

# India Governance Watch

*Viksit Bharat's Policy And  
Administrative Developments*



**16<sup>th</sup> January - 31<sup>st</sup> January**

**JANUARY 2026 | ISSUE II**

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## India Governance Watch

### Viksit Bharat's Policy And Administrative Developments

(16<sup>th</sup> January, 2026 - 31<sup>st</sup> January, 2026)

#### Executive Summary

This document tracks the various key economic and policy decisions made by the Central Government between **16<sup>th</sup> January 2026 and 31<sup>st</sup> January 2026**. Some of the important announcements and policy updates are as follows:

#### I. Economic Growth And Structural Reforms

- A. **Economic Survey 2025-26 Released:** The Ministry of Finance has released the Economic Survey 2025-26 **projecting real GDP growth at 7.4% and GVA growth at 7.3%**, highlighting strong domestic demand, low inflation, rising consumption, **resilient investment**, record services exports, fiscal consolidation, and **expanding financial inclusion**. The Survey notes **gains across sectors**, while **flagging external risks** and emphasising a **balanced approach to indigenisation and global integration**.
- B. **SEBI (Mutual Funds) Regulations, 2026:** The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has notified a **new regulatory framework introducing 'Mutual Fund Lite' (MF Lite)**, a dedicated category for passive investment products. These regulations represent a sophisticated, risk-focused regulatory framework that promotes market expansion while ensuring strong protection for investors.
- C. **SEBI Grants NOC For NSE Initial Public Offering:** The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has granted a **No Objection Certificate (NOC)** to the **National Stock Exchange (NSE)** to proceed with its **initial public offering**, aiming to resolve long-pending regulatory hurdles and enable NSE's market listing. The move will pave the way for one of India's largest IPOs and strengthen market depth and investor confidence.

#### II. Infrastructure, Technology And Sustainability

- A. **Draft National Electricity Policy, 2026:** The Ministry of Power released the draft National Electricity Policy, 2026 policy outlining **reforms to ensure energy security**, promote renewable integration, and **improve efficiency in power markets**. The policy is expected to **support long-term sustainability**, grid stability, and **investment in the power sector**.
- B. **Coking Coal Notified As A Critical And Strategic Mineral:** The Ministry of Coal classified coking coal as a **critical mineral to address supply vulnerabilities** in the steel sector. The move is expected to **strengthen domestic supply security** and **reduce dependence on imports**.
- C. **Delicensing Of 6 GHz Spectrum Band For Wi-Fi Services:** The Ministry of Communications has permitted **licence-free use of the 6 GHz band for low-power Wi-Fi devices** to support next-generation **wireless connectivity**. It will boost indoor

## Executive Summary

Wi-Fi speeds and reliability, enabling Wi-Fi 6E/7 and smoother use of Augmented Reality/ Virtual Reality (AR/VR), gaming consoles, and smart glasses

### III. Human Development and Social Welfare

- A. **Extension of Atal Pension Yojana till 2030–31:** The Union Cabinet has approved continuation of the scheme with **extended Government support** and gap funding to **strengthen old-age income security** for **unorganised sector workers**. The extension will enhance **financial inclusion** and support India's transition towards a pensioned society.
- B. **Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions (Coal Mines) Regulations, 2026:** The Ministry of Labour and Employment has released draft regulations to create a **uniform framework** for safety, health, and working conditions in coal mines by **standardising mine classification**, safety norms, and **operational procedures**. The move aims to **strengthen professional accountability** and risk management through certification requirements and enhanced safety standards.

### IV. National Security and Foreign Policy

- A. **Conclusion of India–EU Free Trade Agreement:** India and the European Union have concluded a comprehensive Free Trade Agreement providing **preferential market access for over 99% of India's exports**, with phased tariff reductions in key sectors, while **safeguarding sensitive agricultural and allied sectors** through exclusions and tariff rate quotas. The move aims to **strengthen export competitiveness**, MSME growth, employment, and **long-term strategic economic ties**.

