NATION FIRST
POLICY RESEARCH CENTRE

# India Governance Watch

## *Viksit Bharat's Policy And Administrative Developments*

**16th March - 31st March**

**MARCH 2026 | ISSUE II**

# Contributors

**Manasa Sriram**
Lead Editor

**Veer Patil**
Editor

**Vedika Znwar**
Consultant

*In case of any queries/ feedback please reach out to either the Lead Editor or the Editor at their respective emails*

In case you wish to be added to the mailing list please reach out to **Girish M.S.** on the following email id: **girish.ms@nationfirstpolicy.org**

# India Governance Watch

## *Viksit Bharat's Policy And Administrative Developments*

## (16th March, 2026 - 31st March, 2026)

### Executive Summary

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

I. **Economic Growth And Structural Reforms**

A. **Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026 Introduced:** The Government has introduced the Bill seeking to **decriminalise 717 provisions across 79 Central Acts,** replacing imprisonment with monetary penalties for procedural offences. It aims to reduce the litigation burden and shift the regulatory environment toward a trust-based framework. The reform significantly improves the ease of doing business and promotes investment through proportionate regulation.

B. **RBI Caps NOP-INR Position for Authorised Dealers at $ 100 Million:** The RBI has prescribed a $ 100 million cap on the Net Open Position in INR that dealers can hold in the onshore deliverable foreign exchange market. The directive **aims to limit excessive directional bets by banks** and reduce vulnerabilities arising from large currency mismatches. Banks caution that the cap could compel unwinding of ₹ 90,000 – ₹ 1,20,000 crore in positions, leading to potential mark-to-market losses and reduced trading revenue while supporting rupee stability.

C. **Anti-Dumping Investigations Initiated Across Key Industrial Inputs:** The Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR) has launched multiple **investigations and sunset reviews** on imports primarily from China, Russia, the EU, and the US. These measures assess continued injury to domestic industries across sectors like steel, chemicals, and pharmaceuticals. The regulatory push safeguards domestic manufacturing from unfair trade practices and ensures fair competition.

D. **Inflation Target of 4% Notified for FY 2026–31:** In consultation with the RBI, the Government has **retained the 4% inflation target with a tolerance band of +/- 2%** for the next five years. This continuity anchors inflation expectations and provides a stable framework for medium-term monetary policy decisions. The decision reinforces macroeconomic stability and policy credibility.

II. **Infrastructure, Technology And Sustainability**

A. **Cabinet Approves Modified UDAN Scheme with ₹ 28,840 Crore Outlay:** The scheme extension to 2035–36 aims to **develop 100 new airports and 200 helipads,** supported by viability gap funding. It includes provisions for indigenous aircraft acquisition to strengthen the domestic aviation ecosystem. The initiative enhances regional connectivity and economic integration in Tier-2 and Tier-3 regions.

## Executive Summary

B. **Natural Gas Pipeline Order 2026 Notified to Streamline Infrastructure:** The Order establishes a uniform, time-bound framework for building and **expanding natural gas pipelines under the Essential Commodities Act.** It simplifies procedures with deemed approvals and standardised charges to reduce regulatory delays. The reform accelerates the rollout of City Gas Distribution networks, supporting India's transition to a gas-based economy.

C. **Cabinet Approves Small Hydro Power (SHP) Development for FY 2026–31:** A **₹ 2,584.60 crore** scheme was approved to **target 1,500 MW of cumulative capacity** from projects up to 25 MW. The program utilizes viability gap funding and subsidies to attract private and community-based investment. By focusing on decentralised units, the initiative improves grid stability and drives clean power access in underserved regions.

D. **TV Rating Policy 2026 Notified to Strengthen Transparency:** The policy mandates transparent rating methodologies, a dual-audit system, and the exclusion of landing page viewership from data. It also **reduces net worth requirements for agencies to ₹ 5 crore** to lower market entry barriers. These regulations improve data reliability for advertisers and strengthen the credibility of audience measurement.

**III. Human Development And Social Welfare**

A. **Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Act, 2026 Passed:** The Act introduces **medical board-based verification for identity recognition** and enables changes in official documents. It significantly strengthens penal provisions, including enhanced punishments for coercion or violence against transgender persons. The legislation enhances legal protections and refines the administrative procedures related to identity recognition.

B. **National Dental Commission Constituted to Modernise Education:** The NDC replaces the Dental Council of India, introducing **three autonomous boards to reform dental regulation and accreditation.** The new framework aims to align dental education with global standards and improve regulatory oversight. This institutional shift enhances the quality of dental healthcare services through a more structured structure.

**IV. National Security And Foreign Policy**

A. **Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026 Introduced:** The Bill establishes a **designated authority for the management of foreign-funded assets** in cases of registration cancellation. It introduces stricter compliance norms and time-bound utilisation of funds to enhance transparency. This reform strengthens national security by tightening asset control and reducing misuse risks in foreign funding.

## Executive Summary

B. **Central Armed Police Forces (General Administration) Bill, 2026 Introduced:** This Bill creates a **unified legislative framework to govern service conditions** and deputation for personnel across all CAPFs. It aims to address fragmentation in existing rules and reduce litigation on service matters. The unified law improves administrative clarity and strengthens command structures within the forces.

**V. Rural And Agricultural Transformation**

A. **Cabinet Approves Mission for Aatmanirbharta in Pulses:** The mission targets self-sufficiency by 2030–31 with an outlay of **₹ 11,440 crore for expansion and post-harvest infrastructure.** It includes the distribution of 87.5 lakh free seed kits to boost productivity in rice fallow and non-traditional areas. The scheme aims to reduce import dependence, stabilise food prices, and enhance nutritional security.

# Table Of Contents

**I. Economic Growth And Structural Reforms** **10**

**A. Policy Updates** **10**

1. Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026 Introduced To Decriminalise Minor Offences – Ministry of Commerce and Industry 10

2. Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Bill Approved by Lok Sabha - Ministry of Corporate Affairs 10

3. Cabinet Approves Bharat Audyogik Vikas Yojna (BHAVYA) With ₹ 33,660 Crore Outlay For Plug-and-Play Industrial Parks – Ministry of Commerce & Industry 10

4. Income-Tax Rules, 2026 Notified To Operationalise New Income-tax Act – Ministry of Finance 11

5. Government Notifies Inflation Target Of 4% For FY 2026–31 Under Monetary Policy Framework – Ministry of Finance 11

6. Amendments To Income-tax Reporting Framework To Reduce Reliance On Form 16 – Income Tax Department 11

7. Government Reduces Excise Duty On Petrol And Diesel To Offset OMC Losses – Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas 12

8. Goods and Services Tax (Settlement of Funds) Rules, 2025 Notified – Ministry of Finance (Department of Revenue) 12

9. Multiple Anti-Dumping Investigations And Reviews Initiated Across Key Industrial Inputs – Ministry of Commerce & Industry 12

10. RBI Defers Implementation Of Capital Market Exposure Norms For Banks – Reserve Bank of India 13

11. Credit Guarantee Scheme For Microfinance Institutions 2.0 (CGSMFI-2.0) Launched – Ministry of Finance 13

12. SEBI (Issue of Capital and Disclosure Requirements) Amendment Regulations, 2026 Notified – Securities and Exchange Board of India 14

13. CBDT Notifies Procedure For Unique Identification Number (UIN) Under Form 121 For TDS Compliance – Ministry of Finance 14

14. PFRDA Amends Regulations To Expand Pool Of Pension Agents For NPS Distribution – Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority 14

**B. Announcements** **15**

1. Corporate Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026 Introduced To Reform LLP And Companies Act Framework – Ministry of Corporate Affairs 15

2. RBI Caps NOP-INR Position for Authorised Dealers at $ 100 Million – Reserve Bank of India 15

3. Courier Imports and Exports (Electronic Declaration and Processing) Amendment Regulations, 2026 – Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) 15

4. Courier Imports and Exports (Clearance) Amendment Regulations, 2026 – Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) 16

5. RBI Announces Measures To Strengthen Customer Protection, Digital Payments And Credit Flow – Reserve Bank of India 16

6. Finance Act, 2026 Passed To Give Effect To Union Budget Proposals For FY 2026–27 – Ministry of Law and Justice 17
7. Proposed Amendments To Central Motor Vehicles Rules – Ministry of Road Transport and Highways 17
8. Government Restores RoDTEP Rates To Assist Exporters Amid West Asia Trade Disruptions - Ministry Of Commerce & Industry 17
9. Government Approves RELIEF Intervention Under Export Promotion Mission To Support Exporters Amid West Asia Disruptions – Ministry of Commerce & Industry 18
10. SEBI Board Approves Multiple Reforms On AIFs, FPIs, SIFs & Governance Norms – Securities And Exchange Board Of India 18
11. DPIIT Signs MoU With Blue Star To Strengthen Manufacturing And Startup Ecosystem – Ministry of Commerce & Industry 18
12. Government Amends PM E-DRIVE Scheme: Caps Outlay, Rationalises EV Incentives And Tightens Timelines – Ministry of Heavy Industries 19
13. Government Expands Districts As Export Hubs (DEH) Initiative To Boost Localised Export Growth – Ministry of Commerce And Industry 19
14. IFSCA Approves Revised FinTech Sandbox Framework To Expand Innovation And Market Testing – International Financial Services Centres Authority 19

