

1. Cabinet Approves BHAVYA Scheme for Industrial Parks
 - The **Union Cabinet**, chaired by **PM Narendra Modi**, approved the **Bhavya Scheme (Bharat Audyogik Vikas Yojana)**.
 - The scheme aims to develop **100** plug-and-play industrial parks across India.
 - The allocated budget is **₹33,660 crore**.
 - The government will provide **₹1 crore** per acre of land for the project.
 - It will be implemented by the **National Industrial Corridor Development Corporation (NICDC)** in partnership with states and private players.
2. CCEA Approves MSP Funding for Cotton Farmers
 - The **Cotton Corporation of India (CCI)** was established on **July 31, 1970**, under the **Ministry of Textiles**.
 - Minimum Support Price (MSP) rates are recommended by the **Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP)**.
 - The **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)**, chaired by **PM Narendra Modi**, approved **₹1,718.56 crore** in Minimum Support Price (MSP) funding.
3. CCEA Approves Funding for National Highway 927 in Uttar Pradesh
 - The **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)** approved **₹6,969 crore** for a four-lane **National Highway 927** project.
 - The highway runs from **Barabanki** to **Bahraich** in **Uttar Pradesh**.
4. Ministry of Civil Aviation Launches FARES Scheme
 - The initiative is launched under the existing **UDAN** scheme framework.
 - The **Ministry of Civil Aviation** launched the **FARES (One Route One Fare)** scheme.
 - The inaugural flight successfully connected **Rewa (Madhya Pradesh)** and **Raipur (Chhattisgarh)**.
5. Government Increases Procurement Commission Rates for Arthiyas and Societies
 - The revised commission rates will be effective starting from the **Rabi Marketing Season 2026-27**.
 - The **Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution**, led by Minister **Pralhad Joshi**, increased the commission rates for Arthiyas (commission agents) and Cooperative Societies for government wheat and paddy procurement.
 - Arthiyas: Wheat commission raised to **₹50.75** per quintal in **Punjab** and **Haryana**, and **₹45.67** per quintal in **Rajasthan**.
 - Cooperative Societies: Wheat commission was raised to **₹29.79** per quintal, and the paddy commission was raised to **₹35.30** per quintal.
6. Government Approves Small Hydro Power Development Scheme
 - The scheme has been approved for a 5-year period, covering **FY 2026-27 to 2030-31**.
 - A **₹2,584.60 crore** initiative was approved to install small hydro project capacity.
 - The total installed capacity will be approximately **1,500 MW**.
7. Government Extends Jal Jeevan Mission 2.0 and Signs UP Agreement
 - The mission was originally launched in **2019** with an initial deadline of **2024**.
 - Eastern **UP** has previously faced fatal **Encephalitis outbreaks** caused by water contamination issues.
 - The government extended the mission to **2028** and officially renamed it **Jal Jeevan Mission 2.0**.
 - The total budget allocated for the extension is **₹8.69 lakh crore**.
 - It aims to provide drinkable tap water to **19.36 crore** households.
8. Kalinjar Fort Hill Declared National Geoheritage Site
 - The **Geological Survey of India** declared **Kalinjar Fort Hill**, located in **Banda district, Uttar Pradesh**, as a **National Geoheritage Site**.
 - This new addition increases India's total number of National Geoheritage Sites to **35**.
9. Odisha Identified as Top Contributor to India's Mining Economy
 - A joint report by **ASSOCHAM** and **ICRA** identified **Odisha** as the top contributor to India's mining economy.
 - **Odisha** accounts for about **14%** of the country's mining gross value added.
 - **Odisha** is followed by **Gujarat** and **Maharashtra** in mining contributions.

10. Government Approves National Quantum Mission Facilities
 - The **Government of India** approved quantum teaching facilities and labs in **23** academic institutions.
 - The initiative was reviewed by Science and Technology Minister **Dr. Jitendra Singh**.
 - The mission holds an approved budget of **₹6003.65 crore** for the period **2023-2031**.
 - An additional **100** more facilities are planned.
 - The review meeting selected **Pune** as the venue for the **India International Science Festival**.
