

India Governance Watch

*Viksit Bharat's Policy And
Administrative Developments*



1st March - 15th March

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India Governance Watch

Viksit Bharat's Policy And Administrative Developments

(1st March, 2026 - 15th March, 2026)

Executive Summary

This document tracks the various key economic and policy decisions made by the Central Government between **1st March 2026 and 15th March 2026**. Some of the important announcements and policy updates are as follows:

I. Economic Growth And Structural Reforms

- A. **FDI Policy Revised for Investments from Land-Bordering Countries:** The Union Cabinet has amended the FDI policy to **permit up to 10%** non-controlling beneficial ownership from land-bordering countries under the automatic route. The reform also introduces a 60-day approval timeline for key manufacturing investments, partially easing Press Note 3 (2020) restrictions. The change eases compliance challenges for global PE/VC funds with diversified investor bases.
- B. **₹ 1 Lakh Crore Economic Stabilisation Fund Announced:** The Government has announced a ₹ 1 lakh crore Economic Stabilisation Fund (ESF) to **manage external economic shocks** such as geopolitical tensions, energy price volatility and supply-chain disruptions. The fund will provide fiscal space for targeted interventions during global economic instability while supporting macroeconomic resilience.
- C. **Deferred Customs Duty Payment Facility Extended to Eligible Manufacturer Importers:** CBIC has extended the **Deferred Payment** of Import Duty facility to Eligible Manufacturer Importers, allowing customs duties to be paid monthly instead of upfront, with the scheme operating from 1st April 2026 to 31st March 2028. The reform improves working capital flexibility for manufacturers and encourages EMIs to strengthen compliance systems.
- D. **SEBI Allows Intraday Borrowing by Mutual Funds for Liquidity Management:** SEBI has permitted intraday borrowing by mutual funds to manage **temporary liquidity mismatches** from investor redemptions. The borrowing is limited to short-term operational needs with safeguards to maintain market stability. The measure enhances liquidity management and strengthens stability and investor confidence in the mutual fund ecosystem.

II. Infrastructure, Technology And Sustainability

- A. **Natural Gas (Supply Regulation) Order, 2026 Notified:** The Government has issued the Natural Gas (Supply Regulation) Order, 2026 to **manage LNG supply disruptions**. The order prioritises gas allocation for domestic PNG, CNG transport, LPG production and fertiliser plants, while restricting supplies to non-priority sectors.

Executive Summary

The measure prioritises gas supply for households, transport, and fertiliser production to safeguard essential services and agricultural supply chains.

- B. **Phased Manufacturing Programme Amended For Electric Trucks And E-Buses:** The Government has amended the Phased Manufacturing Programme (PMP) under the PM E-DRIVE Scheme to **mandate domestic manufacturing** of key EV powertrain components. The localisation requirements will be implemented in phases between September 2025 and September 2026. The measure strengthens domestic value addition and promotes localisation of critical EV powertrain components.
- C. **Captive Power Plant Rules Amended Under Electricity Rules:** The Government has amended the **Electricity Rules, 2005** to clarify ownership and usage conditions for captive power plants while retaining the 26% ownership and 51% consumption requirements. It also allows electricity use through energy storage systems and introduces verification mechanisms for multi-state setups, making captive power usage more flexible and better regulated.
- D. **Domestic LPG Connections Restricted for PNG Consumers:** The Government has amended the LPG Regulation Order, 2000 to **prohibit households with Piped Natural Gas (PNG)** connections from retaining or obtaining domestic LPG connections. The measure aims to prevent duplication of subsidised cooking fuel connections and improve targeted LPG distribution.
- E. **Forest Conservation Rules Amended For Large Forest Diversion Proposals:** The Government has amended the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Rules, 2023 to require additional inspections by senior forest authorities for projects involving diversion of more than 40 hectares of forest land. The change enhances oversight of large forest diversion proposals by mandating higher-level forest authority participation in field inspections.

III. Human Development And Social Welfare

- A. **Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026 Introduced:** The Government has introduced a bill to amend the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019, revising the definition and certification process. The bill also strengthens penal provisions against discrimination and offences targeting transgender persons.
- B. **Mandatory On-the-Job Training Introduced for ITI Trainees:** The Ministry of Skill Development has introduced 150 hours of mandatory On-the-Job Training (OJT) for ITI trainees under the Craftsmen Training Scheme. The aligns vocational training with workplace requirements to improve ITI graduate employability under Skill India.

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IV. National Security And Foreign Policy

- A. **India-Finland Ties Elevated to Strategic Partnership:** India and Finland have elevated bilateral relations to a Strategic Partnership in digitalisation and sustainability, expanding cooperation in areas such as 6G, digital infrastructure, climate action and circular economy. The partnership also includes agreements on migration, mobility and data collaboration, strengthening long-term economic and people-to-people ties.
- B. **Digital Platforms Soft-Launched for India's First Digital Census:** The Government has launched **four digital platforms for Census 2027**, including enumerator apps, a self-enumeration portal and a monitoring system. The initiative will enable India's first digital census, improving data accuracy and real-time monitoring of field operations. The digital framework will improve data accuracy, reduce paperwork and enable real-time tracking of field progress.

V. Rural And Agricultural Transformation

- A. **Jal Jeevan Mission 2.0 Approved to Strengthen Rural Water Supply:** The Union Cabinet has approved Jal Jeevan Mission 2.0, extending the rural drinking water programme **until December 2028** with an outlay of ₹ 8.69 lakh crore. This move reorients the programme from infrastructure creation to sustainable service delivery for reliable rural tap water access, with an added emphasis on digital monitoring under the Sujalam Bharat framework.

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I. Economic Growth And Structural Reforms

A. Policy Updates

1. Cabinet Approves Changes To FDI Policy For Investments From Land-Bordering Countries – Union Cabinet

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

The Union Cabinet has approved amendments to the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) policy governing investments from countries sharing a land border with India. The revised policy defines beneficial ownership in line with the Prevention of Money Laundering Rules and allows up to **10% non-controlling beneficial ownership** from such countries under the automatic route, subject to sectoral conditions and reporting requirements. It introduces a 60-day approval timeline for investment proposals in specified manufacturing sectors such as electronic components, solar value-chain manufacturing, partially easing earlier restrictions introduced under Press Note 3 (2020). The change will ease compliance challenges for global Private Equity/Venture Capital funds whose diversified investor bases previously triggered approval requirements due to minor indirect exposure to land-bordering countries.

2. ₹ 1 Lakh Crore Economic Stabilisation Fund Announced To Cushion External Shocks – Ministry of Finance

Status: Announced | **Impact Level:** High | **Source:** [News On Air](#), [Indian Express](#)

The Government of India has announced the creation of a **₹ 1 lakh crore Economic Stabilisation Fund (ESF)** to provide fiscal space to manage external shocks such as geopolitical tensions, energy price volatility and supply-chain disruptions. To operationalise the corpus, the Government has proposed ₹ 59,000 crore through the second Supplementary Demand for Grants for FY 2025–26, which are financed from the Consolidated Fund of India, with the remaining amount to be mobilised through savings. The Lok Sabha has also passed the second batch of Supplementary Demands for Grants, taking the total supplementary spending for the financial year to ₹ 4.13 lakh crore, including ₹ 1.71 lakh crore classified as technical supplementary requirements. The initiative aims to strengthen macroeconomic resilience and enable targeted fiscal interventions during periods of global economic volatility.

