

Schemes (1)

• The Largest Producer, and Also the Largest Importer

Body: What: Mission for Aatmanirbharta in Pulses completed one year on 11 October 2026; launched 11 October 2025.

Money and period: Rs 11,440 crore, 2025-26 to 2030-31 (six years), targeting self-sufficiency by 2030-31.

Targets by 2030-31: production nearly 350 lakh tonnes; yield 1,130 kg per hectare; area 310 lakh hectares (an expansion of 35 lakh hectares). **Focus crops:** Tur, Urad, Masoor.

Instruments: climate-resilient and improved seed; 87.5 lakh free seed kits and 126 lakh quintals certified seeds over six years; cluster-based approach in 489 districts; 1,000 processing units (dal mills); assured procurement via NCCF and NAFED from willing, registered farmers. **Year-one results:** production 256.83 → 274.09 lakh tonnes; area 277.20 → 286.46 lakh ha; yield 926 → 957 kg/ha; imports down 31.52% (Rs 46,427.60 cr → Rs 31,793.59 cr); exports up 13.40% (USD 855 mn → USD 969.53 mn, 10.01 lakh tonnes).

India's position: largest producer, largest consumer and largest importer of pulses — about a quarter of world production and roughly a seventh of world imports.

Why yields are low: about 84% of pulses area is rainfed; the Green Revolution displaced pulses from irrigated plains onto marginal land; fewer high-yielding, short-duration, drought-tolerant varieties.

Protein: pulses are 20-25% protein — over twice wheat, nearly three times rice.

Agronomy: legumes fix atmospheric nitrogen, cutting urea demand and improving soil for the following crop.

Major States: MP, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, UP, Gujarat, AP, Karnataka, Jharkhand, Odisha, West Bengal — largely rainfed central and western India.

Exam hook: **Exam hook:** an MSP is a price at which the government *may* buy. For pulses the binding constraint has been **procurement capacity**, not the announced price — which is why assured purchase, not free seed, is the Mission's real instrument.

Welfare (4)

• The Rates Must Be Displayed, and the Centre Can Only Ask

Body: What: Union Health Secretary **Punya Salila Srivastava** wrote to Chief Secretaries of all States and UTs on 12 October 2026, urging prominent display of healthcare service rates by clinical establishments.

Constitutional basis: public health and hospitals are a State subject; Parliament enacted the **Clinical Establishments (Registration and Regulation) Act, 2010** under Article 252(1) on resolutions of State legislatures. Assent 18 August 2010; commenced 1 March 2012.

Consequence of Article 252: the Act applies to the requesting States, later-adopting States and the Union Territories — not automatically to all States. Elsewhere, State/UT frameworks govern.

Rule 9, Clinical Establishments (Central Government) Rules, 2012 — two limbs:

Rule 9(i) — disclosure: display rates for each service and facility at a conspicuous place, in the local language and English. Caps nothing.

Rule 9(ii) — price control: charge within the range of rates determined by the Central Government in consultation with State Governments.

Litigation (pending): provider bodies including the Association of Healthcare Providers (India) and the All India Ophthalmological Society challenge Rule 9(ii) as ultra vires the parent Act; a separate petition seeks enforcement of Rules 9(i) and 9(ii); the Court in 2024 questioned fixing uniform rates for private practice. The Centre defends the rule under Article 47.

The clash: Article 47 (directive principle on public health) against Article 19(1)(g) (right to practise a profession).

Also requested: display of package rates for foreign patients on Medical and Ayush Visas — a medical-value-travel measure as much as a patient-rights one.

Enforcement reality: registration, inspection and penalties are State functions; the Union's instrument is an advisory letter.

Exam hook: **Exam hook:** disclosure is not price control. Rule 9(i) helps the elective patient compare and contest; it does almost nothing for the emergency patient, which is where catastrophic health expenditure concentrates.

