Monthly Policy Review

August 2026

Highlights of this Issue

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Parliament

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Monsoon Session 2026 concludes; 12 Bills introduced, 11 Bills passed

The Monsoon Session of Parliament was held from July 20 to August 13, 2026. During this session, Lok Sabha functioned for 15% of its scheduled time, and Rajya Sabha for 33%.

12 Bills were introduced in this session, and 11 of these were passed. These include Bills to increase penalties for cheating in public examinations, to allow the central government to regulate mineral bearing lands and restrict state governments from imposing specified levies, to establish a National Tribunals Commission to select members of various tribunals, and to allow digital records of a bankers' books to be legally admissible as evidence.

One Bill introduced during this session, the Indian Statistical Institute Bill, 2026, remains pending. One Bill introduced last session, the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026, was referred to a Joint Parliamentary Committee.

For more details on the legislative business transacted during the Monsoon Session 2026, see here. For details on the functioning of Parliament during this session, see here.

Macroeconomic Development

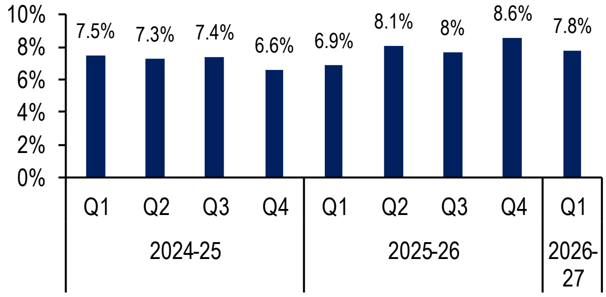
Vedika Bhanote (vedika@prsindia.org)

GDP estimated to grow by 7.8% in the first quarter of 2026-27

India's GDP (at constant 2022-23 prices) is estimated to grow by 7.8% in the first quarter (April-June) of 2026-27, higher than the same period in 2025-26 (6.9%).[1] In the fourth quarter of 2025-26 (January-March), GDP is estimated to grow by 8.6%. Nominal GDP is estimated to grow at 10.3% during the first quarter of 2026-27, higher than the same quarter last year (8.1%).

GDP across economic sectors is measured in terms of Gross Value Added (GVA). In the first quarter of 2026-27, financial, real estate, IT, and professional services sector is estimated to register the highest growth (12.1%), followed by manufacturing (9.2%), and electricity, water supply, and other utilities (8.9%). Mining and quarrying contracted by 2.4%.

Figure 1: Growth in GDP at constant (2022-23) prices (%, year-on-year)



Sources: MoSPI; PRS.

Table 1: Growth in GVA across sectors at constant (2022-23) prices (%, year-on-year)

Sector	Quarter 1		
	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
Agriculture	2.6%	4.4%	3.6%
Mining	15.7%	12.4%	-2.4%
Manufacturing	9.9%	8.3%	9.2%
Electricity	9.8%	-1.8%	8.9%
Construction	8.1%	5.2%	7.7%
Trade	8.1%	9.8%	8.5%
Financial Services	8.5%	8.8%	12.1%
Public Services	6.9%	4.6%	7.5%
GVA	**7.5%**	**7.0%**	**8.2%**
GDP	**7.5%**	**6.9%**	**7.8%**

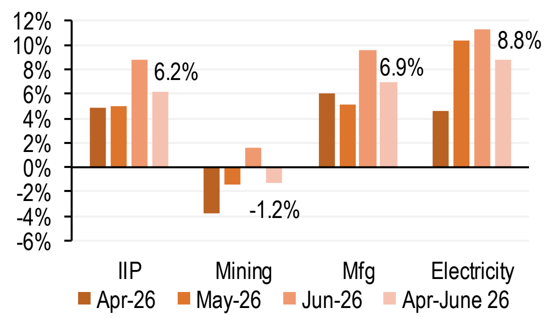
Sources: MoSPI; PRS.

Industrial production grew by 6.2% in first quarter of 2026-27

The Index of Industrial Production (IIP) grew by 6.2% in the first quarter (April-June) of 2026-27, higher than the same period in 2025-26 (3.9%).[2] Manufacturing grew by 6.9% in the first quarter of 2026-27, higher than the growth of 4.2% in the corresponding quarter of 2025-26. Electricity grew by 8.8%, significantly higher than the growth of 1.4% in the first quarter of 2025-26. Mining contracted by 1.2%, as against a growth of 3.5% in the same period in 2025-26.

Note that manufacturing has the highest weightage (76%) in the calculation of IIP, followed by mining (11%) and electricity (10.9%).

Figure 2: Growth in IIP (%, year-on-year)



Note: New series as per base year 2022-23.
Sources: MoSPI; PRS.

RBI maintains repo rate at 5.25%

The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) voted to maintain the policy repo rate (the rate at which RBI lends money to banks) at 5.25%.[3] Other decisions of the MPC include:

- The standing deposit facility rate (the rate at which RBI borrows from banks without giving collateral) remains unchanged at 5%.
- The marginal standing facility rate (rate at which banks can borrow additional overnight funds from RBI) and the bank rate (rate at which RBI lends money to commercial banks for the long term) remain unchanged at 5.5%.
- The MPC decided to continue with its neutral stance.

Mining

Vaishali Dhariwal (vaishali@prsindia.org)

Parliament passes amendments to the MMDR Act, 1957

The Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026 was passed by Parliament.[4] The Bill amends the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957.[5] The Act regulates the mining sector. Key changes are:

- **Regulation of mineral bearing lands:** The Act empowers the central government to control regulation of mines and development of minerals. The Bill adds that the central government will also be empowered to control regulation of mineral bearing lands. Mineral bearing land is defined as any land having mineral contents in accordance with parameters prescribed by the central government under Rules.
- **Restriction on levies by states:** The Bill prohibits a state government from imposing specified levies, except in accordance with conditions or restrictions prescribed by the central government. This applies to any tax, cess, or other such levy on: (i) mineral rights, or (ii) mineral bearing lands, whether based on mineral quantity, mineral value, royalty or otherwise. Unpaid or unrecovered dues of any such state levies from before the commencement of the Amendment Act, will be deemed invalid. However, any such levies already deposited or recovered will not be liable to be refunded.

For a PRS analysis of the Bill, see here.

Standing Committee submits report on Khanij Bidesh India Limited (KABIL)

The Standing Committee on Coal and Mines (Chair: Mr Anurag Singh Thakur) presented its report on "KABIL: India's Quest for Global Minerals".[6] Khanij Bidesh India Limited (KABIL) is a joint venture company of National Aluminium Company Limited, Hindustan Copper Limited, and Mineral Exploration and Consultancy Limited. KABIL aims to source critical raw materials from overseas to the domestic market to achieve mineral security in the country.

Key recommendations of the Committee include: (i) strengthening KABIL's capital base and human resources, including specialised technical, commercial and legal expertise, (ii) establishing a time-bound roadmap for overseas mineral acquisitions, with measurable milestones and periodic reviews, (iii) strengthening coordination among ministries and public sector enterprises through a dedicated project monitoring and coordination cell, (iv) expanding private sector participation in overseas exploration and acquisition through financing and risk-mitigation mechanisms, (v) developing domestic capacity for processing, refining and recycling critical minerals, including recovery from electronic waste and end-of-life batteries, and (vi) establishing stronger linkages between overseas mineral acquisitions and assured domestic demand through long-term offtake arrangements.

