Monthly Policy Review

July 2025

Highlights of this Issue

The monsoon session of Parliament started from July 21, 2025. The session will have 21 sittings and continue till August 21, 2025.

CPI inflation was 3.7% in the fourth quarter of 2024-25, while it was 4.9% in the first quarter of 2024-25. Food inflation in the first quarter of 2025-26 was 0.57%.

The agreement will provide duty-free access to 99% of India's exports to UK. It will also provide for simplified visa procedures and liberalised entry categories to enhance the market access in the services sector.

The Income-Tax Bill, 2025 seeks to replace the Income-Tax Act, 1961. The Committee has recommended amendments to fix drafting issues and align the Bill with the Act.

The Bill sets up the National Sports Board which will recognise national sports governing bodies. It also sets up the National Sports Tribunal to adjudicate sports-related disputes.

The Bill transfers the power of constituting the Appeal Panel from the National Board for Anti-Doping in Sports to the central government. It provides for operational independence of office bearers of NADA.

The Policy aims to improve sporting culture at various levels, including schools, colleges, and universities. It aims to encourage sports-related industries such as manufacturing and tourism, and make sports more inclusive.

The Policy aims to improve telecom connectivity, incentivise domestic telecom equipment production and exports, and improve telecom cyber security.

Key features include encouraging states to developing model cooperative villages, upskilling cooperative members and aligning cooperatives with export hubs.

The scheme aims to generate employment for approximately 4.1 crore youth by offering incentives to first-time employees and support to employers for additional employment generation.

The scheme will fund private R&D through low or zero interest loans in key technology sectors. Funds may also be given as equity investment in the case of startups.

The scheme aims to develop agriculture and allied sectors in 100 districts with low productivity, low cropping intensity, and low credit disbursement.

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Parliament

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Monsoon Session 2025 begins

The Monsoon Session of Parliament commenced on July 21, 2025. The session is scheduled to be held till August 21, 2025, with a total of 21 sittings.

Eight Bills are listed for introduction in this session. Two of these Bills were introduced in Lok Sabha. These are the National Sports Governance Bill, 2025, and the National Anti-Doping (Amendment) Bill, 2025. Other Bills listed for introduction include: (i) the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2025, (ii) the Taxation Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2025, (iii) the Geo-heritage Sites and Geo-relics (Preservation and Maintenance) Bill, 2025, and (iv) the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2025.

Seven pending Bills are listed for consideration and passing. Of these, the Bills of Lading Bill, 2024, was passed by Parliament. The six other Bills are: (i) the Income-Tax Bill, 2025, (ii) the Indian Ports Bill, 2025, (iii) the Merchant Shipping Bill, 2024, (iv) the Coastal Shipping Bill, 2024, (v) the Carriage of Goods by Sea Bill, 2024, and (vi) a Bill to reserve seats in the Goa Legislative Assembly for Scheduled Tribes. The Select Committee on the Income-Tax Bill, 2025, presented its report in Lok Sabha on July 21, 2025.

For more details on the legislative agenda for the Monsoon Session, please see here.

Macroeconomic Development

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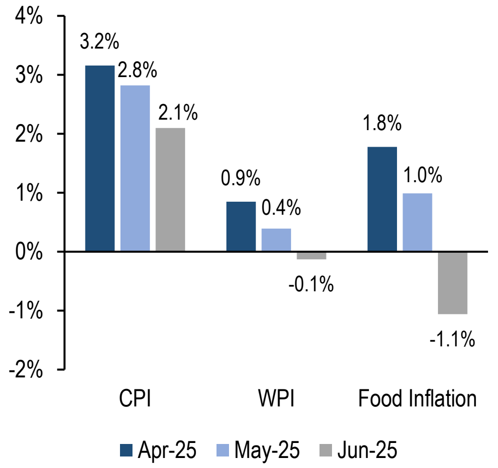
CPI inflation averaged 2.7% in the first quarter of 2025-26

Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation was 2.7% in the first quarter (April-June) of 2025-26, lower than 4.9% in the first quarter of 2024-25.[1] In the fourth quarter (January-March) of 2024-25, it was 3.7%.

Food inflation averaged 0.57% in the first quarter of 2025-26, significantly lower than 8.9% in the corresponding quarter of 2024-25. In the fourth quarter of 2024-25, food inflation was 4.1%.

Wholesale Price Index (WPI) inflation averaged 0.37% in the first quarter of 2025-26, lower than 2.45% in the corresponding quarter of 2024-25.[2] In the fourth quarter of 2024-25, WPI inflation was 2.4%.

Figure 1: Monthly inflation in Q1 of 2025-26 (% change, year-on-year)



Sources: Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation; Ministry of Commerce and Industry; PRS.

Finance

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Select Committee submits report on the Income-Tax Bill, 2025

The Income-Tax Bill, 2025 was introduced in Lok Sabha on February 13, 2025. The Bill seeks to replace the Income-Tax Act, 1961. It was referred to a Select Committee of Lok Sabha (Chair: Mr Baijayant Panda). The Report of the Committee was tabled in Lok Sabha on July 21, 2025.[3] The Committee observed that the Bill primarily seeks to simplify the language, and does not bring any substantive changes.

The Committee noted several drafting issues and recommended addressing them. It noted that the implications of some provisions will change as compared to the 1961 Act. This is owing to inadvertent omissions or changes in the language of the provisions. It recommended amendments to address such issues.

