

The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India

WEEKLY BULLETIN

ASSOCHAM VOICE



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Cabinet Decisions

Cabinet approves proposal for Transitioning from North and South Blocks to 'Seva Teerth' and 'Kartavya Bhavans'

On 13 February 2026, the Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated the new Prime Minister's Office, 'Seva Teerth', to the nation. The Union Cabinet met for the last time in South Block, marking a symbolic transition from a colonial-era centre of power to a modern, service-oriented seat of governance. North and South Blocks have witnessed India's journey from colonial rule to independence and global prominence, hosting Cabinets of 16 Prime Ministers and landmark decisions shaping the nation. In recent years, South Block became the hub of transformative reforms, major welfare initiatives, and decisive national security actions, reflecting India's confident and capable governance.

The shift to Seva Teerth and Kartavya Bhavans represents India's resolve for a modern, technology-driven, and environmentally sustainable governance framework rooted in the culture of service. The Cabinet also resolved to convert North and South Blocks into the Yuge Yugeen Bharat National Museum, preserving India's civilisational heritage while inspiring future generations.

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Cabinet approves Startup India Fund of Funds 2.0 to Mobilize Venture Capital for India's Startup Ecosystem

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved the Startup India Fund of Funds 2.0 (FoF 2.0) with a total corpus of Rs. 10,000 crore to mobilise venture capital and accelerate the next phase of India's startup growth. The scheme aims to strengthen the domestic venture capital ecosystem, mobilise long-term capital, and support innovation-led entrepreneurship across the country. Startup India FoF 2.0 builds on the success of the Fund of Funds for Startups (FFS 1.0) launched in 2016, under which the entire Rs. 10,000 crore corpus was committed to 145 AIFs, enabling investments of over Rs. 25,500 crore in more than 1,370 startups across diverse sectors. These efforts have helped India's startup ecosystem grow from fewer than 500 startups in 2016 to over 2 lakh DPIIT-recognised startups, with 2025 recording the highest-ever registrations.

The new fund adopts a targeted approach to support deep tech and innovative manufacturing, early-growth stage founders, and startups beyond major metros, while addressing high-risk capital gaps in priority sectors critical for self-reliance and economic growth. It will also strengthen India's domestic venture capital base, especially smaller funds.

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Cabinet approves Rs. One Lakh Crore Urban Challenge Fund to Drive Market-Led Urban Transformation

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved the Urban Challenge Fund (UCF) with Rs. 1 lakh crore in Central Assistance to catalyse about Rs. 4 lakh crore of urban investment over the next five years. Central support will cover up to 25% of project cost, with a minimum 50% mobilised from market sources, marking a shift from grant-based to market-linked, reform-driven urban infrastructure financing.

Operational from FY 2025–26 to FY 2030–31, the Fund will support Cities as Growth Hubs, Creative Redevelopment, and Water & Sanitation through a competitive, challenge-based selection linked to reforms, milestones and outcomes. A Rs. 5,000 crore credit enhancement and Credit Repayment Guarantee Scheme will help Tier-II/III and smaller cities access market finance.

The UCF aims to strengthen urban governance, crowd in private investment, and build resilient, inclusive and climate-responsive cities, aligned with national development priorities.

[Read more](#)

Cabinet Decisions

Cabinet approves extension corridor from Noida Sector 142 to Botanical Garden (Noida) for a length of 11.56 Km with 8 stations

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved the Extension Corridor from Noida Sector 142 to Botanical Garden under the Noida Metro Rail Project. The corridor will span 11.56 km with 8 elevated stations. Once operational, the total active metro network in Noida and Greater Noida will increase to 61.62 km, significantly strengthening urban transport infrastructure.

The new corridor will improve connectivity between key commercial hubs, IT parks, educational institutions, healthcare facilities, and recreational areas in Noida. It will provide seamless interchange at Botanical Garden with the Blue Line and Magenta Line, enhancing access to high-demand corridors and major transport hubs. The project is expected to ease traffic congestion, reduce travel time, improve road safety, and lower carbon emissions by shifting commuters to metro rail.

[Read more](#)

Cabinet approves Rehabilitation and upgradation of Ghoti – Trimbak (Mokhada) – Jawhar – Manor – Palghar section of NH-160A to 2 Lane /4 Lane with paved shoulder configuration in Maharashtra

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved the rehabilitation and upgradation of the Ghoti–Trimbak (Mokhada)–Jawhar–Manor–Palghar section of NH-160A in Maharashtra on EPC mode. The project covers 154.64 km at a total cost of Rs. 3,320.38 crore and aims to ease congestion and improve regional connectivity.