• 21% Against a Target of 80%

Body: What: PIB backgrounder *Towards a TB-Free India*, 13 October 2026, with the launch of JOSH (Joint Squad for Health) Teams across 11 states and 55 districts on a pilot basis.

JOSH composition: MY Bharat volunteers + NCC cadets + a designated Class-I officer per team; focus on screening, early detection, adherence and stigma; a Jan Andolan approach.

Progress (WHO Global TB Report 2025): incidence 237 → 187 per lakh (2015-2024), a 21% fall against about 12% globally; deaths 28 → 21 per lakh (about 28% down); treatment coverage 53% → 92% against global 78%.

The target missed: NTEP aimed at 80% lower incidence and 90% lower mortality against 2015, by 2025 — against an SDG horizon of 2030. The deadline has passed.

Burden: India has about 25% of global TB cases (largest of any country, ahead of Indonesia ~10%), about 28% of global TB deaths, and about 32% of global MDR/RR-TB cases.

Programme outputs: 28.1 crore cumulative screenings; over 20 lakh given TB Preventive Treatment (TPT); 5.7 lakh new Nikshay Mitras; 46,118 Gram Panchayats TB-free certified; 34-fold rise in handheld X-ray screening; TB Mukh Bharat App with the AI chatbot 'Khushi'.

Nutrition: Nikshay Poshan Yojana raised from Rs 500 to Rs 1,000 per month from 1 November 2024, extended to family members.

BPaLM: six-month, all-oral regimen — Bedaquiline, Pretomanid, Linezolid, Moxifloxacin — WHO-recommended over 9-month and 18-month regimens for MDR/RR-TB; adopted under NTEP in September 2024. TB-PRACTECAL: success 89% vs 52%, severe adverse events 23% vs 48%.

Treatment success: about 77% for MDR/RR-TB against about 90% for drug-sensitive TB.

The pathogen: TB is caused by Mycobacterium tuberculosis.

Exam hook: **Exam hook:** TB tracks crowding, undernutrition and indoor air. Treatment cures the patient but does not change the room they return to — which is why nutritional support sits inside a disease-control programme.

• 5 Schemes Renamed, and 1 Rate Actually Changed

Body: What: Union Cabinet, 14 October 2026, approved continuation of the National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) for five years, 2026-27 to 2030-31, outlay Rs 53,428 crore, covering 3.20 crore beneficiaries across all 36 States and UTs; guidelines within three months. Proposal of the Department of Rural Development.

Constitutional basis: Article 41 (Directive Principle) — public assistance in cases of old age, sickness and disablement. NSAP launched 15 August 1995; 100% central assistance, intended to make support uniformly available nationwide.

Renaming (learn as pairs): NSAP → Pradhan Mantri Samajik Sahayata Yojana; IGNOAPS → Pradhan Mantri Vridhavaस्था Pension Yojana; IGNWPS → Pradhan Mantri Vidhawa Pension Yojana; IGNDPS → Pradhan Mantri Divyangjan Pension Yojana; National Family Benefit Scheme → Pradhan Mantri Parivar Labh Yojana.

The only substantive change — disability pension: rate Rs 375 (0-79) and Rs 625 (80+); benchmark disability 40%, down from 80%; minimum age now since birth.

Why those rates: the RPwD Act, 2016 requires disability assistance to be invariably 25% higher than similarly placed schemes. 25% above Rs 300 = Rs 375; 25% above Rs 500 = Rs 625. Benchmark disability is defined by that Act as not less than 40%.

Unchanged: old age pension, widow pension and family benefit scheme continue in existing form — central rates of about Rs 200 (old age, 60-79), Rs 500 (80+) and Rs 300 (widow, 40-79), broadly unrevised since around 2012.

The arithmetic check: Rs 53,428 crore ÷ 5 years ÷ 3.20 crore beneficiaries ≈ Rs 278 per beneficiary per month — consistent only with the existing rate structure.