It has also recommended clarifying some provisions, including unincorporated provisions of the Finance Acts of 2024 and 2025, and addressing reference and typographical errors.

For a PRS Summary of the report, see here.

RBI releases directions for waiver of foreclosure charges on loans

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) released directions for the levy of foreclosure/pre-payment charges on loans.[4] According to the directions, regulated entities (such as commercial banks, cooperative banks, and NBFCs) must not levy any pre-payment charges on non-business and business loans to individuals and

Medium and Small Enterprises. These directions will apply to all floating rate loans and advances.

The directions allow exemptions for certain regulated entities (REs) such as Small Finance Bank, Regional Rural Bank, and State Cooperative Bank. These REs will not levy pre-payment charges on loans with sanctioned amount up to Rs 50 lakh. Pre-payment of loans will be allowed on a partial or full repayment basis without any minimum lock-in period. These directions will apply to all loans and advances sanctioned or renewed after January 1, 2026.

Comments invited on draft Directions on Digital Banking Channels

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) invited comments on the draft directions to regulate banking and non-banking activities by banks related to digital banking, mobile banking, and internet banking channels.[5] Key directions for banks include:

- **Applicability:** The directions will be applicable to all commercial and cooperative banks offering services through digital channels.
- **Eligibility for provision of banking services:** Banks offering fund or non-fund based transactional banking services will require prior approval of RBI. For this approval, banks must ensure a fully functioning IT infrastructure, and have adequate financial and technical capacity. They must also comply with minimum regulatory capital ratio and meet net worth thresholds.
- **Compliance requirements:** The directions provide that banks must comply with the Information Technology Act, 2000, the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, the Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999, and other instructions issued by the RBI to conduct digital banking operations. Banks will also be required to comply with the customer protection guidelines.
- **Operational guidelines:** Banks will be required to: (i) obtain consent from customers for provision of digital banking services, (ii) offer multiple registration channels for digital banking, (iii) make digital banking services optional and voluntary for customers, (iv) deploy risk mitigation, transaction monitoring, and surveillance systems, and (v) refrain from displaying third-party products and services on digital banking channels.

Comments are invited until August 11, 2025.

Comments invited on draft circular on categorisation of mutual fund schemes

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) released a draft circular on Categorisation and Rationalisation of Mutual Fund Schemes for public comments.[6] Mutual Fund Schemes are currently categorised on the basis of SEBI guidelines released in 2017.[7] Under the 2017 guidelines, the schemes are classified in the following categories: (i) equity schemes, (ii) debt schemes, (iii) hybrid schemes, (iv) solution-oriented schemes, and (v) other schemes. Key changes proposed include:

- **Equity Schemes:** According to the current guidelines, Asset Management Companies (AMC) are allowed to offer either a value fund or a contra fund under equity schemes. The draft circular proposes to change this to allow mutual funds to offer both value and contra funds. This will be conditional upon overlap of scheme portfolios. In addition, for Sectoral/Thematic Equity Funds, their portfolio overlap with any other equity scheme should not exceed 50%.
- **Portfolio Overlap:** According to the draft circular, this portfolio overlap will be monitored regularly on a semi-annual basis using month-end portfolios of an AMC. If the overlap exceeds the permitted limit, the AMC will be allowed an extension of 30 business days to rebalance their portfolio.
- **One scheme per category:** Under the current guidelines, AMCs are permitted to offer only one scheme per category. However, the draft circular proposes to allow AMCs to launch an additional scheme in the existing scheme category. This is subject to conditions including: (i) existing scheme completing five years, (ii) existing scheme ending subscriptions once the additional scheme is launched, and (iii) the total asset under management of the existing scheme being above Rs 50,000 crore.
- **Investment of residual funds:** According to the draft circular, AMCs will be allowed to invest the residual portion of total assets in a diversified mix of asset classes. These would include equity, debt, gold and silver, Real Estate Investment Trusts and Infrastructure Investment Trusts.

Comments are invited until August 8, 2025.

CAG submits audit report on compliance with the FRBM Act, 2003

The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India presented a report on compliance with the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act, 2003 in the financial year 2022-23.[8] The 2003 Act provides a legislative framework for the reduction of debt and deficit of the central government over the medium term. The Act sets targets for the central government to ensure responsible fiscal management and long-term economic stability. Key observations and recommendations of the CAG include:

- **General Government Debt:** Under the FRBM Amendment Act, 2018, the central government set a target to limit general government debt to 60% of GDP by 2024-25, with limit for the central government debt at 40% of GDP. General government debt is the total liability of the central and state governments. In 2022-23, general government debt was 81.4% of GDP as compared to 70.4% in 2018-19. The outstanding debt of the central government was 58% of GDP in 2022-23. However, CAG also observed that the economy has grown at a faster rate than central government debt, enabling it to absorb and service the debt.

- **Rolling targets of fiscal indicators:** The Act requires the central government to present projections for fiscal targets for two years following the current fiscal year. This includes projections for revenue deficit, fiscal deficit, primary deficit, tax revenue, and central government debt as a percentage of GDP. The advance targets have to be presented in the Medium-term Fiscal Policy (MTFP) statement. The CAG noted that the central government has not presented rolling targets for fiscal indicators since 2021-22. Instead, the central government has presented the reasons for deviation from the fiscal targets in the MTFP statement for these years.
- **Disinvestment proceeds:** CAG noted that receipts from disinvestment in 2022-23 were lower than the pre-pandemic period.
- **Tax revenue raised but not realised:** CAG observed that the tax revenue raised but not realised increased in 2022-23 as compared to the previous year. It noted that this may indicate a lost opportunity to tap non-debt receipts by the government. At the end of 2022-23, Rs 21.3 lakh crore worth of tax revenue was unrealised.