The upgraded corridor will provide an alternative route for heavy freight traffic generated by industrial clusters around Nashik, reducing pressure on urban roads. It will connect NH-160A with major corridors including the Samruddhi Expressway, Delhi–Mumbai Expressway (NE-4) and NH-48, improving access to the western coastal belt and tribal regions of Palghar. The project aligns with PM GatiShakti principles and will link key economic, social and logistics nodes, strengthening logistics efficiency.

Once completed, the project is expected to reduce travel time and vehicle operating costs, improve road safety, and support economic development in tribal areas. It is also estimated to generate around 19.98 lakh person-days of direct employment and 24.86 lakh person-days of indirect employment, besides catalysing growth along the corridor.

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Cabinet approves upgradation of Dhamasiya–Bitada/ Movi and Nasarpore–Malotha Sections of National Highway-56 in Gujarat

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved the construction of 4-lane sections on NH-56 in Gujarat under the Hybrid Annuity Mode (HAM). The project covers the Dhamasiya–Bitada/Movi (47.46 km) and Nasarpore–Malotha (60.21 km) stretches, with a total length of 107.67 km and a capital cost of Rs. 4,583.64 crore.

The project will improve connectivity in tribal and aspirational districts including Narmada, Dahod, Chhota Udepur, Tapi and Bharuch, and enhance access to the Statue of Unity near Kevadia. Designed for 100 km/h, it will reduce travel time by about 40% (from 2.5 hours to 1.5 hours) and support faster, safer movement of people and goods.

On completion, the project will establish continuous 4-lane connectivity from Bodeli to Malotha, easing congestion on NH-56 and strengthening links with NH-53, NH-48 and the Delhi–Mumbai Expressway (NE-4). It is expected to generate around 19.38 lakh man-days of direct and 22.82 lakh man-days of indirect employment, while catalysing economic activity along the corridor.

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Cabinet Decisions

Cabinet approves the Widening of NH167 from Gudebellur to Mahabubnagar on the Hyderabad-Panaji Economic Corridor

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved the widening of NH-167 from Gudebellur to Mahabubnagar in Telangana to a 4-lane standard under the Hybrid Annuity Mode (HAM). The project, part of the Hyderabad-Panaji Economic Corridor, covers 80.01 km with a total capital cost of Rs. 3,175.08 crore.

The upgradation will address congestion and poor road geometry across several urbanised towns, improving travel time and safety. It will significantly benefit Narayanpet and Mahabubnagar districts by enhancing freight efficiency, reducing logistics costs, and supporting socio-economic growth. The corridor will integrate with NH-150 and NH-167N and connect multiple PM GatiShakti economic, social and logistics nodes, strengthening multimodal connectivity.

On completion, the access-controlled 4-lane highway is expected to boost regional trade and industrial development and generate about 14.4 lakh person-days of direct and 17.9 lakh person-days of indirect employment, besides inducing additional economic activity along the corridor.

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Cabinet approves construction of Twin Tube TBM road Underwater tunnel 2 Lane each under River Brahmaputra

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved the construction of a 4-lane access-controlled greenfield corridor from Gohpur (NH-15) to Numaligarh (NH-715) in Assam at a total capital cost of Rs. 18,662 crore under EPC mode. The project includes a 15.79 km road-cum-rail tunnel beneath the River Brahmaputra, which will be India's first underwater road-cum-rail tunnel and the second such tunnel in the world.

The project will drastically reduce the existing 240 km travel distance—which currently takes about six hours—thereby improving connectivity between Upper Assam and North Bank regions. It will enhance freight efficiency, reduce logistics costs, and support socio-economic growth across Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and other North-Eastern states.

The corridor will integrate with NH-15, NH-715, key railway sections of Northeast Frontier Railway, airports and inland waterways, strengthening multimodal connectivity and linking major economic, social, tourist and logistics nodes.

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Cabinet approves three multitracking projects covering 12 Districts across the states of Delhi, Haryana, Maharashtra and Karnataka

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved three multi-tracking projects of the Ministry of Railways at an approximate cost of Rs. 18,509 crore. The projects include the Kasara-Manmad, Delhi-Ambala, and Ballari-Hosapete 3rd and 4th lines. Together, they will add about 389 km to the railway network, enhance line capacity, reduce congestion, and improve operational efficiency and service reliability.