State top-ups: States add their own amounts, and the variation is an order of magnitude; aggregate State spending on top-ups and additional beneficiaries exceeds the central outlay by a wide margin.

Exam hook: **Exam hook:** in a continuation decision the news lies in the modifications, not the continuation. Here that is one component out of five.

• No Added Sugar Before Six Months

Body: The draft: Food Safety and Standards (Foods for Infant Nutrition) Amendment Regulations, 2026, published in the Gazette on 16 October 2026, proposing that sucrose and fructose shall not be added in products intended for infants up to 6 months.

The parent regulations: FSS (Foods for Infant Nutrition) Regulations, 2020, covering composition, quality and safety for products for infants from birth to 24 months.

Existing carbohydrate rule: lactose and glucose polymers are preferred; sucrose and fructose permitted only where required, subject to limits. The draft removes that discretion below six months.

Why lactose: it is the carbohydrate of human milk, so the preference aligns the substitute with what it substitutes.

Why six months: public health guidance recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months, so products for that band may constitute the infant's entire nutrition.

Why fructose specifically: hereditary fructose intolerance is a rare inherited disorder, typically undiagnosed in early infancy, in which exposure can cause serious illness.

It is a draft. Gazette publication of a draft invites objections and suggestions; final notification follows, usually with a transition period.

Exam hook: The parallel statute: the IMS Act, 1992 (amended 2003) regulates the marketing of infant milk substitutes and feeding bottles — advertising prohibitions, restrictions on idealising imagery, and bars on promotional contact — while the FSS Act governs composition.

Polity/Bodies (1)

• Yes or No, With Remarks

Body: What: Ministry of Cooperation mandated the Multi-State Co-operative Societies (Auditor's Report) Order, 2026 (MSCARO, 2026) on 14 October 2026 — a uniform, structured, risk-based statutory audit reporting framework.

Legal basis: Section 73(6) of the Multi-State Co-operative Societies (Amendment) Act, 2023, which empowered the Central Government to prescribe auditing and accounting standards for MSCS.

Consulted: RBI, ICAI, CAG and the societies.

Template: modelled on CARO, the Companies (Auditor's Report) Order of the corporate sector.

The format: auditors report on financial, administrative, governance and statutory compliance parameters through a standardised format with clear Yes/No responses plus remarks. Implementation is phased.

Why the format matters: binary answers remove the auditor's scope to bury findings in qualification, and are machine-readable — which is what enables automated scrutiny and risk-based monitoring through the CRCS Portal.

Constitutional position: cooperative societies are a State subject; societies with objects beyond one State are governed by the Multi-State Co-operative Societies Act, 2002, administered by the Central Registrar of Cooperative Societies, appointed under Article 243ZH(f) read with Section 4(1).

97th Amendment (2011): inserted Part IXB, Articles 243ZH–243ZT. In Union of India v. Rajendra N. Shah (2021) the Supreme Court, on the Article 368(2) proviso ratification question, held Part IXB operative only for multi-State cooperative societies and inapplicable to societies confined to one State. The bench was split; the judgment was confined to the procedural issue.

Why cooperative audit carries more weight than corporate audit: a cooperative has no market price, no analyst coverage and no rating — the auditor is nearly the only external check on members' savings.

Exam hook: Exam hook: a disclosure requirement becomes a supervisory instrument only when the disclosure is structured enough to be read at scale. The remaining variable is whether the Central Registrar can act on what the data reveals.

Economy (5)

• The Insurer That Was Made to Buy a Bank

Body: What: CCEA, on 14 October 2026, approved the strategic restructuring of IDBI Bank Ltd — sale of an aggregate 60.72% stake to M/s 10955230 Canada Inc. (parent M/s Fairfax Financial Holdings Ltd) for Rs 52,878.08 crore.

The stake split: GoI 30.48% + LIC 30.24% = 60.72% sold; residual GoI 15% and LIC 19% — i.e. 34% retained on the state side, which is why it is restructuring, not full privatisation.