For a PRS Summary of the report, see here.

External Affairs

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India and the UK sign the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement

India and the UK signed the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA).[9] This agreement aims to double bilateral trade between the two countries by 2030. As of July 2025, bilateral trade between India and the UK was about USD 56 billion. Key highlights of the agreement include: (i) duty-free access on 99% of India's exports to the UK, (ii) tariff reduction from 70% to 0% on marine products, textiles, and processed foods, and (iii) enhanced market access in the services sector through simplified visa procedures and liberalised entry categories.

India also signed an agreement on the Double Contribution Convention with the UK. Under this, Indian professionals and their employers will be exempt from the social security payments in the UK for up to three years.

PM visits Maldives for bilateral talks

Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi visited Maldives for bilateral talks.[10] Both countries discussed the progress on implementation of the Comprehensive Economic and Maritime Security Partnership, and the proposed Free Trade Agreement and Bilateral Investment Treaty. The two countries signed memoranda of understanding on aquaculture, digital public infrastructure, UPI, pharma, and concessional lines of credit. India will provide a new line of credit worth Rs 4,850 crore for infrastructural development in Maldives. The two countries also reached an agreement to reduce Maldives' annual debt repayment obligations by 40% under existing lines of credit.

Labour and Employment

Cabinet approves the Employment Linked Incentive Scheme

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The Union Cabinet approved the Employment Linked Incentive (ELI) Scheme with an outlay of Rs 99,446 crore.[11] The scheme will be implemented over a period of two years and will cover jobs created between August 1, 2025 and July 31, 2027. It aims to incentivise employment generation and enhance social security across sectors. The scheme has the following two components:

- **Support to employers:** Under the scheme, employers will be provided incentives up to Rs 3,000 per month for two years for each additional employee hired. Employers with fewer than 50 employees will be required to make two additional hirings while those with more than 50 employees will have to make five additional hirings. Incentives will be conditional on sustained employment for at least six months. Manufacturing sector establishments will be offered incentives for two additional years under the scheme. The scheme aims to generate additional employment for up to 2.6 crore persons under this component.
- **Incentive to first-time employees:** Under this component, first time employees registered with the Employees Provident Fund will receive an incentive worth one month's wage, subject to a maximum of Rs 15,000. This will be paid in two instalments. The first instalment will be paid upon completion of six months of service. The employees will receive the second instalment upon completing 12 months of service and a financial literacy programme. First-time employees with salaries up to one lakh rupees per month will be eligible. The scheme aims to cover 1.92 crore employees under this component.

Draft National Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Policy, 2025 released for public feedback

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The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship has released a draft National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship for public feedback.[12] The draft Policy targets the development of digital and physical infrastructure for skills and entrepreneurship. It aims at strengthening the monitoring, evaluation, and learning framework to track policy outcomes. Key focus areas under the Policy include:

- **Strengthening Systems:** The draft Policy aims at improving infrastructure, enabling policy reforms, and promoting collaborations among key stakeholders. Key proposed initiatives include: (i) enhancing the Skill India Digital Hub as a user-centric platform, (ii) shifting to a decentralised open network skilling platform, (iii) building a centralised labour market information system, (iv) establishing a digital lifelong learning account consolidating all the credentials of an individual, (v) creation of a unique skill profile for every individual, and (vi) formalising nano-enterprises.
- **Improving delivery:** The draft Policy emphasises establishing flagship Industrial Training Institutes and skilling Centres of Excellence using PPP models. It also aims at the integration of skilling, education, and work experience with the National Credit Framework. The draft Policy proposes the development of a National Employability and Entrepreneurship Measure to periodically assess the quality of the workforce. In addition, a skilling programme for women re-entering the workforce is also proposed.
- **Incentives:** The draft Policy proposes introduction of skill vouchers allowing learners to self-select skilling programs and providers. In addition, it also proposes the development of a reward and recognition mechanism for industries to engage skilling institutions and initiatives. Industries will be rewarded and recognised based on their degree of engagement, commitment towards leading, and supporting skilling initiatives.

Communications

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Comments invited on the draft National Telecom Policy, 2025

The Department of Telecommunications has invited comments on the draft National Telecom Policy, 2025.[13] It seeks to replace the National Digital Communications Policy (NDCP) issued in 2018.