Planned under the PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan, the projects span 12 districts across Delhi, Haryana, Maharashtra and Karnataka, improving connectivity for around 3,902 villages with a population of nearly 97 lakh.

The capacity augmentation is expected to enable additional freight traffic of about 96 MTPA, reduce logistics costs, cut oil imports by 22 crore litres, and lower CO₂ emissions by 111 crore kg, equivalent to planting 4 crore trees.

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Industry Developments

Overall

India's trade surplus with US may hit USD 90 bln: SBI

State Bank of India report indicates that India's trade surplus with the United States (US) could exceed USD 90 billion annually, driven by tariff reductions that may significantly raise exports. The report estimates Indian exporters could expand shipments of the top 15 products to the United States by about USD 97 billion, with total additional export potential likely to cross USD 100 billion a year.

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Centre pushes states to expedite utilisation of capex funds

The department of expenditure is urging states to expedite pending proposals and clear eligible projects under the Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment (SACI) scheme to ensure timely sanction and disbursal before the 31 March 2026 deadline, a government official informed Economic Times.

[Read more](#)

India-US trade statement remains basis for interim trade deal: Centre

India has stated that the India-United States (US) joint statement dated 7 February 2026 remains the basis for negotiating the proposed interim trade agreement. It added that amendments to the White House fact sheet now reflect the shared understanding between both sides.

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Agri & Food processing

FCI, WFP sign MoU for supply of rice to eradicate global hunger

On 18 February 2026, the Food Corporation of India (FCI) and World Food Programme (WFP) signed an MoU for the supply of rice to support the eradication of global hunger. Under the pact, the FCI will supply 200,000 tonnes of rice, up to 25 per cent broken, to the WFP. The agreement will be valid for five years from the date of signing and may be extended by mutual consent.

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Saffron production in J&K declines to 19.5 MT in 2024-25

Saffron production in Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) has declined from 23.5 metric tonnes (MT) in 2023-24 to 19.5 MT in 2024-25. The information was shared by union territory (UT) deputy chief minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary. The total area under saffron cultivation in the UT has remained constant at 1,116.2 hectares, but output and productivity have fluctuated, he added.

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India's oilmeals exports decline to 260,000 tonnes in January

India's oilmeals exports declined by 42.5 per cent in January 2026. As per the Solvent Extractors' Association of India (SEA), India exported around 260,000 tonnes of oilmeals during January 2026, as against 452,000 tonnes in January 2025. The decline has been reported due to a sharp fall in the exports of soybean meal and rapeseed meal.

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Aviation

India has a total of 25,001 active pilots: MoS for Civil Aviation

In a written reply in Lok Sabha, the MoS for Civil Aviation, Murlidhar Mohol, said that the number of pilots who are below the age of 65 years and holding various categories of licences issued by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) was 25,001. Of this, 10,051 were Airlines Transport License (ATPL) (aeroplane) holders and 210 ATPL (helicopter) holders, while the number of Commercial Pilot License (CPL) (aeroplane only) and CPL (helicopters only) holders was 12,480 and 777, respectively.

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SC asks to submit progress report on inquiry into Air India plane crash

On 11 February 2026, the Supreme Court (SC) asked the government to submit within three weeks a progress report on the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau's (AAIB's) inquiry into the Air India plane crash in Ahmedabad in June last year that killed as many as 260 people.

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Proposed cabin crew rest norms are 'more restrictive' compared to global standards: Indian airlines

Indian airlines like IndiGo, Air India, and SpiceJet have described the proposed cabin crew rest norms as 'more restrictive' compared to global standards and offers limited operational flexibility for the airlines. The Federation of Indian Airlines (FIA), which represents IndiGo, Air India and SpiceJet, has made various recommendations to the aviation watchdog and stressed the need for having 'globally-harmonised, evidence-based and operationally practical provisions'.

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Automobiles and Ancillaries

Mahindra invests in Chennai R&D centre

Mahindra & Mahindra is investing Rs.1.96 billion to expand its Advanced Research & Development Centre at Mahindra Research Valley in Chennai. The funds will strengthen the company's capabilities in vehicle research, design, engineering, and testing, with a focus on next-generation platforms and emerging automotive technologies.