**II. Infrastructure, Technology And Sustainability 20**

**A. Policy Updates 20**

1. Cabinet Approves Modified UDAN Scheme With ₹ 28,840 Crore Outlay To Boost Regional Air Connectivity – Ministry of Civil Aviation 20
2. DGCA Issues Passenger Facilitation Directives To Strengthen Airline Transparency And Consumer Rights – Ministry of Civil Aviation 20
3. Aircraft (Demolition of Obstructions) Rules, 2026 Notified – Ministry of Civil Aviation 20
4. Natural Gas Pipeline Order 2026 Notified To Streamline Infrastructure – Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas 21
5. Cabinet Approves Scheme on Small Hydro Power (SHP) Development for FY 2026-27 to 2030-31 - Cabinet 21
6. Indian Railways Announces New Reforms Under 'Reform Express' To Improve Cargo, Construction And Passenger Services – Ministry of Railways 21
7. Cabinet Approves Continuation Of IVFRT Scheme With ₹ 1,800 Crore Outlay To Modernise Immigration Systems – Ministry of Home Affairs 22
8. Government Lays Out National Generation Adequacy Plan for 2026-27 to 2035-36 - Ministry of Power 22
9. TV Rating Policy 2026 Notified To Strengthen Transparency And Accountability In Audience Measurement – Ministry of Information and Broadcasting 23
10. Petroleum and Natural Gas (Furnishing of Information) Order, 2026 Notified To Strengthen Supply Chain Monitoring – Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas 23

11. Minerals Concession (Second Amendment) Rules, 2026, Notified – Ministry of Mines 23
12. TRAI Notifies Regulations To Strengthen Quality Of Service Monitoring And Reporting Framework – Telecom Regulatory Authority of India 24
13. Telecommunication Tariff (72nd Amendment) Order, 2026 Notified To Rationalise Tariff Framework – Telecom Regulatory Authority of India 24
14. Draft IT Rules Amendment 2026 Proposes Binding Government Directions And Links Compliance To Safe Harbour – Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology 24
15. Cabinet Approves India's Updated Nationally Determined Contribution (2031–2035) – Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change 25
16. CEA Notifies Safety Regulations For Battery Energy Storage Systems Under Electricity Framework – Central Electricity Authority 25

**B. Announcements 25**

1. Government Announces Additional 20% Power Allocation For Key Manufacturing Sectors – Ministry of Power 25
2. Draft Amendments To Environment Protection Rules For End-of-Life Vehicles Notified – Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change 26
3. Government Approves 29 More Proposals Under Electronics Component Manufacturing Scheme (ECMS) – Ministry of Commerce and Industry 26
4. Cabinet Approves Scheme To Strengthen Urban Planning Capacity In India – Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs 27

**III. Human Development And Social Welfare 27**

**A. Policy Updates 27**

1. Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Act, 2026 Passed To Strengthen Legal Protections – Ministry of Law and Justice 27
2. National Dental Commission Constituted Replacing Dental Council Of India – Ministry of Health & Family Welfare 27
3. Government Intensifies Regulatory Surveillance On GLP-1 Weight Loss Drugs – Ministry of Health & Family Welfare 28

**B. Announcements 28**

1. TRAI Amends Provisions Under Tariff Order And Accounting Separation Regulations - Ministry of Communications 28

**IV. National Security And Foreign Policy 28**

**A. Policy Updates 28**

1. Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026 Introduced To Strengthen Asset Oversight And Compliance – Ministry of Home Affairs 28
2. Government Constitutes Seven Empowered Groups To Address West Asia Crisis Impact – Prime Minister's Office 29
3. Central Armed Police Forces (General Administration) Bill, 2026 Introduced in Rajya Sabha – Ministry Of Home Affairs 29

4. DAC Approves ₹ 2.38 Lakh Crore Defence Procurement Proposals To Strengthen Military Capabilities – Ministry of Defence 29

**B. Announcements 30**

1. Government Announces Census 2027 With Digital Enumeration And Self-Enumeration Facility – Ministry of Home Affairs 30

2. India And Bhutan Sign MoU To Strengthen Postal Cooperation And Cross-Border Connectivity – Ministry of Communications 30

3. MoD Signs ₹ 858 Crore Contracts For Air Defence Systems And Aircraft Maintenance – Ministry of Defence 31

**V. Rural And Agricultural Transformation 31**

**A. Policy Updates 31**

1. Cabinet Approves 'Mission For Aatmanirbharta In Pulses' With ₹ 11,440 Crore Outlay – Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare 31

2. Cabinet Approves National Cooperative Policy 2025 To Strengthen Cooperative Sector – Ministry of Cooperation 31

3. Natural Farming Mission And DDKY Initiatives Highlighted To Boost Sustainable Agriculture – Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare 32

4. PM-PRANAM Scheme Operationalised To Incentivise Reduction In Chemical Fertiliser Use – Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers 32

5. Agriculture Insurance Company Completes 25 Years Of Operations With Expanded Crop Insurance Coverage – Ministry of Finance 32

**B. Announcements 33**

1. Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) Issues Advisory To Stop Unfair "LPG/ Fuel-Related Charges" By Hotels And Restaurants – Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution 33

2. ₹ 200 Crore Banana Cluster Approved In Jalgaon To Strengthen Horticulture Value Chain – Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare 33

**Annexure - I : Miscellaneous Policy Updates 34**

**A. Policy Updates 34**

1. Bharat Innovates Deep-Tech Pre Summit Inaugurates At IIT-Bombay - Ministry of Education 34

2. Guidelines Issued For Plastic Waste Management And EPR Compliance – Central Pollution Control Board 34

3. SEZ-to-DTA Customs Duty Exemption Notification For FY 2026-27 – Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) 34

**B. Announcements 35**

1. Cookware, Utensils And Cans For Foods And Beverages (Quality Control) Order, 2026 Notified - Ministry of Steel 35

2. SEBI Issues Master Circular For Mutual Funds To Consolidate Regulatory Framework – Securities and Exchange Board of India 35

3. Parliamentary Panel Recommends Integrated Government Data Dashboard For Real-Time Governance – Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation 35

4. Indian Railways Approves ₹ 1,236 Crore Projects To Upgrade Communication And Kavach Safety Systems – Ministry of Railways 36
5. Government Expands DEH Scheme To Enhance Local Export Growth - Ministry of Commerce & Industry 36
6. National AI Skilling Initiative And MyWAVES Platform Launched To Boost Digital Content Ecosystem – Ministry of Information & Broadcasting 36
7. Government Establishes Strategic Partnerships to Strengthen AVGC-XR Ecosystem And IICT - Ministry of Information And Broadcasting 37
8. Government Introduces Model Context Protocol (MCP) Server To Facilitate Linking Artificial Intelligence Tools With Official Statistical Databases - Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation 37
9. Real-Time Internal Audit Portal Launched To Strengthen Governance In Rural Development – Ministry of Rural Development 37

# I. Economic Growth And Structural Reforms

## A. Policy Updates

### 1. Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026 Introduced To Decriminalise Minor Offences – Ministry of Commerce and Industry

**Status:** Announced | **Impact Level:** High | **Source:** Gazette of India

The Government has introduced the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026 in the Lok Sabha to **decriminalise 717 provisions across 79 Central Acts,** replacing imprisonment for minor and procedural offences with monetary penalties and administrative actions. The Bill also proposes amendments to 784 provisions administered by 23 Ministries, along with graded enforcement mechanisms and the establishment of adjudicating and appellate authorities. The reform meaningfully decongest courts and the Select Committee has reinforced this with a recommendation to establish a **Centralised Regulatory Management System** to track compliance requirements across Ministries, which would institutionalise the reform rather than leaving it as a one-time legislative exercise.

### 2. Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Bill Approved by Lok Sabha - Ministry of Corporate Affairs

**Status:** Announced | **Impact Level:** High | **Source:** NewsOnAir, MoneyControl

The Lok Sabha has passed amendments to the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), incorporating 12 amendments, 11 recommended by the Select Committee and one introduced by the Government, to the IBC, 2016. The Bill replaces the underutilised fast-track process with a Creditor-Initiated Insolvency Resolution Process (CIIRP) **capped at 150 days**, under a debtor-in-possession model where existing management is retained subject to defined safeguards, mandates National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) to admit or reject insolvency applications within a strict 14-day timeline. The amendments will improve resolution efficiency and predictability, enabling faster capital redeployment and more consistent recovery outcomes for creditors. Enhanced oversight and clearer procedural frameworks may also strengthen institutional credibility and support more disciplined participation across stakeholders in the insolvency process.

### 3. Cabinet Approves Bharat Audyogik Vikas Yojna (BHAVYA) With ₹ 33,660 Crore Outlay For Plug-and-Play Industrial Parks – Ministry of Commerce & Industry

**Status:** Announced | **Impact Level:** High | **Source:** PIB

The Union Cabinet has approved the Bharat Audyogik Vikas Yojna (BHAVYA) with a total outlay of ₹ 33,660 crore to develop 100 plug-and-play industrial parks across India. The scheme aims to provide pre-approved land and utilities for faster transition from investment intent to production. Industrial parks (100–1000 acres) will receive **financial support of up to ₹ 1 crore per acre,** along with up to 25% support for external infrastructure. Earlier initiatives saw underutilisation, with

nearly 1.35 lakh hectares out of 7.7 lakh hectares of mapped industrial land, remaining unused across over 4,500 industrial parks. Therefore, the scheme addresses the gap by shifting from land creation to industry-ready ecosystems that can enhance investment and manufacturing outcomes.

4. **Income-Tax Rules, 2026 Notified To Operationalise New Income-tax Act – Ministry of Finance**
   **Status:** Completed | **Impact Level:** High | **Source:** Gazette of India
   The Central Board of Direct Taxes has notified the Income-tax Rules, 2026 under the Income-tax Act, 2025, effective from 1st April, 2026. The rules provide detailed procedures for tax administration, including conditions for recognised stock exchanges, valuation norms for capital assets, determination of income for non-residents, thresholds for significant economic presence. They also introduce standardised frameworks for reporting, valuation and compliance across financial transactions, including rules for zero-coupon bonds, fair market value calculations and attribution of income to assets located in India. The notification operationalises the new income-tax regime by translating legislative provisions into enforceable procedures, strengthening tax certainty, compliance standardisation and administrative clarity across the direct tax system.

