Monthly Policy Review

December 2025

Highlights of this Issue

Winter Session 2025 concludes (p. 2)
The winter session of Parliament concluded on December 19, 2025. The session had 15 sittings. Nine Bills were introduced during this session, out of which seven were passed, and two were referred to Committees.

Repo rate reduced to 5.25% (p. 2)
RBI's Monetary Policy Committee voted to reduce the repo rate from 5.5% to 5.25%. The standing deposit facility rate, marginal standing facility rate and bank rate were also reduced by 0.25%.

Parliament passes a Bill to modify the legal framework for nuclear energy (p. 3)
The Bill replaces the Atomic Energy Act, 1962 and the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010. It allows private participation in plant operation and fuel handling, and alters the right of recourse against suppliers.

Parliament passes Viksit Bharat - G RAM G Bill to replace MGNREGA (p. 5)
The Bill increases right to employment for a rural household from 100 to 125 days. Funding will be shared between the Centre and states in 60:40 ratio. States will bear additional expense above a normative allocation.

Parliament passes a Bill to amend the insurance laws (p. 5)
The Bill increases FDI limit in Indian insurance companies from 74% to 100%. It lowers net-owned fund requirements for foreign re-insurers. It also grants additional powers to IRDAI.

The Securities Markets Code, 2025 introduced in Lok Sabha (p. 6)
The Code seeks to consolidate provisions of the SEBI Act, 1992, the Depositories Act, 1996, and the Securities Contracts (Regulations) Act, 1956.

The Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill, 2025 introduced in Lok Sabha (p. 7)
The Bill sets up a regulatory body for higher education to replace UGC, AICTE, and NCTE. The new regulatory body will not have any powers regarding funding to higher education institutions.

Select Committee submits report on the IBC (Amendment) Bill, 2025 (p. 7)
Key recommendations include barring Resolution Professionals from being appointed as liquidators, imposing a timeline for appeal disposal by NCLAT, and specifying details for cross-border insolvency.

Russian President visits India for bilateral talks (p. 8)
The two countries re-affirmed their support for strengthening the strategic partnership. They agreed to expand cooperation in areas such as nuclear energy, space, military, science and technology, and maritime transport.

India and Oman signed a comprehensive economic partnership agreement (p. 8)
Oman will offer zero-duty access on over 98% of its tariff lines, covering most Indian exports. India will cut tariffs on about 78% of its tariff lines, covering nearly 95% of imports from Oman by value.

Comments invited on draft Rules under the four Labour Codes (p. 9)
These Rules specify details such as weekly working hours, detailed procedures for social security benefits, manner of calculation of minimum wage and floor wage, and the manner of recognition of trade unions.

Standing Committees of Parliament submitted reports
Standing Committees of Parliament submitted various reports. These include working of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code and Land Acquisition Act, self-sufficiency in fertilisers, and self-reliance in minerals.

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Parliament

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Winter Session 2025 concludes

The Winter Session of Parliament was held from December 1 to December 19, 2025. During the session, nine Bills were introduced. Two of these Bills were referred to Committees. These are the Securities Markets Code, 2025, and the Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill, 2025 (establishes a regulator for higher education).

Seven Bills were passed. These include a Bill to modify the legal framework for nuclear energy, and another Bill to replace the MGNREGS Act. A Bill to amend insurance laws was also passed. Further, two Bills were passed to raise excise duty on tobacco products and levy a cess on pan masala.

The Supplementary Demands for Grants for 2025-26 was also discussed and passed.

For more details on the legislative business transacted during this session, see here.

For more details on functioning of Parliament during the session, see here.

Macroeconomic Development

RBI reduces repo rate to 5.25%

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The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) voted to reduce the policy repo rate (the rate at which RBI lends money to banks for short-term needs) from 5.5% to 5.25%.[1] Other decisions of the MPC include:

- The standing deposit facility rate (the rate at which RBI borrows from banks without giving collateral) has been reduced from 5.25% to 5.0%.
- 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) have also been reduced from 5.75% to 5.5%.
- RBI increased its projection for real GDP growth for 2025-26 from 6.8% to 7.3%.
- The MPC decided to continue with its neutral stance.

Current account deficit at 1.3% of GDP in the second quarter of 2025-26

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India recorded a current account deficit of USD 12.3 billion (1.3% of GDP) in the second quarter (July-September) of 2025-26, lower than USD 20.9 billion (2.2% of GDP) in the corresponding quarter of 2024-25.[2] In the first quarter (April-June) of 2025-26, current account deficit of USD 2.7 billion (0.3% of GDP) was recorded. Foreign exchange reserves decreased by USD 10.9 billion during the second quarter of 2025-26.

Table 1: Balance of payments, Q2 2025-26 (USD billion)

	Q2 2024-25	Q1 2025-26	Q2 2025-26
a. Exports	100.6	112.7	109.4
b. Imports	189.2	181.6	196.8
c. Trade balance (a-b)	-88.5	-68.9	-87.4
d. Net services	44.5	47.9	50.9
e. Other transfers	23.2	18.2	24.2
f. Current account (c+d+e)	-20.9	-2.7	-12.3
g. Capital account	39.9	8.0	0.6
h. Errors and omissions	-0.4	-0.7	0.8
i. Change in reserves (f+g+h)	18.6	4.5	-10.9

Sources: RBI; PRS.

Industrial production grows by 4.3% in the second quarter of 2025-26

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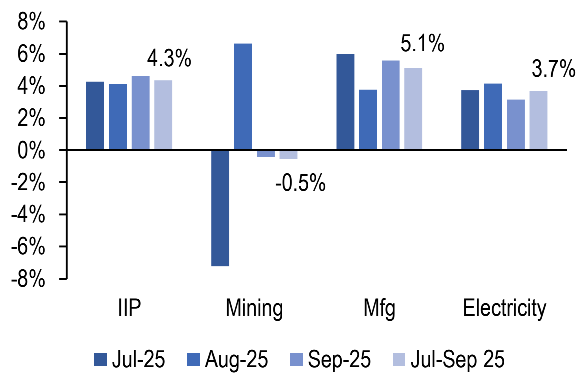
The Index of Industrial Production (IIP) grew by 4.3% in the second quarter (July-September) of 2025-26, higher than the same period in 2024-25 (an increase of 2.7%).[3,4] Note that manufacturing (78%) has the highest weightage in the calculation of the IIP, followed by mining (14%) and electricity (8%).

Manufacturing increased by 5.1% in the second quarter of 2025-26. Electricity registered an increase of 3.7%, while mining decreased by 0.5%. In the corresponding quarter of 2024-25, mining had decreased by 0.1%.

Figure 1: Growth in IIP (%, year-on-year)



Sources: Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation; PRS.