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Ashok Leyland sharpens global expansion plans

Ashok Leyland is accelerating its international growth with key strategic initiatives. The company plans to set up a new vehicle assembly unit in Saudi Arabia to meet rising demand in the Middle East. It is entering Indonesia through a partnership to co-develop vehicles, including electric buses and defence products.

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India lags in electric passenger vehicle adoption

India ranks near the bottom globally in electric passenger vehicle adoption, with EVs accounting for only about four per cent of new car sales in 2025. Despite government targets for 2030, the pace of adoption remains slow due to limited charging infrastructure, inadequate policy support, and other systemic challenges. Under current conditions, EV penetration is projected to reach only around 10 per cent, highlighting the urgent need for stronger incentives and expanded infrastructure to accelerate the transition to electric mobility.

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Banking and Financial Services

SBI to focus on retail deposits and not wholesale funding

State Bank of India (SBI) will continue to focus on retail deposits and not on wholesale funding, according to a report by Motilal Oswal Financial Services. The bank's cost of funds is expected to remain at current levels in the near term. The bank will wait for its credit growth to outpace funding costs before providing funding cost guidance.

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RBI eases MSME lending norms

Under the revised norms, banks can provide collateral-free lending for loans up to Rs.2.5 million to strong credit profile borrowers. The mandatory collateral-free lending threshold has been increased to Rs.2 million from Rs.1 million for MSMEs.

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IRDAI eases AIF norms, tightens overseas investment rules

The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has issued clarifications granting insurers greater flexibility to invest in Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs). However, the regulator introduced safeguards to restrict overseas investments made through AIFs using policyholder money.

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Energy & Natural Resources

Tripura Electricity Corporation undertakes capacity enhancement drive

The Tripura State Electricity Corporation Limited has undertaken a comprehensive capacity enhancement drive across key substations in Agartala. The initiative is aimed at addressing the steadily rising power demand while strengthening long-term grid reliability and consumer convenience.

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Uttarakhand surpasses 1 GW of installed solar power capacity

Uttarakhand has crossed a major renewable energy milestone, surpassing one GW of installed solar power capacity. The state's total installed solar capacity now stands at over 1,027.8 MW, underlining its growing push towards clean and sustainable energy.

[Read more](#)

Kutch Copper to achieve full utilisation levels in 2-3 months

Kutch Copper is likely to achieve full capacity utilisation over the next 2-3 months, according to Robbie Singh, chief financial officer at Adani Enterprises. The smelter has a capacity of 0.5 million tonnes and was built with a capital expenditure of about USD 1.2 billion.

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Govt offers 11 mineral blocks across 8 states for exploration

The government has offered 11 deep-seated mineral blocks across eight states under the second round of exploration license (EL) auctions, according to G Kishan Reddy, union mines minister. The mineral mix includes five rare earth element (REE) blocks, two vanadium-titanium, two diamond, one lead-zinc and one zirconium.

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Healthcare

Medical devices sector to reach USD 50.1 billion by 2030

India's medical devices sector is expected to reach USD 50.1 billion by 2030, growing at a compound annual growth rate of 26.9 per cent. The growth will be supported by government schemes such as the National Medical Devices Policy (NMDP), the production linked incentive (PLI) scheme, the Scheme for Promotion of Medical Devices Parks and MedTech Mitra.

[Read more](#)

J&K admin to roll out comprehensive cancer control strategy

The J&K administration has decided to roll out a comprehensive cancer control strategy focusing on infrastructure development, capacity building and institutional partnerships. It will be launched in collaboration with NITI Aayog and Indian Council of Medical Research, with strategic guidance from institutions such as the Tata Memorial Centre.

[Read more](#)

Himachal Pradesh approves Rs.16.1 bln under healthcare modernisation

The Himachal Pradesh government has approved Rs.16.1 billion in the first phase of a Rs.30 billion healthcare modernisation project. The initiative will upgrade Government Medical Colleges, Super Speciality Centres and Adarsh Swasthya Sansthans.

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Infrastructure

Road connectivity gets support in Rajasthan Budget 2026-27

The Rajasthan government's 2026-27 Budget allocated Rs.18 billion for construction, repair and upgradation of state highways, bridges, flyovers and elevated roads. It also earmarks Rs.4 billion for access roads to industrial areas and logistics parks and Rs.5 billion for general road repair works.