Key features of the draft Policy are as follows:

- **Improving connectivity:** By 2030, the draft Policy aims to: (i) cover 100% population with 4G and 90% population with 5G, (ii) set up one million public Wi-Fi hotspots, (iii) provide internet using satellite where needed, (iv) enable fixed broadband coverage to 10 crore households, and (v) improve fiberisation of towers from 46% to 80%. Fiberisation refers to the connectivity of telecom towers to the main network using fibre-optic cable, instead of wireless links that have lower speed and reliability. The draft Policy also aims to improve the quality of service, and encourage low-latency communication for industrial applications.
- **Promoting R&D and domestic production:** The draft Policy aims to support research in areas such as AI, 6G, quantum communication, and blockchain. It aims to achieve 50% import substitution in the telecom sector by 2030. It proposes measures such as: (i) easing spectrum access for R&D, (ii) funding and mentorships for startups and MSMEs, (iii) promoting incubation hubs, and (iv) establishing the Telecom Manufacturing Zone with integrated infrastructure for design and production of telecom equipment.
- **Security measures:** The draft Policy proposes to improve the security in telecom. It also includes measures such as: (i) biometric-based identification for users, (ii) enabling standardised and security-certified hardware and software supply chains, and (iii) using AI for incident reporting and countering threats from adversarial attacks.
- **Simplifying compliances:** The draft Policy seeks to reduce compliance burden by: (i) setting up a single-window portal for permissions, (ii) digitising regulatory processes, and (iii) faster approvals.
- **Improving sustainability:** The draft Policy aims to reduce the telecom sector's carbon footprint by 30% by 2030. It specifies focusing on e-waste management and climate change resilience.

Comments are invited until August 14, 2025.

Comments invited on draft amendments to the guidelines on television rating agencies

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has invited comments on the draft amendments to the Policy Guidelines for Television Rating Agencies in India, 2014.[14] The 2014 guidelines set out the terms and conditions for the registration of television rating agencies with the Ministry.[15] The 2014 guidelines prohibit: (i) board members of a television rating agency from being in broadcasting or advertising businesses, and (ii) a single company or promoter from holding substantial equity across multiple rating, broadcasting, and advertising agencies. The draft amendments propose to remove these restrictions.

Comments are invited until August 1, 2025.

Cooperation

The National Cooperative Policy released

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The Ministry of Cooperation released the National Cooperative Policy, 2025.[16] It replaces the National Cooperative Policy, 2002.[17] The 2025 Policy aims to create an enabling regulatory, economic, and legal ecosystem for sustainable development of cooperatives. Key features of the Policy include:

- **Support to cooperatives:** The Policy outlines strategies to develop accessible finance, business research capacity, and marketing and branding services for cooperatives. Key initiatives include: (i) development of at least one model cooperative village per district, (ii) promoting cooperative-led economic clusters for rural produce, (iii) encouraging cooperatives to explore GI (geographical indication) tags and trademarks to secure product recognition, and (v) aligning cooperatives with export-oriented goods production identified under One District One Product (ODOP) initiative. It also aims to encourage states and union territories to bring down cooperative taxes where they are higher than corporate tax.
- **Capacity building and innovation:** The Policy aims to upskill cooperative members and increase participation of women, disadvantaged sections, and under-represented age groups. It also aims to promote adoption of environment-friendly practices by cooperatives. It aims to achieve this through the following initiatives: (i) develop training and skill development capacity through partnerships with academic institutions for new cooperative-focused courses, (ii) creation of a national digital cooperative employment exchange to match job seekers and employers in the cooperative sector, (iii) promote agricultural cooperatives to adopt climate resilient farming methods, and (iv) diversification into new areas such as Aushadhi Kendra and fuel retail outlets, among others.
- **Implementation structure**: The Policy proposes the creation of a dedicated implementation cell within the Ministry of Cooperation. It also proposes the formation of a National Steering Committee on Cooperation Policy chaired by the Union Minister of Cooperation, to oversee overall monitoring. Additionally, a Policy Implementation and Monitoring Committee, chaired by the Union Cooperation Secretary, will be responsible for addressing implementation bottlenecks.

Cabinet approves a scheme for loans to cooperatives through NCDC

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The Union Cabinet approved a scheme to extend grants worth Rs 2,000 crore to the National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC).[18] NCDC has been established by the central government under the National Cooperative Development Corporation Act, 1962.[19] The Corporation is responsible for planning and promoting programmes for the whole supply chain of agricultural produce, industrial goods, and other commodity cooperatives. Rs 500 crore will be released to NCDC annually over four years between 2025-26 and 2028-29. On the basis of these grants, NCDC is expected to raise Rs 20,000 crore from open market during this period. NCDC will deploy these funds for granting loans to cooperatives. These loans may be used for new projects, plant expansions, and working capital requirements. This scheme is expected to benefit 2.9 crore members of 13,288 cooperative societies across different sectors.

Agriculture

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Cabinet approves the Prime Minister Dhan Dhaanya Krishi Yojana

The Union Cabinet approved the PM Dhan Dhaanya Krishi Yojana with an annual outlay of Rs 24,000 crore for six years starting from 2025-26.[20,21] The scheme was announced in the Union Budget 2025-26.[22] The scheme aims to develop 100 districts with low agricultural productivity, low cropping intensity, and less credit disbursement into Dhan-Dhaanya Districts. A minimum of one district will be selected from each state.

The scheme will be implemented in partnership with the private sector, state schemes, and existing schemes across different government departments. Under the scheme, committees will be formed at the district, state, and national level to develop district plans. These plans will have to be in alignment with national goals of crop diversification, soil and water conservation, self-sufficiency in agriculture, and natural and organic farming. Scheme progress will be tracked on a monthly basis through monitoring of 117 key performance indicators. Under the scheme, a comprehensive dashboard for monitoring, dedicated mobile app for farmers, and a district ranking mechanism will be developed.