Standing Committee submits report on review of the National Statistical Commission

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The Standing Committee on Finance (Chair: Mr. Bhartruhari Mahtab) presented its report on

'Performance Review of National Statistical Commission (NSC)'.[5] NSC began functioning in July 2006. Its purpose is to serve as a nodal body for matters related to statistics and statistical systems and ensure co-ordination between ministries and agencies. Key recommendations of the Committee include: (i) establishing NSC as an autonomous body for all statistical activities with full statutory backing, (ii) developing a national standards framework on data collection, sampling, and reporting protocols applicable to both public and private sector, (iii) establishing a statistical audit function and standardised audit guidelines, (iv) refining GDP data to capture all economic activity, especially within the unorganised sector, and (v) pursuing international collaborations for joint research initiatives.

For a PRS summary of the report, see here.

Energy

Parliament passes a Bill to modify the legal framework for nuclear energy

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The Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India Bill, 2025 was passed by Parliament.[6] The Bill replaces the Atomic Energy Act, 1962 and the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010.[7,8] The 1962 Act provided for the development and use of atomic energy, and the 2010 Act provided a framework for assigning liability and compensation in case of a nuclear incident. Key changes include:

- **Licence to non-government entities:** The 1962 Act permitted only central government entities or companies to mine atomic minerals or produce nuclear energy. The Bill empowers the central government to issue licences to Indian private companies or their joint ventures with government entities for generating nuclear energy and handling nuclear fuel.
- **Operator's right of recourse:** The 2010 Act gave operators a legal right to recover some or all of the compensation paid. This right could be exercised: (i) when such rights are provided in a contract, (ii) where the incident arises due to the supply of defective equipment or materials, and (iii) when the incident is caused by a deliberate act with the intent to cause damage. The Bill removes the ground of supply of defective equipment or materials.
- **Liability for nuclear damage:** The 2010 Act specified a maximum liability of the operator at Rs 1,500 crore for a nuclear reactor with thermal power capacity of 10 megawatt or above. The Bill specifies a tiered structure, with liability limit ranging from Rs 100 crore to Rs 3,000 crore based on power capacity.
- **Atomic Energy Regulatory Board:** The Bill provides statutory recognition to the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB). The Board will take measures to ensure safe use of radiation and nuclear energy.

For a PRS summary of the Bill, see here.

The Petroleum and Natural Gas Rules, 2025 notified

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The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas notified the Petroleum and Natural Gas Rules, 2025.[9] These Rules have been notified under the Oilfields (Regulations and Development) Act, 1948.[10] The Act provides for regulation of oilfields and development of mineral oil resources. These Rules replace the Petroleum and Natural Gas Rules, 1959 which specify the manner of issuing licences and leases with respect to petroleum and natural gas, and rights and obligations of licence/lease holders.[11] Key features of the 2025 Rules include:

- **Petroleum lease:** Petroleum lease will be granted by: (i) the state government for mineral oil underlying land within its jurisdiction, and (ii) the central government for resources in offshore areas. The lease will provide exclusive right to explore, develop, and produce mineral oils. Earlier, separate concessions were issued for exploration and production. A lease will be valid for a period between four years and 30 years. The lease may be extended till the end of economic life of the oilfield, in one or more instalments. The lessee may also undertake activities such as exploration and generation from renewable energy sources, and exploration and production of hydrogen in the leased area.
- **Rights with respect to data:** All data obtained as a result of operations will be the property of the central government. A lessee will have right to use data free of cost and retain for its own purposes. The central government may disclose data to public, other than any data held to be proprietary.
- **Greenhouse gas emissions:** Every lessee must monitor and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Lessees may undertake projects for geological storage of emissions within the leased area, after obtaining authorisation from the central government.
- **Sharing of infrastructure:** Two or more lessees may jointly develop or share infrastructure facilities, as per mutually agreed terms and conditions.

CERC notifies guidelines for virtual power purchase agreements

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The Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC) notified guidelines for Virtual Power Purchase Agreements (VPPAs).[12] These agreements are intended to help designated consumers meet their Renewable Energy Consumption Obligation (RCO). This obligation was introduced through an amendment to the Energy Conservation Act, 2001 in 2022. It requires certain consumers to source a minimum percentage of electricity requirement from non-fossil sources. Designated consumers include distribution companies, open access consumers (who procure electricity directly from generators), and captive users (who generate electricity for their own use).

Currently, RCO may be fulfilled by: (i) utilising electricity from non-fossil sources, or (ii) purchasing Renewable Energy Certificates (REC) from generators through competitive bidding on power exchanges. RECs are issued to generators for supplying electricity from renewable sources. A VPPA will provide a third option to fulfil the obligation. A VPPA is a financial contract in which electricity is not physically exchanged between contracting parties. Key features of the guidelines include:

- **Design of VPPA:** A VPPA will be a bilateral contract between a renewable energy generator and a designated consumer for at least one year. Under this contract, the generator will earmark RE capacity for that designated consumer. The generator will transfer to the designated consumer the RECs earned from the sale of electricity up to the earmarked capacity. RECs for VPPAs may be earned by sale through a power exchange, or other such modes authorised by CERC. VPPAs will be non-tradeable and non-transferrable.
- **Payment terms:** The generator and the designated consumer will decide a mutually agreed price. Difference between the price realised through sale and the pre-agreed price will be settled bilaterally in accordance with agreed terms and conditions.
- **Dispute settlement:** The guidelines specify that a dispute will be mutually settled as per the contract.

Standing Committee submits report on review of solar power projects

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The Standing Committee on Energy (Chair: Mr. Shrirang Appa Barne) presented its report on 'Performance Evaluation of Solar Power Projects in the Country'.[13] Key recommendations include: (i) providing grants to research institutions to conduct solar storage-related R&D for cost reduction, (ii) introducing dedicated production-linked incentive schemes for manufacturing of polysilicon, ingots, and wafers, (iii) reducing delays in land clearances by adopting uniform compensation guidelines for right of way by states, (iv) a single window clearance mechanism for easy identification of issues and time-bound resolution, and (v) acceleration of solar power schemes such as PM Surya Ghar Yojana and PM-KUSUM.

For a PRS summary of the report, see here.

Estimates Committee submits report on implementation of PM-KUSUM and PM Surya Ghar schemes

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The Estimates Committee (Chair: Dr. Sanjay Jaiswal) presented its report on "Implementation of Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urjan Suraksha Evam Utthaan Madhabhiyan (PM-KUSUM) and PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana".[14] PM-KUSUM aims to promote adoption of solar energy in the agricultural sector. PM Surya Ghar seeks to promote rooftop solar panels among households.

In case of PM-KUSUM, the Committee recommended: (i) increasing central financial assistance for decentralised solar power plants to address low uptake, (ii) modifying the scheme to allow higher capacity solar pumps in areas with lower groundwater levels, and (iii) adopting agrivoltaics which allows agriculture and solar power generation on the same piece of land. Key recommendations on PM KUSUM include: (i) addressing inter-state disparity in empanelment of vendors, and reducing performance bank guarantee amount to support it, (ii) extending coverage to single dwelling units in agricultural fields and beneficiaries of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, (iii) speedy disposal of loan applications, and (iv) addressing shortages of various components in far-flung areas.

For a PRS summary of the report, see here.