### V. Rural And Agricultural Transformation

- A. **Revised Raw Jute Stock Limits Notified:** The Ministry of Textiles has revised raw jute stock limits under the Jute and Jute Textiles Control Order, 2016 in **response to rising prices** and supply concerns, **capping permissible holdings** for traders, balers and mills with **mandatory disclosures**. The move aims to **curb hoarding**, ensure fair distribution of raw jute, and protect the interests of farmers, workers and manufacturers, while **stabilising prices** and ensuring continuity of production.

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## I. Economic Growth And Structural Reforms

### A. Policy Updates

#### 1. SEBI Notifies New Mutual Funds Regulations 2026 - Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)

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

SEBI has notified the **SEBI (Mutual Funds) Regulations, 2026**, replacing the 1996 framework to strengthen investor protection, enhance cost transparency, and tighten governance and accountability of Asset Management Companies (AMCs) and trustees. The regulations **introduce a Base Expense Ratio (BER)** to clearly separate core fund management fees from taxes and statutory charges, lower expense-ratio caps across several fund categories, and introduces **'Mutual Fund Lite' (MF Lite), a dedicated category for passive investment products** such as index funds and Exchange-Traded Funds (ETFs), featuring simplified regulations to encourage innovation and broaden investor access. These regulations represent a sophisticated, risk-focused regulatory framework that promotes market expansion while ensuring strong protection for investors.

#### 2. SEBI Grants NOC For National Stock Exchange IPO - Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)

**Status:** Initiated | **Impact Level:** High | **Source:** [Economic Times](#), [Moneycontrol](#)

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has issued a crucial No Objection Certificate (NOC) allowing the **National Stock Exchange (NSE)** to move forward with its long awaited **initial public offering (IPO)**. This decision ends nearly a decade of delays that followed regulatory and governance concerns. With SEBI's clearance, NSE can begin formal IPO preparations, including appointing merchant bankers and advisers, drafting its Red Herring Prospectus (DRHP) and setting a timeline for listing. The exchange, currently valued at about **₹ 5 lakh crore in the unlisted market**, is pursuing a listing that aligns with global practice, where major exchanges such as the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE), London Stock Exchange Group, and Deutsche Börse are publicly traded and subject to continuous market scrutiny. Major institutional investors like Life Insurance Corporation of India (10.72% stake), Temasek (4.5%), SBI Capital Markets (4.5%), and SBI (3.2%) gain transparent exit options, while **retail shareholders will benefit from price discovery in a regulated, liquid market.**

#### 3. Export Incentives Extended To Postal Shipments To Boost MSME And E-Commerce Exports - Ministry of Finance

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

The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) has extended key export incentives such as **Duty Drawback**, **RoDTEP (Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products)**, and **RoSCTL (Rebate of State and Central Taxes and Levies)** to

exports made through the postal channel. It has enabled exporters using the postal route to file electronic export declarations, have their consignments processed end-to-end in digital mode, and claim these incentives in the same way as cargo and courier exporters. The extension of export incentives to postal shipments will make **international shipping more attractive and affordable for small exporters, artisans, MSMEs and e-commerce sellers**, especially in Tier-2, Tier-3 towns and rural areas and puts postal exports on par with courier and cargo exports, encouraging cross border online trade.

#### 4. SEBI Amends Regulations On Issue And Listing Of Non-Convertible Securities - Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)

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

SEBI has notified the **Securities and Exchange Board of India (Issue and Listing of Non-Convertible Securities) (Amendment) Regulations, 2026**, amending the 2021 framework to broaden retail participation and enhance inclusivity in the corporate bond market. The amendment formally defines “**retail individual investor**” as an individual applying or bidding for **debt securities up to ₹ 2 lakh**, providing regulatory clarity for retail-focused issuances. Further, SEBI has enabled issuers to offer targeted incentives, such as **additional interest or discounts on issue price, to specific categories including senior citizens, women**, serving and retired defence personnel, widows and widowers of defence personnel, and retail individual investors, among others as specified by SEBI. The move will **encourage more retail investors to subscribe to debt securities**, strengthening the retail investor base and increasing competitiveness in the debt market.

