NBFCs more specific and to tighten the way it defines firms that do not take public money and do not deal directly with customers. The changes take effect from 1st July, 2026. Under the new rules, some of these **NBFCs with assets below ₹ 1,000 crore** can apply to stop registration, while larger ones will need to register as Type I NBFCs. The RBI has also added clearer reporting and disclosure requirements, including annual board approval and disclosure in financial statements. The revised framework sharpens classification and compliance requirements for NBFCs, reducing regulatory ambiguity for smaller entities while strengthening oversight and disclosure standards across the sector.

6. Framework for Net Settlement of Funds for Transactions Done by Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) in Cash Market - Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)

Status: Initiated | **Impact Level:** Medium | **Source:** [SEBI](#)

SEBI has permitted net settlement of funds for outright transactions undertaken by FPIs in the cash market, with implementation to be carried out on or before 31st December, 2026. Under the framework, FPI transactions involving only **outright purchase or only outright sale** in a settlement cycle will be net settled to arrive at a net fund obligation, while transactions involving both purchase and sale in the same cycle will continue to be settled on a gross basis. SEBI has clarified that securities settlement between the FPI and custodian will continue on a gross basis, and that STT and stamp duty will remain payable on a delivery basis. The circular is intended to improve operational efficiency and reduce funding costs, especially around periods of high trading activity such as **index rebalancing**.



7. Securities And Exchange Board Of India (Infrastructure Investment Trusts) (Amendment) Regulations, 2026 - Securities And Exchange Board Of India (SEBI)

Status: Initiated | **Impact Level:** Medium | **Source:** [SEBI](#)

SEBI has amended the Infrastructure Investment Trusts Regulations, 2014 to refine the **definition of cash and liquid assets**, clarify the treatment of special purpose vehicles (SPVs), and adjust investment conditions for InvITs. The amendment inserts units of liquid mutual fund schemes with credit risk value of at least 10 and falling into the eligible asset pool, clarifies that PPP projects may be excluded where concession or regulatory provisions do not permit acquisition or holding, and provides that the expiry or termination of a concession agreement will not by itself affect an SPV's status, subject to Board conditions. It also lowers the credit risk threshold in one investment category and expands eligibility to Class B-I instruments, while allowing deployment for other purposes specified by the Board.

8. SEBI (Real Estate Investment Trusts) (Amendment) Regulations, 2026 - Securities and Exchange Board of India

Status: Initiated | **Impact Level:** Medium | **Source:** [SEBI](#)

SEBI has amended the Real Estate Investment Trusts (REIT) Regulations, 2014 to relax the eligibility threshold for certain liquid assets and align REIT investment norms with the **updated risk framework**. The amendment lowers the minimum credit risk value for units of overnight and liquid mutual fund schemes from 12 to 10, and expands eligibility to some SEBI schemes in its potential risk class matrix. It also makes corresponding changes in other regulations, while retaining the existing investment framework for Government securities, treasury bills and repo on Government Securities. The amendments are expected to enhance liquidity management flexibility for REITs and align investment norms with the revised risk framework, improving operational efficiency without materially altering core asset allocation.

9. SEBI (Alternative Investment Funds) (Amendment) Regulations, 2026 - Securities and Exchange Board of India

Status: Initiated | **Impact Level:** Medium | **Source:** [SEBI](#)

SEBI has amended the Alternative Investment Funds (AIF) Regulations, 2012 to revise certain thresholds and introduce **additional operational flexibility**. The amendment reduces the minimum investment requirement for certain AIF schemes from ₹ 2 lakh to ₹ 1,000. It also makes liquidation payouts subject to SEBI conditions and allows AIFs to be classified as “inoperative funds” based on rules set by the Board.



10. Reforms Of Norms Committee Under Directorate General Of Foreign Trade (DGFT) - Ministry of Commerce and Industry

Status: Initiated | **Impact Level:** Medium | **Source:** [PIB](#)

The Government has undertaken targeted reforms to strengthen Norms Committees under the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) for **faster disposal of Advance Authorisation (AA)** and **Duty-Free Import Authorisation (DFIA)** applications. The measures address previous capacity constraints by issuing detailed guidelines for uniform processes, fixed fortnightly meetings, prioritisation of long-pending cases, and a special disposal drive, while nominating ten additional technical members from Line Ministries, raising the total from 12 to 22. These reforms are expected to reduce transaction costs, shorten authorisation timelines, enhance transparency and predictability, and significantly boost export competitiveness, especially for MSMEs.

11. IFSCA Issues Framework For Finance Company Activities (FIF) In IFSC - International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA)

Status: Initiated | **Impact Level:** Medium | **Source:** [IFSCA](#)

The IFSCA has introduced a framework for Finance Company and Finance Unit (FIF) activities in IFSCs, aimed at expanding the scope of permissible financial services and deepening credit intermediation in GIFT IFSC. The framework enables entities to undertake a **broad range of financing activities**, including lending, structured finance, trade finance and other credit-related services, within a unified regulatory structure, while prescribing eligibility conditions, prudential norms and governance requirements for such entities. It is designed to facilitate global capital flows and position IFSC as a competitive offshore financing hub.

