

NEWS TODAY

Union Cabinet approves Incentive scheme for promotion of low-value BHIM-UPI transactions (P2M)

The scheme will cover UPI Person-to-Merchant (P2M) transactions and will be implemented at an outlay of 1,500 crore for FY 2024-25.





Key Highlights of the Scheme

- **Incentive:** Incentive of **0.15% per transaction** will be provided for transactions upto **Rs.2,000** pertaining to **category of small merchants**.
 - ⊕ Incentive is paid to the Acquiring bank (Merchant's bank) and shared with Issuer Bank (Customer's Bank), Payment Service Provider Bank and App Providers.
- **Objective:**
 - ⊕ Promotion of **indigenous BHIM-UPI platform**.
 - ⊕ Achieving the target of **20,000 crore total transaction volume** in FY 2024-25.
 - ⊕ Penetration of UPI in **tier 3 to 6 cities**, especially in rural & remote areas by promoting innovative products such as feature **phone based (UPI 123PAY) & offline (UPI Lite/UPI LiteX)** payment solutions.
- **Key Benefits:** Enable small merchants to avail of UPI services at no additional cost.
 - ⊕ Earlier, in 2020, **Merchant Discount Rate** was made zero for BHIM-UPI transactions.
 - ◆ **MDR** refers to the rate at which merchants are charged for accepting Debit Card and Credit Card payments and funds paid via net banking and Digital Wallets.

About Bharat Interface for Money (BHIM), 2016

- A payment app that enables easy transactions using the **Unified Payments Interface (UPI)**.
 - ⊕ UPI is a system that powers multiple bank accounts into a single mobile application (of any participating bank)
- Developed by **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)** to drive digital payments.

Key Features of UPI

 Virtual Payment Address Send and receive money using a VPA instead of bank details	 Single Click 2FA Two-factor authentication with a single click	 India Stack Integration Integral part of Payments layer of India Stack	 UPI One World Wallet Powered by UPI for NRIs and foreign visitors
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Related News

NPCI International Payments Limited (NIPL)

NIPL has partnered with Singapore-based payment company to expand the acceptance of UPI.

About NIPL

- It has been incorporated in 2020 as a wholly owned subsidiary of NPCI.
- It is devoted for deployment of RuPay (domestic card scheme) and UPI (mobile payment solution) outside of India.

Cabinet approved Revised Rashtriya Gokul Mission

The Union Cabinet approved the Revised Rashtriya Gokul Mission (RGM) to boost growth in livestock sector.

About Rashtriya Gokul Mission (RGM)

- **Aim:** Launched in 2014 for Development and conservation of **indigenous breeds**, genetic upgradation of bovine population and enhancement of **milk production** and **productivity of bovines**.
- **Implementation:** **Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying**.
- **Activities under RGM:** Strengthening of semen stations, Artificial Insemination network, strengthening of Central Cattle Breeding Farms, skill development, farmer awareness etc.
- **Gokul Grams:** It provides for setting up of **16 Gokul Grams as Integrated Indigenous Cattle development Centres** with aim of conservation & development of indigenous bovine breeds in a scientific and holistic manner.

Key Features of Revised RGM

- **Outlay:** **₹3,400 crore** for 15th Finance Commission cycle (2021-22 to 2025-26).
- **Two New added Activities:**
 - ⊕ **Heifer Rearing Centres (HRCs):** One-time assistance of **35% of capital cost** for establishment of HRCs to Implementing Agencies for creation of 30 housing facilities having total 15000 heifers.
 - ⊕ **Interest Subvention for Farmers:** To encourage purchase of **high genetic merit (HGM)** in vitro fertilization (IVF) heifers, farmers will receive a **3% interest subvention** on loans taken from milk unions, financial institutions, or banks.

Achievements of Rashtriya Gokul Mission

- **Milk production:** Increased by **63.55%** in the last 10 years.
- **Per capita milk availability:** Increased from 307 grams per day in 2013-14 to **471 grams per day** in 2023-24.
- **Dairy productivity:** Increasing by **26.34%** in the last ten years.
- **Artificial Insemination:** Nationwide Artificial Insemination Programme (NAIP) under the RGM provides free of cost Artificial Insemination at the farmer's doorstep in 605 districts

Changing Dynamics of India's Remittances highlighted by Reserve Bank of India (RBI)


Data from **Sixth Round of India's Remittances Survey** for 2023-24 has been used.