#### 5. Cookware, Utensils and Cans for Foods and Beverages (Quality Control) Order, 2026 - Ministry of Commerce and Industry

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

The Ministry of Commerce has notified the Cookware, Utensils and Cans for Foods and Beverages (Quality Control) Order, 2026. The Order mandates **Bureau Of Indian Standards (BIS) certification** and the use of the **Standard Mark** for wrought **aluminium utensils and aluminium cans** for beverages, in accordance with the relevant Indian Standards. Implementation will be phased for general manufacturers, as well as small and micro enterprises. The Order also **provides exemptions for goods manufactured for export, limited pre-implementation stock, filled imports**, and a specified number of imports for research and development purposes. This measure will ensure **product quality and consumer safety**, standardise manufacturing, and enhance trust in domestic products while reducing substandard imports.

## B. Announcements

### 1. Economic Survey Of India 2025-26 - Ministry of Finance

**Status:** Completed | **Source:** [PIB](#), [Link to Economic Survey](#).

On 29<sup>th</sup> January 2026, the Economic Survey 2025-26 was tabled in Parliament, projecting **real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth at 7.4%** and **Gross Value Added (GVA) growth at 7.3%** in FY 2025-26, with potential growth estimated at 7%. It highlights strong domestic demand, supported by **low inflation, rising consumption, resilient investment** and services-led expansion, alongside fiscal consolidation, improved revenues, low banking Non Performing Assets (NPAs), expanding financial inclusion, record services exports and comfortable foreign exchange reserves. The Survey notes broad-based gains across manufacturing, infrastructure, renewable energy, agriculture, human development and connectivity, while emphasising a calibrated approach to indigenisation and global integration. It also flags **external risks from geopolitical and financial volatility**, even as higher capital expenditure and improved innovation indicators point to strengthening long-term competitiveness.

Read NFPRC's Highlights of the Economic Survey [here](#).

### 2. Centre Releases First Phase Census 2027 Questionnaire Draft Covering Basic Household Amenities - Ministry of Home Affairs

**Status:** Ongoing | **Source:** [The Gazette of India](#), [TNIE](#)

The Registrar General of India has released a **33-point questionnaire for the House Listing Operation**, the first phase of Census 2027. This phase will begin on 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2026 and will formally launch the decennial census exercise. The questionnaire focuses on housing characteristics and living conditions. It covers the location and nature of residence, access to drinking water, LPG for cooking, sanitation facilities, bathing and wastewater outlets. **A new question on internet access has been included** to reflect growing digital connectivity. Information on the main cereal consumed by households will also be collected to understand dietary patterns and food security. The questionnaire will help **provide updated and granular data** to guide evidence-based policymaking, infrastructure planning and targeted welfare delivery.

### 3. Health Security And National Security Cess (First Amendment) Rules, 2026 - Ministry of Finance

**Status:** Initiated | **Source:** [The Gazette of India](#)

The Health Security and National Security Cess (First Amendment) Rules, 2026, effective 1<sup>st</sup> February 2026, provide detailed methodology for determining the maximum rated speed of high-speed packing machines and **revise the calculation of cess abatement in cases of temporary machine non-operation**. The rules also establish procedures for the transfer of the collected cess to a designated Health

Security and National Security Cess Fund, which shall be utilised exclusively for public health and national security-related schemes and programmes. These amendments will **ensure accurate assessment of cess liability, facilitate proper adjustments during periods of non-operation**, and promote transparent and accountable utilisation of funds.

#### 4. **Controlled Relaxation In Export Ban On Wheat Flour And Related Products - Ministry of Commerce and Industry**

**Status:** Initiated | **Source:** [The Gazette of India](#)

The Ministry of Commerce and industry has released notification amending India's export policy for items under **HS Code 1101**, covering wheat flour and related products such as atta, maida, and semolina. While the **overall export status remains "Prohibited"**, the Central Government has allowed a **limited exception permitting export of up to 5 lakh metric tonnes (LMT)** of these products through Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) -issued export authorisations, subject to specific modalities to be notified separately. **Amid higher domestic wheat production** and adequate availability, the exemption allowing limited exports of up to **5 LMT** of wheat flour and related products will help **manage surplus supply** and support exporters, while retaining the **overall prohibition to safeguard domestic food security**.