12. IFSCA Issues Frameworks For Rights Issues, Preferential Issues And QIP under Listing Regulations, 2024 - International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA)

Status: Initiated | **Impact Level:** Medium | **Source:** [IFSCA](#), [IFSCA](#)

IFSCA has issued two complementary circulars prescribing detailed frameworks for, rights issues and preferential issues and qualified institutions placement (QIP) by listed entities under the IFSCA (Listing) Regulations, 2024. The frameworks apply to entities whose specified securities are listed solely on recognised stock exchanges in IFSCs and set out **comprehensive requirements** for capital raising, including eligibility conditions, pricing, disclosures, approvals, timelines and issuance mechanics. The preferential issue and QIP framework additionally prescribes norms on shareholder approval, valuation, lock-in requirements, due diligence by investment bankers and placement procedures for institutional investors, while the rights issue framework governs offer structure, record date-based entitlements and compliance requirements for issuance to existing shareholders.



B. Announcements

1. Companies (Incorporation) Amendment Rules, 2026 - Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA)

Source: [MCA](#)

The Ministry Of Corporate Affairs (MCA) has prepared a draft notification proposing amendments to the Companies (Incorporation) Rules, 2014. The amendments primarily pertain to **simplification of incorporation filing procedures** and alignment with other regulatory frameworks such as GST and the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC). The proposed rules are expected to streamline the process of incorporation, reducing compliance burden on stakeholders, and furthering ease of doing business, recognised as a pillar of growth and development in the Union Budget 2026-27.

2. EPFO to Launch Aadhaar-Based Portal to Help Members Find and Reactivate Old PF Accounts - Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO)

Source: [The Hindu](#), [Mint](#)

EPFO is planning to launch **E-PRAAPTI**, a digital portal that will help members trace, link and reactivate old or inoperative EPF accounts through Aadhaar-based authentication, including accounts not linked to a UAN. An EPF account is treated as inoperative when contributions have not been received for three years after retirement, permanent migration abroad, or death. In the first phase, the portal will support users who can identify their member ID, and it is expected to expand later to cover users who do not remember their older account details. The initiative is meant to make access to long-unused provident fund savings easier, reduce dependence on employers for follow-up, and simplify account management for workers who changed jobs before the UAN system became common.

3. MoU Between Financial Intelligence Unit-India (FIU-IND) And Pension Fund Regulatory Development Authority (PFRDA) - Ministry Of Finance

Source: [PIB](#)

A comprehensive Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between the FIU-IND and the PFRDA to **enhance information sharing and coordination** with the aim of strengthening the nation's capabilities against money laundering and terror financing. The MoU aims to enable both agencies to undertake outreach and training programmes for reporting entities while ensuring alignment with applicable international standards. Such coordination between the two bodies is likely to improve monitoring of compliance by reporting entities as well as flagging of suspicious transactions.



4. IFSCA Issues Guidelines on Cyber Security and Cyber Resilience for Market Infrastructure Institutions in IFSC - International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA)

Source: [IFSCA](#)

The IFSCA has issued comprehensive guidelines on cyber security and cyber resilience for Market Infrastructure Institutions (MIIs) operating in IFSCs. The guidelines prescribe a **principles-based framework** covering governance, risk management, cyber resilience, incident response and recovery, with mandatory requirements for periodic audits, board-level oversight and continuous monitoring. They also require MIIs to establish robust incident reporting mechanisms, including time-bound reporting of cyber incidents to IFSCA and relevant agencies, along with regular testing of business continuity and disaster recovery systems.

II. Infrastructure, Technology And Sustainability

A. Policy Updates

1. Promotion And Regulation Of Online Gaming Rules, 2026 - Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)

Status: Announced | **Impact Level:** High | **Source:** [Gazette of India](#)

The Government has notified the Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Rules, 2026 under the Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming (PROG) Act, 2025, and the Rules will come into force on 1st May, 2026. It lays down a **registration regime for e-sports and notified social games**, mandates user safety features and grievance redressal obligations for service providers, and prescribes the procedure for inquiry and civil penalties. The framework is intended to provide a clear mechanism to determine whether an online game is an online money game or a permissible online social game or e-sport, while also establishing the Online Gaming Authority of India as a digital-first regulator.

2. Streamlining Of Access and Benefit Sharing Funds (ABS) For Biological Diversity Act, 2002 - Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)

Status: Initiated | **Impact Level:** Medium | **Source:** [PIB](#)

The National Biodiversity Authority (NBA), under the MoEFCC, approved measures to strengthen implementation of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002. These include **streamlined procedures for Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS)** fund use and revised repository guidelines. The framework allocates 25–40% of ABS funds to institutions and repositories, and 60–75% to local communities via State Biodiversity Boards and UT Councils. It allows flexibility based on traceability, with a default 30:70 split where origin is unclear, and directs funds from untraceable sources to conservation. The revised guidelines emphasise secure custody, provenance records, digitisation and restricted transfers, aiming to improve transparency, accountability, compliance and equitable benefit sharing.



