

Current Affairs search results for tag: national-news

1. Chhattisgarh becomes the 35th State/UT to Join “One Nation One Ration Card” plan (Feb. 2, 2022)

Chhattisgarh formally joined the “One Nation one Ration Card” (ONORC) on 2 February 2022 and became the 35th State/Union Territory government which is now part of this scheme.

- The scheme now covers almost **96.8%** National Food Security Act (NFSA) population (about **77 Crore** NFSA beneficiaries) in the country
- The ONORC scheme was launched by the Government of India in August 2019. Under this scheme the eligible ration card holders are linked with their Aadhaar card number.
- The beneficiaries who are part of the scheme can get foodgrains under National Food Security act (NSFA) and Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) from any Fair Price Shop (also called ration shop) in the country.
- This scheme was devised to help the migrant workers who faced a lot of problems during the corona pandemic-induced lock down in the country.

PMGKAY (Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana)

It was launched in March 2020 by the Government of India.

Under this scheme the government provides an additional free 5 kg wheat /Rice per person per month to the 80 crore beneficiaries of the National Food Security act.

[For more details kindly see the post of 25 November 2021.](#)

National Food Security act (NFSA)

The Public distribution system in India is covered under the National Food security act 2013. It covers 75% of the rural population and 50% Urban areas.

- Food Grains are provided to beneficiaries in two categories, Antodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) and Priority Household (PHH).
- The Antodaya Anna Yojana beneficiaries get 35 kg of foodgrains per month and the Priority Household gets 5kg per person per month.
- The beneficiary gets rice/wheat or coarse cereals at a highly subsidised price.

2. UNION BUDGET 2022-23 (Feb. 2, 2022)

The Union Budget was presented in the Lok Sabha by the Union Finance Minister Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman on 1 February 2022. Like last year, this year's budget was also a paperless budget .

The Highlights of the Budget

- India's economic growth is estimated at **9.2%** in 2021-22 and it is the highest growth rate among all large economies.
- **60 lakh new jobs** to be created under the Productivity Linked Incentive(PLI) scheme in 14 sectors.

- PLI Schemes have the potential to create an **additional production of Rs 30 lakh crore.**
- Entering Amrit Kaal, the 25 year long lead up to India @100, the budget provides impetus for growth along **four priorities**. These priorities are as follows:
- **PM GatiShakti**
- **Inclusive Development**
- **Productivity Enhancement & Investment, Sunrise opportunities, Energy Transition, and Climate Action.**
- **Financing of investments**

PM GatiShakti

- PM GatiShakti is a transformative approach for economic growth and sustainable development.
- The seven engines that drive PM Gati Shakti are **Roads, Railways, Airports, Ports, Mass Transport, Waterways and Logistics Infrastructure.**

Road Transport

- National Highways Network to be expanded by **25000 Km** in 2022-23.
- **Rs 20000 Crore** to be mobilized for National Highways Network expansion.

Multimodal Logistics Parks

- Contracts to be awarded through Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode in 2022-23 for implementation of Multimodal Logistics Parks at four locations.

Railways

- **Railway will popularise the “One Station One Product”** concept to help local businesses & supply chains.
- **2000 Km of railway network to be brought under Kavach**, the indigenous world-class technology for safety and capacity augmentation in 2022-23
- **400 new generation Vande Bharat Trains** to be manufactured during the next three years.
- **100 PM GatiShakti Cargo terminals for multimodal logistics** to be developed during the next three years.

Parvatmala: National Ropeways Development Programme

- As an alternative to surface road, ropeways will be developed in difficult hilly areas and congested urban areas as a means of transportation.
- In 2022-23 the government will award contracts for **8 ropeway projects of 60 Km length.**

Inclusive Development

Agriculture

- The procurement of wheat in Rabi 2021-22 and the estimated procurement of paddy in Kharif 2021-22 will cover 1208 lakh metric tonnes of wheat and paddy from 163 lakh farmers.
- The government will transfer an estimated Rs 2.37 lakh crore direct payment of MSP value to the farmers' accounts.
- Chemical free Natural farming to be promoted throughout the country. Initial focus is on farmer's lands in 5 Km wide corridors along river Ganga.
- **2023 has been announced as the International Year of Millets.** The government will support post harvest value addition, branding and consumption of millets nationally and internationally.
- Government will promote 'Kisan Drones' for crop assessment, digitization of land records, spraying of insecticides and nutrients.