#### 5. **Cabinet Approves ₹ 5,000 Crore Equity Support To SIDBI To Expand MSME Credit - Ministry of Finance**

**Status:** Announced | **Source:** [PIB](#)

The Union Cabinet has approved an equity support of **₹ 5,000 crore** for the **Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI)**, to be infused in phased tranches of ₹ 3,000 crore in 2025–26 and ₹ 1,000 crore each in 2026–27 and 2027–28. The equity infusion will strengthen SIDBI's capital base and enhance its ability to raise funds at competitive rates. The measure is aimed at **expanding the flow of institutional credit to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)**, including through digital and collateral-free lending products. Following the infusion, the number of MSMEs supported by SIDBI is projected to increase from 76.26 lakh in 2025 to around 102 lakh by 2028, covering an additional 25.74 lakh enterprises. The intervention will **improve access to formal finance** for MSMEs and support enterprise expansion and employment generation across sectors.

#### 6. **IFSCA Invites Public Comments On Participation Of IFSC Banking Units In Remote Booking Arrangements (RBA) - International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA)**

**Status:** Announced | **Source:** [IFSCA](#)

IFSCA has invited public comments on draft circular which seeks to lay down a **regulatory framework for "remote booking" arrangements of banks licensed by**

the Authority to set up an IFSC Banking Unit (IBU) and the participation of such IBUs in the Remote Booking Arrangements (RBA) of their parent banks. The proposed directions aim to facilitate the booking of **cross-border transactions in IBUs while ensuring robust risk management**, governance and regulatory compliance. They focus on clarifying the roles and responsibilities of IBUs and their parent banks in RBA structures, including oversight, attribution of risk and income, and adherence to applicable home and host supervisory requirements. It is expected to enhance **cross-border booking efficiency and business volumes at IBUs** while strengthening risk, governance and compliance standards around remote booking arrangements.

#### 7. One-Time Extension Window For Placement Memorandum Validity By IFSCA - International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA)

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

IFSCA has granted a **one-time window of three months to Fund Management Entities (FMEs) operating in IFSCs to extend the validity of Placement Memoranda (PPMs)** for eligible Venture Capital Schemes and Restricted Schemes whose PPMs have recently expired or are nearing expiry. The relaxation is intended to **provide additional time to complete fundraising without requiring a fresh PPM filing**, while ensuring continuity of key scheme terms and adherence to the existing fund management framework. The extension facility is available only where there are **no material changes to core scheme attributes** such as name, investment objective, strategy, structure and scheme type, and is subject to payment of a reduced fee (50% of the normal filing fee) and compliance with specified procedural conditions. It is expected to **ease fundraising constraints, support capital formation in IFSC-based funds and schemes**.

#### 8. IFSCA Draft Consultation Paper On SAC-Based Classification Of Authorised Services - International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA)

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

IFSCA has invited public comments on a draft consultation paper which seeks to **align the existing “Default List of Authorised Services” with the Services Accounting Code (SAC)-based classification under the Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime**. The proposal aims to map each authorised service in the Default List to a specific SAC code and corresponding GST description so that Special Economic Zone (SEZ)/IFSC units and their service providers can clearly identify eligible services and avail GST/IGST benefits without interpretational disputes. It focuses on updating service tax-era terminology, **removing ambiguity where broad heads like “banking and other financial services” do not reflect the granular SAC-based services now used on invoices**, and providing a harmonised, SAC-linked list that can be applied consistently by units and approving authorities. It is expected to **reduce**

**classification confusion, facilitate smoother availing of tax exemptions on input services** for authorised operations.