3. DPIIT Issues Operational Guidelines For ₹ 10,000 Crore Startup India Fund Of Funds 2.0 To Streamline Capital Deployment - Ministry of Commerce & Industry

Status: Initiated | **Impact Level:** Medium | **Source:** [DPIIT](#)

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) has issued the operational guidelines for the Startup India Fund of Funds 2.0, which will operationalise the ₹ 10,000 crore corpus through a structured framework for fund deployment, governance and monitoring. The scheme will be implemented through SEBI-registered Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs), with SIDBI acting as the initial Implementation Agency and DPIIT also onboarding an additional agency to expand reach and capacity. The guidelines segment AIFs into **deep tech-focused funds, micro venture capital funds, manufacturing-focused funds**, and sector- and stage-agnostic funds, and establish a two-stage selection process with due diligence by the Implementation Agency followed by evaluation by a Venture Capital Investment Committee. The framework is designed to crowd in private capital, widen startup funding access and strengthen India's venture capital ecosystem.

4. Establishment Of AI Governance And Economic Group (AIGEG) And Technology and Policy Expert Committee (TPEC) - Ministry Of Electronics And Information Technology (MeitY)

Status: Initiated | **Impact Level:** Medium | **Source:** [MeitY](#), [PIB](#)

MeitY has established AIGEG, an inter-ministerial body for AI governance, policy development and coordination. It will **classify AI use cases by readiness**, assess and mitigate impacts on labour markets, and collaborate with industry on a decade-long deployment roadmap, thereby consolidating and synergising AI initiatives while retaining supervisory oversight. The TPEC, comprising academic, technology and digital policy experts, will support the AIGEG with technical, policy and strategic expertise. It will ensure deliberations reflect contemporary technological and regulatory developments and global practices, remain responsive to India's context, and translate these into actionable insights aligned with the AIGEG's strategic direction.

5. Revised Guidelines For Technology Development And Investment Promotion (TDIP) Scheme To Strengthen India's Global Telecom Footprint - Ministry Of Communications

Status: Initiated | **Impact Level:** Medium | **Source:** [PIB](#)

The Ministry of Communications released the revised guidelines for the Technology Development and Investment Promotion (TDIP) Scheme of the Department of Telecommunications, with a total outlay of ₹ 203 crore for 2026-31. The scheme is intended to **strengthen India's participation in global telecom standardisation** and accelerate indigenous telecom technology development, including 5G Advanced and 6G. It expands support to startups, MSMEs, academia, research institutions, telecom



service providers and industry players, and also provides for pilot projects, proof-of-concept initiatives and technology demonstrations to support real-world deployment. The guidelines further aim to enhance India's role in international bodies such as the ITU, 3GPP and one M2M through support for meetings, technical contributions, leadership roles and hosting of standardisation events in India.

6. Bio-Medical Waste Management (Amendment) Rules, 2026 - Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)

Status: Announced | **Impact Level:** Medium | **Source:** [Gazette of India](#)

The MoEFCC has notified the Bio-Medical Waste Management (Amendment) Rules, 2026 under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, which come into force on the date of publication. The amendment makes targeted changes to the Bio-Medical Waste Management Rules, 2016 by **adding the Department of Ayush** to the authorities responsible for monitoring biomedical waste management, and requires that a representative from Ayush be included at the district level.

B. Announcements

1. Approval Of Two Multitracking Projects In Uttar Pradesh And Andhra Pradesh - Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)

Source: [PIB](#)

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has approved two railway multitracking projects with a combined cost of approximately ₹ 24,815 crore, spanning 15 districts across Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh. The projects are estimated to expand the Indian Railways network by 601 km by 2030-31. The Ghaziabad-Sitapur 3rd and 4th Line traverses 9 districts of UP including Ghaziabad, Moradabad, Bareilly, and Sitapur. It is expected to carry an additional 35.72 MTPA of freight, generate 274 lakh human-days of employment, and save ₹ 2,877.46 crore annually in logistics costs compared to road transport. On the other hand, the Rajahmundry-Visakhapatnam 3rd and 4th Line traverses 5 districts of Andhra Pradesh including Vishakhapatnam. It is expected to handle an additional 29.04 MTPA of freight while **saving ₹ 1,150.56 crore annually in logistics costs**. Together, both projects are projected to save 180.31 crore kg of CO₂ emissions and improve connectivity to key tourist, religious, and industrial destinations.

2. Release Of Consultation Paper On Regulatory Framework For Vehicle-to-Everything (V2X) Communication - Ministry Of Communications

Source: [TRAI](#), [PIB](#)

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has released a consultation paper on the regulatory framework for Vehicle-to-Everything (V2X) Communication, following a request from the Department of Telecommunications, to develop recommendations on its regulatory mechanism. The paper aims to **enable vehicles to communicate with each other**, roadside infrastructure, and other elements of the



transport ecosystem through **Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS)** facilitating real-time data exchange. By enabling Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) that allow real-time data exchange between vehicles and their surroundings, the framework aims to address India's critical road safety crisis, given that approximately 1.73 lakh lives were lost to road accidents in 2023 alone, with around 92% of accidents attributed to human error.