CAG releases audit report on the Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana and SAUBHAGYA scheme

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The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) released its audit report on 'Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana (DDUGJY) and Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana (SAUBHAGYA)'.[15] DDUGJY was launched in 2014 to strengthen rural electricity distribution. SAUBHAGYA was launched in 2017 to provide last-mile connectivity and electricity to all unelectrified rural households.

CAG noted that actual expenditure under both schemes was lower than the sanctioned expenditure. Under DDUGJY, actual expenditure was Rs 64,495 crore against a sanction of Rs 75,893 crore. Under SAUBHAGYA scheme, actual expenditure was Rs 9,246 crore against a sanction of Rs 14,082 crore.

Under DDUGJY, as of March 2022, 7,833 agricultural feeders were separated against a sanction of 9,019 and cabinet approval for 16,500. Under SAUBHAGYA, 1.52 crore households were electrified against an initial target of three crore households. Under both these schemes, detailed project reports were prepared without field surveys. It highlighted gaps in quality assurance under the two schemes such as delay in inspections and resolution of issues identified during inspections.

Key recommendations include: (i) collecting accurate beneficiary data before launch of a scheme to avoid gaps in targets and achievement, (ii) ensuring field surveys before preparing detailed project reports to address variance in execution, (iii) planning fund allocations based on verified beneficiary lists, (iv) undertaking extra budgetary borrowing only as per assessed requirements, and (v) ensuring adherence to quality assurance frameworks in future schemes.

For a PRS summary of the report, see here.

Rural Development

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Parliament passes a Bill to replace MGNREGA

The Viksit Bharat—Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB—G RAM G) Bill, 2025 was passed by Parliament.[16] The Bill replaces the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 (MGNREGA).[17] Key features of the Bill include:

- **Increased number of guaranteed days**: Under MGNREGA, members of a rural household seeking unskilled manual work were guaranteed at least 100 days of wage employment in a financial year. The 2025 Bill increases the guarantee to 125 days. Under MGNREGA, if a person seeking work is not provided employment within 15 days, the state government must pay them an unemployment allowance. The 2025 law retains this provision.
- **Fund sharing pattern**: The central government covered the entire cost of wages, up to three-fourths the material cost, and a share of the administrative cost under MGNREGA. The state governments provided one fourth of the material cost, rest of the administrative cost, unemployment allowance, and compensation for delay in wage payment. Under the 2025 Bill, the programme will be implemented as a centrally sponsored scheme, where the central and state governments will bear all costs in a 60:40 ratios for all states and in a 90:10 ratios for north-eastern and himalayan states. The central government will determine state-wise normative allocation for each financial year. The state governments will bear any excess expenditure incurred beyond this allocation.
- **Pause on work during agricultural season**: The Bill empowers the state government to pause work under the programme for a period of up to 60 days in a financial year during peak agricultural seasons, including sowing and harvesting. The 2005 Act did not contain any such provisions.
- **Technology integration**: The Bill provides for using technologies for monitoring scheme implementation. These include: (i) biometric authentication for transactions, (ii) geospatial technology for planning, and (iii) mobile application based dashboards for real-time tracking of work under the scheme.

For a PRS summary of the Bill, see here.

Standing Committee submits report on implementation of land acquisition law

The Standing Committee on Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (Chair: Mr. Saptagiri Sankar Ulaka) presented its report on 'Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 (LARR Act) - Implementation and Effectiveness'. The Committee observed challenges in implementation in scheduled areas and issues related to rehabilitation. It observed that the consent of Gram Sabha is often obtained as a mere formality. It recommended making it mandatory across all land acquisitions, not just in scheduled areas. Taking note of issues in rehabilitation, it recommended that no possession of land should be allowed until the rehabilitation sites are fully functional and service ready. The Committee emphasised aligning LARR Act with provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996, and giving recognition to community forest resource titles under the Forest Rights Act, 2006 for the compensation process.

For a PRS summary of the report, see here.

Finance

The Sabka Bima Sabki Raksha (Amendment of Insurance Laws) Bill, 2025 passed by Parliament

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The Sabka Bima Sabki Raksha (Amendment of Insurance Laws) Bill was passed by Parliament.[18] The Bill seeks to amend the Insurance Act, 1938, the Life Insurance Corporation Act, 1956, and the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority Act, 1999. Key changes include:

- **100% FDI permitted in an Indian Insurance Company:** The Bill increases the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) limit in Indian Insurance companies from 74% to 100% of the paid-up equity capital.

- **Net-owned fund requirements for foreign reinsurers lowered**: The Bill reduces the net-owned fund requirements for foreign entities engaged in the re-insurance business from Rs 5,000 crore to Rs 1,000 crore.
- **Minimum paid-up share capital for insurance co-operative societies:** The Bill amends the definition of an insurance co-operative society to remove the requirement of minimum paid-up share capital of Rs 100 crore for life, general, and health insurance businesses.
- **Powers of IRDAI:** The Bill adds certain powers to IRDAI. It empowers IRDAI to approve the scheme of arrangement between an insurer and a company not engaged in insurance business. It also empowers IRDAI to supersede the Board of Directors of an insurer where it appoints an Administrator. This may be done if the insurer is carrying on business prejudicial to the interests of its policyholders. IRDAI may specify regulations on remuneration, commission, or reward payable to insurance agents or intermediaries, including limits, manner of payments, and related disclosures. The Bill extends the powers of IRDAI to inspect and investigate insurance intermediaries.

For a PRS summary of the Bill, see here.

The Securities Markets Code, 2025 introduced in Lok Sabha

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The Securities Markets Code, 2025 was introduced in Lok Sabha.[19] It seeks to repeal and replace: (i) the Securities Contracts (Regulations) Act, 1956, (ii) the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) Act, 1992, and (iii) the Depositories Act, 1996. The Bill seeks to consolidate the provisions of these Acts into a single Code. It retains most of the provisions. The Bill has been referred to the Standing Committee on Finance (Chair: Mr. Bhartruhari Mahtab). Key changes under the Bill include:

- **Composition of SEBI:** Currently, SEBI consists of nine members: (i) the Chairperson, (ii) two officials from the Ministry of Finance and Corporate Affairs, (iii) one official of RBI, and (iv) five other members appointed by the central government of whom at least three must be whole-time members. The Bill increases the number of other members appointed by the central government to 11, of whom at least five must be whole-time members.
- **Conflict of interest of a Board Member:** Under the SEBI Act, a member of SEBI, who is a director of a company, must disclose any direct or indirect pecuniary interest in a matter. He must not take part in deliberations or decisions on such matters. The Bill expands this restriction to include all members with any direct or indirect interest as may be specified by regulations, including interests of any family member. It also adds that the central government may remove a member who has acquired any financial or other interests that is likely to prejudice his functions.
- **Requirement to register:** The Bill retains registration requirement for various entities. Intermediaries such as stock brokers, asset management companies, and investment advisors must register with SEBI for carrying on investment activity or business. It also mandates registration of Market Infrastructure Institutions (MIIs) with SEBI which include stock exchanges, depositories, and clearing corporations. The Bill empowers SEBI to require registration of specified classes of investors. It empowers SEBI to delegate its powers of registration of intermediaries or investors to MIIs. MIIs may also make bye-laws to minimise market abuse and foster transparency.
- **Grievance redressal and Ombudsperson:** The Bill empowers SEBI to establish an investor grievance redressal mechanism and direct service providers to also constitute grievance redressal mechanisms. It also empowers SEBI to appoint an Ombudsperson to redress grievances.