5. **Government Notifies Inflation Target Of 4% For FY 2026–31 Under Monetary Policy Framework – Ministry of Finance**
   **Status:** Completed | **Impact Level:** High | **Source:** Gazette of India
   The Government has notified the inflation target under the flexible inflation targeting (FIT) framework for the period 1st April, 2026 to 31st March, 2031, in consultation with the Reserve Bank of India. The **target has been retained at 4%,** with an **upper tolerance band of 6% and lower tolerance band of 2%,** continuing the existing monetary policy framework under the RBI Act, 1934. The Government's retention of a 4% inflation target (±2%) under the FIT framework anchors inflation expectations, reinforcing policy credibility and reducing volatility in bond yields. It guides a stable monetary policy trajectory, supporting investment and consumption decisions.

6. **Amendments To Income-tax Reporting Framework To Reduce Reliance On Form 16 – Income Tax Department**
   **Status:** Announced | **Impact Level:** High | **Source:** Income Tax Department
   Under the amended Income-tax Rules, 2026, traditional Form 16 , i.e., TDS certificate for salaried tax deductions will be phased out and **replaced by a redesigned Form 130** aligned with updated ITR forms, alongside more system-driven tax filing processes and revised employer reporting requirements for salary income and TDS, reflecting the broader transition under the Income-tax Act, 2025. Taxpayers will not

receive the classic Form 16 from 1st April, 2026, but will instead be furnished alternative documentation that consolidates income, deduction, and TDS details in a structured format, while ITR compliance is increasingly automated. Replacing Form 16 with Form 130 standardises TDS reporting in line with modernised ITR architecture, reduces ambiguity in salary and deduction disclosure, and leverages real-time system integration to cut errors and compliance friction.

7. **Government Reduces Excise Duty On Petrol And Diesel To Offset OMC Losses – Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas**
   **Status:** Completed | **Impact Level:** High | **Source:** PIB
   The Government has reduced excise duty by ₹ 10 per litre on petrol and diesel in response to a sharp increase in global crude oil prices. The reduction is not being passed on to consumers through lower retail prices but is instead aimed at **offsetting under-recoveries incurred by public sector oil marketing companies** (OMCs), which continue to supply fuel below cost. The measure is complemented by an export levy on diesel to prioritise domestic fuel availability. The decision helps stabilise domestic fuel supply and insulate consumers from global price volatility, while transferring the fiscal burden to the Government to support OMC financial sustainability and ensure uninterrupted energy access.

8. **Goods and Services Tax (Settlement of Funds) Rules, 2025 Notified – Ministry of Finance (Department of Revenue)**
   **Status:** Completed | **Impact Level:** High | **Source:** Gazette of India
   The Central Government has notified the Goods and Services Tax (Settlement of Funds) Rules, 2025 to **operationalise the mechanism for apportionment and settlement of GST revenues** between the Centre and States under the GST framework. Effective retrospectively from 1st April, 2025, the rules lay down detailed procedures for settlement of Integrated GST (IGST), including cross-utilisation of input tax credit between Centre and States, and inter-governmental fund transfers. They also prescribe a structured reporting system through standardised forms (GST STL-1 to STL-7). It streamline apportionment and settlement of IGST, enabling cross-utilisation of input tax credits, timely fund transfers, and standardised reporting.

9. **Multiple Anti-Dumping Investigations And Reviews Initiated Across Key Industrial Inputs – Ministry of Commerce & Industry**
   **Status:** Initiated | **Impact Level:** High | **Source:** Gazette of India
   The Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR) has initiated multiple **anti-dumping investigations and sunset reviews** across a range of industrial inputs, including PTFE resins, steel pipes and tubes, aluminium products, chemicals such as sodium hydrosulphite and fumed silica, pharmaceutical intermediates, and trailer

axles. These actions include fresh investigations, sunset reviews of existing duties, and anti-circumvention probes, alongside final findings in select cases such as PET resin and rubber chemicals. This strengthens trade defence mechanisms by protecting domestic industries from dumping, ensuring fair competition, and reinforcing India's strategic industrial and manufacturing resilience.

10. **RBI Defers Implementation Of Capital Market Exposure Norms For Banks – Reserve Bank of India**
**Status:** Announced | **Impact Level:** High | **Source:** Reserve Bank of India
The Reserve Bank of India has deferred the implementation of amended directions on capital market exposures for banks by three months to 1st July, 2026, from the earlier deadline of 1st April. The decision follows representations from banks and market participants citing operational and interpretational challenges in implementing the revised framework. The revised norms aim to establish a framework for bank financing of corporate acquisitions, rationalise lending limits against shares and investment instruments The deferral provides banks short-term relief by avoiding adjustment in capital market exposures and supporting ongoing Initial Public offering (IPO) and deal financing. However, it delays addressing risks in Alternative Investment Fund (AIF) and structured exposures and postpones balance sheet clean-up.

11. **Credit Guarantee Scheme For Microfinance Institutions 2.0 (CGSMFI-2.0) Launched – Ministry of Finance**
**Status:** Announced | **Impact Level:** Medium | **Source:** PIB, The Economic Times
The Government has introduced the CGSMFI-2.0 offering tiered guarantee coverage such as, 80% for small MFIs (AUM below ₹ 500 crore), 75% for mid-sized (₹ 500– ₹ 2,000 crore), and 70% for large MFIs (above ₹ 2,000 crore). The scheme is expected to facilitate credit flow of up to **₹ 20,000 crore** and benefit around 36 lakh borrowers and the tiered structure particularly benefits smaller MFIs. Developed as a strategic response to a sharp sectoral contraction, the scheme addresses a critical liquidity gap evidenced by an 18% year-on-year decline in microfinance Assets Under Management (AUM) to ₹ 3.2 lakh crore in Q3 FY 2025-26, and a nearly 36% drop in bank credit to MFIs throughout FY 2024-25. However, while the initiative provides essential capital relief, its ultimate success in tackling structural borrower indebtedness and enhancing consumer welfare remains contingent upon a stabilized recovery in asset quality and the rigorous enforcement of responsible lending standards.

12. **SEBI (Issue of Capital and Disclosure Requirements) Amendment Regulations, 2026 Notified – Securities and Exchange Board of India**
    **Status:** Completed | **Impact Level:** Medium | **Source:** Gazette Of India
    SEBI has notified the Issue of Capital and Disclosure Requirements (ICDR) Amendment Regulations, 2026 to strengthen disclosure norms and streamline public issue processes. The amendments **mandate submission of a draft abridged prospectus alongside offer documents,** introduce requirements for simplified and standardised disclosures, and enable use of QR codes and digital links for accessing key IPO-related documents. The regulations also expand disclosure requirements to include summaries of contingent liabilities, related party transactions, financial performance indicators, and risk factors in a concise format to improve investor understanding. The Amendment Regulations enhance transparency in public issues, improving investor access to critical information.

13. **CBDT Notifies Procedure For Unique Identification Number (UIN) Under Form 121 For TDS Compliance – Ministry of Finance**
    **Status:** Completed | **Impact Level:** Medium | **Source:** CBDT
    The Central Board of Direct Taxes has notified procedures, formats and standards for generation and allotment of a **Unique Identification Number (UIN) for declarations under Form 121,** relating to cases of non-deduction of tax under the Income-tax Act, 2025. The payer is required to enable submission of declarations (Part A) in electronic or paper form, ensure PAN quoting, and assign a 26-character UIN to each declaration. The UIN structure includes a sequence number, tax year and TAN of the payer, with mandatory quarterly reporting of declaration details (Part B) through the income-tax e-filing portal, regardless of whether tax has been deducted. This move will boost TDS compliance by providing a unique identifier for each non-deduction declaration and reducing errors.

14. **PFRDA Amends Regulations To Expand Pool Of Pension Agents For NPS Distribution – Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority**
    **Status:** Completed | **Impact Level:** Medium | **Source:** Gazette of India
    The Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) has notified amendments to the Point of Presence (PoP) Regulations, 2018 to expand the definition of pension agents, **allowing a wider set of intermediaries to distribute pension products** under the National Pension System (NPS). The revised framework includes business correspondents of banks, insurance agents, mutual fund distributors registered with AMFI, and other authorised entities. The amendments also formalise principal-agent relationships, allow agents to associate with multiple PoPs, expanding the pool of NPS distribution agents, enabling banks' business correspondents and mutual fund distributors to reach a larger investor base. The changes are expected to increase subscriber enrolments, improve financial

inclusion, and enhance operational efficiency through formalised agent relationships and periodic audits.

**B. Announcements**

1. **Corporate Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026 Introduced To Reform LLP And Companies Act Framework – Ministry of Corporate Affairs**
   **Status:** Initiated | **Source:** Gazette of India
   The Government has introduced the Corporate Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026 in the Lok Sabha to **amend the Limited Liability Partnership Act, 2008 and the Companies Act, 2013.** The Bill introduces structural reforms including the creation of a regulatory framework for Specified Limited Liability Partnership (LLPs) and companies in International Financial Services Centres (IFSCs), allowing operations in permitted foreign currency and enabling conversion of specified trusts into LLPs. The Bill proposes raising the net profit eligibility threshold for mandatory Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) applicability from ₹ 5 crore to ₹ 10 crore and extending the unspent fund transfer window from 30 to 90 days. The reforms will accelerate cross-border structuring, while supporting growth in the expanding LLP ecosystem. Stronger NFRA oversight amid heightened audit scrutiny will improve reporting quality, while digital provisions could ease compliance.

2. **RBI Caps NOP-INR Position for Authorised Dealers at $ 100 Million – Reserve Bank of India**
   **Status:** Announced | **Source:** RBI, Business Standard
   The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has prescribed a cap of $ 100 million on the Net Open Position in INR (NOP-INR) that Authorised Dealers can hold in the onshore deliverable foreign exchange market at the end of each business day. They have been directed to **comply with the revised limit by 10th April, 2026,** indicating a short transition window for swift implementation. This directive, issued under the RBI's risk management framework, reflects tightening of exposure limits in response to evolving market conditions. The cap perhaps trigger an unwinding of ₹ 2 – ₹ 4 lakh crore worth of arbitrage positions, increasing near-term dollar supply and lending support to the rupee, which has remained relatively stable in the ₹ 82.8 – ₹ 83.5/$ range in FY26. However, banks warn the limit could force unwinding of net long-dollar positions estimated at $40 billion, risking mark-to-market losses and reducing trading revenue, even as the measure aims to stabilise the currency.