3. **Performance Monitoring Dashboard - Ministry Of Statistics And Programme Implementation (MoSPI)**

Source: [PIB](#)

MoSPI has launched the Performance Monitoring Dashboard to monitor Central sector infrastructure projects, which have been monitored by the Project Assessment, Infrastructure Monitoring and Analytics for Nation-building (PAIMANA) dashboard as of 25th September, 2025. A new Performance Monitoring Dashboard has been launched to **strengthen tracking capabilities** with regards to infrastructure performance across key sub-sectors such as power, roads and railways. The unified digital interface along with a comprehensive indicator framework for six sub-sectors provides a cross-sector view of infrastructure progress, strengthening inter-sectoral analysis.

III. **Human Development and Social Welfare**

A. **Announcements**

1. **Support for Marginalized Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise (SMILE)-Beggary Survey Mobile Application - Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment**

Source: [PIB](#)

The Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment has launched the SMILE-Beggary Survey Mobile Application the SMILE-Beggary Sub-Scheme (Comprehensive Rehabilitation of Persons Engaged in the Act of Begging). It aims to strengthen **field-level implementation through real-time digital data collection** and improved monitoring. Through obtaining survey data with greater accuracy, transparency, and timeliness, the app aims to address challenges such as delayed and inconsistent data reporting. The initiative aligns with the Government's vision of achieving a "Bhiksha Vritti Mukta Bharat."

2. **Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyaan (NMBA) App 2.0 - Ministry Of Social Justice And Empowerment**

Source: [PIB](#)

The upgraded Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyaan (NMBA) 2.0 App has been launched by the Ministry Of Social Justice and Empowerment. Originally launched on 15th August 2020 in 272 most vulnerable districts and extended to all districts from 15th August 2023, the NMBA scheme has so far sensitised over 26 crore people through more



than 8.3 lakh activities nationwide. The upgraded app has new features such as citizen access with e-Pledge and IEC materials, dedicated role-based access for Grant-in-Aid Institutions (GIAs) for real-time activity reporting, real-time Anudan (grant) status tracking, a '**Nearest De-addiction Centre**' locator, and a public feedback mechanism. The launch underscores the Government's commitment towards effective drug demand reduction under the National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction (NAPDDR).

IV. National Security and Foreign Policy

A. Policy Updates

1. India-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (FTA) - Ministry of Commerce and Industry

Status: Announced | **Impact Level:** High | **Source:** [PIB](#), [FTA Agreement In Text](#)

India and New Zealand signed the India–New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (IN–NZ FTA) just nine months after negotiations were launched, making it one of the fastest FTAs concluded by India with a developed country. On goods trade, **India secures 100% duty-free access** to the New Zealand market for all of its exports, while offering tariff liberalisation on 70.03% of tariff lines covering 95% of bilateral trade value, with sensitive sectors such as dairy, key agricultural products, gems and jewellery, and arms kept in exclusion. The FTA covers 118 services sectors with Most-Favoured Nation commitment being granted in 139 sub-sectors. The FTA will significantly expand export opportunities across goods and services, open structured pathways for pharmaceuticals and organics.

2. India-Austria Signed Letter of Intent on Counterterrorism and Defence Industrial Cooperation - Ministry Of External Affairs

Status: Announced | **Impact Level:** Medium | **Source:** [PIB](#), [Ministry of External Affairs](#)

India and Austria have signed multiple MoUs during the Austrian visit to India with the most important ones including the signing of a Letter of Intent (LoI) to establish a **Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism** for enhanced bilateral cooperation in counter-terrorism, counter-radicalisation, information sharing, and capacity building. They also welcomed the India-Austria LoI on Military Matters, creating a framework for defence industrial cooperation, technology partnerships, policy dialogue, training, and UN Peacekeeping collaboration, building on the India-EU Defence Partnership. Both sides also renewed the MoU on road sector cooperation, with a Joint Working Group to convene in 2026, while encouraging greater engagement in railways and related areas via public-private partnerships.



3. Continuation of the Immigration, Visa, Foreigners Registration & Tracking (IVFRT) Scheme - Prime Minister's Office

Status: Announced | **Impact Level:** Medium | **Source:** [Prime Minister's Office](#)

The Union Cabinet has approved the continuation of the IVFRT Scheme beyond 31st March, 2026 for five more years, from 1st April, 2026 to 31st March, 2031, with an outlay of ₹ 1,800 crore. The scheme is meant to **connect and streamline immigration**, visa issuance and foreigners' registration in India, while modernising services through a more secure and integrated system. It is also intended to make travel easier for legitimate visitors while strengthening national security.