Background: IDBI is a scheduled commercial bank regulated by the RBI; poor financial health required repeated capital infusion, first by GoI, later by LIC.

PCA: RBI placed IDBI under the Prompt Corrective Action framework on 5 May 2017 over NPAs and losses; restrictions lifted 10 March 2021, subject to conditions and continuous monitoring. PCA restricts lending, branch expansion and dividends when capital, asset-quality or profitability thresholds are breached.

Decision machinery: Inter-Ministerial Group (IMG) → Core Group of Secretaries on Disinvestment (CGD) → Alternative Mechanism (AM), an empowered group of Cabinet Ministers → CCEA.

Process: two-stage competitive bidding. Preliminary Information Memorandum inviting Expressions of Interest issued 7 October 2022; bidders required to be 'Fit and Proper' per the RBI and to hold MHA security clearance; Request for Proposal for techno-financial bids. Five EoIs → four qualified → two Qualified Bidders.

Timeline: four years, October 2022 to October 2026.

Why bank sales are slow: the RBI's 'Fit and Proper' test for owners of a deposit-taking institution and an MHA national-security screen, plus due diligence on a loan book recently under PCA.

Exam hook: Exam hook: recapitalising a state bank through a state insurer does not remove the cost — it moves it from the Budget, where it is visible and voted, to a balance sheet, where it is neither.

• 375 MW to 1.5 GW, and the Two Resources Nobody Priced

Body: What: the Data Centre Evaluation Framework, released by NITI Aayog's Frontier Tech Hub on 14 October 2026, developed with inputs from MeitY, the Ministry of Power and DPIIT. It is a decision-support tool for States, not a regulatory requirement.

Five pillars: Power and Energy; Water and Cooling; Siting and Environmental Sustainability; Economic and Strategic Value; Policy, Governance and Implementation.

Capacity: about 375 MW in 2020 to roughly 1.5 GW now (over 1,500 MW in 2025 per a March 2026 parliamentary reply; about 1.57 GW in a later factsheet). Projections for 2030 range from about 6.5 GW to 8 GW.

Concentration: Mumbai and Navi Mumbai about 790 MW, Chennai about 305 MW, Bengaluru about 182 MW — driven by submarine-cable landings, not by power or water availability.

Key recommendations: assess grid readiness and net grid draw; storage-backed renewable power; basin-level water stress and public-supply impact; rainwater harvesting and on-site water treatment; lifecycle plans for e-waste and batteries; distinguish colocation from active compute; link incentives to measurable outcomes; time-bound approvals.

The fiscal backdrop: the Union Budget 2026-27 proposed a tax holiday until 2047 for foreign cloud providers serving overseas customers from Indian data centres, with domestic sales routed through an Indian reseller and taxed in India.

Exam hook: Why advisory: land, water and electricity distribution are State subjects; NITI Aayog advises rather than regulates.

• The Licence Queue That Is Also a Foreign Policy Problem

Body: What: the **National Strategic Trade Command Centre (NSTCC)**, launched at **Vanijya Bhawan** on **15 October 2026**, developed by the **Department of Commerce** as an integrated analytics and visualisation platform over existing DGFT systems and the Trade Connect ePlatform.

First-phase dashboards: IEC, Advance Authorisation, EPCG, Certificate of Origin, SCOMET, and restricted imports and exports — analysable by Regional Authority, scheme, product, destination market and application.

Three stated purposes: integrated monitoring, performance assessment against indicators, and evidence-based policy inputs.

The operative instruction: reviewing the SCOMET dashboard, the Minister called for **Inter-Ministerial Committee meetings weekly if required** to clear pending applications.

SCOMET: Special Chemicals, Organisms, Materials, Equipment and Technologies — India's national export control list for dual-use, munitions and nuclear-related items including software and technology; notified under **Appendix 3 to Schedule 2 of the ITC (HS)**; categories **0 to 8**.