3. CBIC Extends Deferred Customs Duty Payment Facility To Eligible Manufacturer Importers – Ministry of Finance

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

The Ministry of Finance, through the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC), has extended the existing deferred Customs duty payment facility to a new category of “**Eligible Manufacturer Importers**” (EMIs), following the Union Budget 2026–27 announcement. Approved manufacturers can clear imported inputs without upfront duty payment and instead remit customs duty on a monthly basis under the Deferred Payment of Import Duty Rules, 2016, with the scheme operating from 1st

April 2026 to 31st March 2028. The reform is expected to improve working capital flexibility for manufacturers while encouraging EMIs to strengthen internal systems and compliance controls to progress toward higher-tier AEO status, thereby reinforcing the high-trust Customs facilitation ecosystem.

4. **Amendments To Income-tax Rules To Include Crypto-Assets And Digital Money In Financial Account Reporting – Ministry of Finance**

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

The Ministry of Finance has notified the **Income-tax (Amendment) Rules, 2026**, amending the Income-tax Rules, 1962 to expand financial account reporting requirements to cover digital assets. The amendments incorporate relevant crypto-assets, specified electronic money products and central bank digital currencies (CBDCs) within the scope of reportable financial assets for tax information reporting. The rules also introduce new reporting obligations for financial institutions, including disclosure of account types, self-certification status, joint account details and controlling persons of entities. The framework aligns India's tax reporting regime with emerging global standards such as the OECD Crypto-Asset Reporting Framework (CARF) and strengthens monitoring of cross-border digital asset transactions for tax compliance and transparency.

5. **Amendment To Accounting Standards To Incorporate OECD Pillar Two Global Minimum Tax Disclosures – Ministry of Corporate Affairs**

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

The Ministry of Corporate Affairs has notified the **Companies (Accounting Standards) Amendment Rules, 2026**, amending Accounting Standard (AS) 22 under the Companies (Accounting Standards) Rules, 2021. The amendment introduces provisions relating to the OECD Pillar Two global minimum tax framework, requiring companies to disclose information on income taxes arising from Pillar Two legislation. The rules clarify that enterprises will not recognise or disclose deferred tax assets or liabilities related to Pillar Two income taxes, while requiring separate disclosure of current tax expenses and qualitative or quantitative information on exposure to such taxes where applicable. The amendment aligns India's accounting standards with international tax transparency requirements under the OECD global minimum tax framework.

6. **SEBI Issues Framework For Borrowing By Mutual Funds To Address Liquidity Mismatches – Securities and Exchange Board of India**

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

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has issued a circular allowing **intraday borrowing by mutual funds** to manage temporary liquidity mismatches caused by investor redemptions. The borrowing facility is permitted strictly for short-term operational needs and cannot be used to alter the investment strategy of

schemes. The framework also introduces safeguards and reporting requirements to ensure borrowing remains limited and transparent. The measure will strengthen liquidity management, reduce the need for distress asset sales during redemption pressures, and enhance overall stability and investor confidence in the mutual fund ecosystem.

7. **DGFT Extends Export Obligation Period For Advance Authorisation And EPCG Schemes – Ministry of Commerce and Industry**

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

The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) has extended the **export obligation period** for specified Advance Authorisations and Export Promotion Capital Goods (EPCG) authorisations where the obligation period is expiring between 1st March 2026 and 31st May 2026. The extension allows exporters additional time to fulfil export obligations under these schemes without requiring separate applications or payment of composition fees. Introduced in response to geopolitical disruptions affecting global shipping routes and supply chains, the measure reduces compliance risks under duty exemption and capital goods import schemes, helping exporters retain eligibility for incentives despite delays in fulfilling export commitments.

B. Announcements

1. **Terms Of Reference Signed For India–Canada Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement – Ministry of Commerce and Industry**

Status: Initiated | **Source:** [PIB](#), [Times of India](#)

On 2nd March 2026, India and Canada signed the Terms of Reference (ToR), formally launching negotiations for a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA). The ToR sets the structure and scope of negotiations covering trade in goods, services and other agreed areas to conclude a comprehensive and mutually beneficial pact with a bilateral trade target of **\$ 50 billion by 2030**, against trade of \$ 8.66 billion in FY 2024-25. The CEPA is expected to improve market access, boost two-way investment and deepen cooperation in critical minerals, clean energy and resilient supply chains, while supporting India's efforts to secure long-term energy inputs such as uranium and LNG and strengthen economic integration with Canada.

2. **Guidelines For Custodians Issued By SEBI – Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)**

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

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has issued a **revised framework for custodians** to strengthen governance, risk management and operational resilience in custody services. The circular requires custodians to maintain board-level oversight, clear risk management policies, business continuity plans and disaster recovery mechanisms to safeguard investor assets. The framework also

allows custodians to undertake regulated and unregulated financial services through separate strategic business units and introduces provisions for orderly wind-down of operations. The measures aim to bring custodian practices closer to global post-trade standards by separating regulated and unregulated activities while strengthening governance and operational resilience in institutional securities market infrastructure.

3. Appropriation Bill, 2026 Introduced In Parliament – Ministry of Finance

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

A Bill to authorise the payment and appropriation of additional sums from the **Consolidated Fund of India** for FY 2025–26 was introduced in Parliament as the Appropriation Bill, 2026. The bill seeks approval to withdraw ₹ 2.81 lakh crore to meet supplementary expenditure across ministries including defence, food and public distribution, economic affairs, health, transfers to states, and fertiliser subsidies. Introduced under Articles 114 and 115 of the Constitution, it provides statutory authority to appropriate funds from the Consolidated Fund of India for expenditures approved through supplementary demands for grants. This ensures the legal sanction of additional Government spending while preserving parliamentary oversight of fiscal operations.

4. Quality Control Order Issued For Aluminium and Aluminium Alloy Products – Ministry of Commerce and Industry

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

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade has notified the **Aluminium and Aluminium Alloy Products (Quality Control) Order, 2026** under the Bureau of Indian Standards Act, 2016. The order mandates that specified aluminium and aluminium alloy products conform to relevant Indian Standards and bear the BIS Standard Mark before being manufactured, sold or imported in India. The order exempts products manufactured for export and limited quantities imported for research and development purposes, while providing staggered compliance timelines for micro, small and other enterprises. The measure strengthens product quality regulation and standardisation in the aluminium sector while aligning domestic manufacturing with BIS certification requirements.