3. **Courier Imports and Exports (Electronic Declaration and Processing) Amendment Regulations, 2026 – Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC)**
   **Status:** Announced | **Source:** Gazette of India
   The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) has amended the Courier Imports and Exports (Electronic Declaration and Processing) Regulations, 2010 to

introduce a **formal re-export window for uncleared shipments** and strengthen disclosure requirements for re-imported goods, effective 1st April 2026. Authorised couriers may now request Customs to re-export or return uncleared goods to the sender after 15 days of arrival, before the standard detention and disposal process is triggered. Additionally, the re-import declaration form has been updated to capture key details including the return airway bill number, whether the original export cleared customs at the destination country, whether it was an e-commerce export, and critically, whether any export benefits were claimed and subsequently neutralised. It closes a potential audit gap where exporters could claim duty drawback or other export incentives on goods that were later returned without reversing those benefits, a concern especially relevant to the fast-growing cross-border e-commerce segment.

4. **Courier Imports and Exports (Clearance) Amendment Regulations, 2026 – Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC)**
   **Status:** Announced | **Source:** Gazette of India
   The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) has amended the Courier Imports and Exports (Clearance) Regulations, 1998 to streamline the handling of uncleared courier shipments and remove a value-based restriction on re-export, effective 1st April 2026. The rules now allow authorised couriers to formally request Customs for re-export or return of uncleared goods to the sender within 15 days of arrival, provided the goods are not restricted or subject to any enforcement proceedings, before the standard 30 days detention and disposal process is triggered. These changes create a more uniform and operationally practical framework for courier customs clearance, reducing the risk of goods being unnecessarily detained or disposed of when returning to sender is a viable alternative.

5. **RBI Announces Measures To Strengthen Customer Protection, Digital Payments And Credit Flow – Reserve Bank of India**
   **Status:** Announced | **Source:** RBI
   The Reserve Bank of India has announced a set of regulatory and developmental measures aimed at strengthening customer protection, enhancing digital payment security and improving credit flow in the financial system. Key proposals include draft guidelines to curb mis-selling of financial products, limit customer liability in unauthorised digital transactions, and introduce **compensation mechanisms for small-value fraud cases**. The RBI has also proposed easing regulatory requirements for certain NBFCs, alongside measures to enhance lending capacity of urban cooperative banks and increase collateral-free loan limits for MSMEs. This strengthens security in the digital transaction ecosystem, by capping liability in fraud cases and mandating compensation for small-value losses.

6. **Finance Act, 2026 Passed To Give Effect To Union Budget Proposals For FY 2026–27 – Ministry of Law and Justice**
   **Status:** Completed | **Source:** Gazette of India
   The Finance Act, 2026 has been passed to give effect to the financial proposals of the Central Government for FY 2026–27. The Act **operationalises tax rates for individuals, firms, companies and other entities,** along with provisions governing agricultural income, surcharge thresholds and health and education cess. It also provides the statutory basis for implementation of budgetary taxation measures under both the Income-tax Act, 1961 and the new Income-tax Act, 2025, including frameworks for tax computation, deduction and compliance mechanisms. It streamlines compliance and provides clarity on deductions, agricultural income, and corporate tax computations, supporting revenue mobilisation and fiscal stability.

7. **Proposed Amendments To Central Motor Vehicles Rules – Ministry of Road Transport and Highways**
   **Status:** Initiated | **Source:** Gazette of India
   The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) has issued draft amendments to the Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989, aimed at enhancing road safety and standardising vehicle design norms, particularly for commercial vehicles such as dumpers and tippers. It mandates that, from 1st April, 2027, all **dumpers and tippers must be equipped with mechanically or electronically operated systems** to fully cover the load body during transit. The amendments clarify that load-covering systems, along with certain safety and auxiliary fittings such as mirrors and guard rails, will be excluded from the calculation of vehicle height, removing potential compliance ambiguities for manufacturers. The rules strengthen safety and environmental compliance for heavy vehicles, improving road safety and regulatory clarity in the sector.

8. **Government Restores RoDTEP Rates To Assist Exporters Amid West Asia Trade Disruptions - Ministry Of Commerce & Industry**
   **Status:** Announced | **Source:** PIB
   The Government has restored the rates and value caps under the Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP) scheme to pre-February 2026 levels, **reversing the earlier 50% restriction** to support exporters affected by disruptions in the West Asia maritime corridor. The move addresses rising logistics costs and shipping uncertainties due to geopolitical tensions, ensuring timely relief and reinforcing India's export competitiveness through a stable and responsive policy framework. Restoring RoDTEP rates offsets the surge in freight and insurance costs due to West Asia disruptions, preserving exporter margins and preventing order cancellations or loss of price competitiveness.

9. **Government Approves RELIEF Intervention Under Export Promotion Mission To Support Exporters Amid West Asia Disruptions – Ministry of Commerce & Industry**
   **Status:** Announced | **Source:** PIB
   The Government has approved RELIEF (Resilience & Logistics Intervention for Export Facilitation) under the Export Promotion Mission to **support exporters affected by disruptions in the West Asia** maritime corridor. It addresses challenges arising from elevated freight costs and war-related risks due to geopolitical tensions revolving around the Strait of Hormuz. Additionally, an Inter-Ministerial Group on Supply Chain Resilience has been operationalised to monitor developments and implement measures such as logistics coordination and cost-mitigation support in response to stabilising export flows and safeguarding trade competitiveness.

10. **SEBI Board Approves Multiple Reforms On AIFs, FPIs, SIFs & Governance Norms – Securities And Exchange Board Of India**
    **Status:** Announced | **Source:** SEBI
    The SEBI Board approved a series of regulatory reforms aimed at enhancing ease of doing business and strengthening governance standards across market participants. Key measures include allowing Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs) to retain liquidation proceeds beyond fund tenure under specified conditions and introducing an **'inoperative fund' category** with reduced compliance burden. The minimum investment threshold in Social Impact Funds (SIFs) has been **reduced from ₹ 2 lakh to ₹ 1,000.** Additionally, SEBI has overhauled the 'fit and proper person' criteria to balance regulatory oversight with ease of doing business, and approved enhanced conflict-of-interest and disclosure norms for board members and officials. The reforms aim to reduce compliance friction, improve capital market participation, and strengthen institutional governance while maintaining regulatory safeguards.

11. **DPIIT Signs MoU With Blue Star To Strengthen Manufacturing And Startup Ecosystem – Ministry of Commerce & Industry**
    **Status:** Announced | **Source:** PIB
    The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Blue Star Limited to **support startups and innovation** in the manufacturing sector. The collaboration focuses on fostering product startups in HVAC technologies, digital solutions, advanced manufacturing, and supply chain innovation through structured industry engagement. Startups will receive mentorship, access to R&D labs and testing facilities, pilot opportunities, and market linkages, along with support for Proof-of-Concept (PoC) development and product validation. The initiative will also include innovation challenges and hackathons under the Bharat Startup Grand Challenge, enabling startups to integrate with industry value chains and scale solutions.

12. **Government Amends PM E-DRIVE Scheme: Caps Outlay, Rationalises EV Incentives And Tightens Timelines – Ministry of Heavy Industries**
**Status:** Ongoing | **Source:** Gazette of India
The Government has notified key amendments to the PM Electric Drive Revolution in Innovative Vehicle Enhancement (PM E-DRIVE) Scheme, introducing tighter fiscal controls for electric vehicle (EV) adoption. The **scheme outlay has been capped at ₹ 10,900 crore**, with a provision that benefits will cease once funds are exhausted. Segment-specific deadlines have also been formalised, incentives for electric two-wheelers (e-2W) will end by July 31, 2026, while for e-3W (e-rickshaws and e-carts) will continue till March 2028. The amendment also rationalises demand incentives, such as for e-2Ws, subsidies have been reduced from **₹ 5,000/kWh** (capped at ₹ 10,000 per vehicle) to **₹ 2,500/kWh** (capped at ₹ 5,000), indicating a calibrated phase-down. The modifications signal a shift to a fiscally prudent, market-driven EV policy, with lower subsidies potentially moderating short-term demand.

13. **Government Expands Districts As Export Hubs (DEH) Initiative To Boost Localised Export Growth – Ministry of Commerce And Industry**
**Status:** Completed | **Source:** PIB
The Ministry of Commerce & Industry has expanded the Districts as Export Hubs (DEH) initiative to **strengthen district-level export competitiveness** and promote decentralised export growth. The initiative focuses on identifying district-specific products and services, addressing supply chain bottlenecks, and improving access to logistics, financing, and export infrastructure. It also emphasises capacity building, branding, and market linkages to integrate local producers, MSMEs, and artisans into global value chains. The move will assist to broaden its export base by strengthening district-level strategies and improving logistics and credit access.

14. **IFSCA Approves Revised FinTech Sandbox Framework To Expand Innovation And Market Testing – International Financial Services Centres Authority**
**Status:** Announced | **Impact Level:** Medium | **Source:** IFSCA
The International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA) has approved a revised FinTech Sandbox Framework to **facilitate innovation across financial services** within IFSCs. The framework expands eligibility to include individuals and groups affiliated with academic institutions, incubators and accelerators, and introduces a structured two-stage application and approval process through a single-window digital system. It also enables market exploration of developed products within IFSCs and broadens the scope of testing to cover all regulated financial services and institutions under IFSCA oversight. The framework strengthens the regulatory sandbox ecosystem by improving access, reducing entry

barriers and enabling structured experimentation, thereby supporting fintech innovation.