11. Ministry of Culture Launches Gyan Bharatam Mission
 - This new initiative restructures the earlier **2003 National Mission for Manuscripts**.
 - The **Union Ministry of Culture**, under Minister **Gajendra Singh Shekhawat**, launched the **Gyan Bharatam Mission**.
 - The **Standing Finance Committee** sanctioned **₹491.66 crore** for the period **2025-2031**.
 - The funds will establish a national network of cluster centers and a **National Digital Repository**.
 - The mission's objective is to survey, document, conserve, and digitize India's manuscript heritage found in academic institutions, museums, and private collections.
 - To qualify, manuscripts must be handwritten on paper, bark, metal, or palm leaf, and must be at least **75 years** old.
12. India and Australia Partner for Vocational Education
 - India's **National Council for Vocational Education and Training** (under the **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship**) met with the **Australian Skills Quality Authority**.
13. Supreme Court Rules 12-Week Maternity Leave for Adoptive Mothers
 - A previous **Code on Social Security** provision restricted benefits to mothers adopting children under three months old.
 - This restriction was declared unconstitutional and a violation of **Article 14 (Equality)** and **Article 21 (Right to Life)**.
 - A Supreme Court bench comprising Justices **J.B. Pardiwala** and **R. Mahadevan** ruled that all adoptive mothers are entitled to **12 weeks** of paid maternity leave.
 - The ruling applies regardless of the adopted child's age.
 - The court struck down the older restrictive provision.
14. AICIL Launches Krishi Sakhi Initiative for Women Farmers
 - The **Agriculture Insurance Company of India Ltd. (AIC)** is a government company founded on **December 20, 2002**, with its HQ in **New Delhi**, and is headed by **Girija Subramanian**.
 - The insurance sector is regulated by the **Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI)**.
 - The launch aligns with the **FAO's "International Year of Women Farmer Recognition"**.
 - The **Agriculture Insurance Company of India Ltd. (AICIL)** launched the **"Krishi Sakhi"** initiative.
15. Ministry of Ayush Launches Yoga 365 Campaign and Signs MoU with CISF
 - The **Ministry of Ayush** launched the **"Yoga 365"** campaign to make yoga a daily habit.
 - Partnered the **Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga** with the **"Habuild"** platform to offer free daily online sessions.
 - Furthermore, the Ministry signed a **5-year MoU** with the **Central Industrial Security Force (CISF)**.
16. Horticulture Crop Area and Production Increases in 2024-25
 - The **Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare**, under Minister **Shivraj Singh Chouhan**, released horticulture crop estimates for **2024-25**.
 - 2024-25 horticulture production is around **370.74 million tonnes**; 2025-26 first advance estimate is about **370.85 million tonnes**.
17. Government Targets 5% Market Share for BHIM App and Expands UPI Globally
 - The government aims for the NPCI-backed **BHIM app** to achieve a **5%** UPI market share by **2028**.
 - A new subsidiary, **"NPCI BHIM Services"**, was launched.
 - **M.S. Dhoni** was named the brand ambassador for the app.

- **NPCI International Payments Ltd (NIPL)** expanded UPI merchant acceptance to **Sri Lanka**, enabling Indian travelers to pay via Lankan QR codes.
 - UPI is now active in **nine countries** (including UAE, Singapore, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, France, Mauritius, Qatar, etc.).
 - UPI now allows access to international mobile numbers in over **12 countries**.
18. IRDAI Proposes Digital Public Insurance Registry
- The **Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI)**, chaired by **Ajay Seth**, proposed a consent-driven digital **Public Insurance Registry**.
 - The registry will act as the backend for the **Bima Sugam** e-marketplace.
19. New PAN Card Application Rules and Structure Announced
- Starting **April 1, 2026**, applying for a PAN card with only an Aadhaar card will be invalid.
 - Applicants must provide additional **Date of Birth (DOB)** proof (such as a birth certificate, voter ID, passport, or driving license).
 - The 10-Character PAN Structure was detailed as follows:
 - **First 3 characters**: Random alphabetic letters.