5. Amendment To Furniture (Quality Control) Order, 2025 – Ministry of Commerce and Industry

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

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade has notified the **Furniture (Quality Control) Second Amendment Order, 2026** under the Bureau of Indian Standards Act, 2016. The amendment grants a transitional exemption for imported furniture consignments shipped or ordered before the implementation of the Furniture (Quality Control) Order, 2025, provided they are cleared within 180

days. Importers must submit relevant documents to BIS within seven days of clearance. The measure provides limited relief for pre-existing purchase commitments and shipments already in transit, preventing retrospective compliance burdens from the new quality standards while maintaining requirements for future imports.

6. Stricter Safety And Location Norms Introduced For Fireworks Shops Under Explosives Rules – Ministry of Commerce and Industry

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

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade has notified the **Explosives (Amendment) Rules, 2026**, revising safety and infrastructure requirements for fireworks shops under the Explosives Rules, 2008. The rules mandate ground-floor standalone premises with independent exits, fire extinguishers and additional fire safety systems, while requiring shops to maintain a minimum 50-metre distance from schools, hospitals and religious places. The amendment strengthens regulatory oversight of fireworks retail operations by enforcing stricter safety infrastructure and location standards, aimed at reducing fire hazards and accident risks associated with the storage and sale of fireworks.

II. Infrastructure, Technology And Sustainability

A. Policy Updates

1. Natural Gas (Supply Regulation) Order, 2026 Notified – Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas

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

The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has notified the **Natural Gas (Supply Regulation) Order, 2026** under the Essential Commodities Act to manage natural gas supply amid disruptions to LNG shipments. The order prioritises allocation of gas to essential sectors, ensuring 100% of past average consumption for domestic PNG supply, CNG for transport, LPG production and pipeline operations, and at least 70% for fertilizer plants. Industrial and commercial consumers will receive around 80% of their past average consumption, with supplies diverted from non-priority sectors such as petrochemicals and power generation if required. The measure prioritises gas availability for household energy, transport fuel and fertilizer production to protect essential services and agricultural supply chains during global LNG supply disruptions.

2. Phased Manufacturing Programme For Electric Trucks Amended Under PM E-DRIVE Scheme - Ministry of Heavy Industries

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

The Ministry of Heavy Industries has amended the Phased Manufacturing Programme (PMP) under the **PM E-DRIVE Scheme** for N2/N3 electric trucks and M2/M3 e-buses. The amendments mandate domestic manufacturing and assembly

of key EV powertrain components, including traction motors, integrated motor-transmission systems and motor controllers/inverters. For e-buses, traction motor manufacturing must be carried out domestically from 1st September 2026, while localisation requirements for electric trucks will be implemented in phases between September 2025 and September 2026. The measure strengthens domestic value addition and supports localisation of critical EV powertrain components.

3. **Amendment To Energy Conservation Rules On Energy Consumption Value For Designated Consumers – Ministry of Power**

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

The Ministry of Power has notified the **Energy Conservation (Amendment) Rules, 2026**, amending the Energy Conservation Rules, 2012 under the Energy Conservation Act, 2001. The amendment specifies the value of per metric tonne of oil equivalent (MTOE) of energy consumed at ₹ 22,774 for the year 2021–22, which will serve as the reference value for designated consumers under the energy efficiency compliance framework. The rule supports implementation of the Perform, Achieve and Trade (PAT) mechanism, under which energy-intensive industries must meet prescribed energy efficiency targets and can trade Energy Saving Certificates. The clarification of the reference value is expected to improve transparency and consistency in calculating compliance and trading under the energy efficiency market.

4. **Domestic LPG Connections Restricted For PNG Consumers – Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas**

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

The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has notified the **Liquefied Petroleum Gas (Regulation of Supply and Distribution) Amendment Order, 2026**, amending the LPG Regulation Order, 2000 under the Essential Commodities Act. The amendment prohibits consumers with a Piped Natural Gas (PNG) connection from retaining or obtaining a domestic LPG connection or receiving LPG cylinder refills from Government oil companies or their distributors. Existing consumers with both connections will be required to surrender their LPG connection, and Government oil companies are barred from supplying LPG to such consumers. The measure aims to rationalise domestic LPG distribution by preventing duplication of subsidised household cooking fuel connections and improving targeting of LPG supplies.

5. **Captive Power Plant Rules Amended Under Electricity Rules – Ministry of Power**

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

The Ministry of Power has notified the **Electricity (Amendment) Rules, 2026**, revising provisions governing Captive Generating Plants under the Electricity Rules, 2005. The amendment clarifies ownership and consumption requirements for captive status, retains the thresholds of 26% ownership and 51% captive consumption, and allows electricity generated by captive plants to be consumed

through Energy Storage Systems. It also introduces a verification framework by State nodal agencies or the National Load Despatch Centre for plants and users located across multiple states. The reform provides greater regulatory clarity for captive power structures used by industrial consumers while strengthening oversight of captive status verification in open access power markets.

6. Amendment To Forest Conservation Rules Strengthening Field Inspection For Large Forest Diversion Proposals – Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

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

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has notified the **Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Amendment Rules, 2026**, amending the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Rules, 2023 under the Forest Conservation Act, 1980. The amendment introduces an additional verification requirement for proposals involving diversion of more than 40 hectares of forest land, mandating simultaneous field inspections by the Conservator of Forests, Chief Conservator of Forests, or Regional Chief Conservator of Forests, alongside the inspection already conducted by the Divisional Forest Officer. The change strengthens oversight and verification mechanisms for large forest diversion proposals by requiring higher-level forest authorities to participate directly in field inspections during the approval process.

7. Amendment To Inland Vessels Safe Navigation And Communication Rules – Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways

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

The Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways has notified the **Inland Vessels (Safe Navigation, Communication and Signals) (First Amendment) Rules, 2026**, amending the Inland Vessels Rules, 2022 under the Inland Vessels Act, 2021. The amendment introduces revised provisions on vessel navigation and signalling, clarifies the methodology for calculating vessel gross tonnage and reorganises rules relating to vessel conduct and lighting requirements. It also mandates minimum navigation and communication equipment such as VHF radio, GPS navigator, Automatic Identification System (AIS), compass and search lights for vessels operating in different inland waterway zones. The amendment strengthens safety standards and navigation protocols for inland water transport, supporting safer vessel operations across India's inland waterways network.

8. Amendment To Hit And Run Motor Accident Compensation Scheme To Streamline Claims Processing – Ministry of Road Transport and Highways

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

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has notified the Compensation to Victims of **Hit and Run Motor Accidents (Amendment) Scheme, 2026**, amending the 2022 scheme under the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988. The amendment introduces

revised definitions and governance mechanisms, including the involvement of District Road Safety Committees and State Road Safety Councils in monitoring implementation and claim processing. The revised framework enables portal-based submission and processing of compensation claims and sets a target timeline of 15 days for sanction of claims after enquiry reports are received. These changes aim to digitise claim processing, reduce administrative delays and improve monitoring of compensation disbursement to victims of hit-and-run accidents under the Motor Vehicle Accident Fund.