Commerce and Industry

Parliament passes the MSME Development (Amendment) Bill, 2026

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The Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development (Amendment) Bill, 2026 was passed by Parliament.[7] It amends the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Act, 2006. The Bill empowers the central government to notify the thresholds to classify enterprises as MSME based on: (i) investment in plant and machinery or equipment and (ii) turnover. The Act authorises Micro and Small Enterprises Facilitation Councils or mediation service providers referred by them to settle payment disputes by mediation. The Bill adds that mediation must be completed within 90 days from the date fixed for first appearance. It further adds that central public sector enterprises must settle all invoices for procurement of goods or services from MSMEs on the Trade Receivables Discounting System (TReDS). TReDS is an RBI-regulated electronic platform that enables MSMEs to raise funds from financiers against invoices due from buyers. It also decriminalises certain offences.

For a PRS summary of the Bill, see here.

Joint Parliamentary Committee submits report on the Corporate Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026

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The Joint Parliamentary Committee on the Corporate Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026 (Chair: Mr Sudhir Gupta) presented its report on August 3, 2026.[8] The Bill seeks to amend the Companies Act, 2013 and the Limited Liability Partnership (LLP) Act, 2008. Key observations and recommendations of the Committee include:

- **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR):** The Bill increases the net profit threshold for applicability of CSR obligation from Rs 5 crore to Rs 10 crore. It also empowers the central government to revise the threshold. The Committee recommended removing the powers to revise the threshold. The Bill exempts classes of companies which fulfil prescribed conditions, from CSR obligation. The Committee observed that this provision lacks statutory guidance and amounts to excessive delegation. It also recommended the government to examine the feasibility of permitting CSR contributions in kind.
- **Appointment of auditors:** The Bill exempts classes of companies which fulfil prescribed conditions, from appointing auditors. The Committee recommended limiting this exemption to private companies, to enable ease of doing business while ensuring accountability and stakeholder confidence.
- **National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA):** The Companies Act, 2013 establishes NFRA to: (i) make recommendations on the formulation of accounting and auditing standards, (ii) enforce compliance with these standards, and (iii) oversee quality of service of the associated professions. The Act empowers NFRA to investigate into matters of professional or other misconduct. The manner of investigation is prescribed under Rules framed by the central government. The Bill instead empowers NFRA to make regulations on the manner of investigation. The Committee recommended deleting this amendment.
- The Bill adds that following offences will be punishable with imprisonment up to six months or a criminal fine: (i) failure to comply with an order of NFRA, or (ii) non-payment of penalty imposed by NFRA. The Committee observed that these provisions are not aligned with the larger objective of decriminalisation. It recommended removing imprisonment but retaining criminal fine.
- **National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT):** The Act establishes NCLT as the adjudicating authority. The Bill allows the President of NCLT to constitute one or more special benches for disposing cases under the Companies Act or the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 (IBC). The Committee recommended mandating creation of dedicated benches to deal with matters related to IBC. The President may separately create benches to dispose cases under the Companies Act.

For a PRS summary of the report, see here.

Cabinet approves a scheme for establishment of chemical parks

Davis Joseph (davis@prsindia.org)

The Union Cabinet approved the Bharat Audyogik Vikas Yojana (BHAVYA) – Rasayan scheme for the five-year period between 2026-27 and 2030-31.[9] Under the scheme, three dedicated greenfield chemical parks will be developed to enhance domestic production capacities, increase cost competitiveness, and attract investment across the chemical value chain. The three parks will be selected through a structured assessment of proposals by a steering committee. The assessment will factor aspects such as strategic relevance, financial soundness, and long-term sustainability.

State governments will provide the land required for the park, along with bearing the financial cost of land acquisition. State implementing agencies will be responsible for project execution and coordination. Financial assistance will be provided to develop common infrastructural facilities and basic utilities with an overall ceiling of one thousand crore rupees per park. This will be subject to the condition that at least Rs 500 crore is mobilised by the concerned state. The projected outlay under the scheme is Rs 3,030 crore.

Inventory-based e-commerce export framework notified

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The Ministry of Commerce and Industry notified the framework for inventory-based e-commerce export.[10] The framework enables Exporters-on-Record (EOR) to export and sell goods procured from Sellers-on-Record (SOR) to buyers located outside India. EORs must incorporate and carry out such operations through a separate legal entity.

Only goods of Indian origin are eligible under the framework. EOR refers to e-commerce entities registered with Directorate General of Foreign Trade under the Inventory-based Cross-border E-Commerce Facilitation Framework. SOR refers to registered entities supplying goods to EOR.

The SOR shall provide the goods to the EOR against a confirmed order. Speculative inventory build-up is not permitted. Payments by EOR to SOR should be completed within seven days of acceptance or deemed acceptance of the order. EOR is entitled to claim export rebates and refunds. These rebates and refunds received by the EOR must be distributed among the SORs in proportion to the value of their goods included in the export shipment.

The EOR is responsible for managing all returned or rejected consignments. Returned or rejected consignments must not be sold or supplied in the domestic market. Further, EORs are mandated to maintain a digital repository for identification and traceability of export inventory.

Standing Committee submitted report on India-US trade relations

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The Standing Committee on Commerce (Chair: Ms. Dola Sen) presented its report on 'Evaluation of India-US Trade Relations'.[11] Key recommendations of the Committee include: (i) concluding the Bilateral Trade Agreement with the US at the earliest while protecting India's interests, and strengthening India's integration into critical supply chains, (ii) securing tariff reductions and exemptions for key exports, including generic medicines, critical minerals, and smartphones, and establishing mechanisms to resolve trade frictions, (iii) supporting engineering and auto component manufacturers through export credit and targeted financial support, (iv) providing targeted support and promoting market diversification for the gems and jewellery, textiles, marine, and agricultural sectors, (v) diversifying chemical exports towards specialty and performance chemicals, and (vi) securing long-term access to aluminium and copper scrap and leveraging the National Critical Minerals Mission and QUAD Critical Minerals Initiative to strengthen critical mineral supply chains.

For a PRS summary of the report, see [here]().

Standing Committee submitted report on business reforms

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The Standing Committee on Commerce (Chair: Ms Dola Sen) presented its report on 'Doing Business in India: The Way Forward.'[12] Key recommendations of the Committee include: (i) merging overlapping licences, (ii) delegation of routine forest clearances to states, (iii) a single no-objection certificate for construction, (iv) self-certification for fire safety in smaller renewable energy projects, and (v) uniform adoption of the National Building Code, including a separate regulatory category for renewable energy sites.

Assessing the progress of the Business Reform Action Plan (BRAP), the Committee recommended: (i) a new edition of BRAP, (ii) a mandatory third-party ground reality verification audit rather than reliance on state-submitted paperwork, (iii) a single PAN-based Business ID across state clearances, and (iv) measures to close the efficiency gap between industrial hubs and areas in rural region.

On working conditions in e-commerce dark stores, the Committee recommended: (i) strict enforcement of the Occupational Safety, Health, and Working Conditions Code, 2020, and the Code on Social Security, 2020, (iii) randomised inspection audits, and (iv) a portable Aadhaar-linked insurance framework for delivery/dark-store personnel. On consumer protection, it recommended stricter checks on misleading advertising and dynamic pricing, and automated online dispute resolution.