 - **4th character**: Holder's status (**P**=Individual, **C**=Company, **H**=Hindu Undivided Family, **F**=Firm, **A**=Association, **T**=Trust, **G**=Government Agency).
 - **5th character**: First letter of the individual's surname.
 - **6th to 9th characters**: Sequential numbers (**1 to 9**).
 - **10th character**: Validation alphabet.
20. SEBI Penalizes Entities for Stock Manipulation
- The **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** was established in **1992**.
 - SEBI's **Investor Education and Protection Fund (IEPF)** was established in **2016**.
 - **SEBI** penalized **18** entities with a **5-year** ban.
 - Fines levied ranged from **₹5 lakh** to **₹50 lakh** for manipulating '**Retro Green Revolution Ltd**' shares via social media and Telegram.
 - The total penalties amount to **₹2.8 crore**.
 - Key accused (**Sanjay Arunkumar Choksi, Western Agrotech Innovative**) must return **₹2.94 crore** plus **12%** interest to **Investor Education and Protection Fund (IEPF)**.
21. RBI and SEBI Approve Bain Capital Investment in Manappuram Finance
- US-based **Bain Capital** was founded in **1984**.
 - The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** and **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** approved a proposed **₹4,385 crore** indirect investment by **Bain Capital**.
 - The investment is made via its affiliate **BC Asia Investment Entities**.
 - The funds will go into **Manappuram Finance Limited (MFL)** and two of its subsidiaries: **Asirvad Micro Finance** and **Manappuram Home Finance**.
22. RBI Wins Central Banking Cybersecurity Award
- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)**, under its **26th** Governor **Sanjay Malhotra**, won the "**Initiative of the Year**" award from London-based **Central Banking**.
 - The award recognized the launch of the exclusive "**.bank.in**" internet domain.
 - **Punjab National Bank (PNB)** was the first public sector bank to migrate to it.
 - The domain was launched to enhance cybersecurity and reduce phishing.
 - India is the **first country** to create such a domain.
23. Keki Mistry Appointed Interim Chairman of HDFC Bank
- He replaces **Atanu Chakraborty**, who had served in the position since **May 2020**.
 - The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** approved **Keki Mistry** as the interim part-time chairman of **HDFC Bank** for a period of **3 months**.
24. Argentina Withdraws from the World Health Organization
- The action follows the **USA**, which had previously exited the WHO and the **International Solar Alliance**.

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- **Argentina** (Capital: **Buenos Aires**, Currency: **Peso**) officially withdrew from the **World Health Organization (WHO)** and a related treaty.
 - The withdrawal is effective **March 2026**.
25. World Happiness Report 2026 Ranks India 116th
- The **World Happiness Report 2026** ranked India **116th** out of **147** countries, which is an improvement from **118th** in **2025**.
 - **Finland** was named the happiest country for the **9th** consecutive year, followed by **Iceland, Denmark, Costa Rica, and Sweden**.
26. Anutin Charnvirakul Re-elected as Thailand's Prime Minister
- **Anutin Charnvirakul**, representing the **Bhumjaithai Party**, was re-elected as the **32nd** Prime Minister of **Thailand**.
27. India and Sri Lanka Partner for Wind Energy Transmission Line
- **Sri Lanka** approved a joint venture between India's **Jyoti Structures Ltd.** and a Sri Lankan company.
 - They will construct a **28 km** transmission line connecting the **Mannar** and **Mullikulam** grid substations for wind energy.
 - The project is valued at **2.27 billion Sri Lankan Rupees**.
28. Sri Lanka Implements 4-Day Work Week to Conserve Fuel
- President **Anura Kumara Dissanayake** and PM **Harini Amarasuriya** transitioned public sector jobs to a four-day week, making **Wednesdays** a public holiday (effective **March 18**).
 - The **National Fuel Pass QR** system was reintroduced.
 - Fuel caps were set at **15 liters/week** for private cars and **5 liters/week** for motorcycles.
29. India Partners with Indonesia for Heritage Restoration
- India partnered with **Indonesia** to restore the **Prambanan Temple Complex** located in **Yogyakarta**.