Split licensing: **Category 0** → **Department of Atomic Energy**; **Category 6 (Munitions)** → **Department of Defence Production**; **all other categories** → **DGFT**.

Exam hook: **Regime position:** India joined the **MTCR** on **27 June 2016** as its 35th member, and is a member of the **Wassenaar Arrangement** and the **Australia Group**. India is **not an NSG member**, but adheres to NSG guidelines.

• 42% of Capacity Is Not 42% of Electricity

Body: **PAIMANA = Project Assessment, Infrastructure Monitoring and Analytics for Nation-building**, a **MoSPI** dashboard launched **16 April 2026**, updated quarterly. The October 2026 update was released on **16 October 2026**.

184 indicators after adding **21**; **41 indicators** updated this quarter across Power, Civil Aviation, Ports/Shipping/Waterways and Roads.

Five dimensions: **Access, Quality, Fiscal Cost and Revenue, Utilization, Affordability** — note that three of these measure something other than output.

Indicator spread: Ports/Shipping/Waterways **62**, Railways **37**, Telecom **31**, Civil Aviation **30**, Power **14**, Roads **10**.

Power: installed capacity **5,32,739.7 MW** (up **12.1%**, March 2026); **RES** **2,23,273 MW** (up **29.5%**), about **42% of installed capacity**.

Capacity ≠ generation. Renewables have lower capacity utilisation factors, so their share of electricity generated is well below their share of capacity. Also distinguish **RES, non-fossil** (adds large hydro and nuclear) and **renewables including large hydro**.

Exam hook: **Other figures:** NH awarded **2,236.3 km** (+62.9%); Major Ports cargo **390.4 MT** (+7.2%), Non-Major **313.4 MT** (+1.8%); OFC **7,52,113 km**; Gram Panchayats connected **2,23,814**; air cargo **18.6 lakh tonnes** (+12%); foreign tourist arrivals **30.49 lakh** (+2%).

• Legal to Spray, Impossible to Sell

Body: The notification: draft **Food Safety and Standards (Contaminants, Toxins and Residues) Amendment Regulations, 2026**, published in the Gazette on **16 October 2026**, proposing MRLs in **tea** of **20 mg/kg (20 ppm)** for **acetamiprid** and **50 mg/kg (50 ppm)** for **imidacloprid**. Stakeholder comments invited.

International comparison: India's proposed acetamiprid limit of **20 ppm** is **below Japan's 30 ppm** and the **USA's 50 ppm**; the imidacloprid limit was formulated with reference to **Codex** standards.

Two regulators: **CIB&RC** under the **Ministry of Agriculture** (Insecticides Act, 1968) registers pesticides and approves label claims; **FSSAI** under the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** (FSS Act, 2006) fixes residue limits in food.

The gap: **CIB&RC** approved the label expansion for tea in **January**, the **Tea Board** added both molecules to its **Plant Protection Code** in **April**, but **no MRL existed under food law** — making use lawful and residues non-compliant.

MRL definition: the **highest residue legally permitted when the pesticide is used according to Good Agricultural Practice**, derived from **supervised residue trials** and checked against the **Acceptable Daily Intake**. It is a compliance benchmark, not a toxicity threshold.

Codex Alimentarius: joint **FAO-WHO** body; its standards gain force through the **WTO SPS Agreement**, under which conformity creates a presumption of consistency with obligations.

Context figures: India's pesticide use **under 0.5 kg/hectare** against a global average of **2.38 kg/hectare**; **13 pesticides** of higher toxicity delisted in the earlier review; the **2024** amendment regulations revised MRLs substantially.

Exam hook: **Chemistry note:** both molecules are **neonicotinoids**, several of which are restricted in the EU over pollinator concerns.