## II. Infrastructure, Technology And Sustainability

### A. Policy Updates

1. **Cabinet Approves Modified UDAN Scheme With ₹ 28,840 Crore Outlay To Boost Regional Air Connectivity – Ministry of Civil Aviation**
   **Status:** Initiated | **Impact Level:** High | **Source:** PIB
   The Union Cabinet has approved the Modified UDAN (Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik) Scheme for the period FY 2026–27 to FY 2035–36 with a **total outlay of ₹ 28,840 crore.** The scheme aims to expand regional connectivity through the development of 100 new airports, 200 helipads, and support for over 400 aerodromes, along with Viability Gap Funding (₹ 10,043 crore) for airlines and operational support for underserved routes. It also includes O&M support for regional airports and provisions for indigenous aircraft acquisition, strengthening the domestic aviation ecosystem. It enhances regional connectivity and economic integration by improving access to air transport in Tier-2 and Tier-3 regions, while boosting tourism, trade, and aviation infrastructure development.

2. **DGCA Issues Passenger Facilitation Directives To Strengthen Airline Transparency And Consumer Rights – Ministry of Civil Aviation**
   **Status:** Announced | **Impact Level:** High | **Source:** PIB
   The Ministry of Civil Aviation, through the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), has issued a set of **passenger-centric directives** to enhance transparency, uniformity, and consumer protection in the aviation sector. Key measures include mandating that at least 60% of seats be allocated free of charge, ensuring that passengers on the same PNR are seated together, and requiring airlines to adopt clear and transparent policies for carriage of baggage, pets, sports equipment, and musical instruments. Airlines must also ensure strict adherence to passenger rights in cases of delays, cancellations, and denied boarding, along with prominent display of passenger entitlements across platforms and communication in regional languages. These measures will improve passenger experience, reduce grievances, and strengthen accountability.

3. **Aircraft (Demolition of Obstructions) Rules, 2026 Notified – Ministry of Civil Aviation**
   **Status:** Completed | **Impact Level:** High | **Source:** Gazette of India
   The Government has notified the Aircraft (Demolition of Obstructions caused by Buildings and Trees etc.) Rules, 2026, superseding the 1994 Rules, to establish a **clearer process for removing structures and trees** that violate aviation safety clearance limits within 20 kilometres of an aerodrome. The rules lay down a step-by-step process, with a 30-day appeal window and a 60-day compliance period

for the owner. In cases of non-compliance, the matter is escalated to the District Collector, who is empowered to carry out demolition in the same manner as unauthorised construction removal. The updated rules bring aviation obstruction enforcement in alignment with the Bharatiya Vayuyan Adhiniyam, 2024, and strengthen the legal framework for protecting airspace safety around India's expanding airport infrastructure.

4. **Natural Gas Pipeline Order 2026 Notified To Streamline Infrastructure – Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas**
   **Status:** Completed | **Impact Level:** High | **Source:** Gazette of India
   The Government has notified the Natural Gas and Petroleum Products Distribution (Through Laying, Building, Operation and Expansion of Pipelines and Other Facilities) Order, 2026 under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955. The Order establishes a uniform, time-bound and transparent framework for laying and **expanding natural gas pipeline infrastructure across the country,** including provisions for standardised charges, and simplified procedures to reduce regulatory delays. By facilitating the expansion of City Gas Distribution (CGD) networks, piped natural gas (PNG) access, and last-mile connectivity, the Government aims to address anticipated long-term constraints in fuel supply arising from disruptions in liquefaction facilities in the Gulf region and the continued blockage of the Strait of Hormuz, necessitating fuel diversification for energy security.

5. **Cabinet Approves Scheme on Small Hydro Power (SHP) Development for FY 2026-27 to 2030-31 - Cabinet**
   **Status:** Announced | **Impact Level:** High | **Source:** PIB
   The Union Cabinet has approved a Small Hydro Power (SHP) Development Scheme for the period FY 2026-27 to 2030-31 with a **total outlay of ₹ 2,584.60 crore** to promote decentralised and sustainable power generation across India. Under the approved programme, the government will provide support for the installation of small hydropower projects up to 25 MW capacity, **targeting a cumulative addition of around 1,500 MW** during the scheme period. Assistance will include viability gap funding, subsidies, and promotional incentives to attract investment from private developers, state governments, and community-based organisations. By supporting smaller, decentralised generation units, the initiative seeks to improve grid stability, facilitate off-grid electrification and drive balanced regional development through increased access to clean and cost-effective power.

6. **Indian Railways Announces New Reforms Under 'Reform Express' To Improve Cargo, Construction And Passenger Services – Ministry of Railways**
   **Status:** Announced | **Impact Level:** High | **Source:** PIB
   The Ministry of Railways has announced five new reforms under the 'Reform Express' initiative, bringing the total reforms in 2026 to nine. The measures focus on

cargo efficiency, construction quality, and passenger convenience, including allowing passengers to change boarding stations up to 30 minutes before departure, introducing refund disincentives to curb speculative bookings, and enabling the development of specialised containers for commodities such as salt and automobiles. Additionally, **seven changes in construction norms have been introduced** to improve project quality, accountability, and timely delivery. These initiatives enhance operational efficiency and service delivery in Indian Railways by improving logistics capabilities, strengthening project execution, and reducing inefficiencies in passenger ticketing.

7. **Cabinet Approves Continuation Of IVFRT Scheme With ₹ 1,800 Crore Outlay To Modernise Immigration Systems – Ministry of Home Affairs**
   **Status:** Completed | **Impact Level:** High | **Source:** PIB
   The Union Cabinet has approved the continuation of the Immigration, Visa, Foreigners Registration & Tracking (IVFRT) Scheme for the **period 2026–2031 with a total outlay of ₹ 1,800 crore.** The scheme aims to modernise India's immigration ecosystem through integrated digital platforms, biometric systems, self-service kiosks, and mobile-based services, while strengthening coordination across Immigration Posts, FRROs, and data centres. It focuses on technology upgrades, infrastructure expansion, and service optimisation to enable seamless and secure movement of travellers, alongside enhanced monitoring of foreign nationals. It strengthens national security and border management while improving ease of travel, tourism inflows, and efficiency of immigration services.

8. **Government Lays Out National Generation Adequacy Plan for 2026-27 to 2035-36 - Ministry of Power**
   **Status:** Announced | **Impact Level:** Medium | **Source:** Central Electricity Authority
   The Central Electricity Authority (CEA) has released the National Generation Adequacy Plan, outlining a long-term strategy to ensure reliable and sufficient electricity supply through 2035–36. The plan projects that India will require an installed generation capacity of ~1,121 GW by 2035–36 to meet growing demand. A major thrust is placed on clean energy expansion, with significant additions planned in solar (509 GW), hydro (78 GW) and coal (315 GW). The plan envisages **94 GW of Pumped Storage Projects** (PSP) and **80 GW of Battery Energy Storage Systems** (BESS) to support peak demand and grid stability. Additionally, advanced planning tools such as Monte Carlo simulations to be utilised to assess system reliability under uncertainties such as demand fluctuations. It provides a clear roadmap for scaling renewable energy while maintaining grid reliability, supporting India's transition toward a low-carbon power system.

9. **TV Rating Policy 2026 Notified To Strengthen Transparency And Accountability In Audience Measurement – Ministry of Information and Broadcasting**
   **Status:** Completed | **Impact Level:** Medium | **Source:** Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, PIB
   The Government has notified the TV Rating Policy 2026, establishing a regulatory framework for television audience measurement agencies. The policy introduces provisions for transparent disclosure of rating methodologies, mandates compliance with data protection norms, and **requires a dual-audit system to improve accuracy** and credibility of ratings. It also excludes landing page viewership from measurement and reduces the net worth requirement for rating agencies from ₹ 20 crore to ₹ 5 crore to ease market entry. The policy strengthens regulatory oversight and credibility of television ratings, improves data reliability for advertisers and broadcasters, and promotes competition by lowering entry barriers while ensuring accountability in audience measurement systems.

10. **Petroleum and Natural Gas (Furnishing of Information) Order, 2026 Notified To Strengthen Supply Chain Monitoring – Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas**
    **Status:** Completed | **Impact Level:** Medium | **Source:** Gazette of India
    The Government has notified the Petroleum and Natural Gas (Furnishing of Information) Order, 2026 under the Essential Commodities Act, **mandating entities across the petroleum and natural gas value chain to furnish detailed data** on production, supply and consumption. The Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC) has been designated as the nodal agency for collection, compilation and analysis of such information. It also overrides confidentiality constraints, mandating disclosure of commercially sensitive information to enable centralised monitoring and analysis of the petroleum and natural gas supply chain. It will improve supply chain transparency and reduce risks of shortages and price volatility.

11. **Minerals Concession (Second Amendment) Rules, 2026, Notified – Ministry of Mines**
    **Status:** Announced | **Impact Level:** Medium | **Source:** Gazette of India
    The Ministry of Mines has notified the Minerals (Other than Atomic and Hydro Carbons Energy Minerals) Concession (Second Amendment) Rules, 2026, to streamline the inclusion of additional minerals and contiguous areas into existing mining leases and composite licenses. It introduces a framework for the **one-time inclusion of deep-seated minerals,** defined at depths exceeding 200 meters with poor surface manifestation and allowing leaseholders to expand their area by up to 10% for mining leases or 30% for composite licenses to ensure geological continuity. The framework will promote resource optimisation and ensure better accountability through separate reporting and accounting for expanded lease areas.

12. **TRAI Notifies Regulations To Strengthen Quality Of Service Monitoring And Reporting Framework – Telecom Regulatory Authority of India**
    **Status:** Completed | **Impact Level:** Medium | **Source:** TRAI
    The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has notified new regulations to **strengthen the Quality of Service (QoS) monitoring and reporting framework** for telecom services. The regulations introduce revised standards for performance measurement, periodic reporting and compliance by telecom service providers, with a focus on improving service reliability and consumer experience. They mandate structured data submission, enhanced monitoring of service parameters, and stricter compliance mechanisms to ensure adherence to prescribed service quality benchmarks across telecom networks. The new QoS regulations increase compliance and monitoring costs, requiring tighter reporting and network upgrades, while improving service reliability and reducing consumer complaints.