For a PRS summary of the report, see [here]().

Standing Committee submits report on national policy on petrochemicals

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The Standing Committee on Chemicals and Fertilisers (Chair: Mr Azad Kirti Jha) presented its report on 'Review of National Policy on Petrochemicals, 2007'.[13] Key observations and recommendations of the Committee include: (i) review of the policy to address shifting demand/supply dynamics, global competitiveness and sustainability goals, (ii) identifying and correcting existing gaps in investment and employment in the three petrochemical regions of Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh and Odisha, (iii) increasing production and exports of synthetic fibres, (iv) reconstituting the Plastic Development Council for development of the plastic processing sector, and (v) reviewing functioning of Centres of Excellence.

For a PRS summary of the report, see [here]().

Standing Committee submits report on ecosystem of startups

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The Standing Committee on Commerce (Chair: Dr Abhishek Manu Singhvi) presented its report on 'Ecosystem of Startups to Benefit India'.[14] Key observations and recommendations of the Committee include: (i) expanding startup support beyond IT services such as in non-tech and social sectors, (ii) increasing funding to expand the presence of Agri-based startups, (iii) encouraging investments and financial assistance in women-led startups, (iv) initiating outreach campaigns to encourage startups in tier-2 and tier-3 cities, and (v) simplifying startup registration and further reducing compliance burden.

Finance

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Parliament passes the Taxation and Other Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026

Parliament passed the Taxation and Other Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026.[15] The Bill was introduced in Lok Sabha on August 4, 2026. It amends the Income-tax Act, 2025, the Finance Act, 2026 and the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007. Key changes include:

- **Exemption to FIIs and BIS:** The Bill exempts foreign institutional investors (FIIs) and the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) from paying income tax on: (i) interest earned on investments in government securities, and (ii) capital gains arising from sale, exchange, or transfer of such securities.
- **Foreign companies engaged in businesses of diamonds and electronics manufacturing:** The Bill amends the Income-tax Act to give tax exemptions to certain foreign companies. Income from sale of rough diamonds in a notified special zone will be exempt under certain conditions. Similarly, income on account of storage of components in a warehouse in a custom bonded area will be exempt under certain conditions.
- **Special purpose vehicles of business trusts:** The Finance Act, 2026 levies a surcharge of 10% on income-tax payable by every domestic company opting for concessional tax rates. The Bill raises surcharge rate to 25% for a special purpose vehicle of a business trust. Business trusts (e.g. REITs and InvITs) pool money from investors to buy and manage assets. The Bill also exempts unit holders of a business trust from tax on the income representing dividends from such a special purpose vehicle.

For a PRS Summary of the Bill, see here.

Parliament passes the Bankers' Books Evidence Bill, 2026

Parliament passed the Bankers' Books Evidence Bill, 2026.[16] The Bill was introduced in Lok Sabha on August 3, 2026. It replaces the Bankers' Books Evidence Act, 1891. Key changes include:

- **Admissibility of electronic records:** The Bill adds that an electronic or digital record of a banker's book will be admissible, valid, and legally enforceable as evidence, subject to certain conditions.
- **Compelling production of bankers' books:** The Act states that an officer of a bank cannot be compelled to produce any banker's book in a legal proceeding to which the bank is not a party. An officer cannot be compelled to appear as a witness to prove matters, transactions, or accounts recorded. Such actions require an order of the Court or a Judge made for a special cause. The Bill retains these provisions and defines special cause to mean where: (i) accuracy or genuineness of the information is doubtful, (ii) any event occurred which suggests that the regularity or ordinary nature of record keeping is interrupted, or (iii) the bank does not comply with any Court order regarding inspection of books.
- **Application to other entities in the financial sector:** The Act applies to entities engaged in the business of banking and any post office savings bank or money order office. The Bill retains this. It also empowers the central government to extend the provisions of the Bill to any entity or class of entities operating in the financial sector, by notification.

For a PRS summary of the Bill, see here.

Rules on voluntary disclosure of undeclared foreign assets of small taxpayers notified

The Ministry of Finance notified the Foreign Assets of Small Taxpayers – Disclosure Scheme Rules, 2026.[17] The Rules operationalise the disclosure scheme under the Finance Act, 2026.[18] The scheme enables eligible taxpayers to disclose undeclared foreign assets and income, with payment of a specified tax or fee (total 60% of the value of undisclosed asset plus undisclosed income). The scheme is applicable where: (i) the aggregate value of the undisclosed asset located outside India and the undisclosed foreign income does not exceed one crore rupees, or (ii) the value of the asset located outside India does not exceed five crore rupees. The Rules specify the methodology for valuation of different types of foreign assets such as jewellery, archaeological collections, works of art, shares and securities, immovable properties, and bank accounts.

The declaration may be made electronically. Where the value of an asset declared differs from that determined by the assessing officer, the declaration will remain valid if the difference does not exceed 20%. Payment of the amount determined by the income-tax authority must be made within two months from the end of month in which the order is received. An extension of up to two months may be granted, at a monthly interest of 1%.

The last date for making a declaration under the scheme is December 31, 2026. The valuation date for declaring the market value of assets is March 31, 2026.

Energy

Comments invited on the draft Rules and Regulations under the SHANTI Act, 2025

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The Department of Atomic Energy released the draft Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI) Rules, 2026 and draft SHANTI Regulations, 2026.[19,20] These have been released under the provisions of the SHANTI Act, 2025.[21] The Act provides a framework for regulating nuclear energy, including licencing of nuclear facilities and liability for any nuclear damage. Key features include:

- **Licensing of nuclear power plants:** The Rules provide for a single composite licence to build, own, operate, and decommission a nuclear power plant or reactor. The licence may be sought for purposes such as supply of electricity to grid and captive power generation for specified purposes including hard to abate sectors and data centres. Operators may source technology indigenously or from foreign suppliers. If a design is foreign, it must be: (i) certified or approved by its regulatory body, and (ii) should be operational in its country of origin or any other foreign country. If a licence is cancelled or a facility is abandoned, the central government will appoint an administrator to run the business. If no eligible buyer is found, the central government will assume control and the assets will vest in it.
- **Safety related provisions:** The Act states that any activity involving radiation exposure will require a safety authorisation from the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB). The Regulations specify authorisation at different project phases such as siting (i.e. assessment of site suitability), construction, commissioning, operation, and decommissioning. AERB may also prescribe regulatory hold points, beyond which work cannot proceed until specified safety requirements are verified. The Rules also constitute a Standing Committee comprising representatives from the Department of Atomic Energy and other Ministries to advise the central government on issues related to radiation protection.
- **Periodic review of operator's liability limits:** The central government will constitute a group of experts every five years to review the maximum limits of operator's civil liability for nuclear damage.

Comments are invited until September 4, 2026.

Cabinet approves a scheme on bioenergy

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The Union Cabinet approved GOBARdhan, the National Circular Bioenergy Scheme.[22] The scheme aims to increase domestic Compressed Biogas (CBG) production. The scheme will run from 2026-27 to 2035-36. Key features of the scheme include: (i) stable administered CBG price of Rs 2,110 per million metric British thermal units, (ii) dedicated CBG procurement by city gas distribution entities, (iii) capital assistance of up to two crore rupees per ton per day of installed CBG capacity for eligible CBG projects, (iv) support for pipeline infrastructure connecting CBG plants with city gas distribution networks, (v) credit guarantee support for eligible MSME-based CBG projects, and (vi) CBG Ecosystem Challenge Fund to support activities such as feedstock resource assessment and technology adoption. The total projected outlay under this scheme is Rs 23,731 crore.