Cabinet approves additional outlay for PM Kisan Sampada Yojana

The Union Cabinet approved additional outlay worth Rs 1,920 crore for the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada

Yojana (PMKSY).[23] The scheme provides for creation of modern infrastructure including storage and transportation infrastructure, agro-processing clusters, and food processing and preservation capacities.[24] Rs 920 crore will be utilised for sanctioning projects under different components of PMKSY until 2025-26. Rs 1,000 crore has been approved for setting up 50 multi-product food irradiation units and 100 nationally accredited food testing labs. Food irradiation facilities help in reducing post-harvest losses and wastage of perishable farm produce by enhancing shelf-life.

Sports

The National Sports Governance Bill, 2025 introduced in Lok Sabha

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The National Sports Governance Bill, 2025 was introduced in Lok Sabha.[25] The Bill seeks to provide for recognition of national sports bodies and regulate their functioning. Key features of the Bill include:

- **Governing Bodies for Sports:** The Bill provides for establishing: (i) National Olympic Committee, (ii) National Paralympic Committee, and (iii) National and Regional Sports Federations for each sport. The Bill requires these bodies to establish: (i) certain committees for their functioning, (ii) a code of ethics to govern conduct of persons such as members, affiliates, athletes, coaches, and sponsors, and (iii) a grievance redressal mechanism for complaints from such persons. The Bill specifies certain conditions such as age limit for members of executive committee of these bodies, and term limit for office bearers such as the President, the Secretary General, and the Treasurer. The Bill states that the international charters and statutes will primarily govern these bodies. In the event of a conflict with the Bill, the central government may issue clarifications.
- **National Sports Board:** The Bill empowers the central government to establish a National Sports Board. This Board will grant recognition to national sports bodies, inquire into the welfare of sportspersons, and issue guidelines on ethics and compliance with international rules.
- **National Sports Tribunal:** The Bill provides for a National Sports Tribunal to address disputes related to sports. Appeals against its decisions will lie before the Supreme Court, except where international charters or bye-laws require appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Switzerland.
- **Elections to Sports Bodies:** The central government will establish a national panel of electoral officers to oversee elections of national sports bodies.

For a PRS summary of the Bill, see here.

The National Anti-Doping (Amendment) Bill, 2025 introduced in Lok Sabha

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The National Anti-Doping (Amendment) Bill, 2025 was introduced in Lok Sabha.[26] It seeks to amend the National Anti-Doping Act, 2022 which prohibits doping in sports. Doping is the consumption of certain prohibited substances by athletes to enhance performance. The Act establishes: (i) the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) to enforce anti-doping rules, and (ii) the National Board to oversee NADA and advise the central government on anti-doping regulations.[27] Key features of the Bill include:

- **Central government to constitute the Appeal Panel:** The Act requires the National Board to constitute: (i) a Disciplinary Panel to determine consequences of anti-doping violations, and (ii) an Appeal Panel to hear appeals against its decisions. The Bill transfers the power to constitute the Appeal Panel from the Board to the central government, and empowers it to specify the manner of filing and hearing of appeals.
- **Autonomy of Anti-Doping Bodies**: The Act empowers the Board to obtain information or issue directions to the Disciplinary Panel and Appeal Panel. The Bill removes these powers. It adds that the Director General and other members of NADA will have operational independence from: (i) any national or international sports federation, (ii) Olympic or Paralympic Committee, (iii) any government department, and (iv) any sports or anti-doping agency.
- **Only specified bodies to file appeal to CAS**: The Act allows any person to file an appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) in Switzerland, against a decision of the Appeal Panel. The Bill specifies the entities that may file an appeal to CAS. These include bodies such as the World Anti-Doping Agency, the International Olympic Committee, the International Paralympic Committee, and international sports federations.

For a PRS summary of the Bill, see here.

Cabinet approves the National Sports Policy

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The Union Cabinet approved the National Sports Policy, 2025.[28] It replaces the National Sports Policy (NSP), 2001.[29] Key features of the Policy include:

- **Promotion of sports:** The Policy aims at improving sporting culture at various levels, including schools, colleges, and universities. Key proposed interventions include: (i) developing structured sports programs across age groups, (ii) sports related literacy from early childhood, (iii) expanding talent search, (iv) strengthening sports safety, ethics, gender parity, and grievance redressal, and (v) strengthening the para-sports ecosystem. It aims to provide for development of sports infrastructure with a special focus on rural and remote areas. It seeks to encourage innovative financing mechanisms and engage private sector for sports. It also provides for a national monitoring framework with benchmarks, key performance indicators, and time-bound targets.

- **Sports for economic development:** The Policy aims to promote economic development through sports. Key proposed initiatives include: (i) promoting sports tourism through local and international events, (ii) boosting domestic sports equipment manufacturing, (iii) encouraging entrepreneurship in sports, and (iv) exploring public-private partnership models for monetisation of sports stadiums and online platforms.
- **Making sports more inclusive:** The Policy aims at promoting inclusivity in sports education and careers. It aims to reduce barriers to participation for under-represented groups such as women, economically weaker sections, tribal communities, and physically and psychologically challenged individuals. A specific talent development mechanism will be developed for under-represented groups. In addition, the Policy will also aim to promote indigenous sports and games from states.

  The Policy will aim to promote community health and well-being through targeted interventions in sports. This will include engagement with educational institutions and workplaces targeting physical and mental well-being.