B. Announcements

1. MoD Signs Contracts For Procurement Of TRAWL Assembly For T-72/T-90 Tanks - Ministry Of Defence

Source: [PIB](#)

The Ministry of Defence has signed contracts with Bharat Earth Movers Limited (BEML) and Electro Pneumatics and Hydraulics (India) Private Limited for the **procurement of TRAWL Assembly for T-72/T-90 tanks** at an approximate cost of ₹ 975 crore. The equipment, developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), is designed to enhance the Indian Army's minefield breaching capability by enabling the creation of vehicle-safe lanes through minefields with anti-tank mines fitted with proximity magnetic fuses. Categorized under the 'Buy (Indian-Indigenously Designed, Developed and Manufactured)' route, the procurement is expected to strengthen indigenous defence manufacturing, modernise operational capabilities, and generate direct and indirect employment through MSME participation in component manufacturing.

2. India-Republic Of Korea Comprehensive Framework For Partnership In Shipbuilding, Shipping And Maritime Logistics - Prime Minister's Office

Source: [PIB](#)

India and ROK, during ROK's visit to India, discussed mutually beneficial cooperation between government agencies and private entities in shipbuilding, shipping and maritime logistics. They noted that **India's Maritime Amrit Kaal 2047 Vision** and the Government of India's Shipbuilding Development Scheme have created opportunities for long-term collaboration, including large-scale greenfield shipbuilding clusters, brownfield shipyard expansion, port development and skill training in the sector. The two sides also welcomed a series of related MoUs and industrial collaborations, including on a greenfield shipyard in southern India, port development cooperation, maritime education and research, and maritime heritage, and expressed confidence that the partnership will deliver benefits for both countries and the wider world.



3. **India–Republic Of Korea (RoK) Joint Statement On Cooperation For Sustainability - Prime Minister’s Office**

Source: [PIB](#)

India and RoK agreed to deepen cooperation on sustainability through practical collaboration on climate change, maritime issues and Arctic cooperation. The joint statement welcomed the conclusion of a Memorandum of Cooperation under the Paris Agreement, which will support investment-driven mitigation projects and advance both countries’ Nationally Determined Contributions, while also promoting cooperation on carbon markets, renewable energy and low-carbon technologies. The two sides also agreed to pursue institutional cooperation through an MoU on climate and environment, with India welcoming the RoK’s membership in the **International Solar Alliance** and the RoK welcoming India’s membership in the Global Green Growth Institute. Further collaboration will cover marine science, sustainable fisheries, coastal ecosystem protection, marine pollution prevention, blue economy exchanges, Arctic research and Arctic shipping.

4. **India-Germany Hold Bilateral Talks And Ink Defence Industrial Cooperation Roadmap And UN Peacekeeping Training Arrangement - Ministry Of Defence**

Source: [PIB](#)

India-Germany bilateral talks in Germany to further strengthen the strategic defence partnership between the two countries. The discussion was on bilateral security and defence issues, including priority areas for co-development and co-production of defence equipment, particularly in niche technologies. They reaffirmed commitment to enhance military-to-military cooperation. During the meeting, the **Defence Industrial Cooperation Roadmap** and an Implementing Arrangement for Cooperation in UN Peacekeeping Training were inked and exchanged. The two sides also noted that India and Germany are marking 25 years of Strategic Partnership and 75 years of diplomatic relations in 2026.

5. **India-Austria Bilateral Fast-Track Mechanism - Ministry Of Commerce And Industry**

Source: [PIB](#)

A bilateral Fast-Track Mechanism (FTM) was launched during the Austrian Government visit to India, to facilitate investments, resolve issues promptly, and improve ease of doing business for companies in both countries. Discussions focused on **scaling trade and leveraging the proposed India-EU Free Trade Agreement** (FTA) as well as cooperation in sustainable development, advanced manufacturing, and green technologies. These initiatives are expected to enhance investor confidence, create opportunities for MSMEs and labour-intensive sectors, and deepen bilateral economic partnership through sustained high-level engagement.



6. Advanced Armoured Platforms Launched By DRDO - Ministry Of Defence

Source: [PIB](#)

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) unveiled both **Tracked and Wheeled Advanced Armoured Platforms** designed and developed by the Vehicles Research and Development Establishment (VRDE). Manufacturing has been undertaken by TATA Advanced Systems Limited and Bharat Forge Limited with the support of several MSMEs. Both platforms have been integrated with an indigenously developed 30 mm Crewless Turret offering enhanced mobility, firepower, and protection, STANAG (NATO standard for military vehicles) level 4 and 5 modular blast and ballistic protection, and amphibious capability via hydro jets. The turret is also configured to launch Anti-Tank Guided Missiles with the base design supporting configuration for multiple roles. Current indigenous content stands at 65%, with plans to scale it up to 90%.