Cabinet approves scheme to promote domestic PNG connections

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The Union Cabinet approved the Incentive Scheme for Promotion of Domestic Piped Natural Gas (PNG) Connections.[23] The scheme seeks to fast-track the expansion of active PNG connections in households across the country. Under the scheme, eligible City Gas Distribution (CGD) entities will be provided 200 standard cubic meters (SCM) of domestically-produced, lower-priced APM gas, for every incremental billed domestic PNG connection.

APM gas refers to natural gas sold under a government-administered pricing mechanism. The scheme aims to reduce the overall gas-sourcing costs for CGDs. It is expected that APM gas will substitute the costlier liquefied natural gas currently used for CNG transport. The incentive is tied to each additional billed connection achieved during the performance period above a specific threshold. The scheme will be implemented in two tranches over six months.

Public Undertakings Committee submits report on NHPC

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The Committee on Public Undertakings (Chair: Mr. Baijayant Panda) presented its report on 'National Hydroelectric Power Corporation Limited (NHPC)'.[24] NHPC is a public sector undertaking that develops and operates power projects and trades and sells power. The Committee examined NHPC's operations and related issues affecting the sector, including commercial viability and the project execution framework.

The Committee noted issues such as delays in receiving consent from gram sabhas (as part of forest clearance), prolonged search for land suitable for compensatory afforestation, commercial viability issues, and changes in statutory obligations post-agreement.

Key recommendations of the Committee include: (i) reducing consent threshold from 100% to 70-75% of gram sabha members, (ii) creation of a digital land bank, (iii) introducing a structured viability gap funding framework for new hydropower projects, (iv) creating a model implementation agreement with dispute resolution and change-in-law protection, and (v) supporting pump storage development though expedited site allotments and clearance prioritisation. For a PRS summary of the report, see here.

Estimates Committee submits report on supply and distribution of natural gas

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The Committee on Estimates presented its report on 'Supply and Distribution of Natural Gas – Challenges and Prospects'.[25] The Committee examined issues related to the availability and supply of natural gas in the country. Natural gas is 6% of India's energy mix, less than the global average of about 24%. It noted issues such as: (i) delays in assessment, exploration, and production from natural gas reserves, (ii) insufficient use of alternative gas sources such as compressed bio-gas (CBG) and coal bed methane (CBM), and (iii) high cost of natural gas leading to poor uptake in industrial and domestic settings.

Key recommendations of the Committee include: (i) formulating a Natural Gas Action Plan, with yearly targets for production, imports, consumption, infrastructure expansion, and decarbonisation, (ii) bringing natural gas under the GST framework to prevent multiple taxes, (iii) operationalising more CBG plants, (iv) expediting production from explored natural gas and CBM reserves, (v) creating frameworks to increase utilisation of gas-based power plants, and (vi) instituting mechanisms to make piped natural gas more affordable for domestic users.

For a PRS summary of the report, see here.

Standing Committee submits report on and examination of R&D activities of oil PSUs

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The Standing Committee on Petroleum and Natural Gas presented its report on 'Examination of R&D Activities of Oil PSUs'.[26] The Committee examined the research and development (R&D) activities undertaken by 11 public sector undertakings (PSUs) working in the oil and natural gas sector. It noted issues such as limited linkage between R&D and national priorities, lack of a standardised performance review system, and limited monetisation of developed technologies.

Key recommendations of the Committee include: (i) mandating that a minimum percentage of oil PSUs' profit before tax be spent on R&D, (ii) creating a 'National Mission Portfolio' to link R&D goals with national priorities, such as reducing import dependence, (iii) providing the R&D department with representation on the board of oil PSUs, (iv) creating a standardised system of performance reporting and review, (v) increasing collaborations between PSUs, academia, and start-ups, and (vi) providing performance-linked incentives to scientists for deployed patents and royalty-earning technologies.

For a PRS summary of the report, see here.

Law and Justice

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Parliament passes the Tribunals Reforms Bill, 2026

Parliament passed the Tribunal Reforms Bill, 2026. The Bill was introduced in Lok Sabha on August 10, 2026.[27] It seeks to repeal the Tribunals Reforms Act, 2021.[28] The 2021 Act provides for appointments and terms and conditions of service for various Tribunals. Key features include:

- **National Tribunals Commission**: The Bill establishes the National Tribunals Commission Its functions include: (i) conducting the selection process and performance reviews of Tribunals, (ii) overseeing inquiries into complaints against all Tribunal members, and (iii) developing and maintaining the National Tribunals Data Grid.
- **Composition of the Commission:** The Commission will consist of: (i) a chairperson, who has been a Judge of the Supreme Court or a Chief Justice of a High Court, (ii) two judicial members, who have been a Chief Justice or Judge of a High Court, and (iii) two technical members. Appointments will be made by the central government. Appointments of the chairperson and judicial members must be made in consultation with the Chief Justice of India.
- **Appointments to Tribunals:** The Commission will constitute a search-cum-selection committee to recommend appointment to a Tribunal. For each vacancy, the committee will recommend a name, and another in the waiting list. The central government must make an appointment within three months of the recommendation.

For a PRS summary of the Bill, see here.

Regulations notified to establish a bench of the J&K High Court in Ladakh

The President promulgated the Union Territory of Ladakh (Sitting of Bench of the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh in Ladakh) Regulation, 2026.[29] The Regulation allows the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh to sit in Ladakh. The Regulations also empower the Chief Justice to direct that any case or class of cases arising in Ladakh must be heard at Srinagar or Jammu, as the case may be.

Standing Committee submits report on the Tribunals system

The Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law, and Justice (Chair: Mr Brij Lal) submitted its report on "Review of Functioning of Tribunal System in the Country".[30] Tribunals are adjudicatory bodies established for discharging judicial or quasi-judicial duties. The objective is to reduce case load of the judiciary, or to bring in subject expertise for technical matters. The Committee examined the functioning and capacities of five Tribunals.

Key observations and recommendations include: (i) addressing vacancies in the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal and National Green Tribunal, (ii) periodic review of need for additional benches of NCLT considering its increasing workload, (iii) addressing pendency by reducing timelines for written statement and report submissions in case of Railway Claims Tribunal, and (iv) upgrading infrastructure across Tribunals.

For a PRS summary of the report, see here.

Standing Committee submits report on alternate dispute resolution ecosystem

The Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice (Chair: Mr Brij Lal) submitted its report on "Creation and Development of Institutional Mechanism to Support the Alternative Dispute Resolution Ecosystem".[31] Alternate dispute resolution (ADR) systems are mechanisms for resolving disputes outside the formal court process through mediation, arbitration, or conciliation.

Key recommendations of the Committee include: (i) improving utilisation of the India International Arbitration Centre, (ii) fully operationalising the Mediation Act, 2023, (iii) filling vacancies and addressing budgetary needs of the National Legal Services Authority, (iv) upgrading infrastructure and hiring more personnel at the Delhi International Arbitration Centre, (v) mandating inclusion of institutional ADR mechanisms in contracts entered by PSUs, (vi) clearer guidelines to define and limit the scope of judicial intervention in arbitration matters, and (vii) introducing measures to encourage young professionals to build careers in ADR.

