

### 1. Union Cabinet Approves Bhavya Scheme for Industrial Parks

- The **Union Cabinet** has officially approved the **Bharat Audyogik Vikas Yojana (Bhavya Scheme)** to boost infrastructure and industrial growth across **India**.
- The scheme was approved with a total financial budget of **₹33,660 crore**.
- The project is handled and implemented by the **National Industrial Corridor Development Corporation (NICDC)** in collaboration with **state governments** and **private players**.
- The government provides internal infrastructure (such as roads and utilities) and funds up to **25%** of the project costs for external infrastructure (highways, railways, and ports connecting the parks).
- The core objective is to develop **100 industrial parks** ranging in size from **100 to 1000 acres** across the country, driving large-scale industrialization.

### 2. Cabinet Clears Small Hydro Power Development Scheme

- The **Union Cabinet** approved the **Small Hydro Power Development Scheme**, which is structured to run for a **5-year** period from **2026-27** to **2030-31**.
- The scheme has been allocated a total budget of **₹2584.60 crore**.
- For **North-East (NE) states**, hilly regions, and border districts, the government provides **₹3.6 crore per MW** or **30%** of the project cost (whichever is lower), capped at **₹30 crore per project**.
- For other states, the funding is set at **₹2.4 crore per MW** or **20%** of the project cost (whichever is lower), capped at **₹20 crore per project**.

### 3. Updates on the 10,000 FPOs Scheme and Market Integration

- The **Central Sector Scheme** to promote **Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs)** was originally launched by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** in **February 2020** with a budget of **₹6,865 crore**.
- As per official definitions, Marginal farmers are those holding up to **1 hectare** of land, while Small farmers hold **1 to 2 hectares**.
- As of **March 1, 2026**, all **10,000 FPOs** have been successfully registered.
- The milestone **10,000th FPO** is located in **Khagaria, Bihar** (focusing on maize, banana, and paddy).
- A total of **5,000 FPOs** are now registered on the **Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC)**.
- The **Ministry of Agriculture** signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** to convert the **10,000 FPOs** into **Common Service Centers (CSCs)**.

### 4. Extension of Jal Jeevan Mission 2.0 and Related Water Governance Initiatives

- The **Union Cabinet** extended the **Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) 2.0** up to **December 2028**.
- **Rajasthan** and **Madhya Pradesh** signed an **MoU** comprising **11 structural reforms** regarding governance and sustainability.
- **Jal Arpan** was introduced as the formal process of handing over completed piped water supply schemes to **Gram Panchayats** and communities.
- **Jal Utsav** was instituted as a three-tier annual campaign operating at the national, state, and **Gram Panchayat** levels.

### 5. Launch of Dirghawadi Krishak Punji Sahkar Yojana

- The **National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC)**, operating under the **Ministry of Cooperation**, launched the **Dirghawadi Krishak Punji Sahkar Yojana**.
- The **NCDC** currently operates via **19 regional offices** and **9 sub-offices** across the country.

### 6. National Quantum Mission

- The **National Quantum Mission** was originally approved on **April 19, 2023**, with a massive budget allocation of **₹6,003.65 crore**.

### 7. Development of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) in Pondicherry

- Historically, **India's first SEZ** was established in **Kandla, Gujarat** in **1965**.
- The modern **SEZ Act of 2005** was modelled on the **Chinese system**, and the **Baba Kalyani Committee** currently advises on SEZ matters.
- **Pondicherry** is governed by **Chief Minister N. Rangasamy** and **Lieutenant Governor K. Kailashnathan**.
- The **Union Government** approved a **₹1,250 crore IT SEZ** spanning **21.30 acres** on government land near **Thattanchavady**.