30. Tata Steel Signs MoU with USTB China for Low-Carbon Steelmaking
- **Tata Steel** signed an MoU with the **University of Science and Technology Beijing (USTB)**.
31. FIFA Designates YouTube as Preferred Platform for 2026 World Cup
- **FIFA** designated **YouTube** as the preferred platform for the **2026 World Cup**.
 - The tournament will be held in **Canada, Mexico, and the US** from **June 11 to July 19, 2026**.
32. Jawed Ashraf and N. Chandrasekaran Receive International Honors
- Former Indian Ambassador to France, **Jawed Ashraf**, received France's highest award, the **Legion of Honour of the Commander rank**, for strengthening strategic partnerships.
 - **N. Chandrasekaran** was awarded an honorary **KBE (Knight Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire)** for his contributions to India-UK business ties.
33. Sahitya Akademi Awards 2025 Announced
- The **Sahitya Akademi Awards 2025** were announced across **24 languages**.
 - **Navtej Sarna** won the English award for his novel **Crimson Spring**.
 - **Mamta Kalia** won the Hindi award for her memoir **Jeete Ji Allahabad**.
34. William Dalrymple Wins Mark Lynton History Prize
- Historian **William Dalrymple** won the **Mark Lynton History Prize** and **\$10,000** for his book **The Golden Road: How Ancient India Transformed the World**.
 - **Siddharth Kara** was a finalist for the prize.
35. BCCI Naman Awards 2026 Winners Announced
- **Shubman Gill** won the **Polly Umrigar Award** for Best International Cricketer (Men).
 - **Smriti Mandhana** won the Best International Cricketer (Women) award for the **fifth time**.
 - **Roger Binny** and **Rahul Dravid** won the **Col. C.K. Nayudu Lifetime Achievement Award**.
 - **Mithali Raj** won the **BCCI Lifetime Achievement Award for Women**.
36. Vikram K. Doraiswami Appointed Ambassador to China
- He replaces **Pradeep Kumar Rawat** in the role.
 - **Vikram K. Doraiswami** was appointed India's next Ambassador to **China**.
37. Key State Initiatives in Gujarat, Puducherry, and Punjab
- **Gujarat**: Launched its first sounding rocket, officially entering the space sector.

- **Puducherry:** Approved a ₹1250 crore IT Special Economic Zone.
 - **Punjab:** The state government collaborated with the **World Bank** for "**Punjab Sikhai Kranti 2.0**", a **6-year** educational reform program with a total **₹3,500 crore** investment (**World Bank: ₹2,500 crore, Punjab: ₹1,000 crore**).
38. Odisha Wins Hosting Rights for Major Athletics Championships
- The **Kalinga Stadium** in **Bhubaneswar, Odisha**, won hosting rights for two major events.
 - The events are the **National Para Athletics Championship 2026** and the **World Indoor Athletics Championship 2028**.
39. New Species of Earthworm and Lichen Discovered in India
- A new earthworm species named **Drawida vazhania** was found in **Peechi-Vazhani Wildlife Sanctuary, Thrissur, Kerala**.
 - New lichen species (**Bhattacharya S Singh** and **N Singh**) were discovered in **Sikkim** and **West Bengal**.
40. Regional Festivals Celebrated Across Indian States
- **Myoko Festival:** Celebrated by the **Apatani tribe** in **Ziro Valley, Arunachal Pradesh**.
 - **Parippally Gajamela:** An elephant pageant held in **Kerala**.
 - **Shigmotsov (Shigmo):** A vibrant **14-day** spring festival celebrated in **Goa**.
41. Key Important Days Observed in March
- **Ordnance Factory Day (March 18):** Marks the establishment of India's first ordnance factory at **Cossipore, West Bengal**.
 - **Global Recycling Day (March 18):** The **9th** edition was observed with the theme "**Don't think waste, think opportunity**".
 - **International Day of Happiness (March 20):** Supported by the **UN** and its **2030 SDGs**, this year's theme is "**Caring and Sharing**", focusing on kindness and community building.