For a PRS summary of the report, see here.

Education

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Bill introduced to replace Indian Statistical Institute Act, 1959

The Indian Statistical Institute Bill, 2026 was introduced in Lok Sabha on August 3, 2026.[32] The Bill seeks to repeal and replace the Indian Statistical Institute Act, 1959.[33] Key features of the Bill include:

- **Incorporation:** ISI is presently registered as a society under the West Bengal Societies Registration Act, 1961.[34] The Bill provides that ISI will be a body corporate, and will be a not-for-profit legal entity.

- **Visitor**: The President of India will be the Visitor. The Visitor may appoint one or more persons to: (i) review the work and progress, and (ii) hold inquiries into its affairs. The Visitor may take actions and issue directions based on the inquiry or review reports, which will be binding.
- **Board of Governors**: ISI will have a Board of Governors as the principal policy making executive body. The Chairperson will be nominated by the Visitor on the recommendation of the central government. Other members of the Board include: (i) a nominee from the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), not below the rank of Joint Secretary, (ii) Joint/Additional Secretary and Financial Adviser of MoSPI, (iii) four eminent persons nominated by the Chairperson, and (iv) four specified representatives of ISI. The Bill also establishes an academic council, a finance committee, and a management council.
- **Director:** The Board will appoint a Director who will be the chief executive officer, with prior approval of the Visitor. The Director will be responsible for: (i) implementing the decisions of the Board and the academic council, and (ii) day-to-day administration.
- **Powers of the central government:** The Act empowers the central government to issue directions in public interest, with reasons to be recorded in writing. The Bill instead empowers the central government to issue directions if necessary for efficient administration of the Act. The Act requires prior approval of the central government for amending rules and regulations. Under the Bill, prior approval will be required only for the first regulations made by the Board. Under the Act, the central government may take charge of ISI for up to two years in case of: (i) default in giving effect to its directions, or (ii) exceeding or abuse of powers by the institute management. The Bill removes these powers.

For a PRS summary of the Bill, see here.

Agriculture

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Parliament passes the National Co-operative Development Corporation (Amendment) Bill, 2026

Parliament passed the National Co-operative Development Corporation (Amendment) Bill, 2026.[35] It was introduced in Lok Sabha on August 10, 2026. It amends the National Co-operative Development Corporation Act, 1962. The Act establishes the National Co-operative Development Corporation. Key changes include:

- **Functions of the Corporation:** As per the Act, the Corporation plans, promotes, and finances programmes implemented through co-operative societies in specified areas. These include agricultural produce, foodstuffs, minor forest produce, and other notified commodities and services. The Bill instead provides that the Corporation carry out the these activities for co-operative development. The Bill defines co-operative development as providing assistance directly or through an intermediary to co-operative societies.
- The Bill also allows the Corporation to undertake its activities in industrial goods. Under the Act, industrial goods are defined as products of specified entities situated in rural areas: (i) industrial co-operatives, (ii) cottage and village industries, or (iii) allied industries. The Bill removes the requirement for such entities to be situated in rural areas.
- **Entities eligible for funding and investments:** Under the Act, the Corporation may provide: (i) funds to state governments for financing co-operative societies, or (ii) loans and grants to co-operative societies at the national level or those operating in more than one state. The Bill allows state governments to extend funding from the Corporation to any entity engaged in co-operative development. Further, the Corporation may also provide loans and grants directly to any co-operative society or entity engaged in co-operative development
- Under the Act, the Corporation may invest in the share capital of national or multi-state co-operative societies. The Bill adds that the Corporation may also participate in the share capital of co-operative societies operating within a state or entities engaged in co-operative development. Such investments will require approval of the central government.
- **Information sharing:** The Bill empowers the Corporation to collect and furnish credit information or other information for efficient discharge of its functions.

For a PRS summary of the Bill, see here.

Standing Committee submits report on fertiliser movement and forced bundling

The Standing Committee on Chemicals and Fertilisers (Chair: Mr Azad Kirti Jha) submitted its report on "Alignment of Logistics for Efficient Fertiliser Movement and Availability at Affordable Prices during Peak Season and Steps Taken to Curb Forced Bundling of Unnecessary Boosters with Essential Fertilisers".[36] The Committee observed that non-essential products were sold as a necessity to get fertilisers, a practice known as forced bundling. It also observed that recurring shortages of fertilisers and distribution disruptions were occurring. It highlighted a lack of coordination between the central and state governments in last mile delivery. It also observed the excessive use of urea relative to other fertilisers due to prevailing subsidies had led soil health damage and ground water contamination.

The Committee recommended: (i) mandating separate billing of all non-subsidised products, (ii) amending the Fertiliser (Control) Order, 1985 to prohibit and prescribe penalties for forced bundling, (iii) instituting a permanent joint command and monitoring cell to strengthen centre-state coordination, and (iv) a comprehensive review of existing pricing and subsidies.

For a PRS summary of the report, see here.

Standing Committee submits report on the Fertiliser (Movement Control) Order, 1973

The Standing Committee on Chemicals and Fertilisers (Chair: Mr Azad Kirti Jha) submitted its report on "Evaluation of Implementation of Fertiliser (Movement Control) Order, 1973".[37] The Committee observed the Order was enacted prior to the present digital system. It observed that the monetary penalties imposed were disproportionate with the economic gains from illegal diversions. It noted there was no centralized statement of procedure for enforcement of the Order. It also observed several states had high rates of vacancies in positions of enforcement officials. It recommended: (i) a comprehensive, time bound review of the Order to align it with modern enforcement needs, (ii) strengthening penalty and enforcement provisions to ensure that monetary penalties are proportionate, (iii) a statement of procedure laying down uniform procedures for inspections and movement checks, and (iv) filling critical vacancies in fertiliser inspectorate in states where vacancy rates exceed 30%.

For a PRS summary of the report, see here.

Defence

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Defence Minister approves transfer of technology of DRDO-developed missiles

The Defence Minister, Mr. Rajnath Singh, approved the transfer of DRDO-developed conventional missile system technologies to Indian defence industry.[38] This will be applicable for production within the country. The transfer of technology aims to promote greater participation of domestic industries in the defence ecosystem.

Sixth Positive Indigenisation List notified

The Ministry of Defence notified the sixth Positive Indigenisation List consisting of 405 items with an estimated business potential of Rs 3,070 crore.[39] The list contains line replaceable units, sub-systems, sub-assemblies, spares, components, and raw materials. Each item has an indicative timeline for indigenisation. Upon successful indigenous development, these items will be procured from Indian industry. The list includes 16 items of the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) and 389 items of Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs). The ICG and DPSUs will undertake their indigenisation through various routes, including in-house development, and participation from MSMEs and start-ups.

Public Accounts Committee submits report on the production of small arms

The Public Accounts Committee (Chair: Mr. K. C. Venugopal) presented its report on "Production of Small Arms in Ordnance Factories".[40] It examined CAG report on the same subject for the year ended 2022 with some additional inquiry and recommendations. The report examines three small arms factories, which are under the Advanced Weapons and Equipment India Limited (AWEIL). AWEIL was set up in 2021 when the Ordnance Factory Board was restructured into defence public sector undertakings. The Committee noted reduced demand, high operating costs, recurring quality issues, and delays in research and development (R&D) projects of these factories. Key recommendations include: (i) creating a multi-year rolling demand plan between Army, Ministry of Home Affairs, state police forces, and small arms factories to prevent capacity from remaining idle, (ii) conducting a detailed study of demand patterns and recalibrating facilities to meet these patterns, (iii) taking measures to increase revenue such as diversifying products, (iv) in-process (rather than end-of-line) quality inspections for all products, and (v) introducing a monitoring mechanism for R&D.