For a PRS summary of the Bill, see here.

Parliament passes a Bill to levy a cess on production of pan masala

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The Health Security se National Security Cess Bill, 2025 was passed by Parliament.[20] The Bill levies a cess on production of pan masala and any other goods notified by the central government. The cess will be used for expenditure towards public health and national security. It will be calculated per machine installed for production or per unit of wholly manual production.

For a PRS summary of the Bill, see here.

Parliament passes a Bill to increase central excise duty on production of tobacco

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The Central Excise (Amendment) Bill, 2025 was passed by Parliament.[21] The Bill amends the Central Excise Act, 1944. The Bill increases central excise duty on unmanufactured tobacco, manufactured tobacco, tobacco products, and tobacco substitutes.

For a PRS summary of the Bill, see here.

The Manipur Goods and Services Tax (Second Amendment) Bill, 2025 passed by Parliament

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The Manipur Goods and Services Tax (Second Amendment) Bill, 2025 was passed by the

Parliament.[22] The Bill sought to replace the Manipur Goods and Services Tax (Second Amendment) Ordinance, 2025 which was promulgated on October 7, 2025. The Ordinance amended the Manipur Goods and Services Tax Act, 2017. The Act provides for levy and collection of State GST (SGST) on intra-state supply of goods and services. The Ordinance aligned the Manipur Act with the amendments made to the Central Goods and Services Tax Act, 2017 by the Finance Act, 2025. Key features include:

- **Issuance of credit notes**: A supplier may issue a credit note to the recipient of goods or services if: (i) the taxable value or tax charged in the invoice exceeds the taxable value or tax charged, (ii) goods or services have been returned, or (iii) goods or services have been found to be deficient. The supplier's tax liability for sales can accordingly be adjusted, provided the recipient has not availed of input tax credit attributable to that credit note. Input tax credit refers to the credit received for tax paid on purchases (inputs), which can be used to reduce GST payable on sales.
- **Exemption to certain supply of goods housed in Special Economic Zones**: Schedule III of the Act specifies a list of transactions that are not considered as supply of goods and services. Hence, these are exempt from levy of SGST. The Bill expands the list by adding supply of goods warehoused in a Special Economic Zone (SEZs) or Free Trade Warehousing Zone (FTWZ) to any person before clearance for exports or to the Domestic Tariff Area (DTA). SEZs are special areas set up by the government where businesses get concessions to attract investment and increase exports. FTWZ is a special type of SEZ focused on warehousing and logistics. All parts of India outside SEZs are referred to as DTA.

For a PRS summary of the Bill, see here.

Select Committee submits report on the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Bill, 2025

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The IBC (Amendment) Bill, 2025 was introduced in Lok Sabha in August 2025. It seeks to amend the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016. The Bill was referred to a Select Committee of Lok Sabha (Chair: Mr. Baijayant Panda). The Committee presented its report on December 17, 2025. Key observations and recommendations of the Committee include:

- **Appointment of Liquidator:** The Code provides for the appointment of a Resolution Professional (RP) as a liquidator by the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT). The Bill amends this to allow the Committee of Creditors (CoC) to appoint an RP or any other insolvency professional as a liquidator. The Committee observed that the RP may have a perverse incentive to favour liquidation over resolution for additional fee. It recommended that an RP shall be ineligible to be appointed as a liquidator to eliminate any conflict of interest. Therefore, the Committee recommended appointing a liquidator upon the recommendation of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) to the NCLT.
- **Role of CoC in the liquidation process:** The Bill empowers the CoC to supervise the conduct of the liquidation process. The Committee observed that this provision will ensure that CoC can leverage its commercial wisdom to assist the liquidator in taking commercial decisions. However, it recommended that IBBI should clarify the scope of supervision to prevent any conflict with the statutory duties of the liquidator.
- **Voting threshold to initiate a Pre-Packaged Insolvency Resolution Process (PPIRP):** Under the Bill, the voting threshold for unrelated financial creditors to initiate a PPIRP is 66%. The Committee recommended reducing this threshold to 51% to expedite the PPIRP. This voting threshold will also apply under the Creditor-Initiated Insolvency Resolution Process.

For a PRS Summary of the report, see here.

Standing Committee submits report on review of working of IBC and emerging issues

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The Standing Committee on Finance (Chair: Mr. Bhartruhari Mahtab) submitted its report on 'Review of Working of Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) and Emerging Issues'. Key recommendations of the Committee include: (i) establishing an online mechanism to issue "no dues" certificates and statutory clearances for debtors, (ii) raising the penalty for frivolous applications, (iii) expansion of competitive bidding for assets of firms entering the resolution process through global outreach, (iv) introducing an early-stage mediation process as an alternative dispute resolution mechanism outside a formal court process, and (v) ease the eligibility criteria for homebuyers to initiate an insolvency process.

For a PRS summary of the report, see here.

Education

The Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill, 2025 introduced in Lok Sabha

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The Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan (VBSA) Bill, 2025 was introduced in Lok Sabha.[23] It seeks to establish a regulatory body for higher education. It replaces three existing bodies: (i) the University Grants Commission (UGC), (ii) the All-India Council for Technical Education, and (iii) the National Council for Teacher Education. The Bill has been referred to a Joint Parliamentary Committee. Key features of the Bill include:

- **Establishment of VBSA and Councils:** The Bill establishes the VBSA as the apex regulatory body for higher education. It also establishes three separate Councils for regulation, accreditation, and standard setting. Currently, UGC also allocates grants to higher education institutions (HEIs). Under the Bill, neither the VBSA, nor its Councils will have any powers regarding funding to HEIs.
- **Appointment of members:** The Chairperson and members of VBSA will be appointed by the President of India, on the recommendation of the central government. The Presidents and full-time members of the Councils will also be appointed by the President of India, on the recommendation of a search committee.
- **Penalties on HEIs:** Penalties ranging between Rs 10 lakh and Rs 70 lakh may be imposed on HEIs for contravention of the Act. The Regulatory Council may also recommend actions such as: (i) withholding grants, (ii) reviewing autonomy, (iii) revoking affiliation, or (iv) winding up.

For PRS summary of the Bill, see here.

Standing Committee submits report on autonomous bodies in higher education

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The Standing Committee on Education, Women, Children, Youth, and Sports (Chair: Mr. Digvijaya Singh) submitted its report on 'Review of Autonomous Bodies and Institutions- NTA, NAAC, Draft UGC regulations, ICHR, ICPR, ICSSR, IIAS (Shimla) and Auroville Foundation under the Department of Higher Education'.[24] The Committee highlighted issues in administration of competitive exams such as exam postponement, paper leaks, delayed results, and errors in papers. It also noted that universities require support in infrastructure, recruitment, and curriculum drafting to implement the National Education Policy, 2020.