- A separate **Multi-Modal SEZ** worth **₹2,500 crore** covering **750 acres** was cleared at **Sedarapet-Karasur**, focusing on pharma and textiles.
- 8. Odisha's First Smart Village Inaugurated at Kusumpur**
- **Odisha** is currently led by **Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi** and **Governor Dr. Hari Babu Kambhampati**.
  - **Kusumpur**, located in the **Rajnagar block** of **Kendrapara district**, has been selected as **Odisha's first smart village**.
  - It is home to **130 families** comprising roughly **700 people**.
- 9. NSO Releases Periodic Labour Force Survey Employment Data**
- Based on a massive sample size of **3,74,897**, **India's overall unemployment** declined to **4.9%** in **February 2026** (down from **5%** in **January**).
  - The data breakdown reveals that **Urban unemployment** stands at **6.6%**, while **Rural unemployment** is **4.2%**.
  - The survey provides critical indicators of national economic health, recording an overall **Labor Force Participation Rate** of **55.9%** and a **Worker Population Ratio** of **53.2%**.
- 10. MNRE Expands Renewable Energy ALMM to List III**
- India targets hitting **500 GW of non-fossil capacity by 2030** without diluting strict domestic content rules.
  - Note: The **International Solar Alliance (ISA)** is headquartered in **Gurugram**, founded by **India and France** in **2015**, and the **United States of America (USA)** recently exited the alliance.
- 11. RBI Wins Global Award for Exclusive "bank.in" Domain**
- **India** became the first country globally to introduce a highly secure, exclusive web domain for authorized banks to prevent cyber fraud and phishing attacks.
  - The initiative is jointly supported by the **National Internet Exchange of India (NIXI)** and the **Institute for Development and Research in Banking Technology (IDRBT)**.
  - The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** won the **"Initiative of the Year"** award at the **13th Central Banking Awards** held in **London**.
  - The RBI has mandated that all authorized banks must fully adopt the **"bank.in"** domain by **October 2025**.
- 12. RBI Injects Liquidity via Variable Rate Repo (VRR) Auction**
- The **RBI** conducted a **Variable Rate Repo (VRR)** auction.
  - Through this auction, the RBI successfully injected **₹48,014 crore** into the banking system at a cut-off/weighted average rate of **5.26%**.
- 13. Government and RBI Crackdown on Fraudulent Digital Lending Apps**
- Citizens can report financial fraud directly via the **National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal** or by calling the **1930 helpline**.
- 14. Major Innovations and Expansions in India's UPI Ecosystem**
- Regulatory note: Payment Banks require a minimum capital of **₹100 crore**, can accept a maximum of **₹2 lakh** in deposits, and are strictly not allowed to offer loans or credit cards.
  - The **BHIM** app was originally launched in **2016**; its current version (**BHIM 3.0**) natively supports over **15 languages**.
  - **Jio Payments Bank** partnered with **RNFI Services** (operating the **'RallyPay'** platform) to launch cardless, UPI QR-based cash withdrawals via Business Correspondents (agents/shopkeepers) using a secure PIN.
  - **NPCI International Payments Limited (NIPL)** expanded UPI acceptance across Sri Lankan merchants via direct QR code scanning.
  - The travel fintech platform **Scapia** launched an in-app **Scapia Pay** service allowing users to earn rewards using **RuPay credit cards**.
  - **NPCI BHIM Services Limited (NBSL)** officially appointed cricketer **MS Dhoni** as the brand ambassador for the BHIM payments app.
- 15. Axis Bank Clears Major Investment in Axis Finance**

- **Axis Finance** is a **100% owned subsidiary** of **Axis Bank**.
  - **Axis Bank**, after receiving formal approval from the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)**, cleared a massive **₹1500 crore** investment into **Axis Finance**.
- 16. SEBI Mandates Default Nominations for Demat and Mutual Funds**
- The **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)**, established in **1988**, regulates India's financial markets.
  - **SEBI** made it mandatory by default to add a nominee for single-holder Demat accounts and Mutual Fund folios.
  - Investors are allowed to list up to **4 nominees**.
- 17. Shriram General Insurance Launches 'Shri Health Suraksha 2.0'**
- **Shriram General Insurance** is a prominent **Jaipur-based** insurance firm.
  - The company is currently headed by **Chairman Chandra Kishore Mishra**.
- 18. CCEA Approves MSP Support for Cotton Farmers**
- The **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)** is chaired by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**.
  - The **CCEA** officially approved a **₹1718.56 crore** allocation toward the **Minimum Support Price (MSP)** for the **2023-24 season**.
- 19. Launch of the Asia-Africa Agri Alliance (AAAA)**
- Bilateral agricultural trade between Asia and Africa tops **\$90 billion** annually, accounting for **40% of global production**.
  - Africa notably holds **65% of global arable land**, and its agricultural sector is projected to hit a massive **\$1 trillion** market valuation by **2030**.
  - The **Asia-Africa Agri Alliance (AAAA)** was formally launched in **New Delhi**.
- 20. 7th India-Russia UN Consultations Held in New Delhi**
- The **7th consultations** took place in **New Delhi**.
  - The dialogue was led by India's **Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) Secretary (West) Shri Sibi George** and **Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Alimov**.
- 21. India and Indonesia Initiate Prambanan Temple Restoration**
- The **Prambanan Temple complex**, built by the historical **Sanjaya Dynasty**, is a renowned **UNESCO World Heritage** site.
  - Located in **Sleman**, near **Yogyakarta, Java**, the **9th-century** complex is also popularly known as **Roro Jonggrang**.
  - The massive complex features **240 temples** that are dedicated to the Hindu deities **Shiva, Vishnu, and Brahma**.
- 22. Argentina Officially Withdraws from the World Health Organization (WHO)**
- **Argentina** formally withdrew from the **World Health Organization (WHO)** in **March 2026**.
  - The massive policy shift was directly announced by **President Javier Milei** and officially confirmed by government official **Pablo Quirno**.
- 23. Himachal Pradesh Signs MoUs with NDDB for Major Dairy Infrastructure**
- **Himachal Pradesh (HP)** holds the record of being the first state nationally to offer the highest milk **Minimum Support Price (MSP)**.
  - Current HP MSP pricing guarantees: Cow milk at **₹32–₹51/liter** and Buffalo milk at **₹47–₹61/liter**.
- 24. Tripura Presents FY27 State Budget**
- **Finance Minister Pranjit Singha Roy** presented the state budget for FY27.
  - The total budget stands at **₹34,212.31 crore**, representing a **+5.52%** increase from the previous fiscal year.
- 25. Gujarat Launches its First Sounding Rocket**
- **Gujarat's** very first sounding rocket was successfully launched.
  - The launch occurred from **Bavalyari village** situated near **Dholera**.
  - The rocket was built and launched by the **Ahmedabad-based** space startup **Om Space Rocket and Exploration Pvt Ltd**.