V. Rural And Agricultural Transformation

A. Policy Updates

1. Continuation of Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana-III (PMGSY-III) - Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD)

Status: Ongoing | Impact Level: Medium | Source: [PIB](#)

The Union Cabinet has approved continuing PMGSY-III beyond March 2025 up to March 2028. The scheme will continue to improve rural roads and bridges, especially links to villages, agricultural markets, schools and hospitals. The **revised outlay has been raised to ₹ 83,977 crore**, and the timeline for some bridge works in hilly areas has been extended up to March 2029. The Cabinet also allowed certain already-sanctioned but unawarded works to be taken up for tendering, and permitted sanctioning of 161 long-span bridges on already approved road alignments. This is further expected to improve last-mile rural connectivity, support access to markets and public services, and sustain rural employment through continued road construction.

B. Announcements

1. Review Of Sugarcane (Control) Order 1966 - Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution

Source: [Department of Food and Public Distribution](#), [Business Standard](#)

The Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution has proposed the Sugarcane (Control) Order, 2026 to replace the 1966 framework, aiming to modernise the sector by integrating technological advancements and the ethanol economy. It recognises ethanol as a core output, equating 600 litres from cane juice or molasses to one tonne of sugar to align with biofuel targets, while increasing the



minimum distance between mills from 15 km to 25 km and **bringing khandsari units¹ under licensing and FRP obligations**. The draft also strengthens farmer safeguards through a 14-day payment window with a 15% annual interest penalty, and curbs speculative practices by banning transfer of project memorandums before operations and mandating derecognition of mills closed for seven years.

¹ *Khandsari units are small-scale, decentralised rural industries in India that produce unrefined or semi-refined white sugar from sugarcane, often using open-pan sulphitation processes.*



Annexure - I: Miscellaneous Policy Updates

A. Policy Updates

1. Grassroots Biodiversity Governance Projects In Tamil Nadu And Meghalaya - Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)

Status: Initiated | **Impact Level:** Medium | **Source:** [PIB](#)

The MoEFCC and the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) have launched a five-year project aimed at strengthening grassroots biodiversity governance by empowering local communities through Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDPs) and innovative financing. The project is a joint initiative of the Government of India, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), with a grant of \$ 4.88 million (₹ 46.22 crore) for the period 2025–2030, aligning with India's Updated National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP 2024–2030). It is rooted in two ecologically significant landscapes, the **Sathyamangalam landscape in Tamil Nadu and the Garo Hills region of Meghalaya**. The project's key objectives are mainstreaming biodiversity, promoting innovative financing, systematic knowledge management and capacity building with a focus on women, Scheduled Castes, and tribal communities.

2. Drugs Controller (India), Group 'A' Post Recruitment Rules, 2026 - Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

Status: Announced | **Impact Level:** Medium | **Source:** [Gazette of India](#)

The President has notified the Drugs Controller (India), Group 'A' Post Recruitment Rules, 2026, superseding the 2011 recruitment rules for the CDSCO post. The post remains a single sanctioned Group 'A', Gazetted, Non-Ministerial position at Level-14 (₹ 1,44,200–₹ 2,18,200), and **recruitment is now to be made only by deputation**, including short-term contract, with UPSC consultation required. Eligibility for deputation has been laid down through feeder grades across government, autonomous bodies, PSUs, universities and research institutions, together with a master's degree in one of the specified engineering, pharmacy, science or medical disciplines and 15 years of relevant experience in manufacture, testing, regulation, clinical trials or enforcement under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940. The rules also cap deputation tenure at five years and the maximum age at 58 years.

3. Infected Zone Management, Reporting and Control of Communicable Disease at Ports Rules, 2026 - Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways

Status: Announced | **Impact Level:** Low | **Source:** [Gazette of India](#)

The Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways has published draft rules under the Indian Ports Act, 2025 to create a dedicated framework for managing communicable diseases at ports. The draft provides for **declaration of infected zones**, preparation of port-level infected zone management plans, restrictions on entry and movement, health screening, sanitation and disinfection measures, cargo controls, worker safety



protocols, reporting obligations for masters of vessels, and graded response powers for the conservator and health officer. It also requires public notification of infected zones and invites objections and suggestions until 21st May, 2026. The draft is expected to strengthen disease surveillance and emergency readiness at ports, reducing the risk of infection spread through maritime traffic.

4. **Border Security Force, Deputy Commandant (Ministerial) Recruitment Rules, 2026 - Ministry of Home Affairs**

Status: Announced | **Impact Level:** Low | **Source:** [Gazette of India](#)

The Ministry of Home Affairs has notified the Border Security Force, Deputy Commandant (Ministerial) Recruitment Rules, 2026 under the BSF Act, 1968, to regulate recruitment to the post. The Rules classify the post as Group 'A', Gazetted, Ministerial (Combatised), with 21 sanctioned posts at Level-11 (₹ 67,700–₹ 2,08,700). Recruitment is to be made entirely by promotion, with eligibility prescribed as Assistant Commandant (Ministerial) with five years' regular service or combined service from Inspector (Ministerial) and Assistant Commandant levels, subject to SHAPE-I medical fitness and prescribed training. The Rules also specify superannuation at 60 years, all-India service liability, and standard provisions on disqualification, relaxation and reservation. The rules **standardise career progression** and eligibility within the ministerial cadre, improving administrative clarity and internal workforce management in the BSF.