For a PRS summary of the report, see here.

Communications

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Rules for telecommunication user identification notified

The Department of Telecommunication notified Telecommunications (User Identification) Rules, 2026.[41] These Rules seek to create a biometric-based identification framework for telecom users. Key features include:

- **Mandatory biometric verification:** The notified Rules mandate telecom users to undergo biometric verification before: (i) enrolment, (ii) updating user information, and (iii) disconnection of services. Users with an Aadhaar number must undergo Aadhaar authentication. Users without Aadhaar, or those unable to complete Aadhaar authentication, must follow an alternate digital KYC process. Under both processes, a live photograph or any other specified biological attributes, and user details will be stored in the subscriber data record. For digital KYC, a user must submit documents relating to proof of identity and proof of address. In case of business users, an authorised representative of the business, and each of the end users of that connection must undergo biometric identification. However, exemptions for verification of each end-user may be granted by the central government.
- **Provisions regarding suspicious connections or requests:** Telecom entities are required to act against false information being provided, forged documents being used, and impersonation during enrolment. Entities must inform law enforcement and register an FIR in such cases. The central government must also be informed. Further, the central government may require that when a user undergoes biometric identification, the telecom entities send an alert to confirm the user's request. If the user responds negatively to the alert, the telecom operator must take immediate action.
- **Change in user of telecom connections:** The Rules permit a change in the user of a telecom connection or SIM only in favour of a relative, legal heir, or other specified users. The change requires biometric identification of the existing and the new user and a no-objection certificate from the existing user. In case of a deceased user, the death certificate and biometric identification of the new user are required. The connection will be treated as a new connection.

Standing Committee submits report on review of scheme under Digital Bharat Nidhi

The Standing Committee on Communications and Information Technology (Chair: Dr. Nishikant Dubey) presented its report on "Review of performance of schemes or projects under Digital Bharat Nidhi implemented by public and private sector".[42] Digital Bharat Nidhi (DBN) aims to fund schemes or projects providing telecom services in underserved areas. It also aims to provide support to R&D in communication technologies. DBN-funded schemes include BharatNet and 4G mobile tower projects in border and remote areas.

The Committee highlighted low utilisation under BharatNet. It also noted several challenges encountered by connectivity projects in security-sensitive areas and the north-eastern region, such as difficult terrain, delays in forest clearances, and security constraints. Key recommendations of the Committee include: (i) increasing network utilisation under BharatNet, (ii) providing logistical and security support to scheme implementing agencies in security-sensitive zones, (iii) time-bound commissioning of towers in remote and uncovered areas, and (iv) sharing of infrastructure between telecom operators in the north-east.

For a PRS summary of the report, see here.

Health and Family Welfare

Sneha Bharti (sneha@prsindia.org)

Amendments to Drug Rules, 1945 notified

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare notified amendments to the Drugs Rules, 1945.[43,44,45] The Rules are prescribed under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940.[46] The Act regulates the import, manufacture, and distribution of drugs and cosmetics in India. Key amendments to the Rules include:

- **Debarment in certain cases:** The amendments add that a licence applicant may be debarred for a certain period by the licencing authority for specified violations. Such an action may be taken if the person is found guilty of submitting misleading, fake, or fabricated documents or information. The amended Rules define debarment as prohibition, exclusion, or disqualification of a person from activities such as: (i) importing, (ii) manufacturing for sale or distribution, or (iii) selling, stocking, or distributing.
- **Procedure for debarment:** The licencing authority must give an opportunity to show cause why such an action should not be taken. A person aggrieved by debarment order may

make an appeal before the government. The government may pass an order after giving an opportunity of hearing.

Standing Committee submits report on affordability and accessibility of healthcare

The Standing Committee on Health and Family Welfare (Chair: Prof. Ram Gopal Yadav) submitted its report on 'Affordability and Accessibility of Healthcare Facilities in Public and Private Sector'.[47] The Committee highlighted challenges such as: (i) inadequate public health expenditure, (ii) low spending on secondary and tertiary care, (iii) high and unregulated private healthcare costs, (iv) limited insurance coverage for outpatient care, (v) shortages of specialist physicians in rural areas, and (vi) high out-of-pocket expenditure on medicines.

It recommended: (i) increasing health funding through a time-bound roadmap to reach 2.5% and eventually 5% of GDP, (ii) increasing public capital investment in Community Health Centres (CHCs), District Hospitals, and medical colleges through a dedicated healthcare capex fund, (iii) establishing a legally binding framework to standardise private hospital rates and ensuring uniform adoption of the Clinical Establishments Act, (iv) expanding Ayushman Bharat scheme to cover outpatient consultations, diagnostics, and medicines, and raising the annual family coverage limit to Rs 10 lakh, (vi) establishing Jan Aushadhi Kendras across hospitals, and (vii) enforcing price controls on life-saving and over-the-counter medicines.

For a PRS summary of the report, see here.

Standing Committee submits report on the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority

The Standing Committee on Chemicals and Fertilisers (Chair: Mr Azad Kirti Jha) submitted its report on "Review of Role, Functions and Duties of National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) with specific reference to increase in prices of medicines in the country".[48] The Committee highlighted following key challenges: (i) the absence of a permanent Trade Margin Rationalisation (TMR) framework, (ii) large unrecovered overcharged amounts pending in litigation, (iii) gaps in the classification of scheduled and non-scheduled medicines, (iv) incomplete data for price monitoring, and (v) limited public participation in price fixation.

Key recommendations include: (i) finalising a permanent TMR framework within a defined timeline, (ii) establishing a fast-track dispute resolution mechanism and dedicated legal cell for pending litigation, (iii) examining the feasibility of reintroducing cost-based pricing through statutory amendments, (iv) reviewing medicine categorisation to address pricing loopholes, (v) expanding data coverage to hospital sales and rural areas, and (vi) increasing public awareness and participation in the price fixation.

For a PRS summary of the report, see here.

Standing Committee submits report on chronic kidney diseases

The Standing Committee on Health and Family Welfare (Chair: Prof. Ram Gopal Yadav) submitted its report on 'Prevalence of Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) in India- Prevention, Diagnosis, Treatment and Management'.[49] Key recommendations of the Committee include: (i) adopting a prevention-first approach through door-to-door screening of high-risk individuals using Ayushman Arogya Mandirs, (ii) filling vacant specialist posts in underserved states and expanding DM-Nephrology seats, (iii) extending Ayushman Bharat post-transplant coverage up to one year and increasing the family health cover to Rs 10 lakh, (iv) studying gender disparities in organ donation and expanding transplant facilities across states, and (v) developing a national framework for prevention and surveillance, along with agrochemical regulation and workplace kidney health programmes.

For a PRS summary of the report, see here.