B. Announcements

1. India AI Impact Summit 2026 Concludes With Global Declarations And Major Investment Commitments – Ministry of Electronics & IT

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

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology hosted the India AI Impact Summit 2026, which concluded with the adoption of the India AI Impact Summit Declaration, endorsed by 92 countries and international organisations. The Government announced the **expansion of sovereign compute capacity** under the IndiaAI Mission, adding 20,000 GPUs to the existing 38,000+ provisioned units. The Summit catalysed over \$ 200 billion in AI-related investment commitments across infrastructure and applications, positioning India as a major hub for AI infrastructure, innovation and responsible technology deployment. These outcomes position India as a central hub for AI infrastructure, innovation and responsible governance, with implications for digital competitiveness, job creation and long-term technology leadership.

2. BHASHINI Platform Expanded With Advanced AI Language Models – Ministry of Electronics and IT

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

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology highlighted the expansion of the Digital India BHASHINI platform, enabling the deployment of advanced AI models, including open-source Sarvam models, to support population-scale multilingual language technologies. Operating on a sovereign, cloud-agnostic AI infrastructure, the platform powers over **500 Government websites and processes 15 million AI inferences daily** across 36 text and 23 voice languages, providing services such as automatic language detection, speech recognition and translation. The expansion strengthens India's language digital public infrastructure, enabling developers, startups, and Government platforms to build multilingual AI applications and expand access to digital public services.

3. Aadhaar Authentication Mandated For Beneficiaries Under PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana – Ministry of New and Renewable Energy

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

The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy has notified that beneficiaries seeking Central Financial Assistance for rooftop solar installations under the PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana must undergo **Aadhaar authentication** or provide proof of Aadhaar under the Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and Other Subsidies, Benefits and Services) Act, 2016. The measure establishes Aadhaar-based identity verification for beneficiaries while allowing alternative identification documents and enrolment acknowledgement for individuals who do not yet possess an Aadhaar number, strengthening transparency and efficiency in the delivery of subsidies under the scheme.

4. Rajmarg Pravesh Portal Upgraded To Simplify Access Permissions On National Highways – Ministry of Road Transport and Highways

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

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has upgraded the **Rajmarg Pravesh online portal** to streamline approvals and No Objection Certificates (NOCs) for accessing National Highways. The platform serves as a one-stop digital system for permissions related to fuel stations, restaurants, wayside amenities, connecting roads and the laying of utilities such as pipelines, optical fibre and power lines along highway corridors. The portal introduces paperless applications, real-time tracking, time-bound approvals and GIS-based jurisdiction identification to simplify the approval process. The reform strengthens digital governance in the highways sector by reducing paperwork, improving transparency and enabling faster approvals for infrastructure and commercial facilities along India's 1.46 lakh km National Highway network.

5. Exemption Criteria Updated For Highly Specialised Electronic Equipment Under CRO – Ministry of Electronics and IT

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

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology has amended the Electronics and Information Technology Goods (Requirements for Compulsory Registration) Order, 2021, revising the exemption criteria for **Highly Specialised Equipment (HSE)**. Equipment meeting specified technical thresholds, such as those powered by three-phase supply, devices with current rating above 16 amperes, equipment exceeding prescribed size or weight limits, and models manufactured or imported in quantities below 100 units annually, may be exempted from the compulsory registration requirement upon approval by the Ministry. The amendment provides regulatory relief for niche and industrial-grade electronic equipment that are produced or imported in limited quantities.

6. Draft Marine Aids to Navigation (Vessel Traffic Services) Rules, 2026 Issued – Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways

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

The Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways has issued draft **Marine Aids to Navigation (Vessel Traffic Services) Rules, 2026** under the Marine Aids to Navigation Act, 2021 for public consultation. The draft rules propose a regulatory framework for establishing and operating Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) in ports, harbours and coastal waters, including provisions for authorisation of service providers, appointment of a competent authority, and standards for equipment, operations and coordination with maritime agencies. The framework aims to strengthen maritime traffic management and improve safety and efficiency of vessel movement in Indian waters.

7. TRAI Releases Draft Amendment To Strengthen Regulation Of Unsolicited Commercial Communications – Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI)

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

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has issued the Draft Telecom Commercial Communications Customer Preference (Third Amendment) Regulations, 2026 for public consultation to strengthen the framework for controlling unsolicited commercial communications (UCC). The proposed amendments aim to improve the effectiveness of the existing 2018 regulations by incorporating stakeholder feedback and leveraging emerging technologies such as AI-based detection of spam communications used by telecom service providers. Comments on the draft regulations have been invited from stakeholders to further refine the regulatory framework for commercial communication in telecom networks.

8. TRAI Issues Digital Addressable Systems Audit Manual, 2026 For Broadcasting And Cable Services – Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI)

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

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has issued the Telecommunication (Broadcasting and Cable) Services Digital Addressable Systems Audit Manual, 2026, which will come into effect from 1st April 2026. The manual provides detailed guidance for audits of Distribution Platform Operators (DPOs) under the Interconnection Regulations, 2017, incorporating provisions to **reduce repetitive audits**, enable infrastructure sharing oversight and strengthen accountability through experience-based categorisation of auditors. The framework aims to improve transparency, efficiency and credibility in the auditing of digital addressable broadcasting and cable services.

9. MeitY Invites Proposals To Establish Centres of Excellence For Cyber Law, Policy And Technical Research – Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology

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

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has issued a call for proposals to establish up to **three Centres of Excellence (CoEs)** focused on cyber law, digital policy and technical research in cyberspace. Each CoE will receive funding of up to ₹ 30 crore over five years, with lead law universities partnering with technical institutions to undertake policy research, develop compliance technologies and support capacity building in cyber governance. The initiative aims to strengthen India's cyber law ecosystem, digital governance frameworks and national cyber resilience amid rapid technological change.

III. Human Development and Social Welfare

A. Policy Updates

1. Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026 Introduced – Parliament

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

The Government introduced Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026 bill to amend the **Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019** in the Lok Sabha on 13th March 2026. The proposed amendments revise the definition of “transgender person”, introduce the role of a medical authority in the certification process, and modify procedures for issuing identity certificates and recording gender change in official documents. The bill also strengthens penal provisions for offences against transgender persons, including forced labour, denial of access to public places, and coercive acts involving mutilation or forced gender identity. The legislation has been introduced for parliamentary consideration and will undergo further legislative scrutiny. The amendments aim to strengthen legal protections and administrative procedures related to identity recognition and rights of transgender persons.

2. Mandatory On-the-Job Training Introduced For ITI Trainees Under Craftsmen Training Scheme – Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship

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

The Directorate General of Training under the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship has issued guidelines introducing a mandatory provision of **150 hours of On-the-Job Training (OJT) or Group Project** for trainees in Industrial Training Institutes under the Craftsmen Training Scheme. The reform aims to strengthen practical industry exposure for trainees as part of vocational education and has been implemented from the academic session 2022–23. The training structure has also been revised, reducing classroom instruction from 1600 hours to 1200 hours while integrating structured industry exposure, strengthening

industry-institution linkages and aligning vocational training with practical workplace requirements to improve employability of ITI graduates under the Skill India framework.