Ken Betwa project

- Government will implement the linking of Ken Betwa river projects which is expected to cost Rs 44,605 crores. This is aimed at providing irrigation benefits to 9.08 lakh hectare of farmers' lands, drinking water supply for 62 lakh people, 103 MW of Hydro, and 27 MW of solar power.
- The budget has allocated **Rs 1400 crore** for implementation of the Ken - Betwa link project.
- Government has identified Damanganga-Pinjal, Par-Tapi-Narmada, Godavari-Krishna, Krishna-Pennar and Pennar-Cauvery projects for interlinking of rivers..

Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME)

- **Udyam, e-shram, NCS and ASEEM portals to be interlinked.**
- 130 lakh MSMEs provided additional credit under Emergency Credit Linked Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS)
- ECLGS to be extended up to March 2023.
- Guarantee cover under ECLGS to be expanded by **Rs 50000 Crore to total cover of Rs 5 Lakh Crore.**
- **Rs 2 lakh Crore** additional credit for Micro and Small Enterprises to be facilitated under the Credit Guarantee Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE).
- **Raising and Accelerating MSME performance (RAMP) programme** with outlay of Rs 6000 Crore to be rolled out.

Skill Development

- **Digital Ecosystem for Skilling and Livelihood (DESH-Stack e-portal)** will be launched to empower citizens to skill, re skill or upskill through on-line training.
- Startups will be promoted to facilitate '**Drone Shakti**' and for **Drone-As-A-Service** (DrAAS).

Education

- **'One class-One TV channel' programme of PM eVIDYA** to be expanded to 200 TV channels.
- Virtual labs and skilling e-labs to be set up to promote critical thinking skills and simulated learning environments.
- High-quality e-content will be developed for delivery through Digital Teachers.

- The Government will set up a Digital University for world-class quality universal education with personalised learning experience to be established.

Health

- An **open platform** for the National **Digital Health Ecosystem** to be rolled out.

A '**National Tele Mental Health Programme**' for quality mental health counselling and care services will be launched.

- A network of **23 tele-mental health centres** of excellence will be set up, with National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS) being the nodal centre and International Institute of Information Technology-Bangalore (IIITB) providing technology support.

Saksham Anganwadi

- Government has launched Mission Shakti, Mission Vatsalya, Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 to provide integrated benefits to women and children .
- Saksham Anganwadis are a new generation anganwadis that have better infrastructure and audio-visual aids, powered by clean energy and providing improved environment for early child development.
- **Two lakh anganwadis are** to be upgraded to Saksham Anganwadis.

Har Ghar, Nal Se Jal

- **Rs. 60,000 crore** allocated to cover **3.8 crore households** in 2022-23 under Har Ghar, Nal se Jal.
- The current target of the government under this scheme is to provide tap drinking water to 8.7 crore households . 5.5 crore households were covered in the last two years .

Housing for All

- **Rs. 48,000 crore** allocated for completion of **80 lakh houses** in 2022-23 under PM Awas Yojana.

Prime Minister's Development Initiative for North-East Region (PM-DevINE)

- New scheme PM-DevINE launched to fund infrastructure and social development projects in the North-East. The scheme will be implemented by North -Eastern Council.
- An initial allocation of **Rs. 1,500 crore has been made** to enable livelihood activities for youth and women under the scheme.

Vibrant Villages Programme

- Government of India will launch a Vibrant Villages Programme for development of Border villages with sparse population, limited connectivity and infrastructure on the northern border.

Banking

- **100 percent of 1.5 lakh post offices** to come on the **Core Banking System(CBS)**.
- To mark the 75 years of Independence ,Scheduled Commercial Banks will set up **75 Digital Banking Units (DBUs) in 75 districts of the country..**

e-Passport

- The Union External Affairs Ministry will issue e-Passports with embedded chips and futuristic technology.to enhance the convenience for the citizens for International travel.

Land Records Management

The government will encourage the state government to adopt Unique Land Parcel Identification Number to facilitate IT-based management of records.

Accelerated Corporate Exit

- The Government will set up the “**Centre for Processing Accelerated Corporate Exit (C-PACE)**” to facilitate and speed up the voluntary closing up of the companies from the currently required 2 years to less than 6 months.

AVGC Promotion Task Force

- The Government will set up a promotion task force for the development of **animation, visual effects, gaming, and comic (AVGC) sectors..**

Export Promotion

- **Special Economic Zones Act to be replaced with a new legislation** to enable States to become partners in ‘**Development of Enterprise and Service Hubs**’.