- When migrants send home part of their earnings in the form of either cash or goods to support their families, these transfers are known as **Remittances**.
- Paper also highlighted that India's stock of **international migrants** has **tripled** from 6.6 million in 1990 to 18.5 million in 2024.


Key Highlights

- **Status:** India has consistently been the **top recipient** of remittances globally since 2008. (World Bank)
 - ⊕ Remittances have more than **doubled** from **US\$ 55.6 billion in 2010-11** to **US\$ 118.7 billion in 2023-24**.
 - ◆ As a ratio to GDP, India's remittances have been around 3 % of GDP since 2000.
- **Source Countries:** The share of **advanced economies** in India's inward remittances has risen, surpassing the share of Gulf economies (such as UAE), reflecting a **shift in migration pattern** towards **skilled Indian diaspora**.
 - ⊕ Remittances from the **United States** (largest contributor) and the **United Kingdom together nearly doubled** to **40%** of the remittances.
- **State-wise Distribution:** Maharashtra, followed by Kerala and Tamil Nadu continue to be the dominant recipient states.
- **Cost of Remittances declined:** For India, it is **lower than the global average cost**, driven by digitalisation.


Significance of Remittances



Remittances finance around **42% of India's trade deficit**.



India's remittance inflows have consistently surpassed **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)**.



Improved Living Standards (E.g. family maintenance, education, etc.)

Sagarmala Start Up Innovation Initiative (S2I2) launched to Boost Port Led Development

S2I2 was launched at the 4th **National Sagarmala Apex Committee (NSAC)** meeting.

- In meeting, plans to upgrade to **Sagarmala 2.0** was also highlighted.

Key highlights

- **S2I2:**
 - ⊕ **Aim:** Empowering **startups** working in areas such as **green shipping, smart ports, maritime logistics, shipbuilding technology, and sustainable coastal development**.
 - ⊕ It will accelerate RISE— **Research, Innovation, Startups, and Entrepreneurship**.
 - ⊕ It will offer **funding, mentorship, and industry partnerships** to nurture cutting-edge solutions.
- **Sagarmala 2.0:**
 - ⊕ It will be an **upgrade** of the Sagarmala Programme with a new **focus on shipbuilding, repair, breaking, and recycling**.
 - ⊕ It is intended to achieve the **Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision (MAKV 2047)**, aims to position India among the world's top five shipbuilding nations and expanding port handling capacity to 10 billion metric tons annually.

About Sagarmala Programme, 2015


- **Aim:** Accelerate economic development in the country by harnessing the potential of India's **7,500 km long coastline** and **14,500 km of potentially navigable waterways**.
 - ⊕ It holds a vision to reduce logistics cost for both domestic and EXIM cargo.

➤ **Ministry:** Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways


➤ **Apex Body:** NSAC

➤ **Five Key Pillars:** Port-led industrialization, Port Modernization, Port Connectivity, Coastal Shipping and Inland Waterways and Coastal Community Development.


Key Achievements of Sagarmala Programme



Maritime infrastructure:
More than 100 port modernisation projects, have added 230 Million Tonnes Per Annum (MTPA) to port capacity.



Port connectivity: Over 80 port connectivity projects have enhanced 1,500 km of connectivity to ports.



Coastal Community Development: Fishing harbour projects have positively impacted over 30,000 fishermen.

Cabinet Approves Revised National Program for Dairy Development (NPDD)

The revised NPDD focuses on **modernizing and expanding dairy infrastructure**, ensuring the sector's sustained growth and **productivity** and increasing **farmers' income**.