Science and Technology

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Cabinet approves scheme to promote private sector investment in R&D

The Union Cabinet has approved the Research, Development, and Innovation (RDI) Scheme to promote private sector investment in R&D in sunrise and strategic sectors.[30] The scheme will extend long-term loans at low or zero interest for such investments. Key features of the scheme include:

- **Applicability:** The scheme will support high-technology projects at advanced stages of development, and acquisition of critical and strategic technologies. It will also facilitate setting up a Deep-Tech Fund of Funds.
- **Fund disbursement:** The scheme will have a corpus of one lakh crore rupees. This fund will be disbursed through a two-tier funding structure. A Special Purpose Fund (SPF) will be created under the Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF). ANRF is the apex body that supports and promotes scientific research in the country. Long-term concessional loans will be provided from SPF to a variety of second-level fund managers. These managers will then provide long-term loans to private companies at zero or low-interest rates. In case of startups, fund managers may also finance in the form of equity investments.
- **Implementing agencies:** The Department of Science and Technology will implement the scheme. The Executive Council of the ANRF will frame guidelines, and recommend second-level fund managers. This council is chaired by the Principal Scientific Advisor to the central government. An Empowered Group of Secretaries, chaired by the Cabinet Secretary will approve scheme changes, sectors, types of projects to be supported, and second-level fund managers.

Guidelines for cybersecurity audits released

The Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) released the Comprehensive Cyber Security Audit Policy Guidelines, 2025.[31] CERT-In has been appointed by the central government under the Information Technology Act, 2000. Under the Act, CERT-In has been granted the authority to collect information, take emergency measures, and issue guidelines and advisories related to cyber security and cyber security incidents. The Cyber Security Audit Guidelines aim to standardise cybersecurity audit processes and specify responsibilities of organisations involved in audits. Key features include:

- **Audit scope:** Auditee organisations are expected to ensure a cyber security audit covering their information and communication technology systems at least once a year. The audit will include compliance audits, risk assessments, vulnerability assessments, assessment of cloud security and AI systems, and digital forensic readiness assessment. The guidelines discourage employing only tool-based audits. It specifies that audits must go beyond checking for a predefined list of risks, and instead identify all known vulnerabilities. These audits must be carried out by an auditing organisation empanelled with CERT-IN. The frequency and scope of all audits must be disclosed in the organisation's annual report.
- **Internal checks for auditors:** The auditing organisations must implement internal checks, including: (i) a separate verification team reviewing the audit team's work, (ii) restrictions on deploying freelancers, interns, freshers, moonlighters, third party consultants or employees serving notice periods for conducting cybersecurity audits, and (iii) the use of tested and approved auditing tools.

Transport

Parliament passed a Bill to replace Bills of Lading Act, 1856

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The Bills of Lading Bill, 2024 was passed by Parliament. The Bill was introduced in August 2024. It replaces the Indian Bills of Lading Act, 1856. The Act provides a legal framework for issuance of bills of lading. A bill of lading refers to a document issued by a freight carrier to a shipper containing details such as the type, quantity, condition, and destination of goods being carried. The Bill retains all provisions of the Act. The Bill adds that the central government may issue directions for carrying out provisions of the Bill.

For a PRS summary of the Bill, see here.

Revised guidelines for motor vehicle aggregators released

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The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways released the Motor Vehicle Aggregator Guidelines, 2025 to replace similar guidelines from 2020.[32,33] These guidelines provide for a licencing system for motor vehicle aggregators and specify their responsibilities. Key features include:

- **Licencing of aggregators:** The revised guidelines reduce the maximum period of suspension for an aggregator's licence from six months to three months. They also provide for cancellation of licence if the aggregator has faced a licence suspension and has committed another infraction within three financial years. Earlier, a licence could be cancelled in case of more than three suspensions within one financial year. The state government may allow aggregation of non-transport motorcycles for journey by passengers.
- **Obligations of aggregators:** Aggregators must ensure that drivers go through psychological analysis, along with a medical examination before on-boarding. They are required to provide drivers induction training of at least 40 hours, along with special training in sensitivity regarding gender and disabled persons. The health and term insurance for drivers will be increased every year by a percentage notified by the central government. Previously, this was fixed at 5%. Aggregators will also ensure a minimum insurance cover of five lakh rupees for passengers.
- **Fare regulation:** Rates notified by the state government for different classes of vehicles will serve as base fare for aggregators. Aggregators may charge a minimum of 50% of base fare. In times of peak demand, the rules allow for dynamic pricing. Earlier, dynamic pricing was capped at 1.5 times the base fare. The revised guidelines increase this cap to twice the base fare.
- **Fleet management:** Under the new guidelines, aggregators cannot on-board vehicles older than eight years. The state government may also direct aggregators to: (i) increase the share of electric, alternate fuel, or zero emission vehicles in their fleet on an annual basis, and (ii) include certain proportion of disabled-friendly vehicles.

Guidelines on trucks under the PM E-DRIVE scheme notified

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The Ministry of Heavy Industries notified details on demand incentives for the e-trucks segment of the PM E-drive scheme.[34] Under the scheme, original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) and customers will receive incentives on the sale and purchase of e-trucks.

The demand incentive will be made available to buyers in the form of an upfront reduction in purchase price. This gap in the sale price will be reimbursed to the OEMs by the Ministry after the sale. The maximum incentive is set at Rs 9.6 lakh per vehicle, which will vary depending on the truck category. Incentives will be extended to the following categories of e-trucks: (i) trucks with gross vehicle weight between 3.5 and 12 tonnes and (ii) trucks with gross vehicle weight between 12 and 55 tonnes.