IR/Diplomacy (1)

• 8 Years From the Decision to the First Meeting

Body: What: The **First BIMSTEC Home Ministers' Meeting (HMM)**, New Delhi, **13 October 2026**, chaired by Union Home Minister **Amit Shah**, adopted the **Delhi Declaration**.

Full form: **Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation**.

Members (7): **Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand**.

Formation: **1997** as **BIST-EC** (Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Thailand); **Myanmar** joined **22 December 1997** → **BIMSTEC**; **Nepal and Bhutan** admitted **February 2004** → present name and membership.

Charter: signed at the **5th Summit, Colombo (virtual)**, **30 March 2022**; **in force 20 May 2024**. It conferred **legal personality**, enabled admission of new members and observers, and empowered agreements with other countries and organisations.

Secretariat: **Dhaka**, headed by a Secretary General.

6th Summit: **Bangkok, 4 April 2025** — first in-person summit in seven years; adopted **BIMSTEC Bangkok Vision 2030** (first vision document) and signed an **Agreement on Maritime Transport Cooperation**; welcomed establishment of the **HMM** mechanism.

HMM lineage: decided at the **4th Summit, Kathmandu, August 2018**; mechanism established at **Bangkok 2025**; first meeting **Delhi 2026** — an **eight-year** interval.

Delhi Declaration: Bay of Bengal as a **common security space**; condemns terrorism including **cross-border terrorism**; urges **full and effective implementation** of the **BIMSTEC Convention on Combating International Terrorism, Transnational Organised Crime and Illicit Drug Trafficking** (in force since **March 2021**); Plans of Action on **Human Trafficking, Narcotic Drugs and Precursor Chemicals, Anti-Money Laundering**; notes crime groups using **technology** to traffic and coerce victims.

Principles: sovereign equality, territorial integrity, political independence, non-interference, non-aggression, peaceful coexistence — and cooperation that is **complementary to, not a substitute for**, bilateral and other arrangements.

SAARC comparison: no SAARC summit since **Kathmandu 2014**; the **2016 Islamabad** summit collapsed after the **Uri attack**; **BIMSTEC** **excludes Pakistan, includes Thailand and Myanmar**, and fits **Act East**. **Exam hook:** **Exam hook:** BIMSTEC is not better designed than SAARC — it is **usable**, because it lacks the member whose disputes froze the other body.

Environment (3)

• A Reservoir Built in 1958, Now a Wetland of International Importance

Body: The announcement: on **15 October 2026** the Environment Minister said India's Ramsar tally reached **103**, with **Sukhna Wetland (Chandigarh)** and **Sauj Jheel (Uttar Pradesh)** added. In **April 2026**, **Shekha Jheel** in **Aligarh** was India's **99th** site and **Uttar Pradesh's 12th**.

Sukhna: created in **1958** by damming the seasonal **Sukhna Choe** from the **Shivaliks**; about **3 sq km**; the Choe was **diverted away from the lake** in **1974** and the lake fed through siltation; **roughly 25 sq km** of catchment was acquired and vegetated; part of that catchment is the **Sukhna Wildlife Sanctuary**. It is **Chandigarh's first** Ramsar site.

Human-made wetlands qualify. The Ramsar definition covers reservoirs, tanks, canals and salt pans. Designation turns on **ecological function**, not origin.

The Convention: adopted at **Ramsar, Iran, on 2 February 1971**, in force **1975**; **India acceded in 1982** with **Chilika (Odisha)** and **Keoladeo (Rajasthan)**; **World Wetlands Day** is **2 February**.

Key concepts: **wise use**; the **List of Wetlands of International Importance** under nine criteria; the **Montreux Record** for sites whose ecological character has changed or may change.

Domestic law: protection comes from the **Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017** and **State/UT Wetlands Authorities** — not from Ramsar listing itself.

Exam hook: **The route:** **State/UT Wetland Authority** → **MoEFCC** → **Ministry of External Affairs** → **Ramsar Secretariat**.