## II. Infrastructure, Technology And Sustainability

### A. Policy Updates

#### 1. Draft National Electricity Policy 2026 - Ministry of Power

**Status:** Initiated | **Impact Level:** High | **Source:** [Ministry of Power](#), [PIB](#)

The Ministry of Power has released the **Draft National Electricity Policy (NEP) 2026** for public consultation. The policy, once finalised, will replace the existing NEP, 2005. The Draft targets **per capita electricity consumption of 2,000 kWh by 2030 and over 4,000 kWh by 2047**, and aligns with climate goals of **45% reduction in emissions intensity by 2030 and net-zero by 2070**. Major interventions include resource adequacy planning, tariff reforms, dispute resolution, renewable energy expansion and storage, thermal, nuclear and hydro generation development, power market strengthening, **modern transmission and distribution measures**, grid operations reforms, cybersecurity, data sharing, and technology and **skill development**. Since 2005, India has quadrupled generation capacity, achieved universal electrification, established a unified national grid, and reached 1,460 kWh per capita consumption in 2024-25, but challenges remain in distribution, tariffs, and cross-subsidisation. The policy lays a **blueprint for a future-ready, financially strong, and sustainable power sector** providing reliable and affordable electricity.

#### 2. Centre Notifies Solid Waste Management Rules, 2026 - Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

**Status:** Initiated | **Impact Level:** High | **Source:** [The Gazette Of India](#)

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has notified the **Solid Waste Management (SWM) Rules, 2026**. These new regulations place a significant mandate on "bulk generators" including residential societies, universities, and Government buildings, to **process solid waste at the source**. A major shift from the previous regime is the **introduction of mandatory four-stream segregation** (wet, dry, sanitary, and special care waste) and the **implementation of the "Polluter Pays" principle**, which allows for environmental compensation penalties. The rules also integrate principles of the Circular Economy by mandating the use of **Refuse Derived Fuel (RDF)** in industrial units and strictly restricting landfills to non-recyclable materials. Further, **Centralised online monitoring** will ensure compliance, better planning, and efficient logistics.

#### 3. Government Notifies Coking Coal As A Critical And Strategic Mineral To Boost Mineral Security - Ministry of Coal

**Status:** Initiated | **Impact Level:** High | **Source:** [The Gazette Of India](#), [PIB](#)

The Ministry of Coal has notified Coking Coal as a "Critical & Strategic Mineral" under the **Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 (MMDR)**

Act), amending the First Schedule of the Act to explicitly include coking coal in the list of critical and strategic minerals. The classification is **aimed at streamlining approvals**, improving ease of doing business, accelerating exploration and mining, and encouraging **private investment to strengthen the mineral supply chain** for the steel sector. This move is expected to reduce import dependence, currently about 95% of the steel sector's coking coal requirement is met through imports, and enhance supply security and resilience for the steel industry.

#### 4. Government Delicenses 6 GHz Spectrum Band To Enable Licence-Free Wi-Fi Connectivity - Ministry of Communications

**Status:** Initiated | **Impact Level:** High | **Source:** [The Gazette Of India](#), [Hindustan Times](#)

The Ministry of Communications has **permitted licence-free use** of the **6 GHz spectrum band** for **low-power Wi-Fi devices** under the Use of Low Power and Very Low Power Wireless Access System including Radio Local Area Network in Lower 6 GHz band (Exemption from Licensing Requirement) Rules, 2026. Devices **operating in the 5925–6425 MHz range** can now be deployed **without individual licences**, subject to technical conditions and usage restrictions, **including prohibitions on oil platforms, vehicles, boats, aircraft below 10,000 feet**, and drones. The rules require **type-approved equipment** with **integrated antennas** and **enforce interference mitigation measures** to protect licensed telecom systems. It will boost indoor Wi-Fi speeds and reliability, **enabling Wi-Fi 6E/7 and smoother use of Augmented Reality/ Virtual Reality (AR/VR)**, gaming consoles, and smart glasses for consumers. It also opens up opportunities for local manufacturing of advanced Wi-Fi equipment and eases mobile network congestion by enabling more effective data offload from cellular to Wi-Fi.

#### 5. New Rules For Environmental Fund To Support Pollution Control - Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

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

The Ministry of Environment has notified the **Environmental (Protection) Fund Rules, 2026**, to **regulate the Environmental Protection Fund** established under Section 16 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. The Fund will be credited with penalties under environmental laws and other approved sources, and payments will be made through the **Bharatkosh portal**. **75% of the proceeds** will be remitted to the Consolidated Fund of the concerned State/UT, and the **Centre will retain 25%**. The Fund will be utilised for strengthening **environmental monitoring networks, developing laboratories and research infrastructure**, advancing clean technology research, assessment and remediation of environmental damage, capacity building, and IT-enabled systems. The rules are expected to **strengthen environmental**

compliance and promote sustainable management of natural resources nationwide.