3. **PM SETU Scheme To Upgrade ITIs And Strengthen Skill Training Infrastructure – Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship**

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

The Union Cabinet has approved the Pradhan Mantri Skilling and Employability Transformation through Upgraded ITIs (PM-SETU) scheme under the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship to modernise vocational training infrastructure and improve industry alignment in skill development. The scheme will upgrade **1,000 Government Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs)** through a hub-and-spoke model and strengthen five National Skill Training Institutes (NSTIs) with modern training facilities, industry-aligned curricula and sector-specific Centres of Excellence. It also introduces employability skill modules covering entrepreneurship, digital literacy and financial awareness for trainees. The initiative aims to enhance workforce readiness and improve employment outcomes by aligning vocational training with evolving industry needs.

B. Announcements

1. **Advisory Issued On Promotion Of GLP-1 Drugs For Obesity – Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO)**

Status: Announced | **Source:** [CDSCO](#), [Business Standard](#)

The Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO) has issued an advisory directing pharmaceutical manufacturers and importers to ensure that promotion of **GLP-1 receptor agonists and similar prescription drugs** for obesity and metabolic disorders complies with the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 and the Drugs Rules, 1945. The advisory states that advertising or surrogate promotion of prescription-only medicines to the general public, including through disease awareness campaigns, digital media or influencer outreach, will be treated as misleading promotion. Firms have also been directed to ensure compliant product information, establish consumer complaint mechanisms and submit Risk Management Plans for safety monitoring. The advisory aims to curb misleading marketing and ensure responsible promotion of prescription medicines.

2. **NITI Aayog And UNICEF India Sign Statement Of Intent To Strengthen Nutrition Outcomes – NITI Aayog**

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

NITI Aayog and UNICEF India have signed a Statement of Intent (SoI) to collaborate on improving maternal and child nutrition outcomes in Aspirational Districts and Aspirational Blocks. The partnership aims to strengthen implementation systems for nutrition and health interventions through multi-stakeholder collaboration and

data-driven governance. Under the collaboration, UNICEF will provide technical expertise and help mobilise CSR investments through the **IMPAct4Nutrition platform** to support initiatives such as strengthening Anganwadi infrastructure, improving nutrition literacy and enhancing capacity of frontline workers. The initiative aims to improve last-mile delivery of nutrition and health services in high-priority districts.

3. MSDE Signs MoU With GATI Foundation To Strengthen Global Skill Mobility – Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship

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

The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the GATI Foundation, a project under the SFI Impact Foundation, to strengthen institutional mechanisms supporting overseas employment and global mobility of skilled Indian workers. The partnership aims to expand international skill mobility pathways through initiatives such as global skill mobility partnerships and the development of **Skill India International Centres**, enabling Indian youth to access quality employment opportunities in global labour markets.

4. Aadhaar Authentication Enabled For Trainees and Assessors In Skill Development Systems – Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship

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

The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship has notified the use of **Aadhaar authentication for identity verification on digital skill development platforms** under the Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and Other Subsidies, Benefits and Services) Act, 2016. The provision allows Aadhaar-based authentication of trainees during enrolment, admission and certification, as well as verification of trainers and examiners during assessment processes in the vocational education system. The authentication process will be voluntary and based on user consent, with alternative identification options such as voter ID, passport, PAN card and bank passbooks available for those who do not wish to use Aadhaar. The measure aims to improve transparency, streamline identity verification and strengthen governance across digital skill development programmes.

5. Rules Amended For Governance Of National Commission For Allied and Healthcare Professions – Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

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

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has notified the **National Commission for Allied and Healthcare Professions (Amendment) Rules, 2026**, amending the rules governing the National Commission for Allied and Healthcare Professions under the NCAHP Act, 2021. The amendment defines the tenure of part-time members,

Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson (two years or up to 70 years of age), establishes procedures for filling vacancies within three months, and clarifies administrative and financial powers of the Commission. The rules also revise provisions relating to application procedures, fee determination and financial reporting. The changes strengthen the governance framework and administrative functioning of the national regulator for allied and healthcare professions.

6. **Draft Amendment To Drugs Rules, 1945 Notified For Public Consultation - Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**

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

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has issued draft **Drugs (Amendment) Rules, 2026** proposing amendments to the Drugs Rules, 1945. The draft removes the requirement for certain final medical products to undergo mandatory testing for HIV and hepatitis viruses before approval. The proposal has been released for 30-day public consultation, with objections and suggestions invited before finalisation. The amendment is expected to simplify regulatory procedures for specific medical products while aligning testing requirements with updated safety and quality standards.

IV. National Security and Foreign Policy

A. Policy Updates

1. **India And Finland Elevate Bilateral Ties To Strategic Partnership And Expand Cooperation Across Sectors - Prime Minister's Office**

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

India and Finland have elevated their bilateral relationship to a **Strategic Partnership** in Digitalisation and Sustainability, alongside renewing their MoU on Environmental Cooperation and signing agreements on migration, mobility and official statistics. The partnership expands collaboration in emerging technologies such as 6G, digital infrastructure, innovation ecosystems and startup linkages, while also strengthening cooperation in climate action, circular economy, waste management and data systems. It also facilitates movement of students, researchers and skilled professionals between the two countries. The combined initiatives aim to deepen technology, environmental and institutional cooperation while strengthening long-term economic and people-to-people ties.

B. Announcements

1. **India and Canada Sign Agreements On Critical Minerals, Renewable Energy and Nuclear Fuel Supply - Prime Minister's Office**

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

India and Canada have signed agreements to strengthen cooperation in **critical minerals, renewable energy and nuclear fuel supply**. The partnership includes collaboration in the exploration, mining and processing of strategic minerals,

alongside a Memorandum of Understanding on renewable energy to expand cooperation in solar, wind, biomass and energy storage technologies. In addition, Department of Atomic Energy has signed a long-term commercial contract with Cameco (Canada) for the supply of uranium ore concentrates to support the country's nuclear power programme, strengthening India's access to critical mineral resources and uranium supply while expanding clean energy collaboration in line with its target of achieving 100 GW of nuclear power capacity by 2047.

2. MoD Signs ₹ 5,083 Crore Contracts To Strengthen Maritime Surveillance And Naval Air Defence – Ministry of Defence

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

The Ministry of Defence has signed contracts worth ₹ 5,083 crore for the procurement of **six Advanced Light Helicopters** (ALH Mk-III) for the Indian Coast Guard and VL-Shtil surface-to-air missiles for the Indian Navy. The helicopter contract, valued at ₹ 2,901 crore, has been awarded to Hindustan Aeronautics Limited under the Buy (Indian-IDD) category, along with associated equipment and logistics support. The induction of the helicopters will strengthen maritime surveillance and offshore security operations, while the missile system will enhance the air defence capability of frontline naval warships. The contracts are expected to support domestic defence manufacturing with participation from over 200 MSMEs and is expected to generate approximately 65 lakh man-hours of employment, reinforcing the Government's Make in India and Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiatives.