Key recommendations of the Committee include: (i) creating a nationwide blacklist of firms that should not be engaged for exam administration, (ii) filling vacancies in leadership positions, and avoiding assigning these positions to officials as additional charge for long-term, (iii) re-evaluating reservation for the economically weaker section for posts of Professor and Associate Professor, (iv) adopting a binary model for accreditation of higher education institutions (accredited or not accredited), instead of a grade-based model, and (v) setting up a high-level committee to examine the proliferation of coaching centres.

For PRS summary of the report, see here.

Standing Committee submits report on schemes for education loans

Navya Sriram (navya@prsindia.org)

The Standing Committee on Education, Women, Children, Youth and Sports (Chair: Mr. Digvijaya Singh) submitted its report on the "Review of Schemes for Education Loan and Financial Accessibility in Higher Education".[25] Key observations and recommendations of the Committee include: (i) addressing high rates of interest, (ii) revising limits for collateral-free loans to increase accessibility, (iii) exemption from providing CIBIL score to families availing free rations, (iv) increasing moratorium period for repayment from one year to two years, and (v) expanding coverage of institutions under the PM Vidyalakshmi Scheme.[25] The PM Vidyalakshmi scheme provides collateral-free education loans with 3% subsidy on interest, for students from families with annual income up to eight lakh rupees.[26] Currently, this scheme is available only to students enrolled in specified quality higher education institutions.

For a PRS summary of the report, see here.

External Affairs

Russian President visits India for bilateral talks

Navya Sriram (navya@prsindia.org)

The President of the Russian Federation, Mr. Vladimir Putin, visited India for bilateral talks.[27,28] The two countries re-affirmed their support for strengthening the strategic partnership. They agreed to expand cooperation in areas such as nuclear energy, space, military, science and technology, and maritime transport. Key agreements signed include: (i) an MoU to develop a joint venture in urea manufacturing by Indian companies in Russia, (ii) two agreements to establish a framework for migration of skilled workers from India to Russia, and (iii) a protocol to optimise customs control procedures. Other agreements relate to cooperation in food safety, cooperation in maritime domain, broadcasting, healthcare, and academic collaboration.[28] Russia also adopted a framework agreement to join the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA). IBCA is an India-led global coalition launched in 2023 to conserve the world's seven big cat species. This includes tiger, lion, leopard, snow leopard, cheetah, jaguar, and puma.[29]

India and Oman sign Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement

Vedika Bhanote (vedika@prsindia.org)

India and Oman signed a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement to strengthen trade and investment ties.[30] Oman will offer zero-duty access on over 98% of its tariff lines, covering most Indian exports. India will cut tariffs on about 78% of its tariff lines, covering nearly 95% of imports from Oman by value. The agreement also permits 100% foreign direct investment by Indian companies across major services sectors in Oman.

India and New Zealand conclude Free Trade Agreement

Vedika Bhanote (vedika@prsindia.org)

India and New Zealand announced conclusion of Free Trade Agreement (FTA).[31] The agreement provides for elimination or reduction of tariffs on about 95% of New Zealand's exports to India, with over half of the product lines becoming duty-free from the date of entry into force. India will receive duty-free access for all its exports to New Zealand. In addition, New Zealand has committed to invest USD 20 billion in India over the next 15 years. The FTA also creates a new visa pathway for Indian professionals to allow up to 5,000 visas to be issued at any given time, with a maximum stay of three years.

Standing Committee submits report on the Future of India-Bangladesh Relations

Navya Sriram (navya@prsindia.org)

The Standing Committee on External Affairs (Chair: Dr Shashi Tharoor) published its report on the 'Future of India-Bangladesh Relations'.[32] Key observations and recommendations of the Committee include: (i) expediting residual boundary demarcation under the Land Boundary Agreement, 2015, (ii) expediting fencing of 689 km of the unfenced land border, (iii) establishing a dedicated bilateral mechanism to monitor the progress of pending immigration cases, and (iv) commencing discussions on the Ganga Water Treaty (set to expire in 2026) and convening regular meetings of the Joint Rivers Commission.

For a PRS summary of the report, see here.

Labour and Employment

Comments invited on draft Rules under the four Labour Codes

Shrusti Singh (shrusti@prsindia.org)

The Ministry of Labour and Employment invited comments on the draft central Rules under the following codes: (i) Occupational Safety, Health, and Working Conditions Code, 2020, (ii) Code on Social Security, 2020, (iii) Industrial Relations Code, 2020, and (iv) Code on Wages, 2019.[33, 34,35,36] These four codes replace the 29 labour laws. Key features of the draft Rules include:

- **Occupational safety, health, and working conditions:** Weekly working hours in any establishment must not exceed 48 hours. Period of each workday with intervals and spread overs will be notified by the central government. Women may be employed for all types of work during evening and night hours subject to specified conditions such as: (i) written consent of the employee, (ii) adequate transportation facilities for pickup and drop, and (iii) provision of CCTV surveillance. Every employer of a factory, dock, mine, building, and other construction work must arrange for an annual free health check-up for its employees. The draft Rules also specify manner of: (i) registration, (ii) maintenance of records, and (iii) constitution of required bodies such as safety committees.
- **Social security:** The draft Rules specify procedures for providing benefits such as insurance, provident fund, gratuity, and maternity benefits. They also specify manner of constituting various bodies to administer social security schemes. Gig workers are also eligible for social security benefits if they have engaged for at least 90 days with one aggregator, or at least 120 days in case of multiple aggregators, in the last financial year. The central government may specify additional eligibility conditions for benefits to gig workers.
- **Industrial relations:** The draft Rules specify the manner of recognition of trade unions, constitution of bodies such as works committee, and notice of lock out or strike. Application must be made to the central government at least 15 days before layoff, 60 days before retrenchment, and 90 days before closure. They also specify model standing orders for sectors such as mining, manufacturing, and services.
- **Wages:** These draft Rules provide for the following: (i) manner of calculating minimum wage accounting for minimum calorie intake, fuel and electricity, house rent, and educational and medical requirements for a family of three individuals, (ii) revision of dearness allowance twice a year, (iii) number of work hours in a normal working day to be specified through a general or special order, and (iv) fixing of the floor wage by the central government in consultation with the Central Advisory Board.

Comments are invited until January 29, 2026 for the draft Rules under Industrial Relations Code, 2020, and until February 13, 2026 for other three draft Rules.

CAG releases audit report on the PM Kaushal Vikas Yojana

Jahanvi Chaudhary (jahanvi@prsindia.org)

The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) released its audit report on "Skill Development under Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)'.[37]

The scheme was introduced in 2015 to provide industry-relevant skill training and certification to youths. The audit report covers the three phases of the scheme launched between 2015 and 2022. These phases had a combined target of providing skill training and certifications to around 1.32 crore candidates.