#### 6. Government Revises Uniform Consent Guidelines To Streamline Environmental Approvals For Industry - Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

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

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has revised the Uniform Consent Guidelines under the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981 and the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 to make industrial approvals faster and simpler. Under the revised framework, the **Consent to Operate (CTO)** will remain valid until cancelled, **removing the need for repeated renewals** and easing compliance for industries. At the same time, **approval timelines for Red Category industries** have been reduced from 120 days to 90 days, while compliance checks will now be conducted by **Registered Environmental Auditors**, lightening the workload of pollution control boards. In addition, Micro and Small Enterprises in notified industrial estates will benefit from **deemed consent** to establish through self-certification, with flexible, **site-specific assessments** replacing rigid distance-based norms. Overall, these changes are **expected to reduce delays and compliance burden**, improve ease of doing business, and **ensure environmental protection through regular monitoring**.

#### 7. The Mineral (Auction) Amendment Rules, 2026 - Ministry of Mines

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

The Mineral (Auction) Amendment Rules, 2026 amend the Mineral (Auction) Rules, 2015 to **introduce insurance surety bonds** as an **alternative to cash-based security** deposits for performance security across multiple stages of mineral auctions. The amendments rationalise timelines by extending **key compliance periods from 15 days to 45 days**, remove provisions relating to extended periods, and simplify procedures by omitting several provisions. They also strengthen transparency by **mandating automatic public disclosure of auction outcomes** on the online platform and refine institutional provisions relating to District Mineral Foundations and Development Trusts. The **rules will at ease entry barriers for bidders**, improve liquidity, and make mineral auctions more efficient, competitive, and investor-friendly.

#### 8. Motor Vehicles Rules Amended To Enforce Toll Fee Compliance - Ministry of Road Transport and Highways

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

The Government of India has notified the Central Motor Vehicles (Second Amendment) Rules, 2026 to strengthen compliance with user fee payments on National Highways. The amendment introduces the definition of **'unpaid user fee'**

and links it to vehicle-related services. Under the new rules, a **No Objection Certificate (NOC) for transfer of ownership**, renewal or generation of a **Certificate of Fitness**, and issuance of **National Permits for commercial vehicles** will not be granted if toll dues are pending. Form 28 has been updated to disclose any unpaid user fees, and its relevant portions can now be issued electronically. The changes will enhance **Electronic Toll Collection, enable barrier-free Multi-Lane Free Flow (MLFF) tolling**, and foster transparent, technology-driven toll systems for the development and maintenance of the National Highway network.

## B. Announcements

### 1. IWDC 3.0 Approves Over ₹ 1,500 Crore Projects For Inland Waterways Development - Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways

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

The Inland Waterways Development Council (IWDC 3.0) has approved **projects exceeding ₹ 1,500 crore** to accelerate green mobility, enhance cargo movement, and **promote river tourism** across India's inland waterways, while strengthening Centre-State coordination. Key approvals include over **₹ 900 crore for new infrastructure projects** such as jetties, terminals, cruise facilities, and navigation systems, along with ₹ 465 crore for asset procurement to improve safety, navigability, and **year-round operations, including hybrid vessels and dredging equipment**. The initiatives span multiple states, with special emphasis on the Northeast and Jammu & Kashmir, and supports multimodal logistics, passenger connectivity, and sustainable transport. The projects will **reduce logistics costs**, decongest roads and railways, and promote low-carbon transport.

### 2. Wings India 2026 Launched To Showcase Aviation Growth And Global Ties - Ministry of Civil Aviation

**Status:** Announced | **Source:** [PIB](#)

The Ministry of Civil Aviation hosted **Wings India 2026, Asia's largest civil aviation event**, at Begumpet Airport, Hyderabad, showcasing India's evolution as a major aviation hub. The event highlights advances across airlines, airports, aircraft manufacturing, Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul (MRO), cargo, training, advanced air mobility, and sustainable aviation. With **participation from global original equipment manufacturers (OEMs)**, airlines, investors, and official delegations from multiple countries, Wings India 2026 is expected to strengthen international collaboration, catalyse investments.