3. Record Of Discussions Signed For Phase II Of Japan-India SDG Cooperation In Aspirational Districts - NITI Aayog

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

The NITI Aayog and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) have signed the Record of Discussions for Phase II of the Japan-India Cooperative Actions Towards Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to strengthen development outcomes in Aspirational Districts and Blocks. The **initiative will support six priority areas** - global partnership, health & nutrition, education, agriculture & water resources, financial inclusion & skilling, and basic infrastructure through knowledge exchange, capacity building, and dissemination of best practices. This initiative is expected to strengthen local implementation systems and monitoring frameworks, enhance institutional capacities, and accelerate socio-economic progress in underserved regions by promoting scalable and evidence based development interventions.

4. **Contract Signed For Construction Of Four Self-Propelled Fuel Barges For Indian Navy – Ministry of Defence**

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

The Ministry of Defence has signed a contract with Shoft Shipyard Pvt. Ltd., Thane for the construction of four **500-ton self-propelled fuel barges for the Indian Navy**. The barges will be used to supply fuel to ships and submarines in harbour and anchorage, supporting naval logistics operations. The vessels will be built under the Indian Register of Shipping classification rules and form part of the Government's Make in India and Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiatives. The project is expected to strengthen the domestic shipbuilding ecosystem and encourage participation of MSME shipyards in defence manufacturing in line with Maritime India Vision 2030.

5. **Digital Platforms Soft-Launched For India's First Digital Census Exercise – Ministry of Home Affairs**

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

The Ministry of Home Affairs has **soft-launched four digital platforms** to support Census 2027, which will be India's first census conducted using digital tools. The platforms include the Houselisting Block Creator web application, a mobile application for enumerators, a Self-Enumeration portal allowing households to submit information online, and the Census Management and Monitoring System for real-time tracking of field operations. Census 2027 will be conducted in two phases covering houselisting and population enumeration, with more than 30 lakh enumerators and officials involved nationwide. The digital framework will improve data accuracy, reduce paperwork and enable real-time tracking of field progress.

V. **Rural And Agricultural Transformation**

A. **Policy Updates**

1. **Cabinet Approves Jal Jeevan Mission 2.0 to Strengthen Rural Drinking Water Supply – Ministry of Jal Shakti**

Status: Announced | **Impact Level:** High | **Source:** [PIB 1](#), [PIB 2](#)

The Union Cabinet has approved Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) 2.0 under the Ministry of Jal Shakti, extending and restructuring the rural drinking water programme to strengthen long-term service delivery. The mission has been extended until December 2028 with a total outlay of ₹ 8.69 lakh crore, focusing on sustaining and expanding functional household tap connections while improving system reliability and governance. The reform also introduces a national digital framework, "**Sujalam Bharat**," including the **Sujal Gaon ID** system to digitally map rural drinking water infrastructure and strengthen monitoring and accountability at the village level. The restructuring shifts the programme's focus from infrastructure creation to sustainable service delivery, aiming to ensure long-term reliability and universal rural tap water coverage.

B. Announcements

1. Amendment To Fertiliser Control Order To Strengthen Regulation Of Nano Fertilisers – Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare

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

The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare has notified the **Fertiliser (Control) Second Amendment Order, 2026**, introducing additional regulatory requirements for nano fertilisers under the Fertiliser Control Order (FCO), 1985. Manufacturers must now submit biosafety and toxicity data from accredited laboratories and conduct multi-location trials across different agro-climatic zones before approval. The amendment also reduces the initial approval validity period from three years to two years and requires manufacturers to provide crop-specific usage guidelines and safety information for farmers. The changes strengthen regulatory oversight of nano fertilisers by mandating rigorous testing, field trials and safety disclosures before commercial distribution to farmers.

2. Amendments To Food Business Licensing And Registration Regulations – Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)

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

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has notified the Food Safety and Standards (Licensing and Registration of Food Businesses) Amendment Regulations, 2026. The amendment expands the definition of “**Petty Food Business Operator**” to include street food vendors, hawkers, food trucks and temporary stalls, and enables instant registration upon submission of required documents. Street vendors registered under the Street Vendors Act, 2014 will be deemed registered under the Food Safety and Standards Act, subject to hygiene and sanitation requirements. The amendment further introduces a risk-based inspection and food safety audit framework, linking inspection frequency to the type of food business and its compliance history, simplifying licensing for small food businesses while strengthening food safety oversight.

3. FSSAI Calls For QR Codes On Labels Of Plant-Based Food Products – Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)

Status: Announced | **Source:** [Economic Times](#)

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has encouraged manufacturers of plant-based food products to **voluntarily include QR codes on product labels** to provide consumers with easier access to ingredient lists and nutritional information. The recommendation aims to address the limitations of small packaging labels and enable consumers to scan codes to verify product composition and nutritional details using smartphones. The move will improve transparency and consumer trust in the expanding plant-based food sector, while

complementing the regulator's existing framework including the vegan logo and labelling standards for plant-based products.

Annexure - I : Miscellaneous Policy Updates

A. Policy Updates

1. Multiple New Indian Standards Notified Across Manufacturing, Healthcare and Digital Infrastructure – Department of Consumer Affairs

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

The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) has notified several **new and revised Indian Standards under the BIS Rules, 2018** covering sectors such as consumer goods, chemicals, textiles, agriculture inputs, medical devices, automotive components, engineering tools, digital infrastructure and several others. The standards address areas including garments, surgical instruments and sterilisation equipment, QR code technologies, blockchain security frameworks, electromagnetic compatibility, pesticides and chemicals, food additives, safety harnesses for children on two-wheelers and energy consumption of electronic devices. Several older standards have also been revised and scheduled for withdrawal in September 2026. The update strengthens product quality, safety and technological standardisation across multiple industries, supporting consumer protection, manufacturing competitiveness and digital infrastructure development.

2. Fee Structure For IFSC Entities Notified For FY 2026–27 – International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA)

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

The International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA) has notified the revised fee structure applicable to entities operating or seeking authorisation in IFSCs for FY 2026–27 onwards. The circular **standardises multiple categories of regulatory fees** including application, licence, registration, recurring and activity-based fees. The framework also introduces processing fees (20% of the licence fee for change in control), \$ 1,000 informal guidance fee per application, and a 0.75% monthly interest penalty for delayed fee payments. By consolidating and updating the fee structure across sectors, the circular rationalises regulatory costs and introduces scale-linked fee components, lowering entry barriers for smaller entities while strengthening the GIFT-IFSC ecosystem.

3. Revised Regulatory Reporting Framework For Alternative Investment Funds – Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)

Status: Completed | **Impact Level:** Low | **Source:** [SEBI](#)

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has revised the regulatory reporting framework for **Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs)** to streamline compliance and improve reporting efficiency. Under the new framework, AIFs will submit a comprehensive Annual Activity Report within 30 days of the end of each financial year through the SEBI Intermediary Portal, beginning with the report for

FY2025–26. AIFs will also submit a limited Quarterly Activity Report in a revised format within 15 days of the end of each quarter, with the first such report due for the quarter ending June 2026. The reform reduces the frequency and complexity of regulatory reporting while maintaining oversight of AIF activities, supporting ease of doing business in India’s alternative investment ecosystem.