The CAG highlighted that 41% of the candidates certified under the short-term training and special project components of the scheme were placed (23 lakh out of 56 lakh candidates). It highlighted that selection of job roles without analysis of micro-level skill-gap and market demands were primary reasons for low placement. It highlighted that state and district plans for skill development were not prepared in all states. The national plan was also not prepared. It also observed that even after completion of three phases of PMKVY, convergence between efforts of the central and state governments was not effective.

It also highlighted several gaps in implementation and monitoring. These include unreliable documents in support of training and monitoring and delays in assessment of post-completion of training. Around 20% of the funds allocated to states remained unspent as of March 2024.

Key recommendations of CAG include: (i) aligning trainings with skill gaps identified in job roles and demand, (ii) preparing a long-term strategic plan to provide overall direction and continuity, and (iii) preparing a roadmap for convergence and data integration for skilling initiatives across the central and state governments.

For PRS summary of the report, see here.

Mining

Vaishali Dhariwal (vaishali@prsindia.org)

Comments invited on draft amendments to the MMDR Act, 1957

The Ministry of Coal invited comments on draft amendments to the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 (MMDR Act).[38] The Act governs the regulation, development and conservation of minerals in India and the grant of mining rights.[39] Key changes proposed include:

- **Maximum area under licences:** The MMDR Act specifies the maximum area that can be acquired under mining and prospecting licences. The Ministry observed that the current area ceilings restrict development of modern mining projects. It has invited suggestions for the extension of the area limits in light of the modern mining needs.
- **Period of mining lease:** The MMDR Act limits coal and lignite mining leases to a maximum period of 30 years. Renewal can be granted for a maximum of 20 years. The Ministry observed that this may lead to compliance burdens and delays as generally lifespan of these mines exceeds 30 years. It has proposed to extend the period of future leases to 50 years.
- **Relaxing end-use restriction:** The MMDR Act permits captive coal and lignite lessees to sell up to 50% of annual production in the open market after meeting end-use requirements and paying an additional levy. The Ministry noted that unutilised production in these mines has led to legacy stock accumulation. It has proposed to remove 50% ceiling and allow sale of legacy mineral stocks.
- **Inclusion of coal gasification in mining operation:** Coal gasification converts coal into synthetic gas which can be used as a cleaner energy source compared to coal. It has been proposed to add gasification to the definition of mining to integrate the process within the legal and regulatory framework of mineral development.

Comments are invited until January 11, 2026.

New window introduced for auction of coal linkages in non-regulated sector

The Ministry of Coal has amended the Non-Regulated Sector (NRS) Linkage Auction Policy, 2016 to introduce a new auction window, CoalSETU (Coal for Seamless, Efficient and Transparent Utilisation).[40] The NRS Linkage Policy provides for auction-based allocation of coal linkages to non-regulated industries such as cement, steel, sponge iron, and aluminium. The new window allows auction of coal linkages without any specified end-use condition. Traders are excluded from participation. Auctions for existing specified end-use sub-sectors under the NRS policy will continue alongside the new window. Linkages under this window may be granted for up to 15 years, and flexible use across group companies will be permitted. Coking coal will not be offered under this window. Coal India Limited and Singareni Collieries Company Limited will be the implementing agencies.

Comments invited on the draft Coal Exchange Rules, 2025

The Ministry of Coal has invited comments on the Draft Coal Exchange Rules, 2025.[41] The draft Rules have been framed under the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957. A coal exchange is a regulated e-marketplace where coal can be traded as a commodity.

- **Regulatory authority**: Coal Controller Organisation has been designated as the authority to register, regulate, and oversee coal exchanges. It will have powers to: (i) grant, renew, and suspend registrations, (ii) approve contracts through which coal is brought and sold, (iii) carry out market oversight, and (iv) conduct inspections.

- **Eligibility:** An applicant for setting up a coal exchange must be a demutualised company (ownership and management is separate from trading rights), with a minimum net worth of Rs 100 crore. The draft Rules also specify shareholding pattern for equity holders in a coal exchange. No member of a coal exchange can hold more than 5% of the share capital, and members together cannot own more than 49% of the share capital. No non-member can hold more than 25% of the share capital.
- **Registration:** Registration of a coal exchange will be granted for 25 years, with provision for renewal for a further period of up to 25 years. The Authority may revoke registration for violations of the rules, reduction in net worth below the prescribed threshold, market manipulation, insider trading, or failure to comply with directions.
- **Responsibilities of coal exchanges**: Coal exchanges will facilitate contract-based trading of coal through an electronic trading platform. Price discovery on the platform will be done through a double-sided closed bid auction mechanism. To manage market risk, each coal exchange will develop and implement a risk management framework. It will also constitute a Risk Assessment and Management Committee which will monitor adherence to the framework. The exchange will also establish a Settlement Guarantee Fund to address settlement defaults. Coal exchanges will have to set up surveillance systems to detect cartelisation, insider trading, and market manipulation.

Comments are invited until January 18, 2026.

Standing Committee submits report on clearances for coal projects

The Standing Committee on Coal, Mines and Steel (Chair: Mr. Anurag Thakur) submitted report on 'Expediting and Simplifying the Environment and Forest Clearance Process for Coal Mining Projects'.[42] Key observations and recommendations of the Committee include: (i) reducing the difference in average time taken in granting environment and forest clearances between public and private sectors, (ii) bringing permissions given by mine safety and water authorities under the single window framework, (iii) creating land banks for compensatory afforestation, and (iv) policy simplification and standardisation of practices for promoting underground mining.

For a PRS summary of the report, see here.

Standing Committee submits report on self-reliance in minerals and metals

The Standing Committee on Coal, Mines and Steel (Chair: Mr. Anurag Thakur) submitted report on 'Self-Reliance in Minerals and Metals'.[43] The Committee noted that India remains dependent on imports for minerals such as magnesite, manganese, and rock phosphate, with domestic demand for them expected to rise. It is also dependent on imports for critical minerals such as lithium, cobalt, and nickel. Key recommendations of the Committee include: (i) developing domestic processing and refining capacities and making them cost-competitive, (ii) seeing up inter-ministerial group to monitor post-auction progress of mineral and critical mineral projects to address delays, (iii) increasing public-private partnerships in the mineral sector.

For a PRS summary of the report, see here.

Communications

Comments invited on the draft amendments to the Post Office Act, 2023

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The Department of Posts released draft amendments to the Post Office Act, 2023 for public feedback.[44] The Act provides the legal framework for the Post Office, an undertaking of the central government (also known as India Post). The draft amendments propose a framework for a digital addressing system called DHRUVA. Key features include:

- **Digital Addressing System:** This system will allow users to digitally depict and share their addresses in a standardised format. Generation, use, access, and validation of address information will require the user's consent. The amendments empower the central government to prescribe standards for addressing on items, address identifiers, and usage of postcodes.
- The central government will appoint a Network Administrator to establish and operate a common system and set technical and governance standards. The Administrator will register one or more entities as Address Service Providers (ASPs). ASPs will provide services to end-users to generate address identifiers. The central government will authorise specified persons to operate as Authorised Address Validation Agencies. These agencies can validate address information linked to an address identifier provided by a user. These include departments of central or state governments, statutory bodies, companies incorporated, and any other notified persons.
- **Offences and Penalties:** The draft amendments penalise undertaking activities without authorisation. These include generating address identifiers or validating address information. The offences will be punishable with a civil penalty up to one crore rupees. Continuing contravention will attract an additional penalty of Rs 10 lakh per day. Failure to furnish information or submitting false information will be punishable with a civil penalty

up to Rs 10 lakh. Continuing contravention will attract an additional penalty up to Rs 25,000 per day. The central government will appoint adjudicating officers to decide penalties. It will also appoint an appellate authority to hear appeals against the decisions of the adjudicating officers.