[Read more](#)

Punjab minister lays foundation stone for Durali-Manauli, Dairri-Chaomajra link road at Durali

Punjab agriculture minister Gurmeet Singh Khuddian laid the foundation stone for the Durali-Manauli and Dairri-Chaomajra link road at Durali village. This has come as a measure to strengthen road connectivity around Mohali and reduce traffic congestion on the busy Mohali-Chandigarh Road.

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AAI has allocated Rs.34.90 bln for modernisation of air navigation infra

The MoS for Civil Aviation Murlidhar Mohol told the Lok Sabha that the Airports Authority of India has earmarked approximately Rs.34.90 billion during the period 2026-2028 for the modernisation of Communication, Navigation and Surveillance / Air Traffic Management infrastructure at various airports.

[Read more](#)

Centre allocates Rs.153.8 bln for development of NHs in Maharashtra

The Centre has allocated Rs.153.8 billion for the development of national highways (NH) in Maharashtra during the current financial year. As many as 116 highway projects covering a combined length of 2,612-km are currently under construction across the state.

[Read more](#)

IT & ITES

Odisha govt signs MoU with Tata Technologies to upgrade 22 ITIs into CoEs

On 18 February 2026, the Odisha government signed an MoU with the Tata Technologies to upgrade 22 Industrial Training Institutes (ITI) in the state into Centres of Excellence (CoE) at an investment of Rs.7.7 billion. As per the pact, the state government will bear 14 per cent of the project cost, while the firm will contribute 86 per cent. The upgraded ITIs will be equipped with state-of-the-art laboratories and industry-grade equipment, bringing training infrastructure at par with modern industrial standards.

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Bihar govt signs MoUs worth Rs.4.6 bln with technology companies

The Bihar government signed MoUs with several technology companies involving proposed investments of about Rs.4.6 billion at the India AI Impact Summit & Expo held in Delhi. The agreements include a Rs.2.5 billion project to establish a research park at the IIT-Patna and a Rs.600 million (CoE) in artificial intelligence (AI) aimed at promoting innovation, incubation & employment in the state.

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Tech Mahindra shifts to outcome-linked delivery structures

Tech Mahindra has moved away from the traditional billing-based model towards outcome-linked delivery frameworks and more consulting-driven engagements, as artificial intelligence (AI) increasingly shapes customer demand.

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Pharmaceuticals

WHO grants manufacturing pre-qualification to Biological E's polio vaccine

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has granted Phase II pre-qualification to Biological E for its novel oral polio vaccine type two (nOPV2), allowing the company to manufacture both the drug substance and final product at a single integrated Hyderabad facility.

[Read more](#)

Zydus settles Mirabegron patent with Astellas for USD 12 million

Zydus Lifesciences and its United States (US) subsidiary have settled their patent dispute with Astellas Pharma over the drug Myrbetriq (Mirabegron). Under the agreement, Zydus will pay Astellas an upfront amount of USD 120 million and a prepaid per-unit licence fee on its generic Mirabegron sales in the US until September 2027.

[Read more](#)

SC allows Zydus to sell cancer drug biosimilar

The Supreme Court (SC) has refused to stop Zydus Lifesciences from manufacturing and selling its biosimilar version of the cancer drug nivolumab, which is marketed by Bristol Myers Squibb (BMS) under the brands Opdivo and Opdyta. The SC directed BMS to map Zydus' product against its patent and seek any interim relief from the High Court (HC) if needed.

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Regional Developments

Andhra Pradesh

Andhra Pradesh's SIPB clears 27 investment proposals

On 18 February 2026, the Andhra Pradesh State Investment Promotion Board (SIPB) cleared 27 investment proposals across information technology (IT), renewable energy, tourism, food processing, infrastructure and industrial sectors. Once realised, the proposed projects will involve investments worth Rs.290.2 billion and are expected to generate 22,407 jobs.

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Andhra Pradesh Assembly passes amendments to Municipal Act

On 18 February 2026, the Andhra Pradesh Assembly passed amendments to the Municipal Act. The aim is to ease financial burdens on builders and promote transparency in construction processes. The first amendment allows builders to pay only 50 per cent of the vacant land tax during the construction period, from the time building permission is granted until the issuance of the Occupancy Certificate.

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India's largest integrated battery gigafactory to be set up in the state

India's largest integrated battery gigafactory would be set up in Andhra Pradesh by the Waree Energy Storage Solution (WESSPL). This marks a decisive step in the country's push toward clean-energy manufacturing self-reliance and reduced dependence on imports.