The scheme aims to support the deployment of around 5,600 e-trucks. Out of these, incentives for around 1,100 e-trucks will be reserved for Delhi to target air pollution in the city. To avail benefits under the scheme, the buyer must produce proof of the scrapping of an IC engine truck. If the buyer does not own an old IC engine truck, they may purchase a certificate of scrappage through market mechanisms for this purpose.

Standing Committee on Urban Affairs submits report on RRTS

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The Standing Committee on Housing and Urban Affairs (Chair: Mr Magunta Sreenivasulu Reddy) presented its report on 'Regional Rapid Transit System and Role of NCRTC'. The Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) is a high-speed rail-based commuter network operating in urban and peri-urban areas. As of April 2025, out of eight proposed RRTS, one has been sanctioned by the central government. The National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC) was established as a joint venture between the central and four state governments for implementation of the RRTS network. Key observations and recommendations of the Committee include:

- **Need for regional planning in metro cities:** The Committee observed that rapid urbanisation and population growth in urban areas has led to issues related to land, housing, transportation, and pollution. Peripheral areas around main cities are also growing rapidly. The Committee recommended that state governments prepare detailed plans for development of big metro cities including a transport plan.

- **Expanding the mandate of NCRTC:** Currently, NCRTC undertakes overall transport development in the National Capital region including development of commuter rail, roads, and bus services. The Committee recommended expanding the mandate of NCRTC to other regions.
- **PPP model for RRTS projects:** The Committee recommended that NCRTC explore possible opportunities for private sector participation and funding in RRTS projects. It noted that private players are currently mostly involved in operation and maintenance of RRTS sub-systems.
- **Last mile and multi-modal connectivity:** The Committee also recommended integrating RRTS with other modes of transport. The Committee recommended that NCRTC provide shuttle buses to develop last-mile connectivity.

For a PRS summary of the report, see here.

Power

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Scheme launched to support MSMEs in adopting energy-efficient technologies

The Ministry of Power launched the Assistance in Deploying Energy Efficient Technologies in Industries & Establishments (ADEETIE) scheme.[35] The scheme seeks to support Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in adopting energy-efficient and cleaner technologies by offering them financial and technical support. The scheme will be implemented by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) over three years until 2027-28. The total expected outlay under the scheme is Rs 1,000 crore. The scheme targets 14 energy-intensive sectors, including textiles, brick manufacturing, chemicals, glass, pharmaceuticals, and food processing. Key features include:

- **Interest subsidy:** The scheme will offer loans at a subsidised rate to MSMEs for adopting energy-efficient technologies, with the government covering part of the interest. The interest subsidy is set at 5% for micro and small enterprises, and 3% for medium enterprises.
- **Project planning support:** The scheme will provide technical support to MSMEs to prepare detailed project reports, and conduct investment-grade energy audits. These help assess their energy needs, identify suitable technology, and estimate costs. The scheme also includes support for post-implementation monitoring and verification of the new technology.
- **Phased implementation:** The scheme will follow a phased roll-out. In the first phase, the scheme will be rolled out in 60 identified industrial clusters. The second phase will cover 100 clusters.

Environment

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Environment Ministry amends Sulphur Dioxide standards for thermal power plants

The Ministry of Environment notified the Environment (Protection) Fourth Amendment Rules, 2025.[36,37,38] These Rules specify the deadlines and requirements for complying with the Sulphur Dioxide (SO_2) emission standards for coal and lignite based thermal power plants. Key features include:

- **Compliance for different power plants:** Earlier, existing, and proposed power plants located within 10 km radius of Critically Polluted Areas or non-attainment cities under air quality standards were required to comply with SO_2 emission standards by December 31, 2028.[39] Under 2025 Rules, this will be decided on a case-to-case basis.
- Earlier, power plants that are located outside 10 km radius of Critically Polluted Areas, National Capital Region, non-attainment cities or cities having million plus population had to comply with emission standards by December 31, 2029. Under the 2025 Rules, they will no longer be required to comply with these standards. They will be required to ensure the minimum chimney height requirement for dispersing SO_2 emissions by December 31, 2029.

Rules notified for recycling of non-ferrous metal scraps

The Ministry of Environment notified Hazardous and Other Wastes (Management and Transboundary Movement) Amendment Rules, 2025.[40] These were issued under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.[41] The Rules regulate the recycling of non-ferrous metal scraps. Non-ferrous metals include aluminium, copper, zinc, and their alloys. Key features include:

- **Extended producer responsibility:** Producers of non-ferrous metal products will be liable for recycling non-ferrous metal scrap. They must meet recycling targets set by weight. The target will take into account the quantity of non-ferrous metal produced and the average life of products as specified by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). The producer will purchase an extended producer responsibility (EPR) certificate from registered recyclers. The CPCB will generate the certificate in favour of the recycler considering the quantity of metal recycled. Central government may establish platforms for the exchange or transfer of these certificates as per guidelines specified by CPCB. Producers may also refurbish products made using non-ferrous metal. Refurbishing may defer 75% of EPR on recycling.

- **Obligations of stakeholders:** Bulk consumers of non-ferrous metal products will set up collection points for agents to collect scrap. The collection agents will collect scrap from manufacturers, producers, and bulk consumers, and supply to registered recyclers. All these stakeholders must file quarterly and annual reports. Apart from recycling, manufacturers must use a minimum percentage of domestically recycled material in new products.