Standing Committee submits report on mechanism to curb fake news

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The Standing Committee on Communications and Information Technology (Chair: Dr Nishikant Dubey) submitted its report on the "Review of Mechanism to Curb Fake News" on September 11, 2025.[45] Key observations and recommendations of the Committee include: (i) defining "fake news" under the existing regulatory mechanisms for all forms of media, (ii) constituting an independent body for adjudicating cross platform fake news cases and recommending penalties, (iii) ensuring accountability of editors, publishers, and intermediaries, (iv) a self-regulation mechanism for all broadcasters, and (v) a unified digital portal for grievance redressal with respect to fake news.[45]

For a PRS summary of the report, see here.

Law and Justice

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Repealing and Amending Bill, 2025 passed by Parliament

The Repealing and Amending Bill, 2025 was passed by Parliament.[46] It repeals 71 laws that are obsolete or redundant. It also amends four Acts. It amends the General Clauses Act, 1897 and the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908 to update terminologies for registered posts. The Indian Succession Act, 1925 has been amended to remove the requirement to obtain validation of wills by Courts in certain cases. The Bill amends the Disaster Management Act, 2005 to rectify a drafting error.

For a PRS summary of the Bill, see here.

Comments invited on working paper on Generative AI and copyright

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) has invited comments on a working paper on generative AI and copyright.[47] The paper assesses the adequacy of the existing regulatory framework to protect copyright holders in training AI systems. Key observations include:

- **Review of current framework:** The Copyright Act, 1957 grants copyright owner exclusive rights over reproduction, storage, adaptation, communication, and issuance of copies. Any such use without permission amounts to infringement under the Act, unless exempted. However, there is no specific exemption for text and data mining or AI training.
- **Review of existing regulatory models:** Voluntary licencing requires AI developers to individually seek permission and negotiate licences with each copyright owner before using their works for training. However, the scale of online content and the number of potential rights holders make this costly and impractical. A blanket text-and-data mining exemption allows AI developers to train on copyrighted works without obtaining permission, provided the content is lawfully accessible. While this reduces barriers, it leaves creators uncompensated. Collective licencing uses a collective organisation to authorise licence works at lower transaction costs and administer royalties to rights holders. However, holding out against licencing forces companies to demand high royalties, which then creates high entry barriers. This model also struggles with multimodal datasets by making collective licensing impractical at scale.
- **Proposed framework:** DPIIT proposed a hybrid model, where AI systems can train on any lawfully accessed copyrighted work, but they must pay for it through a mandatory blanket licence. Creators are guaranteed payment through a statutory remuneration right and cannot withhold the use of their work. A body designated by the central government will collect payments from AI developers for such usage, and distribute them fairly to rights holders.

Comments are invited by January 7, 2026.

Shipping

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Guidelines notified for schemes to promote domestic shipbuilding

The Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways notified operational guidelines for two shipbuilding initiatives: (i) the Shipbuilding Financial Assistance Scheme and (ii) the Shipbuilding Development Scheme.[48,49,50] Key features of the guidelines include:

- **Financial Assistance Scheme**: The scheme will have a total corpus of Rs 24,736 crore. The government will provide financial assistance for vessel construction ranging from 15% for small vessels to 25% for specialised vessels on value over Rs 100 crore. The scheme will apply to all vessels whose construction involves at least 30% domestic content, including components and labour of Indian origin. Certain vessels, including wooden vessels and those manufactured for defence, will not be covered under the scheme.

- **Recycling:** The scheme also incentivises vessel scrapping and recycling. For scrapping vessels, ship owners can collect a credit note worth 40% of the fair scrap value. The credit notes can be redeemed while paying for vessels constructed at Indian shipyards and registered under the scheme. These credit notes can be redeemed within three years and they can be transferred or sold.
- **Shipbuilding Development Scheme:** The scheme will have a total budgetary outlay of Rs 19,989 crore. It will provide incentive for development of greenfield shipbuilding clusters and expansion of brownfield shipyards. Greenfield clusters will receive 100% capital support through a 50:50 centre-state special purpose vehicle. Brownfield shipyards on the other hand will receive 25% capital assistance for critical infrastructure expansion and installation of automation systems. To promote bankability of these projects, the scheme also includes a credit risk coverage framework. Government-backed insurance will be offered to cover for pre-shipment, post-shipment, and vendor default risks.

Environment

Standing Committee submits report on air pollution in Delhi-NCR

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The Standing Committee on Science and Technology, Environment, Forests and Climate Change (Chair: Mr. Bhubaneswar Kalita) on ‘Air Pollution in Delhi NCR and steps taken by various agencies for its mitigation’.[51] Key observations and recommendations of the Committee include: (i) upgrading all manual monitoring stations and improving geographical coverage of monitoring stations, (ii) undertaking pollution source apportionment studies at a regular interval, (iii) containing vehicular and industrial emissions, and pollution from dust and waste burning, and (iv) addressing shortage of crop residue management machines during peak demand.

For a PRS summary of the report, see here.

Standing Committee submits report on water pollution in Delhi NCR

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The Standing Committee on Science and Technology, Environment, Forests and Climate Change (Chair: Mr Bhubaneswar Kalita) submitted its report on “Water Pollution in Delhi NCR and Steps Taken by Various Agencies for its Mitigation”.[52] Key observations and recommendations of the Committee include: (i) improving existing contaminant monitoring and sewage management systems in the Yamuna river, (ii) implementing Zero Liquid Discharge technologies for wastewater management, (iii) revising timelines for future water sharing agreements between states on the Yamuna river bank from 30 years to 10 years, (iv) a targeted sludge removal plan to rejuvenate Yamuna river floodplains and (v) dedicated healthcare units for diarrhoea treatment and public health campaigns, particularly in low income and high-risk areas.[52]

For a PRS summary of the report, see here.

Urban Development

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Standing Committee submits report on review of Mission AMRUT

The Standing Committee on Housing and Urban Affairs (Chair: Mr. Magunta Sreenivasulu Reddy) presented its report on ‘Review of Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) with special emphasis on Urban Drinking Water’.[53] AMRUT was launched in June 2015. It was subsumed under AMRUT 2.0 in October 2021. AMRUT 2.0 focuses on improving urban water security, strengthening urban governance, and building institutional and technical capacities. Key observations and recommendations of the Committee include: (i) pursuing enhanced central funding, especially for underserved regions, (ii) strengthening inter-agency coordination, (iii) improving quality of data monitoring (iv) formulating a National Urban Aquifer Recharge Strategy, and (v) improving wastewater reuse.