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Gujarat

Health and education receive support in Gujarat Budget 2026-27

The Gujarat Budget 2026-27 has earmarked Rs.32 billion for the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana to strengthen healthcare coverage. It also provides Rs.5 billion for multi-specialty hospitals in Surat & Ahmedabad and Rs.5 billion under the Systems Reforms Endeavours for Transformed Health Achievements - Gujarat (SRESTHA-G) health initiative.

[Read more](#)

Agri and rural economy receive provisions in Gujarat Budget 2026-27

The Gujarat government has allocated Rs.15.7 billion for agricultural mechanisation and Rs.13.4 billion for fisheries sector development in the state Budget 2026-27. Natural farming initiatives receive over Rs.3.9 billion, while Rs.5 billion has been earmarked for the Gau Mata Poshan Yojana. Rural infrastructure is given provision in the state Budget with Rs.56 billion under the Mukhya Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana.

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Infra. and connectivity get major allocation in Gujarat Budget 2026-27

The Gujarat Budget 2026-27 has provided Rs.161.2 billion under the Swarnim Jayanti Mukhya Mantri Shaheri Vikas Yojana to enhance urban infrastructure. It allocates Rs.8 billion for the Gujarat High-Speed Corridor and Rs.6 billion for climate-resilient roads.

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Haryana

Haryana approves 4 solar powered integrated micro irrigation projects

On 18 February 2026, Haryana chief secretary (CS) Anurag Rastogi approved four community-based solar powered integrated micro irrigation projects under the Micro Irrigation & Command Area Development Authority (MICADA). The projects will be implemented across 61 canal outlets covering 20 blocks in Bhiwani, Jhajjar, Kurukshetra and Mahendragarh districts.

[Read more](#)

Haryana govt launches series of TB elimination initiatives

The state govt has launched a series of new patient-centric initiatives under the National TB Elimination Programme (NTEP). As part of it, a dedicated state TB cell website has been introduced for real-time public access to TB services, a first-of-its-kind Sewing Machine Centre to help TB survivors regain financial independence, a clinical guidance document aimed at cutting TB mortality, etc.

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Haryana govt approves procurement of critical medical equipment worth Rs.23.9 mln

Haryana health and family welfare department approved the procurement of critical medical equipment worth Rs.23.9 million. The move aims to enhance patient care and strengthen healthcare infrastructure across the state. The equipment include 25 slit lamps, 140 radiant warmers, 60 LED phototherapy units and 1,575 plastic-moulded pallets.

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Karnataka

India's first private sector helicopter FAL inaugurated in Karnataka

First private sector helicopter final assembly line for the Airbus H125 was inaugurated at Vemagal in Kolar on 17 February 2026. The facility has been built by Tata Advanced Systems (TASL) in partnership with European aerospace major Airbus. This is the first time the Indian private sector will undertake the manufacturing, integration, testing and maintenance of a sophisticated rotary-wing platform in India.

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State mandates collection of gig workers welfare fee from aggregators

The State government issued a notification mandating the collection of gig workers welfare fee from aggregators and digital platforms under the Karnataka Platform-Based Gig Workers (Social Security & Welfare) Act. The objective is to provide social security benefits to platform-based gig workers. The state labour department has fixed the welfare fee at one per cent of payouts, subject to sector-specific caps.

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Karnataka govt to open 210 new fair price shops

The Karnataka government has decided to open around 210 new fair price shops. The information was shared by state food and civil supplies minister KH Muniyappa on 13 February 2026. He said that steps will be taken to distribute Indira kits to nearly 124,000 below poverty line (BPL) cardholders from March 2026. The kits will contain tur dal, oil, sugar and salt. The tender for the distribution of the kits has been floated.

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Madhya Pradesh

Madhya Pradesh's State Economic Survey projects GSDP at Rs.16.6 trillion

Madhya Pradesh's State Economic Survey for the financial year 2025-26, in terms of advance estimates, has projected the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) at Rs.16.6 trillion. This reflects a growth of 11.14 per cent over Rs.15 trillion in FY 2024-25. Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav said that the state's economy has strengthened significantly with financial discipline, transparent governance, and visionary policies.

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Capital push continues despite deficit contraction in Madhya Pradesh

Madhya Pradesh's capital expenditure for 2026-27 is budgeted at Rs.8 trillion, up from Rs.7.5 trillion in the revised estimates of 2025-26. Despite the moderation in fiscal deficit, the state continues to expand asset-creating expenditure. The fiscal deficit is budgeted at Rs.5.4 trillion in 2026-27, equivalent to 3.9 per cent of GSDP, compared with 4.5 per cent in 2025-26 (RE).