Rules notified for the management of contaminated sites

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change notified the Remediation of Contaminated Sites Rules, 2025 under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.[42,41] These Rules relate to the remediation of areas contaminated by toxic and hazardous substances. Key features of the Rules include:

- **Central Remediation Committee**: The Central government will constitute the Central Remediation Committee. The Chairman of the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) will chair this Committee. This Committee will be responsible for (i) reviewing and monitoring the implementation of the Rules, and (ii) reviewing the list of contaminated sites. States and Union Territories will constitute Committees under the chairmanship of their respective additional chief secretaries or principal secretaries of the environment departments.
- **Responsibilities of local bodies:** Urban local bodies or district-level Panchayati Raj institutions will prepare an inventory of suspected contaminated sites within their territories. They will submit the inventory to State Pollution Control Boards. The local bodies will undertake a preliminary assessment of suspected sites. If the level of contamination is found to be above the screening level, the site will be categorised as a probable contamination site. A detailed investigation will be conducted at such sites.
- **Role of Pollution Control Boards**: The State Pollution Control Board will be responsible for: (i) prioritising contaminated sites in the state for remediation, (ii) ordering the persons responsible for contamination to prepare remediation design, and (iii) developing the post-remediation monitoring plan. CPCB will be responsible for verifying completion of remediation. The responsible individual or company will pay the complete cost of the remediation process.

Mining

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Rules notified for operating rights over atomic minerals in offshore areas

The Ministry of Mines notified the Offshore Areas Atomic Minerals Operating Rights Rules, 2025 under the Offshore Areas Mineral (Development and Regulation) Act, 2002.[43,44] They will apply to atomic minerals in offshore areas (either standalone or associated with other minerals) present in grades equal to or above a threshold value specified under the Atomic Minerals Concession Rules, 2016.[45] Key features include:

- **Rights for exploration and production:** Notified government agencies will be allowed to carry out preliminary exploration of atomic minerals without a licence. If a geological report confirms presence of mineral grades above the specified threshold, the Ministry may direct a specified authority to initiate the process for granting production or composite licence (which permits both advanced exploration and production).
- **Issuance of composite licence and production lease:** The central government will, in consultation with specified ministries, notify offshore areas for auction of composite and production licence. A production lease will be granted if general exploration has been completed and if quantity and grade of mineral deposit can be estimated with confidence. If atomic minerals of a grade equal to or above the threshold value exist along with other minerals, composite licence and production lease will be granted for all minerals. A production lease will lapse if production does not begin within two years of grant.
- **Discovery of atomic minerals during operations:** If holder of an operating right discovers atomic minerals, they must report it to relevant authorities. If grades are below a specified threshold, operations may continue under existing rights. If grades are above the threshold, only a government entity will be eligible for grant of a composite licence. In the case of production leases, operations may continue only for the originally approved mineral.

Minority Affairs

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Rules under the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025 notified

The Ministry of Minority Affairs notified the Unified Waqf Management, Empowerment, Efficiency, and

Development (UMEED) Rules, 2025.[46] The Rules specify details on establishing and maintaining a portal and database. The portal and database will administer the registration of waqf properties, maintenance of accounts, publication of audit reports, and publication of Board proceedings.

Details of existing waqf properties must be filed on the system within six months of the commencement of the Act. Waqf properties created after the commencement of the Act must register with the Waqf Board within three months of their creation through this portal.

The Central Waqf Council will have access to information uploaded on the portal. The Waqf Board, Collectors, and other officers of the central and state governments will also have access to this system.

Rural Development

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Standing Committee submits report on devolution of funds to rural local bodies

The Standing Committee on Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (Chair: Mr. Saptagiri Sankar Ulaka) presented its report on 'Devolution of funds under Panchayati Raj System'.[47] Key observations and recommendations of the Committee include:

- **Restructuring Finance Commission grants:** During the award period of the 15th Finance Commission, grants from the central government to rural local bodies (RLBs) are in the form of tied (60%) and untied (40%) grants. Tied grants may only be used for sanitation and the supply of drinking water. The Committee noted that if saturation has already been achieved in these categories through other schemes, funds are not released to such RLBs. This is because tied grants cannot be re-allocated. It recommended establishing a mechanism to allow the re-allocation of tied grants as untied grants for optimal fund utilisation.
- **Devolution of powers:** The Committee observed that despite the constitutional mandate, devolution of functions, funds, and functionaries to RLBs remains incomplete. The Committee recommended that states prepare a time-bound roadmap for devolution of powers. It recommended the Panchayati Raj Ministry to publish an annual report on the state of devolution. It suggested the central government to link financial incentives under grants and schemes to progress on this front.
- **Holding regular Panchayat elections:** The Committee observed that delays or disruptions in Panchayat elections is a key barrier to effective fund utilisation and continuity of development work. The Committee recommended holding timely and regular elections. It suggested that, in the interim, states may consider appointing nominated representatives or administrators with limited tenures and responsibilities.
- **Autonomy in expenditure:** The Committee recommended that states ensure the regular, adequate, and transparent transfer of untied funds to Panchayats. It recommended that Panchayats be given autonomy for utilisation of these funds as per local needs, free from interference of higher administration.

For a PRS summary of the report, see here.

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