For a PRS summary of the report, see here.

Railways

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Committee submits report on enhancing freight related earning of Indian Railways

The Standing Committee on Railways (Chair: Dr. C. M. Ramesh) presented its report on ‘Increasing Freight Related Earnings of Indian Railways and Development of Dedicated Freight Corridors’. The Committee noted that Railways had last revised freight rates in November 2018 and rates have remained unchanged since then despite rising operational costs. It recommended annual comprehensive assessment of freight rates, taking into account market demand and operational costs. It observed that freight revenue accounts for about 65% of Railways’ earnings. To enhance freight revenue, it recommended: (i) diversifying commodity basket to include automobiles and e-commerce goods, instead of keeping it limited to minerals, (ii) building freight terminals for better connectivity, and (iii) ensuring wagon availability and encouraging private wagon ownership. It also noted that Dedicated Freight Corridors offer higher transport speed and recommended augmenting existing feeder routes and developing new feeder routes to ensure integration of industrial hubs.

For a PRS Summary of the report, see here.

Health

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Standing Committee submits report on rise in prices of medicines

The Standing Committee on Chemical and Fertilisers (Chair: Mr. Azad Kirti Jha) submitted its report on 'Price Rise of Medicines in the Pharmaceutical Sector Impacting the Lives of Ordinary Citizens Adversely - A Review'.[54] Key recommendations of the Committee include: (i) amending the Drugs (Prices Control) Order (DPCO), 2013 to allow for rationalising trade margin, (ii) regulating non-scheduled drugs and fixed dose combinations, and (iii) strengthening regulation of online drug platforms.

For PRS summary of the report, see here.

Agriculture

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Standing Committee submits report on self-sufficiency in production of fertilisers

The Standing Committee on Chemicals and Fertilisers (Chair: Mr. Azad Kirti Jha) presented its report on 'Self-sufficiency in production of fertilisers with a view to curb import of fertilisers – Review of constraints thereof'. Key recommendations include: (i) expansion of production capacity through fiscal and tax incentives, (ii) development of indigenous process technology for setting up fertiliser plants, (iii) expediting natural gas extraction projects to reduce import dependence, (iv) setting up of a task force for upgradation, modernisation, and revival of aging urea plants, and (v) introducing a production-linked incentive scheme for drones used in spraying of nano fertilisers.

For a PRS Summary of the report, see here.

Information Technology

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Standing Committee on Communications submits report on the IT Agreement

The Standing Committee on Communications and Information Technology (Chair: Dr. Nishikant Dubey) presented its report on the 'Impact of Information Technology Agreement in the new age'. The Committee highlighted challenges faced by India after signing the IT Agreement. It observed that signing the agreement exposed India's underdeveloped electronics industry to global competition prematurely. It highlighted issues such as: (i) India's dependence on imports for electronics and IT products, (ii) concentration of economic activities in assembly instead of manufacturing, and (iii) cyber security risks caused by lowering trade barriers under the agreement.

Key recommendations by the Committee include: (i) constituting a High Level Empowered Inter-Ministerial Committee to examine the impact of the agreement on the Indian IT industry, (ii) enforcing existing provisions of the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, and (iii) incentivising e-waste recycling. It also recommended raising certain concerns at the World Trade Organisation, such as: (i) the inclusion of 5G equipment and AI components under the agreement, (ii) clearer classification for hybrid digital products, and (iii) mechanisms for technology transfer.

For a PRS summary of the report, please see here.

Annexure

Parliament has re-constituted some of its Departmentally Related Standing Committees. The subjects identified for examination for 2025-26 by some of the Committees are given below. See the Monthly Policy Reviews of October 2025 and November 2025 for earlier announcements.

	Transport, Tourism and Culture
1	Evaluation of Regional Connectivity (RCS-UDAN) and Expansion of Last-Mile Links
2	Framework for Emerging Aviation Technologies, Drone economy, Modernization of Airspace Management, and Addressing Critical Supply-Chain Challenges Facing the Indian Aviation Industry
3	India as a Global Hub for Aviation MRO and Aircraft Manufacturing
4	Promotion of aero sports and adventure
5	Aeromedical infrastructure and health support systems for air crew and personnel
6	Reforming National Museums and Strategy for Repatriation of Antiquities.
7	Functioning of ASI and strengthening Heritage Site Management

8	Port Modernization, Shipbuilding Industry, and Inland Waterways.
9	Development and maintenance of National Highways
10	Review of Gati Shakti National Master Plan: Multi- Modal Integration of Transport Networks
11	A Comprehensive Review of Road Safety including Vision Zero, Tyre ratings, Highway Design Standards, Enforcement Strategies, and the World Bank-sponsored Safe Corridor Demonstration Project
12	Evaluating the Need for an Integrated Transport Development Body and Installation of Integrated Transport Management Systems (ITMS) in Every State
13	Holistic Development of India's Tourism Sector through Formal Skill Development, University-Level Courses and Professional Training for Guides, Hospitality and Eco- Tourism
14	Promotion of Blue Economy Tourism.
15	Integrating Tourism Infrastructure, Tariff Management, and Regional Transport Connectivity in National Tourist Spots for Sustainable Destination Development.
Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice	
Department of Personnel and Training	
1	Filling up of vacancies in the Central Government
2	Review of the Right to Information Act, 2005, and Working of the Central Information Commission
3	Effectiveness of Vigilance Administration
4	Functioning of the Central Administrative Tribunal
Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances	
1	Effective Redressal of Grievances by Strengthening the Public Grievances Redressal System
2	Implementation of the Citizen's Charter in the Central Government
3	Redressal of Grievances related to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe
Department of Legal Affairs	
1	Review of functioning of Tribunal System in the Country
2	Creation and Development of Institutional Mechanism to support the Alternative Dispute Resolution Ecosystem
Department of Justice	
1	Appointments in Higher Judiciary
2	Review of Judicial Infrastructure
3	Judicial Processes and their reform:
i	Court proceedings and Judgements in regional languages; and availability of Supreme Court and High Court Judgements in scheduled languages
ii	24 x 7 Virtual Courts and Live streaming of Court Proceedings
iii	Code of Conduct for the Judges of Higher Judiciary
iv	Court Manager System for the Management of Courts
vi	Assessment of Fast-Track Special Courts
vi	Taking up of post-retirement assignments by the Judges

[1] Monetary Policy Statement, 2025-26, Resolution of the Monetary Policy Committee, December 3 to 5, 2025, Reserve Bank of India, December 5, 2025, https://www.rbi.org.in/Scripts/BS_PressReleaseDisplay.aspx?prid=61749.

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[3] "India's Index of industrial production records growth of 0.4% in October 2025", Press Information Bureau, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, December 1, 2025, https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2196938&reg=3&lang=1.

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