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Receipts growth anchors higher spending plan of Madhya Pradesh

According to the Madhya Pradesh annual budget, total receipts are budgeted at Rs.38.9 trillion in 2026-27. This was higher compared to Rs.35.4 trillion in the revised estimates of 2025-26. Revenue receipts are budgeted at Rs.30.9 trillion, up from Rs.27.9 trillion, while capital receipts are projected at Rs.8.1 trillion against Rs.7.5 trillion previously.

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Maharashtra

Centre allocates Rs.153.8 bln for development of NHs in Maharashtra

The Centre has allocated Rs.153.8 billion for the development of national highways (NH) in Maharashtra during the current financial year. As many as 116 highway projects covering a combined length of 2,612-km are currently under construction across the state. These projects represent an estimated investment of Rs.573.6 billion. A significant portion of the pipeline is aimed at capacity expansion.

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Maharashtra to launch campaign for single-day delivery of key services

The Maharashtra government has decided to launch a special campaign aimed at delivering 15 key revenue services in a single day through specially-organised camps. These include the disposal of pending mutation entries, correction of errors in 7/12 land title documents, issuance of income, domicile & caste certificates, non-creamy layer certificates, guidance and rectification in non-agricultural matters.

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Maharashtra's MMRDA presents Rs.480.7 bln Budget for FY 2026-27

Maharashtra's Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) presented its Rs.480.7 billion Budget for the financial year (FY) 2026-27, projecting a marginal surplus of Rs.1.7 million. Of the total, Rs.40 billion has been earmarked for the Third Mumbai project, Rs.12.5 billion for the Orange Gate to Marine Drive Coastal Road Underground Tunnel, Rs.30.2 billion for Thane to Borivali Four-Lane Underground Tunnel and Rs.23.6 billion for the extended Mumbai urban infrastructure projects.

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Tamil Nadu

Tamil Nadu CM lays foundation stone for Rs.2.6 bln Global Sports City in Chennai

On 18 February 2026, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister (CM) MK Stalin laid the foundation stone for Rs.2.6 billion Global Sports City in Chennai. The facility has been planned over more than 32.3 hectares in the first phase. The project will include an international football stadium, shooting ranges, archery facilities, rowing & kayaking infrastructure, BMX cycling & skating arenas and residential hostels for athletes.

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CM inaugurates Integrated Coirs India Private Limited in Pollachi

CM MK Stalin has inaugurated the first state government-supported coir firm, Integrated Coirs India Private Limited, in Pollachi. The aim is to boost industrial growth, exports and employment opportunities in the region. The unit would act as a special-purpose vehicle for the coir clusters in Pollachi and provide common facilities & warehouse services.

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Tamil Nadu revenue pooled by own taxes

In the interim Budget for 2026-27, the Tamil Nadu government has projected revenue receipts at Rs.344.6 billion. The state's own revenues account for 74.7 per cent of total receipts, while 25.3 per cent is expected from the share in central taxes and grants-in-aid.

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Telangana

Telangana govt launches welfare schemes for minority communities

On 18 February 2026, the Telangana government launched welfare schemes for minority communities. Among the schemes announced is the distribution of e-scooters to minority youth at a unit cost of up to Rs.150,000 under the Empowerment of Youth programme. For the Turka Kasha Muslim community, the state government also announced the distribution of tool kits and generators, with a unit cost of up to Rs.60,000 as a one-time grant.

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Telangana govt to attract USD 25 billion investments in life sciences sector by 2030

The state government has set an ambitious goal to attract USD 25 billion investments in the life sciences sector by 2030. It also aims to generate 500,000 jobs and transform Hyderabad into a global hub for innovation-led life sciences growth. The Telangana Next-Gen Life Sciences Policy has been formulated to position the state among the top three life sciences clusters globally by the end of this decade.

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State govt to bring 3.7 mln hectares of land under prohibitory category

The Telangana government has drawn up district-wise lists to bring 3.7 million hectares of land under the prohibitory category. Under Section 22-A of the Registration Act, lands belonging to the government, forests, Bhoodan, assigned lands, endowments, Waqf, local bodies and religious institutions are placed in the prohibited list and are barred from sale, lease, mortgage, transfer or any other form of alienation.