Standing Committee submits report on vector borne diseases

The Standing Committee Health and Family Welfare Committee (Chair: Prof. Ram Gopal Yadav) submitted its report on 'A Study of Vector-Borne Diseases (VBD) in North-East India'.[50] Key recommendations of the Committee include: (i) strengthening the roadmap for disease management with clear timelines for disease elimination, (ii) pursuing international collaborations for vaccine development and prioritising standard treatment protocols for complicated cases, (iii) expediting recruitment of entomologists and expanding viral research and diagnostic labs in north-east, (iv) strengthening real-time surveillance through measures such as integrated platforms and AI-based early-warning systems, (v) establishing cross-border coordination on these diseases and regulating pig-rearing practices, and (vi) developing a region-specific strategy to ensure universal coverage of insecticidal nets and combination therapies.

For a PRS summary of the report, see here.

Rural Development

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Comments invited on draft Rules relating to audits under the VB-G RAM G Act

The Ministry of Rural Development has invited comments on the draft Rules on audit of schemes under VB-G RAM G.[51,52] The Act guarantees 125 days of wage employment in a financial year to every rural household. It replaces the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005.[53] Key features of the draft Rules include:

- **Annual audits:** Accounts and expenditure under the scheme for each district must be audited annually. Audit must be conducted by the Director, Local Fund Audit, or by chartered accountants, preferably empanelled with CAG. The accounts and audit report must be submitted to the state government. The state government will forward them to CAG, and the central Government for laying before each House of Parliament. CAG may also conduct audits such as supplementary, compliance, performance, and information technology audits.
- **Social audits:** State governments must facilitate social audits of all scheme works in every gram panchayat at least once every six months. An independent Social Audit Unit (SAU) will facilitate these audits by training social auditors, verifying records and works, and publishing audit findings and Action Taken Reports. Each state must establish or identify an SAU, with safeguards for its independence from implementing agencies.
- **Time-bound action and recovery:** Social audit findings and Gram Sabha minutes must be uploaded within seven days. The Programme Officer must submit an Action Taken Report within 30 days, failing which the matter is escalated to the District Programme Coordinator. The entire process must be completed within seven months. Misappropriated funds must be recovered within five months.
- **Public disclosure:** A public-facing dashboard must disclose social audit findings, Action Taken Reports, corrective and punitive action, recoveries, and the status of grievances and appeals. The SAUs must also publish quarterly and annual reports on audits and follow-up action.

Comments are invited until September 6, 2026.

Standing Committee submits report on the effectiveness of the implementation of the Constitution 73rd Amendment Act

The Standing Committee on Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (Chair: Mr. Saptagiri Sankar Ulaka) submitted its report on "'Effectiveness of the Implementation of Constitution 73rd Amendment Act with Special Reference to Coordination in Three-Tier System of Panchayat".[54]

Key recommendations of the Committee include: (i) periodically ranking states on devolution and preparing a roadmap for next-generation PRI reforms, (ii) strengthening Panchayats' own revenue and performance-based incentives to encourage own revenue generation, (iii) ensuring block and district plans consolidate gaps identified in Gram Panchayat Development Plans and follow prescribed grant-sharing ratios, (iv) creating dedicated Panchayat cadres and providing one Panchayat secretary per Gram Panchayat, (v) enforcing measures against proxy representation and strengthening training and mentoring for women representatives, and (vi) using digital platforms and awareness campaigns to revitalise Gram Sabhas and periodically assess their functioning.

For a PRS summary of the report, see here.

Standing Committee submits report on impact study of schemes on rural skilling

The Standing Committee on Rural Development and Panchayati raj (Chair: Mr. Saptagiri Sankar Ulaka) submitted its report on "Rural Skilling and Migration: Impact study of Impact study of Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY), Deendayal Antyodaya Yojna-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) and Rural Self Employment Training Institutes (RSETIs)".[55] DAY-NRLM aims to reduce poverty by mobilising Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and promoting sustainable livelihoods. DDUGKY provides placement-linked skill training to rural youth. RSETIs are district-level training centres that offer short-term residential courses to promote self-employment. The Committee observed following challenges: (i) placement gaps and a high job dropout rate due to low salaries, (ii) fund underutilisation, (iii) inadequate credit and market linkages for SHGs, (iv) an insufficient network of RSETIs, (v) low female participation, and (vi) inter-state disparities in performance of schemes.

Key recommendations include: (i) ensuring near 100% placement through industry linkages, localised placement drives, and higher targets for employment paying at or above minimum wage, (ii) increasing credit flows to SHGs and strengthening marketing networks, (iii) expanding

RSETIs to every district and aligning curricula with local economic opportunities, (v) introducing women-only training batches, mobile training units, and crèches at training centres, and (vi) adopting need-based fund allocation and targeted support for lagging states.

For a PRS summary of the report, see here.

Standing Committee submits report on implementation of DILRMP

The Standing Committee on Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (Chair: Mr. Saptagiri Sankar Ulaka) submitted its report on "Implementation of Digital India Land Records Modernisation Programme (DILRMP)".[56] Key recommendations include: (i) completing pending activities within defined timelines and expediting extension of the scheme, (ii) computerising all revenue courts, prescribing timelines for case disposal, and implementing auto-triggered online mutation nationwide, (iii) prioritising modern record rooms and developing standards for preserving physical and digital land records, (iv) developing a dedicated strategy for Sixth Schedule areas in consultation with Autonomous District Councils, state governments, and traditional institutions, (v) completing consent-based Aadhaar linkage and mobile number seeding and providing automatic alerts for land transactions, and (vi) evaluating the NAKSHA pilot and expanding it to other urban local bodies.

For a PRS summary of the report, see here.

Standing Committee submits report on SVAMITVA Scheme

The Standing Committee on Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (Chair: Mr Saptagiri Sankar Ulaka) submitted its report on "Survey of Villages Abadi and Mapping with Improvised Technology in Village Areas (SVAMITVA) Scheme".[57] The scheme aims to provide legal property ownership rights to people living in inhabited rural areas.

Key recommendations of the Committee include: (i) preparing state-specific action plans with strict timelines for completing drone surveys, (ii) expanding coverage to eligible habitation clusters outside abadi limits, (iii) integrating Property Cards with DigiLocker, BhuNaksha, banking systems, and DILRMP, (iv) integrating SVAMITVA geospatial data with PM GatiShakti and Gram Panchayat Development Plans, (v) establishing a uniform framework for updating property records and grievance redressal, and (vi) strengthening data governance, cyber security and technical audits.

Transport

Model concession agreement for road projects revised

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The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways released an office memorandum revising the Model Concession Agreement (MCA) for Build-Own-Operate (BOT) (Toll) projects.[58,59] MCA for BOT projects is a template that specifies the terms and conditions for public-private partnership in highway construction, under the build, operate and transfer model. Key changes include:

- **Revenue support for lower traffic:** Under the earlier MCA, traffic shortfall of more than 5% from the target can lead to extension of the concession period. The revised MCA states that if actual traffic falls more than 10% below the target during first seven target dates, revenue support will be provided by the National Highway Authority of India (NHAI). After the seventh date, the concession period can be extended. Further, if traffic significantly exceeds the target (but remains within design capacity), the period can also be shortened. Target dates are pre-defined date on which the project's actual and expected traffic is compared.
- **Government buyback:** Under the earlier MCA, if traffic exceeds the design capacity of the project highway, NHAI could, at its discretion, terminate the concession and make a termination payment. The revised MCA instead provides for mandatory buyback by NHAI when average daily traffic exceeds the project's design capacity in any two accounting years within a block of three continuous accounting years.
- **Changes to dispute resolution process:** Under the earlier MCA, dispute resolution would first be attempted by mediation, followed by referral to the Dispute Resolution Board, and thereafter to the conciliation and arbitration. Under the revised MCA, disputes are treated differently based on their value. Disputes with value less than ten crore rupees will be referred to conciliation, and thereafter by arbitration. Disputes of value more than ten crore rupees will be resolved by conciliation, and such disputes will not be referred to arbitration.