Revised National Program for Dairy Development (NPDD)

- It is a **Central Sector Scheme** launched in **2014** (restructured in **2021**).
- **Outlay:** Revised NPDD has been enhanced with an additional Rs.1000 crore, bringing the total budget to Rs.2790 crore for the period of 15th Finance Commission cycle (**2021-22 to 2025-26**).
- **Implementing Agency:** Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying (DAHD), Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying.
- **Objectives:**
 - ⊕ Establish **10,000 new Dairy Cooperative Societies (DCSs)**,
 - ⊕ Strengthen **milk procurement and processing** in the **North Eastern Region (NER)**,
 - ⊕ Formation of **2 Milk Producer Companies (MPCs)** with dedicated **grant support** in addition to the ongoing projects of NPDD,
 - ⊕ Generate an **additional 3.2 lakh direct and indirect employment** opportunities, focusing on **women**, which constitute **70% of the dairy workforce**.
- **The scheme consists of 2 key components:**
 - ⊕ **Component A: Improving essential dairy infrastructure** especially in remote and backward areas by supporting formation of DCSs and MPCs. E.g. milk chilling plants, milk testing laboratories, and certification systems.
 - ⊕ **Component B: Dairying through Cooperatives (DTC):** Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)-assisted programme for **sustainable development of dairy cooperatives** by improving production, processing, and marketing infrastructure in the **9 States**.

Achievements of NPDD:

- **Employment:** Created over 30,000 direct and indirect jobs.
- **Milk procurement capacity:** Increased by an **additional 100.95 lakh liters per day**.
- **Cutting-edge technology:** Over 51,777 village-level milk testing laboratories strengthened; a combined capacity of 123.33 lakh liters of milk coolers installed; advanced systems of **adulteration detection** in 232 dairy plants.

MGNREGA Sees 82% Rise in Employment Generation

Between FY 2014-15 and FY 2024-25, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) has generated **3,029 crore person-days**, marking an **82% increase**.

- **Aadhaar seeding** has been also completed for **99.49%** of active MGNREGA workers.

About MGNREGA

- **MGNREGA: Centrally Sponsored Scheme**, launched in 2005 by **Ministry of Rural Development**.
- **Objective:** To provide at least **100 days of guaranteed wage employment** in a financial year to every rural household whose adult members volunteer to do **unskilled manual work**.
- **Beneficiaries:** All Household members aged more than **18 years** and **residing in rural area**.
- **Coverage:** Entire country **except districts having 100 % urban populations**.
- **Wage Rates:** Different states have different wage rates.
 - ⊕ MGNREGA wages are decided based on changes in the **CPI-AL (Consumer Price Index- Agriculture Labor)**, which reflects inflation in rural areas.

Achievements

- **Increased Women's participation:** Risen from 48% in FY 2013-14 to over 58% in the current financial year.
- **Reduction in Number of water-stressed Rural Blocks:** From 2264 to 1456 (35% reduction) in last decade.
- **Increase in Creation of Individual Assets:** From 17.6% in FY 2013-14 to 56.99% in FY 2024-25.
- **Amrit Sarovars:** Creation of over 68,000 Amrit Sarovars in the country in Phase I.



Also In News



Sansad Bhashini initiative

Lok Sabha and Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) agreed to develop the **Sansad Bhashini initiative** for **AI-powered multilingual Parliamentary operations**.

About Sansad Bhashini initiative

- **Aim:** To **leverage artificial intelligence (AI)** to enhance **multilingual support (through Bhashini)** and streamline **parliamentary operations**.
- ⊕ **Bhashini** is an AI-powered language translation platform by MeitY.
- The key AI initiatives under Sansad Bhashini include AI-based translation, **AI-Powered Chatbot** for the Parliament website etc.

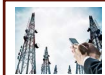


State of Climate 2024 Report

The State of Climate 2024 report published by **World Meteorological Organization (WMO)**.

Key Highlights

- Global Warming causes **greenhouse gas levels highest** in the past 8, 00,000 years as per WMO.
- The report states that **each of the last 10 years** is among the 10 warmest years on record since 1850.
- Frozen parts of Earth's surface, known as the **cryosphere**, are melting at an alarming rate.
- **Extreme weather events** caused the greatest number of displacements in 2024 since 2008.