5. **Indian Economic Service Rules, 2026 - Ministry of Finance**

Status: Initiated | **Impact Level:** Low | **Source:** [Ministry of Finance](#)

The President has notified the Indian Economic Service Rules, 2026 in supersession of the Indian Economic Service Rules, 2008 and its subsequent amendments. The new rules constitute the Indian Economic Service as a Group 'A' service, set the authorised strength at 538 posts, and lay down the **recruitment and service framework** through detailed schedules covering direct recruitment, promotion, probation, seniority, non-functional upgradation, and committee composition. Junior Time Scale vacancies will be filled 60% by direct recruitment through the UPSC examination and 40% by promotion from recognised feeder posts, with a minimum of seven years' regular service required for promotion. The rules also formalise a two-year probation period, define the batch system for non-functional upgradation, and provide for screening and departmental committees for promotion, confirmation and upgradation.



B. Announcements

1. Launch Of Two New Amrit Bharat Express Trains - Ministry of Railways

Source: [PIB](#)

The Ministry of Railways has introduced two new Amrit Bharat Express trains connecting Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra via Madhya Pradesh. The Banaras–Hadapsar Amrit Bharat Express will run daily, making 18 stops, including Prayagraj, Jhansi, and Jalgaon, completing the journey in approximately 30 hours. On the other hand, the Ayodhya–Mumbai Amrit Bharat Express will run once a week, making 12 stops, including Prayagraj, Jabalpur, Nashik and Thane completing the journey in approximately 28 hours. It will provide affordable and comfortable connectivity for pilgrims travelling to the Shirdi shrine, connect Pune's IT and manufacturing hubs at Hadapsar, and students and workers across the UP–MP–Maharashtra corridor.

2. Establishment Of India's First Semiconductor Chip Fabrication Plant - Ministry of Commerce and Industry

Source: [PIB](#)

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry has notified the Special Economic Zone (SEZ) to be set up by Tata Semiconductor Manufacturing Private Limited at Dholera, Gujarat. The SEZ will host India's first semiconductor chip fabrication plant, marking progress from the present capability of assembly of chips. An estimated 21,000 jobs are expected to be created as a result, with the SEZ being constructed on 66.166 hectares of land. The facility is expected to generate approximately 21,000 jobs and improve the broader semiconductor ecosystem by establishing an integrated manufacturing cluster, strengthening the nation's position in the global semiconductor value chain.

3. Cohort II Of The IndiaAI Startups Global Acceleration Programme - Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)

Source: [PIB](#)

The India AI Mission and MeitY in collaboration with Station F, the world's largest startup campus and HEC Paris Business School have started the IndiaAI Startups Global Acceleration Programme. Consequently, 10 cutting-edge Indian AI startups have been selected for the second cohort of the programme. These 10 startups will be provided with the resources, expertise and strategic connections needed to scale themselves internationally. The programme **aligns with India's National AI Strategy** which emphasises cross-border knowledge exchange and global market integration. By facilitating access to international markets and potential global investments, the initiative supports India's vision of becoming a leader in AI-driven solutions.



4. **MoU Between MSME Ministry And NICDC Logistics Data Services - Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME)**

Source: [PIB](#)

The MSME Ministry signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with National Industrial Corridor Development Corporation (NICDC) Logistics Data Services Limited (NLDS) to strengthen the **data-driven logistics ecosystem for MSMEs**. The agreement establishes API-based integration for seamless real-time data exchange, enabling informed policymaking, improved supply chain efficiency, cost optimisation and greater competitiveness in domestic and global markets. This partnership is expected to empower MSMEs with actionable logistics insights, accelerate digital transformation, reduce inefficiencies and support the Government's vision of enhancing ease of doing business.

5. **Reconstitution Of NITI Aayog Leadership - Cabinet Secretariat**

Source: [Gazette of India](#)

The Prime Minister has approved the appointment of Shri Ashok Kumar Lahiri as Vice Chairperson of NITI Aayog, along with the appointment of five Full-time Members, Shri Rajiv Gauba, Prof. K. V. Raju, Prof. Gobardhan Das, Prof. Abhay Karandikar and Dr. M. Srinivas, with effect from the date of assumption of charge and until further orders. The appointments are on the same terms and conditions as applicable to the respective positions, while Ex-officio Members and Special Invitees will remain unchanged as per the 16th July, 2024 notification.

6. **India's First Advanced 3D Semiconductor Packaging Unit - Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)**

Source: [PIB](#)

The foundation stone for India's first advanced 3D semiconductor packaging unit, a Heterogeneous Integration Packaging Solutions (HIPSPL) project (a subsidiary of the USA based 3D Glass Solutions Inc.), was laid at Info Valley, Bhubaneswar, Odisha. The ₹ 1,943.53 crore greenfield facility (with ₹ 799 crore central and ₹ 399.5 crore state support) will establish a **vertically integrated advanced packaging unit** using embedded glass substrate technology. It will produce 70,000 glass panels, 50 million assembled units, and 13,000 advanced 3DHI modules annually for AI, machine learning, 5G/6G, data centres, defence electronics, automotive radar, aerospace, and photonics. This first-of-its-kind project under the India Semiconductor Mission is expected to strengthen domestic semiconductor capabilities, accelerate Atmanirbhar Bharat in high-end electronics, generate large-scale skilled employment, and position Odisha as a global semiconductor hub.