## III. Human Development And Social Welfare

### A. Policy Update

#### 1. Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions (Coal Mines) Regulations, 2026 - Ministry of Labour and Employment

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

The Ministry of Labour and Employment has released draft regulations to **establish a comprehensive and uniform framework for safety, health, and working conditions in all coal mines** across India by clearly defining technical and operational terms, classifying mines and gaseous seams, and prescribing detailed safety standards for ventilation, explosives, machinery, electricity, and emergency response. They introduce a **Mining Examination Board** to ensure **standardised certification**, competency, medical fitness, and **age requirements for managers, supervisors, winding engine operators, and electrical personnel**, thereby strengthening professional accountability. The regulations also emphasise **risk assessment, standard operating procedures, accident prevention**, and emergency preparedness, including rescue arrangements and refuge chambers. Together, these measures are expected to **enhance worker safety**, reduce fatal incidents, and modernise coal mining operations in line with contemporary safety and technological standards.

## B. Announcements

### 1. Second Nationwide Dolphin Survey Launched To Support Conservation - Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

**Status:** Announced | **Source:** [PIB](#)

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has **launched the second rangewide estimation of riverine and estuarine dolphins** under **Project Dolphin**, to strengthen dolphin conservation across India. The **first phase** will cover the Ganga from Bijnor to Ganga Sagar and the Indus River, while the second phase will survey the Brahmaputra, Ganga tributaries, Sundarbans, and Odisha. This assessment will include Ganges, Indus, and Irrawaddy dolphins, along with habitat conditions, threats, and other conservation-priority species. Building on the previous survey (2021–23), **which recorded around 6,327 riverine dolphins**, the expanded coverage and standardized methodology will provide **updated population estimates, identify threats, and support evidence-based conservation planning** for India's river ecosystems. The move is expected to further improve protection, management, and policy action for riverine dolphin populations nationwide.

### 2. Cabinet Extends Atal Pension Yojana Till 2030-31 To Strengthen Old-Age Security - Ministry of Finance

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

The Union Cabinet has approved the **continuation of the Atal Pension Yojana (APY) up to FY 2030-31**, along with extension of funding support for promotional and developmental activities and gap funding. The scheme will continue to provide Government support for **awareness campaigns, capacity building, and outreach among unorganised sector workers**, as well as financial gap funding to ensure its **viability and sustainability**. Launched on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2015, APY provides a **guaranteed**

monthly pension of ₹ 1,000 to ₹ 5,000 from age 60 and has enrolled over 8.66 crore subscribers as of 19<sup>th</sup> January 2026. The extension will **strengthen old-age income security**, enhance financial inclusion, and support India's transition to a pensioned society, aligning with the vision of Viksit Bharat @2047.

## IV. National Security and Foreign Policy

### A. Policy Updates

#### 1. India-EU Free Trade Agreement - Ministry of Commerce and Industry

**Status:** Completed | **Impact Level:** High | **Source:** [PIB](#)

India and the European Union have concluded negotiations for a **Free Trade Agreement** that establishes a **stable, rules-based framework for deeper economic integration** between the two economies. The agreement provides **preferential market access for over 99% of India's exports** by trade value, with immediate or **phased tariff elimination** across major **labour-intensive sectors** such as textiles, leather, footwear, gems and jewellery, engineering goods and chemicals, while also **securing expanded commitments across more than 140 services** subsectors and predictable mobility pathways for professionals. At the same time, India has safeguarded sensitive agricultural and allied sectors, including dairy, cereals, poultry, soymeal and select fruits and vegetables, through exclusions, tariff rate quotas. Intended cooperation on **standards, sanitary and phytosanitary measures and intellectual property** will further reduce trade barriers and regulatory uncertainty. Overall, the FTA is expected to strengthen export competitiveness, support MSMEs, generate employment, attract investment and anchor **India-EU economic ties as a long-term strategic partnership**.