Samarth

Centre for Development of Telematics launches 'Samarth' a cutting edge **Incubation Program** for **telecommunications** and **IT sectors**.

About Samarth

- **Aim:** Encourage the development of **sustainable and scalable business models**, offer access to **cutting-edge resources**, and help **Startups Bridge the** gap from ideation to commercialization.
- **Implementation Partner:** Software Technology Parks of India (STPI), premier S&T organization under Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).



Autonomous Surface Vessels (ASVs)

Indian and US firms signed an MoU to co-develop **Wave Glider**, an Autonomous Surface Vessels (ASVs) for Anti-Submarine Warfare.

About Autonomous Surface Vessels (ASVs)

- These are robotic vehicles that operate on the sea surface, recording oceanographic data.
- They use **wave power or propeller-driven propulsion** systems.
- **Advantages:**
 - ⊕ Larger payloads and higher battery capacity compared to Autonomous Underwater Vehicles.
 - ⊕ **Utilize renewable energy** sources such as **solar and wind power** for prolonged operations.
- **Challenges:** Navigational risks in congested waters.



UpLink Initiative

UpLink initiative under **World Economic Forum's (WEF)** cut carbon emissions by 142,400 tonnes in 2023-2024.

About UpLink Initiative

- It is an initiative focused on **impactful early-stage innovation**.
- It was founded in **2020** by **WEF** in collaboration with **Deloitte** and **Salesforce**.
- It builds **ecosystems** that enable **purpose-driven, early-stage entrepreneurs** to scale their businesses for the markets that are essential to a **net-zero, nature-positive and equitable future**.
- **Objectives:** Accelerate impact of early-stage innovators, Enable Innovation Ecosystems and Influence perception.



Squad Alliance

Philippines urged India to Join 'Squad' Alliance.

About Squad alliance

- An informal minilateral alliance involving the US, Japan, Australia, and the Philippines.
- **Aim:** Address aggression and maintaining stability in the Indo-Pacific Ocean Region, etc.
- It is different from **Quad** which consists of India, USA, Japan and Australia.



Sonic Weapon

Serbia denied using a banned 'sonic weapon' to disperse protesters in Belgrade.

About Sonic Weapon

- Also known as **Acoustic weapons** are devices that deliver very loud sounds over long distances.
 - ⊖ They can also be used to act like voice amplifiers to deliver voice messages/other sounds.
- **Working:** Usually comprise hundreds of **modern transducers**, an electronic device that converts energy from one form to another to create highly concentrated and amplified sound, narrowing beams to focus on specific targeted areas.
- **Impact:** **Tinnitus** (perception of ringing, buzzing, or other sounds in ears **without an external source**); hearing loss etc.



Ashwini

The **Ministry of Defence** inked a capital acquisition contract with **Bharat Electronics Limited** for **Low Level Transportable Radar (LLTR)** 'Ashwini' for the Indian Air Force.

About Ashwini

- An **active electronically scanned phased array radar** based on state-of-the-art **solid state technology**.
- **Indigenously** developed by **Electronics & Radar Development Establishment, DRDO**.
- **Key Features:**
 - ⊖ Capable of **tracking aerial targets** from **high-speed fighter aircraft** to **slow moving targets** such as Unmanned Aerial Vehicles and helicopters.
 - ⊖ Having an **instrumented range of 200 Km**.



Miller-Urey Hypothesis

A study highlighted that '**microlightning**' may have sparked life on Earth, challenging **Miller-Urey Hypothesis**.

- **Microlightning** is the tiny **electric sparks** (imitates how lightning forms in clouds) that form when oppositely charged water droplets come close together after splitting.

About Miller-Urey Hypothesis

- It claimed that **lightning strikes** triggered chemical reactions in Earth's early atmosphere.
 - ⊕ It successfully demonstrated that the **organic compounds (such as amino acids)** needed for life could form with the application of **electricity** to a mixture of water and inorganic gases.
 - ⊕ Recent study has demonstrated formation of organic compounds using microlightning.
- **Limitation:** Critics argue that lightning strikes were rare and mostly occurred over the open ocean, where organic compounds would have quickly dispersed.



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