7. NITI Aayog Releases Framework For Better Governance In India's Million-Plus Cities - NITI Aayog

Source: [PIB](#), [Niti Aayog](#)

NITI Aayog has released a report titled “Moving Towards Effective City Government – A Framework for Million-Plus Cities” which outlines a roadmap to improve governance in cities with populations above one million. It focuses on stronger city leadership, better coordination of services, improved municipal finances, and clearer accountability in urban administration. The framework is expected to support governance reforms in large cities so they can deliver services more effectively and support urban growth.

8. Consultation Paper on “Proliferation of Public Wi-Fi Networks in India” - Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI)

Source: [TRAI](#)

TRAI has released a Consultation Paper on the proliferation of public Wi-Fi networks in India, dated 27th April, 2026, and has invited written comments by 25th May, 2026 and counter-comments by 8th June, 2026. The paper examines the **current public Wi-Fi ecosystem**, international practices, the Indian deployment landscape, and the need for regulatory reassessment. It also sets out policy pathways covering the roles of the Centre and States, local bodies, service providers and private entities, including issues around authentication, payment, roaming and revenue streams.

9. DPI@2047 For Viksit Bharat: A Strategic Roadmap To Enable Non-linear Inclusive Socio-Economic Growth - NITI Aayog

Source: [PIB](#), [NITI Aayog](#)

NITI Aayog has released the DPI@2047 roadmap outlining the next phase of India's Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) journey as a driver of inclusive, non-linear and productivity-led growth. The roadmap emphasises the shift from digital inclusion to productivity and livelihood-centred outcomes, highlighting the **role of “digital rails”** in enabling economy-wide diffusion of innovation at population scale. It proposes a phased approach, DPI 2.0 (2025–2035) focused on livelihood-led growth and DPI 3.0 (2035–2047) aimed at broad-based prosperity, while identifying priority sectors such as MSMEs, agriculture, health and education, and integrating AI with DPI to unlock productivity gains. It also underlines the role of states, sectoral transformations and ecosystem-wide coordination in scaling impact.

10. Approach Paper For Compilation Of The Index Of Service Production (ISP) For The Formal Sector Of The Economy - Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)

Source: [MoSPI](#)

MoSPI has released an approach paper proposing an Index of Service Production (ISP) for the formal sector to complement the Index of Industrial Production and



provide high-frequency indicators on services activity. The paper proposes **compiling trial sectoral and sub-sectoral indices** using three main data sources, secondary administrative data, GST data and the Annual Survey of Incorporated Services Sector Enterprises (ASISSE), which started from 2026-27. It also proposes 2024-25 as the base year and notes that the formal framework still leaves around 33% of services GVA outside the scope of the trial indices. The paper further lays out the methodology for combining sub-sectoral indices into an overall ISP, using GVA weights where available, and recommends a trial basis for release until major data gaps are bridged. The ISP will fill a key data gap by providing more frequent and structured insights into the services sector, strengthening economic monitoring and policy responsiveness.

11. **Indigenously Developed Silicon Photonics Technology Solutions Launched - Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)**

Source: [PIB](#)

MeitY has launched two indigenously developed Silicon Photonics technology solutions through MeitY-sponsored CoE-CPPICS at IIT Madras, a Silicon Photonics Process Design Kit (PDK) for photonics chip manufacturing and a Universal packaged PPIC (Programmable Photonic Integrated Circuit) Test Engine. The PDK contains over 50 verified components and is intended to provide **design enablement for industry, startups, academic institutions and defence R&D organisations**, while the test engine is positioned as a state-of-the-art automated characterisation platform for photonic and optoelectronic modules. The release describes the launch as a major milestone in India's Silicon Photonics technology sovereignty and says the facility will serve as a shared national resource for the photonics R&D community.

12. **Lokayan Sudarshini: INS Sudarshini's Global Expedition - Ministry of Defence**

Source: [Indian Navy](#), [PIB](#)

The INS Sudarshini, **India's second indigenously built sail training ship**, has achieved a key milestone under Lokayan 26, a 10-month, 22,000 nautical mile global expedition aimed at providing Indian Navy and Coast Guard trainees with intensive sail training and global maritime exposure, in support of the MAHASAGAR initiative. It has completed a port call at Casablanca, Morocco, where the crew engaged with the Royal Moroccan Navy to strengthen naval cooperation and diplomatic ties, and arrived at Las Palmas, Spain, on 23rd April, 2026, marking the maiden visit of an Indian naval ship to the Canary Islands and a strategic pause before its trans-Atlantic passage, with planned interactions with Spanish Naval authorities and outreach to the local community and Indian diaspora, underscoring growing maritime cooperation with Spain.



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