4. **IFSCA Relaxes Cybersecurity Compliance Requirements For Certain IFSC Entities – International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA)**

Status: Completed | **Impact Level:** Low | **Source:** [IFSCA](#)

The International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA) has amended its 2025 Cyber Security and Cyber Resilience Guidelines, granting a **three-year exemption from certain** compliance requirements for specific regulated entities in IFSCs, including branch entities, Global In-House Centres, small firms with fewer than 10 employees, newly incorporated standalone entities, foreign universities and credit rating agencies. During the exemption period, such entities must adopt cybersecurity frameworks of their parent organisations or implement proportionate safeguards and submit annual certifications and cyber audit reports to IFSCA. The amendment eases compliance burdens for smaller and newly established IFSC entities while maintaining minimum cybersecurity oversight.

5. **Tariff Values Revised For Edible Oils, Precious Metals And Brass Scrap – Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC)**

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

The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) has **amended the tariff values** used for customs valuation under Section 14 of the Customs Act, 1962. The revised benchmark values apply to commodities including crude and refined palm oil, palmolein, crude soybean oil, brass scrap, gold, silver and areca nuts, and will take effect from 14th March 2026. This periodic revision aligns customs duty calculations with prevailing international prices, helping stabilise revenue collection and curb under-invoicing in imports.

6. **Disaster Management (Removal of Difficulty) Order, 2026 Issued – Ministry of Home Affairs**

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

The Ministry of Home Affairs has issued the **Disaster Management (Removal of Difficulty) Order, 2026** under the Disaster Management Act, 2005. The order removes references to “experts and consultants” from provisions requiring the Central Government to prescribe their salaries, allowances and service conditions under statutory rules. The change allows the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) to engage experts and consultants on flexible contractual terms for specialised and time-bound assignments. The change enhances administrative

flexibility for NDMA to onboard specialised expertise quickly, strengthening technical capacity for disaster preparedness and response.

7. Certification Requirements Relaxed For Persons Associated With Research Services – Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)

Status: Completed | **Impact Level:** Low | **Source:** [SEBI](#)

SEBI has eased certification requirements for Persons Associated with Research Services (PARS) engaged in sales and other non-core functions under the SEBI (Research Analysts) Regulations, 2014. Such personnel may now obtain certification through the simplified **NISM Series-XXV-A examination**, while individuals directly involved in research activities must continue to hold the NISM Series-XV Research Analyst certification. The measure reduces compliance burdens for research analyst firms while maintaining minimum competency standards for client-facing staff.

B. Announcements

1. Assembly Election Schedule 2026 Announced For Four States And One UT - Election Commission of India

Status: Announced | **Source:** [PIB](#), [Times of India](#)

The Election Commission of India has announced the schedule for assembly elections in **West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Assam and Puducherry**, covering a major electoral cycle involving over 17 crore voters. Polling will be conducted in April 2026, with West Bengal voting in two phases while the other states and the Union Territory vote in a single phase. The results for all states will be declared on 4th May 2026.

Election Schedule Overview

State / UT	Polling Date(s)	Phases
Assam	9 th April 2026	Single Phase
Kerala	9 th April 2026	Single Phase
Puducherry	9 th April 2026	Single Phase
Tamil Nadu	23 rd April 2026	Single Phase
West Bengal	23 rd & 29 th April 2026	Two Phases

2. MeitY Launches 30 kW Wide Band Gap-Based Integrated Drive System To Boost Electric Vehicle Adoption – Ministry of Electronics & IT

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

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology has launched an **indigenously developed 30 kW Wide Band Gap-based Integrated Drive System** for electric vehicle applications under the National Mission on Power Electronics Technology (NaMPET). The system integrates the motor and inverter into a compact, high power-density unit, replacing conventional separated configurations and supporting scalable manufacturing. The system, now ready for commercialisation and large-scale deployment, is expected to reduce import dependency on high-performance EV powertrain components, lower system costs through localisation, strengthen India's EV supply chain, create opportunities for MSMEs in power electronics manufacturing, and enhance competitiveness in semiconductor-based electric mobility solutions.

3. Voluntary Debit Freeze Facility Introduced For Mutual Fund Folios – Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)

Status: Completed | **Source:** [SEBI](#)

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has introduced a **voluntary debit freeze facility** for mutual fund folios to enhance digital security for investors. The facility will allow investors to lock their mutual fund folios so that units cannot be redeemed, transferred or otherwise debited until the freeze is lifted. In the first phase, the feature will be made available through the MF Central platform, operated by mutual fund Registrars and Transfer Agents (RTAs), for KYC-compliant investors with registered email and mobile numbers. The measure strengthens investor protection by allowing investors to prevent unauthorised transactions in mutual fund holdings.

4. UIDAI Launches Bug Bounty Programme To Strengthen Aadhaar Cybersecurity – Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology

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

The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology has launched its first **Bug Bounty Programme** to enhance the security of the Aadhaar ecosystem. The initiative invites cybersecurity researchers and ethical hackers to identify vulnerabilities in key UIDAI digital platforms such as the UIDAI website, myAadhaar portal and Secure QR Code application. The initiative aims to strengthen the resilience of Aadhaar digital infrastructure by proactively identifying and addressing cybersecurity risks.

5. FASTag Annual Pass Fee Revised For FY 2026-27 – Ministry of Road Transport and Highways

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

The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has revised the fee for the FASTag Annual Pass from ₹ 3,000 to ₹ 3,075 for FY 2026-27, effective 1st April 2026, in accordance with the National Highways Fee (Determination of Rates and Collection) Rules, 2008. The annual pass, available to eligible non-commercial vehicles with valid FASTag, allows travel across around 1,150 toll plazas on National Highways and Expressways through a one-time payment valid for one year or 200 toll crossings. The revised fee continues to support seamless toll payments and improve convenience for over 56 lakh FASTag annual pass users nationwide.

6. Indian Culture Portal Version 2.0 Launched With AI And Multilingual Capabilities – Ministry of Culture

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

The Ministry of Culture has launched **Version 2.0 of the Indian Culture Portal**, an upgraded national digital platform providing unified access to India's cultural heritage resources. The portal integrates collections from museums, libraries, archives, and cultural institutions, supported by a modern architecture with a React-based frontend and Drupal backend. Key features include an AI-powered chatbot "Bharti" integrated with the BHASHINI platform for multilingual interaction across 22 Indian languages, advanced search with metadata filtering, and immersive features such as 3D walkthroughs and 360 degree virtual tours of heritage monuments. The upgrade also introduces 46 curated cultural categories and interactive learning tools, strengthening efforts to digitise and democratise access to India's cultural heritage.

7. Online Registrations Open For Yuva Sangam Phase VI Under Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat – Ministry of Education

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

The Ministry of Education has opened online registrations for Yuva Sangam Phase VI under the Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat initiative. The flagship youth exchange programme facilitates **structured exposure visits** between paired States and Union Territories to strengthen national integration and mutual understanding among youth aged 18-30 years. In this phase, 22 Higher Education Institutions have been designated as nodal institutions, with selected participants undertaking five to seven-day educational and cultural visits to paired regions. Anchored around the five pillars of tourism, culture, development, people-to-people connect and technology, the programme promotes experiential learning and inter-state engagement in alignment with the National Education Policy 2020.