13. **Telecommunication Tariff (72nd Amendment) Order, 2026 Notified To Rationalise Tariff Framework – Telecom Regulatory Authority of India**
    **Status:** Completed | **Impact Level:** Medium | **Source:** TRAI
    The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has notified the Telecommunication Tariff (72nd Amendment) Order, 2026, introducing changes to the tariff framework governing telecom services. The amendment seeks to **rationalise tariff structures, enhance transparency in pricing,** and ensure fair competition among telecom service providers. The order forms part of a broader set of regulatory updates issued by TRAI to strengthen financial and economic oversight of telecom services, including alignment with evolving market conditions and service delivery models. It introduces graded penalties up to ~₹ 5 crore and stricter compliance, increasing financial and reporting discipline for telcos while capping excessive penalty exposure.

14. **Draft IT Rules Amendment 2026 Proposes Binding Government Directions And Links Compliance To Safe Harbour – Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology**
    **Status:** Announced | **Impact Level:** High | **Source:** MeitY, The Economic Times
    The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology has proposed draft amendments to the IT Rules, 2021 to make Government advisories, directions and guidelines legally binding on intermediaries. The draft requires platforms to comply with written Government instructions as part of due diligence obligations, with **non-compliance potentially leading to loss of safe harbour protection under Section 79** of the IT Act. The amendments could lead platforms to review and strengthen their internal compliance processes, particularly in areas such as content governance and response mechanisms to official communications. This may also influence how intermediaries manage user-generated content, including news and

current affairs, as they align operational practices with evolving regulatory expectations.

15. **Cabinet Approves India's Updated Nationally Determined Contribution (2031–2035) – Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change**
    **Status:** Announced | **Impact Level:** Medium | **Source:** PIB
    The Union Cabinet has approved India's updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) for 2031–2035 under the UNFCCC. India has committed to **reduce emissions intensity of GDP by 47%** from 2005 levels, achieve 60% installed electric power capacity from non-fossil fuel sources, and create an additional carbon sink of 3.5–4.0 billion tonnes of $CO_2$ equivalent through forest and tree cover by 2035. The updated NDC builds on earlier targets achieved ahead of schedule and integrates climate action such as renewable energy expansion, green hydrogen and climate-resilient development strategies. The approval strengthens India's long-term climate strategy by aligning economic growth with sustainability goals, reinforcing global climate commitments and advancing the transition toward a low-carbon and climate-resilient economy.

16. **CEA Notifies Safety Regulations For Battery Energy Storage Systems Under Electricity Framework – Central Electricity Authority**
    **Status:** Completed | **Impact Level:** Medium | **Source:** Gazette of India
    The Central Electricity Authority (CEA) has notified amendments to the Safety and Electric Supply Regulations, 2023, **introducing a dedicated framework for Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS).** The framework mandates safety features including two-fault tolerance, hazard detection and third-party fire safety audits. It also prescribes infrastructure requirements such as spacing norms, containment systems, CCTV monitoring and access control. The regulations will come into force from 1st April, 2027 and apply primarily to high-voltage BESS installations, with provisions for lower voltage systems aligned to relevant standards. The safety regulations enhance risk management for growing BESS capacity, mandatory safety features, monitoring, and third-party audits are expected to improve operational reliability, and support safe scaling of high-voltage energy storage projects.

## B. Announcements

1. **Government Announces Additional 20% Power Allocation For Key Manufacturing Sectors – Ministry of Power**
   **Status:** Announced | **Source:** PIB
   The Government has decided to provide an additional 20% power allocation to key industrial sectors, with priority given to industries such as steel, automobiles, textiles, dyes, chemicals and plastics. The measure **aims to ensure adequate and reliable electricity supply to energy-intensive sectors** critical to industrial production and value chains. The allocation is intended to support sustained

manufacturing activity, reduce supply disruptions and improve capacity utilisation across core and downstream industries. The additional 20% power allocation for key manufacturing sectors will boost capacity utilisation, especially for steel and auto producers and reduce outages, supporting higher production and stabilising costs. It strengthens energy-intensive industries, aiding manufacturing growth.

2. **Draft Amendments To Environment Protection Rules For End-of-Life Vehicles Notified – Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change**
   **Status:** Announced | **Impact Level:** Medium | **Source:** Gazette of India
   The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has notified draft amendments to the Environment Protection (End-of-Life Vehicles) Rules, 2025 introducing **mandatory reporting of material composition of vehicles,** including steel, plastic, electronic components, and require producers to meet EPR obligations across multiple waste streams such as batteries, e-waste and plastics. The draft also mandates minimum use of recycled steel in new vehicles, introduces compliance targets over time, and expands responsibilities to include insurers through a centralised online portal for tracking and verification. The changes strengthen circular economy practices in the automobile sector, improve waste recovery and recycling efficiency, and enhance regulatory oversight of end-of-life vehicle management through integrated EPR compliance mechanisms.

3. **Government Approves 29 More Proposals Under Electronics Component Manufacturing Scheme (ECMS) – Ministry of Commerce and Industry**
   **Status:** Ongoing | **Source:** PIB
   The Government has approved 29 additional proposals under the Electronics Component Manufacturing Scheme (ECMS), with a projected **investment of ₹ 7,104 crore** aimed at strengthening India's electronics manufacturing ecosystem and enhancing domestic value addition. The approvals cover units across multiple states, expected to generate significant employment, boost local production capabilities, and support export-oriented growth in electronics components. This move would strengthen India's domestic electronics component base, reduce import dependence, which is currently over 60% for key components and create concentrated manufacturing clusters. By enhancing local value addition and boosting MSME participation, the scheme can improve India's competitiveness in global electronics supply chains.

4. **Cabinet Approves Scheme To Strengthen Urban Planning Capacity In India – Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs**
   **Status:** Announced | **Source:** PIB
   The Union Cabinet has approved a new scheme to strengthen urban planning capacity in India, aimed at **addressing the shortage of qualified urban planners** and improving planning systems in cities and towns. The initiative focuses on capacity building and professional training through structured support for urban planning education, training programmes and development of Centres of Excellence. It promotes the integration of data-driven governance, and GIS-based planning systems to improve urban infrastructure outcomes. By enhancing technical expertise and planning frameworks, the scheme aims to support sustainable and better land use management, and improved service delivery across rapidly growing urban centres.

## III. Human Development And Social Welfare

### A. Policy Updates

1. **Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Act, 2026 Passed To Strengthen Legal Protections – Ministry of Law and Justice**
   **Status:** Completed | **Impact Level:** High | **Source:** Gazette of India
   The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Act, 2026 has been passed to amend the 2019 Act, introducing revised definitions, expanded institutional mechanisms and strengthened certification procedures. The amendments provide for medical board-based verification processes, enable changes in name across official documents, and refine provisions relating to recognition of transgender identity. The Act also introduces stricter penal provisions, including enhanced punishments for offences such as forced labour, denial of access to public spaces, and coercion or violence against transgender persons, with penalties extending up to life imprisonment in severe cases.

2. **National Dental Commission Constituted Replacing Dental Council Of India – Ministry of Health & Family Welfare**
   **Status:** Completed | **Impact Level:** High | **Source:** PIB
   The Government of India has constituted the National Dental Commission (NDC) along with three autonomous boards to **reform and modernise dental education and regulation.** The new framework, effective 19th March 2026, replaces the existing Dental Council of India (DCI) and repeals the Dentists Act, 1948. Earlier, fee regulation in private dental colleges was largely handled by state-level Fee Regulatory Committees, leading to wide variation in enforcement across states. Furthermore, DCI's elected council was widely criticised for being dominated by private dental college interests, contributing to lenient accreditation and unchecked seat expansion. The NDC aims to align dental education with global standards,

improve regulatory oversight, and enhance the quality of dental healthcare services in India through a more structured institutional structure.

3. **Government Intensifies Regulatory Surveillance On GLP-1 Weight Loss Drugs – Ministry of Health & Family Welfare**
   **Status:** Initiated | **Impact Level:** Medium | **Source:** PIB
   The Government has intensified regulatory surveillance on GLP-1-based weight loss drugs to curb unauthorised sale, misuse, and misleading promotion across the pharmaceutical supply chain. The Drugs Controller of India, in coordination with State regulators, has issued an **advisory prohibiting surrogate advertising and off-label promotion,** and conducted inspections across 49 entities, including online pharmacies, wholesalers, and wellness clinics. The move aims to ensure patient safety and responsible use, as these drugs are approved only under specialist prescription such as endocrinologists, internal medicine specialists, and select cardiologists.

### B. Announcements

1. **TRAI Amends Provisions Under Tariff Order And Accounting Separation Regulations - Ministry of Communications**
   **Status:** Announced | **Source:** TRAI
   The Telecommunication Tariff (Seventy Second Amendment) Order, 2026 and the Reporting System on Accounting Separation (Amendment) Regulations, 2026 have been released by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) to revise financial disincentive provisions under existing regulatory frameworks. These amendments introduce graded financial disincentives, ceilings on total penalty amounts, and interest on delayed payments to **strengthen compliance with tariff and accounting separation norms.** The amendments aim to strengthen tariff compliance, prevent revenue leakage, and ensure accurate operator accounting, thereby promoting fair competition and improving transparency in telecom pricing and financial reporting.

## IV. National Security And Foreign Policy

### A. Policy Updates

1. **Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026 Introduced To Strengthen Asset Oversight And Compliance – Ministry of Home Affairs**
   **Status:** Initiated | **Impact Level:** High | **Source:** Gazette of India
   The Government has introduced the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026 to amend the FCRA, 2010 and strengthen the regulatory framework governing foreign contributions. The Bill introduces a **comprehensive mechanism for management and disposal of foreign-funded assets** through a designated authority in cases of cancellation, surrender or expiry of registration. It also provides for time-bound utilisation of funds, stricter compliance norms, rationalised penalties, and mandatory prior approval for investigations, while expanding

definitions and governance accountability of key functionaries. This enhances regulatory oversight and transparency in foreign funding by tightening asset control, reducing misuse risks, and strengthening national security safeguards.