• A Dead Meander Near Lucknow Holds 4,600 Years of Monsoon

Body: The study: announced 16 October 2026 by the Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeosciences (BSIP), an autonomous institute of the Department of Science and Technology, reconstructing 4,600 years of climate and environmental history.

The site: Karela Lake, an oxbow lake at Hulas Khera, Mohanlal Ganj, near Lucknow, in the Central Ganga Plain, close to an archaeological site with a Kushan-period settlement.

Oxbow lake: a cut-off river meander. It traps sediment, receives pollen and organic matter, and stays undisturbed — which is why it preserves an ordered, datable record.

Proxies used: stable isotopes, vegetation and pollen records, sedimentary organic matter and microbial activity, sediment transport, and archaeological evidence.

The finding: Indian Summer Monsoon fluctuations controlled lake hydrology, sediment transport, vegetation, organic matter, microbial activity and early farming adaptation.

Historical frame: the Indus Valley Civilization's rise and decline are widely linked to monsoon change; the Ganga Plain became a centre of agricultural expansion afterwards, with multiple migrations recorded between 4500 and 1000 cal yr BP.

cal yr BP means calibrated years before present, with "present" fixed at 1950.

Exam hook: Holocene context: the epoch began about 11,700 years ago; its latest subdivision, the Meghalayan Age, begins about 4,200 years ago and is defined from a stalagmite record in Meghalaya.

• India Forecasts Well. It Does Not Yet Serve Well.

Body: The event: First Stakeholder Consultation Meeting of the Climate Science into Services for India Forum (CSSIF), held at IITM Pune on 17 October 2026, with over 150 participants from more than 80 institutions.

The host: the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, Pune, an institute under the Ministry of Earth Sciences.

Technical sessions: weather and climate products, climate models and data, and the need for a Climate Services Information System (CSIS) for India.

Thematic sectoral groups: Health (impact of climate extremes), Energy and Finance, and Climate Projections and Services.

Information vs service: information is a forecast or projection; a climate service is that information delivered in a form a specific user can act on at the moment of decision.

Global Framework for Climate Services (WMO) — five pillars: observations and monitoring; research, modelling and prediction; the Climate Services Information System; the user interface platform; capacity development. India is strong on the first two and building the next two.

Exam hook: Why sectors differ: health needs thresholds with days of lead time; energy needs supply forecasting as renewable share rises; finance needs decadal projections with defensible methodology.

Infra (3)

• 23,493 Data Layers, and the Road Nobody Had to Dig Twice

Body: What: PIB backgrounder on five years of PM GatiShakti, issued 12 October 2026, the anniversary falling on 13 October.

Nature: not a construction or funding programme — the PM GatiShakti National Master Plan (PMGS-NMP) is a GIS-based digital platform carrying ministries' existing and planned assets, geographic features and demography as map layers.

Reach: 58 Central Ministries and Departments and all 36 States and Union Territories; over 23,493 data layers as of 12 October 2026; PM GatiShakti Public opens 230 approved datasets; ingestion via the Data Uploading and Management System (DUMS).

Seven Infrastructure Engines: railways, roads, ports, waterways, airports, mass transport, logistics infrastructure.

Machinery: Empowered Group of Secretaries (EGoS) at the apex; Network Planning Group (NPG) appraising projects for multimodal integration before sanction; Technical Support Unit (TSU) for domain expertise.

Why the NPG is unusual: it is a pre-sanction gate, where most Indian scrutiny is a post-hoc audit — it prevents waste instead of reporting it.

Progress: 256 projects sanctioned, 198 under implementation, as of 11 August 2026.

Training: Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya, a dedicated transport and infrastructure university.

Pune–Bengaluru Expressway: 699 km, crossing 15 National Highways, 25 State Highways and 6 railway stations; 7–8 hours saved; 16 crore litres of fuel and about 39 crore kg of emissions avoided annually.

Jogighopa Multimodal Logistics Park, Assam: Dhubri–Phulbari distance cut from 205 km to 20 km.