8. Empowered Committees Constituted In West Bengal For Processing Citizenship Applications – Ministry of Home Affairs

Status: Completed | **Source:** [Gazette of India](#), [Economic Times](#)

The Ministry of Home Affairs has constituted **two additional Empowered Committees for the State of West Bengal** under the Citizenship Act, 1955 and the Citizenship Rules, 2009. The committees will be headed by officers not below the rank of Deputy Secretary to the Government of India and will include representatives from the Subsidiary Intelligence Bureau, Foreigners Regional Registration Office, National Informatics Centre and the Department of Posts. The committees will support the processing and verification of citizenship applications under the prescribed rules. The two committees notified on 2nd March 2026 bring the total number of empowered committees in West Bengal to four. The move strengthens the administrative capacity and institutional mechanisms for handling citizenship-related applications in the State.

9. Cabinet Approves Rail Multi-Tracking Projects In West Bengal And Jharkhand – Ministry of Railways

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

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved **two multi-tracking railway projects** under the Ministry of Railways with a total estimated cost of ₹ 4,474 crore. The projects include the Sainthia–Pakur fourth line and the Santragachi–Kharagpur fourth line, which together will expand the Indian Railways network by about 192 km across five districts in West Bengal and Jharkhand. The projects aim to increase line capacity, reduce congestion and improve reliability of passenger and freight services while supporting multimodal connectivity under the PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan. The capacity augmentation is expected to strengthen regional connectivity, improve freight movement and reduce logistics costs through more efficient rail transport.

10. Cabinet Approves Declaration Of Madurai Airport As An International Airport – Ministry of Civil Aviation

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

The Union Cabinet has approved the declaration of **Madurai Airport** in Tamil Nadu as an **International Airport** under the Ministry of Civil Aviation. Madurai Airport serves as a key gateway to southern Tamil Nadu and supports tourism, pilgrimage and regional economic activity. The upgrade will improve international connectivity, boost tourism and trade, and strengthen economic development in the region.

11. Foundation Stone Laid For India's First Riverine Lighthouses On Brahmaputra - Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways

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

The Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways has laid the foundation stones for four **riverine lighthouses** along the Brahmaputra River (National Waterway-2) at Pandu, Bogibeel, Silghat and Biswanath Ghat. The project, implemented by the Directorate General of Lighthouses and Lightships in collaboration with the Inland Waterways Authority of India, involves an investment of around ₹ 84 crore. The solar-powered lighthouses will provide navigational support for inland vessels and enable safer 24×7 navigation on the Brahmaputra waterway. The initiative is expected to strengthen inland waterway logistics, support cargo movement and promote river-based tourism in the Northeast.

12. Hallmarking Of Gold Jewellery And Gold Artefacts Order Amended - Department of Consumer Affairs

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

The Department of Consumer Affairs has notified the **Hallmarking of Gold Jewellery and Gold Artefacts (Amendment) Order, 2026**, amending the Hallmarking Order, 2020 under the Bureau of Indian Standards Act, 2016. The amendment substitutes the annexure to update specifications relating to BIS hallmarking requirements for gold jewellery and artefacts, strengthening the regulatory framework governing gold purity certification and consumer protection in the jewellery market.

13. Legal Metrology Rules Amended To Remove Certain Verification Provisions - Ministry of Consumer Affairs

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

The Ministry of Consumer Affairs has notified the Legal Metrology (General) Third Amendment Rules, 2026, amending the Legal Metrology (General) Rules, 2011. The amendment removes Rules 16, 21 and 21A, which previously governed certain verification and regulatory requirements **relating to weights and measures**. The change streamlines the regulatory framework governing legal metrology compliance and administration under the Legal Metrology Act, 2009.

14. IFSCA Issues Consultation Paper On Market Abuse Regulations For IFSC Securities Markets - International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA)

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

IFSCA has released a consultation paper proposing the IFSCA (Prohibition of Market Abuse in Securities Markets) Regulations, 2026, aimed at establishing a dedicated regulatory framework to prevent insider trading, market manipulation and fraudulent trading in **IFSC securities markets**. The draft regulations seek to replace the current application of SEBI's insider trading and unfair trade practice regulations

in IFSCs, while introducing disclosure requirements for insiders, prohibitions on manipulative trading practices and institutional compliance mechanisms aligned with global regulatory standards.

15. V.O. Chidambaranar Port Becomes First Indian Major Port To Implement Digital Twin Technology – Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways

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

The V.O. Chidambaranar Port Authority has become the first major port in India to implement a Digital Twin platform for port management, marking a significant step toward technology-driven maritime operations. The system creates a real-time virtual replica of the port's infrastructure and operational ecosystem, integrating technologies such as **IoT sensors, GPS tracking, LiDAR mapping**. The initiative is expected to reduce vessel turnaround time by up to 25%, improve operational efficiency, and enable energy and emissions tracking, aligning with the Government's Maritime India Vision 2030 and Amrit Kaal Vision 2047 for developing smart and globally competitive ports.

16. Government Engages National Shipping Board To Address Maritime Sector Challenges – Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways

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

The Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways held a **high-level interaction** with the National Shipping Board (NSB) to review challenges facing the shipping sector amid global geopolitical uncertainties and supply-chain disruptions. The interaction focused on strengthening shipping capacity, improving maritime logistics resilience and addressing operational issues raised by stakeholders, while also reviewing progress under Maritime India Vision 2030 and Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047. The engagement is expected to inform future policy measures to strengthen the domestic shipping ecosystem and ensure stable cargo movement.

17. Indian Statistical Service Rules, 2026 Notified – Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation

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

The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation has notified the **Indian Statistical Service (ISS) Rules, 2026**, superseding the ISS Rules, 2016. The rules define the cadre structure, authorised strength, recruitment process and promotion framework for the service, including 50% direct recruitment through UPSC and 50% promotion from the Subordinate Statistical Service, along with provisions for probation, seniority and non-functional upgradation. The update modernises the administrative framework governing India's central statistical cadre, strengthening institutional capacity for official data and statistical systems.

18. Departmental Competitive Examination Rules Notified For Assistant Section Officer Promotions – Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology

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

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology has notified rules governing the **Limited Departmental Competitive Examination (LDCE)** for promotion to the post of Assistant Section Officer in the Standardisation Testing and Quality Certification (STQC) Directorate. The rules specify eligibility conditions, examination procedures and merit-based selection for Senior Secretariat Assistants with at least five years of service, establishing a structured examination-based mechanism for internal promotions within the directorate.

19. Rules Notified For UPSC Combined Medical Services Examination 2026 – Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

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

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has notified the rules for the **Combined Medical Services (CMS) Examination 2026** to be conducted by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) for recruitment of medical officers in the Central Health Service, Indian Railways, New Delhi Municipal Council and Municipal Corporation of Delhi. The notification sets out eligibility conditions, reservation provisions and the examination and selection process, providing the procedural framework for annual recruitment of doctors into key public healthcare services.



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