## V. Rural And Agricultural Transformation

### A. Policy Updates

#### 1. Government Limits Raw Jute Stocks To Ensure Supply And Price Stability - Ministry of Textiles

**Status:** Completed | **Impact Level:** Medium | **Source:** [PIB](#), [Business Standard](#)

The Ministry of Textiles has **revised raw jute stock limits** under the Jute and Jute Textiles Control Order, 2016 **after a sharp increase in prices above the MSP for 2025-26** and concerns over availability of raw jute. The revised norms cap holdings at **1,200 quintals for balers with presses, 25 quintals for other stockists, 5 quintals for unregistered traders, and up to 45 days' consumption for jute mills**, with **mandatory fortnightly disclosure on the Jute SMART portal and a 10-day window to offload** excess stocks. These measures, backed by inspection, seizure and penal provisions under the **Essential Commodities Act, 1955** are likely to curb hoarding and speculative practices, ensure fair distribution of raw jute, and protect the interests of farmers, workers and manufacturers.

## Annexure I: Miscellaneous Policy Updates

### A. Policy Updates

#### 1. SAMPANN Pension Portal Linked With DigiLocker - Ministry of Communications

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

The Ministry of Communications **has integrated the SAMPANN pension portal** with DigiLocker, enabling pensioners under the Department of Telecommunications to **securely access key pension-related documents** through a single digital platform. The integration facilitates retrieval of **electronic Pension Payment Orders (e-PPOs)**, Form-16, and other records using Aadhaar and PPO credentials. This initiative digitises pension document management, **eliminates reliance on physical records and in-person verification**, and enhances service delivery under the Digital India framework by standardising access, reducing administrative delays, and improving record integrity across pension disbursement systems.

### B. Announcements

#### 1. Digital India BHASHINI And Survey Of India Partner To Digitise And Standardise Names Of Places - Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology

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

The Digital India BHASHINI Division (DIBD) of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Survey of India (SoI) to support the **digitisation, transcription and standardisation of geographical place names (toponyms)** using AI-based speech and language technologies. Under the collaboration, BHASHINI's **speech-to-text and language processing capabilities** will convert field-collected audio recordings into structured digital text, contributing to a **comprehensive Toponymy Database of over 16 lakh locations**. The collaboration is expected to enhance data accuracy, scale and speed, preserve correct local pronunciations, and strengthen the geospatial ecosystem for governance, disaster management, infrastructure planning, and citizen services.

#### 2. Kaziranga Elevated Corridor Project - Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways

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

The Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways has launched the **Kaziranga Elevated Corridor Project** in Kaliabor, Assam, a major road infrastructure initiative costing **over ₹ 6,950 crore**. This project involves **four laning the Kaliabor-Numaligarh section of NH-715** and building a 34 km elevated corridor over the ecologically sensitive area near Kaziranga National Park. This project will improve road connectivity in Assam by reducing travel time between major towns and linking the region better with the rest of India. Its **elevated design** will allow **safe movement of wildlife**, helping to prevent accidents and protect the ecosystem around Kaziranga National Park. Improved access is expected to **boost eco-tourism and visitor**

**footfall while generating employment, strengthening trade and logistics, and accelerating overall regional development** in Upper Assam.

### **3. Wage And Pension Revision For Employees And Pensioners Of PSGICs, NABARD And RBI - Ministry of Finance**

**Status:** Announced | **Source:** [PIB](#)

The Ministry of Finance has approved a **comprehensive wage and pension revision for employees and pensioners** of Public Sector General Insurance Companies (PSGICs), National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). **Effective retrospectively** from August 2022 and November 2022, the decision provides for a **12.41% wage hike for PSGIC employees**, a **20% pay revision for NABARD staff**, enhanced NPS contribution, and **revised pension and family pension benefits** for RBI and NABARD retirees. This would result in an effective pension enhancement of up to 1.43 times in certain cases. The measures will benefit around 46,322 employees, 23,570 pensioners and 23,260 family pensioners.



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