Green Energy Corridor: 480-km HVDC line, Pang (Ladakh) to Kaithal (Haryana), NPG-recommended, targeted FY2029-30.

Next step: ITLA is to prepare a National Transport Master Plan — the move from a shared map to a sequenced plan.

Exam hook: Exam hook: a planning platform's output is avoided error, which leaves no evidence. Judge it by data layers, pre-sanction appraisals and interface counts, not by concrete.

• Two Sovereigns on One Coast

Body: What: The 21st Maritime State Development Council (MSDC) concluded at Mumbai on 13 October 2026 — its first meeting as a statutory consultative body.

Statutory basis: the Indian Ports Act, 2025, which repealed and replaced the Indian Ports Act, 1908. Lok Sabha 12 August 2025, Rajya Sabha 18 August 2025, assent 21 August 2025, in force 1 April 2026; the MSDC's recognition notified 15 May 2026.

Origin: MSDC originally constituted in 1997 as an administrative body.

Chair and members: Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways (Sarbananda Sonowal); coastal State ministers, UT administrators, State Maritime Board officials, Major Port chairpersons, naval and coast guard representatives, and allied bodies — IWLAI, Shipping Corporation of India, Dredging Corporation of India, Indian Port Rail and Ropeway Corporation.

Statutory functions: advise on the National Perspective Plan; enhance port competition and efficiency; improve connectivity; issue guidelines for data transparency.

The federal split: Major Ports are a Union responsibility; non-major ports belong to the States through State Maritime Boards — which is the reason the Council exists.

Outcomes: One Nation One Port Process (ONOP) across all ports by March 2027; mandated electronic publication of port tariffs; Shipbuilding Project Credit Risk Insurance Policy (SbPCP) and Business Credit Shield Policy–Shipbuilders (BCSPS); port-linked Industrial Regions with plug-and-play infrastructure; development of a National Ports Perspective Plan.

Why credit insurance matters: shipbuilding is long-cycle and paid on delivery; insurance transfers default risk from the lender, which is what makes the working-capital loan possible.

The catch: the Act does not specify that MSDC recommendations are binding — so it joins the Indian category of statutory bodies with recommendatory output, alongside the GST Council (Article 279A; *Mohit Minerals*) and the Parliamentary Standing Committees.

Exam hook: Exam hook: statutory recognition changed the Council's permanence and standing, not its power. The test in March 2027 is whether State ports adopted ONOP, not whether it was announced.

- **A River Is Not a Road, and That Is the Whole Problem**

Body: The network: **111 National Waterways** declared under the **National Waterways Act, 2016**, totalling **20,187 km** across **23 States and 4 Union Territories**; about **32 operational**.

Cargo: **29 MMT (2014-15) → 218 MMT (2025-26)**, a CAGR of **20.13%**, exceeding the **Maritime India Vision 2030** target of **200 MMT**.

Cost advantage: about **one-third of road** and **half of rail** per tonne, with far lower emissions.

The four interventions: **hydrographic surveys** (measuring the bed), **fairway maintenance** (dredging and marking an assured channel), **navigation aids** including **India's first riverine lighthouses on the Brahmaputra** for 24×7 movement, and **digital platforms** giving real-time depth, route and weather.

Institution: the **Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI)**, constituted in **1986** under the IWAI Act, **1985**, develops, maintains and regulates National Waterways.

Key waterways: **NW-1 Ganga, NW-2 Brahmaputra, NW-16 Barak**, linked to the **Indo-Bangladesh Protocol (IBP)** routes serving the North-East.

Jalvahak scheme: up to **35%** reimbursement of operating expenditure for cargo on NW-1, NW-2 and NW-16 including IBP routes, over distances above **300 km**.

Exam hook: **Constitutional note:** shipping and navigation on waterways declared national by Parliament is a **Union** subject; other inland waterways remain with the States.



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