2. **Government Constitutes Seven Empowered Groups To Address West Asia Crisis Impact – Prime Minister's Office**
   **Status:** Initiated | **Impact Level:** High | **Source:** NewsOnAir, Times Of India
   The Government of India has constituted seven empowered groups of senior officials to assess and mitigate the economic, energy, and security impacts of the ongoing West Asia conflict. Modelled on the COVID-19 response framework, the groups will **adopt a whole-of-Government approach** to address challenges across key sectors including supply chains, petroleum and energy (LPG, LNG), fertilisers, essential commodities, logistics, inflation, and public communication. Each group comprises senior officials from relevant ministries and is tasked with real-time monitoring, strategy formulation, and time-bound implementation of response measures. The initiative reflects a coordinated effort to manage both short-term disruptions and long-term structural risks arising from geopolitical instability.

3. **Central Armed Police Forces (General Administration) Bill, 2026 Introduced in Rajya Sabha – Ministry Of Home Affairs**
   **Status:** Initiated | **Impact Level:** High | **Source:** Gazette of India
   The Government has introduced the Central Armed Police Forces (General Administration) Bill, 2026 in the Rajya Sabha, to establish an overarching legislative framework governing the deputation and service conditions of Group A General Duty officers and other personnel in Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs). It aims to address fragmentation in existing rules across different CAPFs by creating a unified umbrella law. Additionally, empowers the Central Government to frame rules on recruitment processes and override inconsistent provisions in other judicial rulings. Key provisions mandate **50% of Inspector General posts to be filled via deputation** and at least **67% of Additional Director General posts via deputation.** The Bill aims to streamline CAPF governance by harmonising service rules, while reducing litigation on service matters, improving administrative clarity and strengthening command structures within CAPFs.

4. **DAC Approves ₹ 2.38 Lakh Crore Defence Procurement Proposals To Strengthen Military Capabilities – Ministry of Defence**
   **Status:** Announced | **Impact Level:** High | **Source:** PIB
   The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), chaired by the Defence Minister, has **granted Acceptance of Necessity (AoN)** for multiple defence procurement proposals **worth approximately ₹ 2.38 lakh crore.** The approvals cover key systems for the Army, Air Force and Coast Guard, including air defence systems, artillery platforms, surveillance systems, transport aircraft, missile systems and unmanned strike

capabilities. The proposals aim to enhance multi-domain operational capabilities, including air defence, long-range strike, surveillance and strategic airlift, while also supporting maintenance and lifecycle upgrades of existing platforms. The approvals significantly strengthen India's defence preparedness and reflect a continued push toward capability modernisation and indigenous procurement under the Aatmanirbhar Bharat framework.

**B. Announcements**

1. **Government Announces Census 2027 With Digital Enumeration And Self-Enumeration Facility – Ministry of Home Affairs**
   **Status:** Announced | **Source:** PIB
   The Government has announced Census 2027 as India's first fully digital census, introducing self-enumeration through an online portal along with mobile-based data collection by enumerators. The exercise will be conducted in two phases, **House Listing** (April–September 2026) and **Population Enumeration** (February 2027), including caste enumeration, and will involve over 30 lakh officials using digital tools for real-time, secure data collection across demographic and socio-economic indicators. The Government has **approved an outlay of ₹ 11,718.24 crore** for the exercise. The initiative modernises the statistical system by transitioning to digital data collection, improving efficiency, accuracy and timeliness of population data, while expanding scope to include socio-economic and caste-related information.

2. **India And Bhutan Sign MoU To Strengthen Postal Cooperation And Cross-Border Connectivity – Ministry of Communications**
   **Status:** Completed | **Source:** PIB
   India and Bhutan have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on postal cooperation to enhance connectivity, service delivery and institutional collaboration between their postal administrations. The agreement covers areas such as postal operations, logistics, technology development, capacity building, and knowledge exchange, alongside training programmes for Bhutanese officials in India. A key component includes the planned **launch of a UPU-UPI based cross-border remittance system** to enable affordable and efficient remittance services between the two countries. The cooperation strengthens bilateral ties while enhancing digital financial connectivity, logistics efficiency and financial inclusion through integration of postal and digital payment ecosystems.

3. **MoD Signs ₹ 858 Crore Contracts For Air Defence Systems And Aircraft Maintenance – Ministry of Defence**
   **Status:** Completed | **Source:** PIB
   The Ministry of Defence has signed contracts worth ₹ 858 crore for procurement of Tunguska Air Defence Missile Systems for the Indian Army and depot-level inspection of P-8I maritime reconnaissance aircraft for the Indian Navy. The missile systems will enhance multi-layered air defence capabilities against aerial threats, while the aircraft maintenance contract will be executed domestically with 100% indigenous content. The contracts strengthen operational readiness across land and maritime domains while supporting domestic maintenance capabilities under the Aatmanirbhar Bharat framework and reinforcing strategic defence partnerships.

## V. Rural And Agricultural Transformation

### A. Policy Updates

1. **Cabinet Approves 'Mission For Aatmanirbharta In Pulses' With ₹ 11,440 Crore Outlay – Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare**
   **Status:** Completed | **Impact Level:** High | **Source:** PIB
   The Union Cabinet has approved the 'Mission for Aatmanirbharta in Pulses', a centrally sponsored scheme aimed at achieving self-sufficiency in pulses production by 2030–31, with a **total outlay of ₹ 11,440 crore** for the period 2025–26 to 2030–31. The mission focuses on expanding pulses cultivation by 35 lakh hectares, particularly in rice fallow and non-traditional areas, and strengthening post-harvest infrastructure through the establishment of 1,000 processing units (dal mills), with 528 units allocated in the first phase. It also includes the distribution of 87.5 lakh free seed kits over six years to boost productivity. By integrating area expansion, input support, and value-chain infrastructure, the scheme aims to reduce import dependence, stabilise food prices, and enhance nutritional security.

2. **Cabinet Approves National Cooperative Policy 2025 To Strengthen Cooperative Sector – Ministry of Cooperation**
   **Status:** Completed | **Impact Level:** High | **Source:** PIB
   The Union Cabinet has approved the National Cooperative Policy 2025, aimed at revitalising and modernising India's cooperative sector through structural, legal, and institutional reforms. The policy focuses on **strengthening Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS)**, expanding their role into storage, processing, and value addition and improving governance through digitisation and professional management. It also promotes the development of multi-state cooperatives, cooperative based exports, and integration with national supply chains. By addressing issues of fragmentation, weak governance and limited competitiveness, the policy aims to transform cooperatives into efficient, market-oriented

institutions, thereby boosting rural incomes, agricultural value chains and inclusive economic growth.

3. **Natural Farming Mission And DDKY Initiatives Highlighted To Boost Sustainable Agriculture – Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare**
   **Status:** Completed | **Impact Level:** High | **Source:** PIB
   The Government has highlighted the implementation of the National Mission on Natural Farming (NMNF) and related initiatives to promote sustainable and low-cost agriculture practices. The mission, with an **outlay of ₹ 2,481 crore,** focuses on improving soil health, reducing input costs, and enhancing climate resilience. As of March 2026, over 18,786 clusters covering 8.8 lakh hectares and 18.19 lakh farmers have been enrolled. It also provides incentives of ₹ 4,000 per acre per year (up to 1 acre) for two years to support adoption of natural farming practices. This initiative strengthens climate-resilient agriculture by reducing input dependence, lowering costs for farmers, and promoting sustainable farming practices at scale.

4. **PM-PRANAM Scheme Operationalised To Incentivise Reduction In Chemical Fertiliser Use – Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers**
   **Status:** Ongoing | **Impact Level:** High | Source: PIB
   The Government is implementing the PM-PRANAM scheme to incentivise States and Union Territories to reduce consumption of chemical fertilisers, with financial assistance linked to savings in fertiliser subsidies. States achieving reduction compared to their historical consumption levels receive **grants equivalent to 50% of the subsidy savings**, with allocations directed toward capital expenditure and awareness initiatives. The scheme promotes balanced nutrient use and adoption of alternatives such as nano fertilisers, aiming to improve soil health, reduce subsidy burden and support sustainable agricultural practices.

5. **Agriculture Insurance Company Completes 25 Years Of Operations With Expanded Crop Insurance Coverage – Ministry of Finance**
   **Status:** Ongoing | **Impact Level:** Medium | Source: PIB
   Agriculture Insurance Company of India Ltd. (AIC) has completed 25 years of operations, **providing crop insurance coverage to farmers** under various Government schemes. The company plays a key role in implementing schemes such as the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY), offering risk coverage against crop loss due to natural calamities, pests and diseases. Over the years, AIC has expanded its reach and technological capabilities to improve claim settlement efficiency and coverage across states, contributing to income stability for farmers and strengthening agricultural risk management frameworks. The initiative supports agricultural resilience by mitigating income volatility, enhancing financial protection for farmers and reinforcing institutional capacity in crop insurance delivery.

## B. Announcements

### 1. Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) Issues Advisory To Stop Unfair "LPG/ Fuel-Related Charges" By Hotels And Restaurants – Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution

**Status:** Announced | **Source:** PIB

The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has issued an advisory directing hotels and restaurants **not to levy additional charges** such as "LPG/gas/fuel surcharges" over and above menu prices, declaring such practices unfair trade practices under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019. The move aims to enhance billing transparency, protect consumer rights, and ensure fair business practices in the hospitality sector. The advisory clarifies that menu prices should reflect all operational costs, exclusive only of applicable taxes, and consumers cannot be compelled to pay extra charges not voluntarily agreed upon. Violations may attract enforcement action under the Act. The aim is to strengthen consumer protection and prevent arbitrary billing, ensure financial relief by removing unjustified charges and promote transparency and fair competition in the hospitality sector.