### 26. Sahitya Akademi Awards 2025 Announced

- The **National Academy of Letters** confers these highly prestigious annual awards across **24 Indian languages**.
- The 2025 awards category distribution includes **8 poetry books, 4 novels, 6 short story collections, 2 essays, 1 literary criticism, 1 autobiography, and 2 memoirs**.
- Notable winners for the year include **Navtej Sarna** (for the English novel "**Crimson Spring**") and **Mamta Kalia** (for the Hindi memoir "**Jeete Ji Allahabad**").
- The prize comprises a **₹1 lakh** cash prize, a specialized copper plaque originally designed by **Satyajit Ray**, and a traditional shawl.

### 27. Bharat Tribe Fest 2026 and Tribal Homestay Program Commences

- The **Bharat Tribe Fest 2026** officially began on **March 18** in **New Delhi**.

### 28. Important Regional Festivals and Events

- **Phool Dei Festival**: A traditional harvest and spring festival primarily celebrated in the **Garhwal and Kumaon regions**, officially celebrated by the **Uttarakhand Chief Minister**.
- **21st Asian Women's Film Festival**: Hosted in **New Delhi**.
- **Tawi Festival of Arts**: Celebrated in **Jammu & Kashmir (J&K)**.
- **International Yoga Festival**: Hosted in **Rishikesh**.

### 29. Indian Navy Participates in Multinational "Sea Dragon" Exercise

- **Indian Navy Participates** U.S.-led "**Sea Dragon**" Exercise
- The military exercise, named the **Sea Dragon Exercise**, took place near **Guam**.

### 30. Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) Celebrates 41st Raising Day

- The **Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB)** strictly operates under the **Ministry of Home Affairs** with a mandate to heavily combat drug trafficking.
- The bureau was originally founded on **March 17, 1986**, and maintains its headquarters in **New Delhi**.
- The **NCB** officially celebrated its **41st Raising Day**.

### 31. Odisha Hosts National Para Athletics Championship 2026

- The **National Para Athletics Championship 2026** is being officially hosted at the **Kalinga Stadium** located in **Bhubaneswar, Odisha**.
- The sporting event is jointly organized by the **Paralympic Committee of India** and the **Odisha Government**.

### 32. Indian Boxers Excel at World Boxing Futures Cup in Thailand

- The prestigious **World Boxing Futures Cup** serves as an official qualifier for the **Youth Olympic Games** scheduled to be held in **Dakar, Senegal** in **November 2026** (marking the very first Olympic event in Africa).
- The tournament was held in **Bangkok, Thailand**.
- **India** performed exceptionally, winning a total of **5 medals (1 Gold, 3 Silver, 1 Bronze)**.
- A major highlight of the tournament was **Chandrika Pujari**, who decisively won **Gold** in the **Women's 51 kg category**.

### 33. Important National and International Days Observed in March

- **March 15**: Observed as **World Consumer Rights Day** (Theme: "**Safe products, confident customers**") and **International Day to Combat Islamophobia** (Theme: "**Respect every person's dignity**").
- **March 16**: Observed as **National Vaccination Day** (Specifically commemorating the first oral polio vaccine dose given in **India** in **1995**).
- **March 18**: Observed as **Ordnance Factory Day** (Marking the historic **1801** establishment of India's first ordnance factory in **Cossipore, Kolkata**).
- **March 19**: Observed as **National Poultry Day** (A US-focused event tracing back to **1951** in **Versailles, Ohio**, natively aligned with the historic **1944 US National Poultry Improvement Plan**).

### 34. Important Obituaries

- **Kushal Das:** The Former **All India Football Federation (AIFF)** General Secretary passed away in **New Delhi** at the age of **66**.
- **Madhu Malhotra:** The veteran Bollywood actress, incredibly famous for her performance in "**Lambi Judai**" in the film **Hero**, passed away.

**35. Discovery of New Earthworm Species in Kerala**

- A completely new earthworm species formally named **draida vazinia** was discovered.
- The discovery took place in **Kerala**.