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Uttar Pradesh

Uttar Pradesh records surge in women's participation in workforce

UP has witnessed a notable surge in women's participation in the workforce. Recent data shows that a growing number of women are entering both formal and informal employment. The rise has been particularly visible in rural districts, where women are increasingly engaged in agriculture-linked enterprises, self-help group initiatives, micro-entrepreneurship and allied activities.

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UP govt hikes financial assistance under Nirashrit Mahila Pension Yojana

CM Yogi Adityanath has declared a hike in financial assistance under the Nirashrit Mahila Pension Yojana to Rs.1,500 per month. To be eligible, the woman must be a permanent resident of Uttar Pradesh and the annual income of her household should be below Rs.300,000.

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Uttar Pradesh govt to develop network of 6 high-speed vertical roads

The Uttar Pradesh (UP) government is planning to develop the North-South Corridor, which is a network of six high-speed vertical roads. The project will cover over 2,340-km over 20 districts, touching the Nepal border in the north and the Madhya Pradesh border in the south.

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Union Territories

Delhi CM inaugurates projects worth Rs.21 bln

On 18 February 2026, Delhi Chief Minister (CM) Rekha Gupta inaugurated several projects worth over Rs.21 billion at Ramlila Maidan and Todapur. The aim is to strengthen the national capital's water and sewer infrastructure. The projects, undertaken by the Delhi Jal Board (DJB), seek to enhance sewage treatment, modernise water supply and provide long-term solutions to decades-old civic issues.

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J&K admin allocates 10% of funds from CAPEX budget for rural sanitation

The J&K admin has decided to allocate 10 per cent of funds from the capital expenditure budget to run the defunct solid waste management infrastructure for the sanitation of villages in the union territory (UT). The information was shared by UT rural development and panchayati raj minister Javid Dar.

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Delhi govt plans to set up additional CBWTFs

The Delhi government is planning to set up additional common biomedical waste treatment facilities (CBWTFs) across the national capital. The aim is to ease pressure on the city's two existing plants, which currently process all of the city's biomedical waste.

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Chandigarh civic body approves Rs.17.1 bln Budget for FY 2026-27

The Chandigarh Municipal Corporation approved a Rs.17.1 billion Budget for the financial year (FY) 2026-27. The Budget projects a resource gap of about Rs.4 billion as the expected income of Rs.13.1 billion falls short of the planned expenditure, as per The Indian Express.

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International Developments

India and France elevate ties to special global strategic partnership with wide-ranging cooperation initiatives

During the visit of the President of the French Republic to India, both sides upgraded their relationship to a "Special Global Strategic Partnership" and established an annual Foreign Ministers' Dialogue to review progress under the Horizon 2047 Roadmap. Key outcomes include defence cooperation renewal, a helicopter assembly line inauguration in Karnataka, and a joint venture for missile production. Initiatives were launched in innovation, critical technologies, minerals, digital sciences, AI in health, renewable energy, skilling, infectious diseases research, metabolic health, start-ups, taxation amendments, and postal cooperation, strengthening bilateral collaboration across sectors.

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India and United Kingdom deepen cooperation in AI and future telecommunications

On the sidelines of the AI Summit in New Delhi, the Minister of State for Communications, Government of India, held a bilateral meeting with the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for AI and Online Safety, United Kingdom. Both sides reaffirmed cooperation under the India-UK 2030 Roadmap and Technology Security Initiative. Discussions focused on AI-native telecom networks, 6G, quantum communications, cybersecurity, fraud prevention, and global standardization. Progress under the DoT-DCMS MoU and the Connectivity and Innovation Centre was reviewed. Support was sought for upcoming ITU engagements and strengthening institutional collaboration.

[Read more](#)

India and New Zealand convene first joint working group meeting on horticultural cooperation

India and New Zealand held the first Joint Working Group meeting under the Memorandum of Cooperation on horticultural cooperation. The meeting was co-chaired by the Joint Secretary (Horticulture), DA&FW in person and the Divisional Manager, Bilateral Relations and Trade, NZ, in virtual mode. Discussions focused on kiwifruit and pip fruit development, including Centres of Excellence, orchard management, productivity enhancement, quality rootstock import procedures, post-harvest systems, supply chain strengthening, research collaboration, capacity building and grower training. Timelines and an implementation roadmap were finalized to sustain bilateral horticultural cooperation.

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