Standing Committee submits report on sustainable bus transport

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The Standing Committee on Transport, Tourism and Culture (Chair: Mr. Sanjay Kumar Jha) presented its report on "Enabling Inclusive, Digital and Sustainable Bus Transport: Policy, Regulation and Public-Private Partnership for Next-Gen Mobility".[60] It noted that inter-state buses operating under All India Tourist Permits (AITPs) face action by enforcement authorities due to varying interpretations of who qualifies as a tourist. The Committee also noted the practice of obtaining AITPs through registration of vehicles in states where the permit is lower-priced. Other observations include: (i) same entities owning and operating bus terminals and (ii) different ticketing and tracking systems for buses across states, with little interoperability.

It recommended: (i) changing the All-India Tourist Permit to All-India Passenger Permit, (ii) issuance of permit by state of first registration of vehicles, (iii) constituting a National Bus Terminals Authority to manage bus terminals across the country, and (iv) national framework for interoperability standards for different ticketing and tracking platforms.

Home Affairs

Navya Sriram (navya@prsindia.org)

Parliament passes the Kerala (Alteration of Name) Bill, 2026

Parliament passed the Kerala (Alteration of Name) Bill, 2026.[61] The Bill changes the name of the state of Kerala to "Keralam" in the First Schedule of the Constitution.

For a PRS summary of the Bill, see here.

Standing Committee submits report on disaster management

The Standing Committee on Home Affairs (Chair: Dr. Radha Mohan Das Agarawal) submitted its report on "Disaster Management".[62] Key recommendations include: (i) updating disaster management frameworks as per the latest Act, (ii) strengthening urban disaster management through city-level plans and risk assessments, (iii) improving fund utilisation and expanding disaster insurance, (iv) improving rehabilitation through standardised assessments and rebuilding guidelines, (v) strengthening risk assessment through hazard mapping, integrated data and AI-enabled systems, (vi) addressing flood and seismic risks through better drainage, resilient infrastructure and building-code enforcement, and (vii) adopting river-basin-level flood management through flood mapping, floodplain protection and restoration of natural drainage systems.

For a PRS summary of the report, see here.

Standing Committee submits report on the security and development of Jammu Kashmir and Ladakh

The Standing Committee on Home Affairs (Chair: Dr. Radha Mohan Das Agrawal) submitted its report on "Review of Administrative Governance, Socio-Economic Development and Internal Security in the UT of Jammu & Kashmir; and Border Security Management and Preparedness in the UT of Ladakh".[63]

Key recommendations include: (i) expediting completion of ongoing road and tunnel projects, (ii) increased scheme coverage of crop insurance to farmers, (iii) ensuring pilgrim safety by predictive risk assessment in Shri Vaishno Devi Shrine, (iv) increasing solarisation of rooftops in government buildings and remote villages, (v) timely release of funds under Jal Jeevan Mission, which provides tap water connections to all households, (vi) expediting mineral exploration and generating employment within the sector, (vii) increasing recruitment of specialist doctors and teacher deployment in remote areas, and (viii) expediting the return and rehabilitation of migrants to the Kashmir Valley.

For a PRS summary of the report, see here.

Social Justice and Empowerment

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Standing Committee submits report on the National Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporations

The Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment (Chair: Mr. P.C. Mohan) submitted its report on "Review of the functioning of the National Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporations (NSFDC)".[64]

The Committee noted vacancies in the corporation, irregular equity infusion, under-performance of State Channelising Agencies (SCAs), and issues related to accessibility of credit schemes. SCAs are agencies nominated by states to implement NSFDC's financial assistance schemes. Key recommendations include: (i) filling vacancies in the Corporation, (ii) providing equity regularly, (iii) improving the functioning of SCAs, (iv) increasing the income limit for loan eligibility, and (v) improving accessibility of credit schemes and integrating them with central skill development programmes.

External Affairs

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Prime Minister visits Uzbekistan for bilateral talks

The Prime Minister, Mr Narendra Modi visited Uzbekistan for bilateral talks.[65,66] The two countries announced elevating their bilateral relationship to a comprehensive strategic partnership. They agreed to set a bilateral trade target of five billion USD by 2030. Key areas of cooperation agreed include: (i) geology and mineral resources, (ii) tourism, (iii) environmental protection, (iv) higher education and scientific research, (v) Indian system of medicines, and (vi) culture. A memorandum of agreement was signed for an Economic and Financial Dialogue between the Finance Ministries of the two countries.

Housing and Urban Affairs

Sneha Bharti (sneha@prsindia.org)

Committee submits report on sewerage and septage coverage under AMRUT

The Standing Committee on Housing and Urban Affairs (Chair: Mr Magunta Sreenivasulu Reddy) submitted its report on "Review of Sewerage and Septage Coverage in Cities with special reference to interventions under AMRUT & AMRUT 2.0".[67] The Committee observed challenges including slow progress of sewerage and septage projects, low household coverage, inadequate sewage treatment capacity, and continued manual cleaning of sewers despite a legal ban. It recommended: (i) stricter project timelines and milestone-based monitoring, (ii) enforcement of building bye-laws and technical standards for septic tanks, (iii) time-bound plans to augment sewage and faecal sludge treatment capacity and prioritise household sewer connections, (iv) resource recovery from sludge and septage, (v) policies and dedicated networks for treated wastewater reuse, and (vi) time-bound adoption of mechanised sewer cleaning, along with minimum wages, health insurance, and social security for sanitation workers.

For a PRS summary of the report, see here.

Environment

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Standing Committee submits report on forest fires in the Himalayan region

The Standing Committee on Science and Technology, Environment, Forests, and Climate Change (Chair: Dr Medha Vishram Kulkarni) presented its report on 'Forest fires in the Himalayan region, its adverse effects and mitigation measures. The Committee examined fire trends, regional drivers, disaster-response capacity, and funding across the Himalayan region. Key recommendations of the Committee include: (i) a region-specific climate-fire study and predictive risk models, (ii) structured post-fire watershed and spring-rejuvenation protocol, (iii) launching a geostationary satellite capable of round-the-clock coverage, (iv) structured training for nodal officers on interpreting and triaging fire alerts, (v) approving three additional disaster response force teams, (vi) dedicated Oak and Deodar regeneration missions, and (vii) notifying forest fire as a disaster under the Disaster Management Act, 2005.

For a PRS summary of the report, see here.

[1] Press Note on Quarterly Estimates of Gross Domestic Product for the First Quarter (April-June) of 2026-27, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, August 31, 2026, https://www.mospi.gov.in/uploads/latestreleasesfiles/1788174301107.

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[3] Monetary Policy Statement, 2026-27, Resolution of the Monetary Policy Committee, August 3 to 5, 2026, Reserve Bank of India, August 5, 2026, https://rbidocs.rbi.org.in/rdocs/PressRelease/PDFs/PR80907599DE5FD164918A49085C9D6270116.PDF.

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