### 2. ₹ 200 Crore Banana Cluster Approved In Jalgaon To Strengthen Horticulture Value Chain – Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare

**Status:** Announced | **Source:** PIB

The Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare has approved the development of a **₹ 200 crore Banana Cluster** in Jalgaon, Maharashtra, aimed at strengthening the horticulture value chain. The project will establish integrated infrastructure including Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), mechanisation, cold storage, refrigerated transport, and processing facilities, with support under the Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH) and the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF). The banana cluster's integrated cold chain and processing can reduce price plunge, while a below-MSP compensation model that the Government is exploring would provide a safety net and stabilise farmer incomes. This convergence would make the cluster more viable by improving price realisation, reducing distress sales and encouraging higher investment in quality and exports.

# Annexure - I : Miscellaneous Policy Updates

## A. Policy Updates

### 1. Bharat Innovates Deep-Tech Pre Summit Inaugurates At IIT-Bombay - Ministry of Education

**Status:** Announced | **Impact:** High | **Source:** PIB

The Ministry of Education has operationalised Bharat Innovates as a flagship national platform to position India as a global hub for deep-tech innovation and research-driven entrepreneurship. It aims to scale R&D-led innovations from across the country to the global stage through structured international showcasing, beginning with Bharat Innovates 2026 in France. The summit brought together **137 selected startups out of over 1,100 applications** working across sectors including artificial intelligence and next-generation manufacturing systems. It facilitated startup pitching and industry interaction to accelerate commercialisation pathways and global market access. The platform is also intended to build enduring global partnerships, particularly in the Global South requiring scalable solutions.

### 2. Guidelines Issued For Plastic Waste Management And EPR Compliance – Central Pollution Control Board

**Status:** Completed | **Impact:** Medium | **Source:** Gazette of India

The Central Pollution Control Board has issued guidelines to strengthen implementation of plastic waste management and Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) obligations for plastic packaging. The guidelines **mandate registration of producers, importers and brand owners** on the central EPR portal, introduce QR/barcode-based traceability, set recycling and reuse targets, and require periodic reporting and verification of plastic waste collection and processing. The framework tightens compliance improving traceability, reducing leakages, and driving formalisation of India's plastic waste management ecosystem.

### 3. SEZ-to-DTA Customs Duty Exemption Notification For FY 2026-27 – Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC)

**Status:** Completed | **Impact:** Medium | **Source:** Gazette of India

CBIC has issued its annual customs duty exemption notification allowing Special Economic Zone (SEZ) manufacturing units to sell goods into the Domestic Tariff Area (DTA) at concessional Basic Customs Duty (BCD) rates, ranging from 4% to 15%, instead of the standard tariff rates, effective 1st April 2026 and valid through 31st March 2027. To qualify, a unit must demonstrate at least 20% value addition over input costs, ensure that domestic sales do not exceed 30% of its highest export turnover in the preceding three years, and must have commenced production on or before 31st March 2025. The notification provides relief for SEZ manufacturers who are facing disruptions due to global trade uncertainty and the long-term

effectiveness of such concessions will depend on whether SEZ units sustain export orientation.

**B. Announcements**

1. **Cookware, Utensils And Cans For Foods And Beverages (Quality Control) Order, 2026 Notified - Ministry of Steel**
   **Status:** Initiated | **Source:** Gazette of India
   The Ministry of Steel has issued the Cookware, Utensils and Cans for Foods and Beverages (Quality Control) Order, 2026, superseding the 2025 order insofar as it relates to stainless steel utensils, stainless steel domestic sinks and three-piece round open-top metal cans for foods and beverages, with compulsory Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) Standard Mark for sale in India. The order tightens quality control specifically at the food-contact interface curbing low-grade or non-standard products in the domestic market and pushing organised players and importers to align with harmonised, testable norms for cookware and food cans.

2. **SEBI Issues Master Circular For Mutual Funds To Consolidate Regulatory Framework – Securities and Exchange Board of India**
   **Status:** Completed | **Impact Level:** High | **Source:** SEBI
   SEBI has issued a Master Circular for Mutual Funds consolidating all applicable circulars, guidelines and directions issued up to 20th March, 2026 into a single comprehensive framework. The circular aligns with the newly notified SEBI (Mutual Funds) Regulations, 2026 and replaces the earlier Master Circular dated 27th June, 2024. The circular **mandates periodic and continuous reporting by regulated entities** to ensure compliance. It simplifies the compliance mutual fund industry by consolidating multiple regulations into a single framework, improving transparency and regulatory oversight

3. **Parliamentary Panel Recommends Integrated Government Data Dashboard For Real-Time Governance – Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation**
   **Status:** Announced | **Source:** Financial Express
   A Parliamentary Standing Committee has recommended that the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) develop a unified digital dashboard to integrate Government data across ministries and departments. The **proposal aims to address the current fragmentation of data** across multiple platforms and formats, which limits interoperability and effective analysis. The dashboard is expected to provide verified, standardised, and regularly updated data in a user-friendly format, improving accessibility for policymakers, researchers, and citizens. The committee also suggested the creation of an **Economic Nowcasting and Data Analytics Unit** to utilise high-frequency datasets (such as PLFS and ASUSE) for real-time assessment of macroeconomic trends, thereby strengthening evidence-based policymaking and coordinated governance.

4. **Indian Railways Approves ₹ 1,236 Crore Projects To Upgrade Communication And Kavach Safety Systems – Ministry of Railways**
   **Status:** Approved | **Source:** PIB
   Indian Railways has **approved projects worth ₹ 1,236 crore** to upgrade its communication infrastructure and expand the Kavach automatic train protection system. The projects include development of a dual-path optical fibre communication network across Central and Western Railways, and deployment of Kavach 4.0 on 548 km of high-density routes across Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Karnataka. It enhances rail safety and operational efficiency by enabling real-time communication systems and collision avoidance technology, supporting modern and resilient railway operations.

5. **Government Expands DEH Scheme To Enhance Local Export Growth - Ministry of Commerce & Industry**
   **Status:** Announced | **Source:** PIB
   The Government has expanded the Districts as Export Hubs (DEH) initiative by constituting State Export Promotion Committees (SEPCs) and District Export Promotion Committees (DEPCs) for 590 districts. Under the framework, products with export potential such as ceramics, potatoes, bananas, agro-products, rice, iron craft, and bamboo craft have been identified at the district level, while data platforms and outreach events are enhancing awareness and facilitating coordinated action to address local export bottlenecks. By decentralising export promotion and tailoring strategies to district-specific strengths and products, the expanded DEH initiative can unlock local value chains, improve market access for rural and micro exporters, and contribute to more resilient export growth across regions.

6. **National AI Skilling Initiative And MyWAVES Platform Launched To Boost Digital Content Ecosystem – Ministry of Information & Broadcasting**
   **Status:** Announced | **Source:** PIB
   The Ministry of Information & Broadcasting has launched three major initiatives to strengthen India's digital media and creative economy. These include a **National AI Skilling Initiative in partnership with Google and YouTube to provide free training to 15,000 creators** and media professionals, the rollout of "MyWAVES", a citizen-centric content creation platform on the WAVES OTT ecosystem, and the introduction of in-built satellite tuners with an advanced Electronic Programme Guide (EPG) in television sets to enable direct access to DD Free Dish without set-top boxes. The initiatives aim to promote the "Orange Economy", enhance public broadcasting access, and build an AI-ready workforce in the media and entertainment sector.

7. **Government Establishes Strategic Partnerships to Strengthen AVGC-XR Ecosystem And IICT - Ministry of Information And Broadcasting**
   **Status:** Announced | **Source:** PIB
   The Government has announced strategic partnerships with global technology companies to **support the National Centre of Excellence (NCoE)** for Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming, Comics and Extended Reality (AVGC-XR), housed under the Indian Institute of Creative Technologies (IICT). The initiative strengthens industry-academia collaboration and talent development in high-growth AVGC-XR sectors, enhancing India's global competitiveness in creative technologies. Therefore, enhancing innovation, employment and exports in the media and entertainment ecosystem.

8. **Government Introduces Model Context Protocol (MCP) Server To Facilitate Linking Artificial Intelligence Tools With Official Statistical Databases - Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation**
   **Status:** Initiated | **Source:** PIB
   The Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation, through the National Statistics Office (NSO), has launched the beta version of a Model Context Protocol (MCP) server via the e-Sankhyiki portal. It enables users to **directly connect AI tools and applications with authenticated Government datasets** and integration of multiple datasets through a single interface. It currently provides access to key data products such as Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), Consumer Price Index (CPI), Index of Industrial Production (IIP), Wholesale Price Index (WPI). It plans to progressively onboard additional datasets based on user feedback and technical readiness. The platform aims to enable citizens, businesses, and institutions to leverage official statistics more democratically and integrate emerging technologies into governance frameworks.

9. **Real-Time Internal Audit Portal Launched To Strengthen Governance In Rural Development – Ministry of Rural Development**
   **Status:** Initiated | **Source:** PIB
   The Ministry of Rural Development has launched a **Real-Time Internal Audit Portal to transform audit processes** into a centralised, digital, and continuously monitored system. Developed by the National Informatics Centre (NIC), the platform enables real-time tracking of audit observations, Action Taken Reports (ATRs), and compliance status, with Secretary-level dashboard access for direct oversight. Key features include automated escalation mechanisms, role-based access controls, and end-to-end audit tracking from field to headquarters. By shifting from periodic reviews to 365-day monitoring, the initiative aims to reduce compliance gaps, enhance transparency, and strengthen fiscal accountability across rural development programmes.

NATION FIRST
POLICY RESEARCH CENTRE

samparka@nationfirstpolicy.org

x.com/nfprc_ind

nationfirstlr.substack.com