AtmaNirbharta in Defence:

- In order to reduce imports in the defence sector and to promote AtmaNirbharta in equipment for the Armed Forces , **68 per cent of the capital procurement budget will be earmarked for domestic industry in 2022-23, up from 58 per cent in 2021-22**
- Defence R&D to be opened up for industry, startups and academia with 25% of defence R&D budget earmarked for this purpose.
- Independent nodal umbrella body to be set up for meeting testing and certification requirements.

Defence

The allocation for defence has been increased for 2022-23 to Rs 5.25 lakh crores. Last year the allocation for defence was Rs 4.79 lakh crore.

Sunrise Opportunities

- Government contribution to be provided for R&D in Sunrise Opportunities like Artificial Intelligence, Geospatial Systems and Drones, Semiconductor and its eco-system, Space Economy, Genomics and Pharmaceuticals, Green Energy, and Clean Mobility Systems.

Energy Transition and Climate Action:

- Additional allocation of **Rs. 19,500 crore for Production Linked Incentive for manufacture of high efficiency solar modules** to meet the goal of 280 GW of installed solar power by 2030.
- In order to become a carbon neutral economy, five to seven per cent biomass pellets are to be used in thermal power plant along with coal for production of power.

Benefits

- It will result in reducing the production of 38 MMT per year of carbon dioxide
- It will provide an extra source of income to farmers and job opportunities to locals,
- Help avoid stubble burning in agriculture fields.
- **Four pilot projects to be set up for coal gasification and conversion of coal into chemicals** for the industry

Public Capital Investment:

- To support the economy and to pull in private sector investment the government will continue to invest in the economy
- **Outlay for capital expenditure stepped up sharply by 35.4% to Rs. 7.50 lakh crore in 2022-23** from Rs. 5.54 lakh crore in 2021-22..
- Outlay in 2022-23 to be **2.9% of GDP**.
- **‘Effective Capital Expenditure’** of the Central Government is estimated at **Rs. 10.68 lakh crore in 2022-23**, which is about **4.1% of GDP**.

GIFT-IFSC

- World-class foreign universities and institutions to be allowed in the Gujarat International Financial Tech-City (GIFT- City).
- An **International Arbitration Centre** will be set up in GIFT-City to be set up for timely settlement of disputes under international jurisprudence.

Mobilising Resources

- **Data Centres and Energy Storage Systems** to be given infrastructure status.
- Venture Capital and Private Equity invested more than Rs. 5.5 lakh crore last year facilitating one of the largest start-up and growth ecosystems. Measures to be taken to help scale up this investment.

Blended funds to be promoted for sunrise sectors.

Government will issue **Sovereign Green Bonds** for mobilizing resources for green infrastructure.

Digital Rupee

- Introduction of **Digital Rupee by the Reserve Bank of India starting 2022-23.**

Providing Greater Fiscal Space to States

- Government of India will provide a 50-year, interest-free loan of ₹1 lakh crore to states to enable them to spend on capital investments, especially in infrastructure, under the PM GatiShakti Master Plan during 2022-23 under the **'Scheme for Financial Assistance to States for Capital Investment'**:
- In 2021-22 the total outlay for the scheme was Rs 15,000 crore.

In 2022-23, States will be allowed a fiscal deficit of 4% of Gross State Domestic Product(GSDP), of which 0.5% will be tied to power sector reforms

Fiscal Management

The total expenditure in 2022-23 is estimated at Rs. 39.45 lakh crore, while the total receipts other than borrowings are estimated at Rs. 22.84 lakh crore.

The total Market Borrowings of the government for 2022-23 are estimated to be at Rs. 11,58,719 crore.

Deficits

Fiscal Deficit

The expected Fiscal Deficit in 2021-22 has been revised to 6.9% of GDP. It is expected to be of ₹ 15,91,089 crore.

The target fiscal deficit for 2022-23 is 6.4% of GDP. It is estimated to be at ₹ 16,61,196 crore.

Revenue Deficit

The revenue deficit in 2021-22 is expected to be 4.7% of the GDP.

The target Revenue Deficit for 2022-23 is 3.8% of GDP.

Primary Deficit

The primary deficit for 2021-22 is expected to be 3.3% of GDP

The target primary deficit for 2022-23 is 2.8% of GDP.

[For understanding the concept of deficits kindly see our blogs and click on this link.](#)

Tax Proposals

DIRECT TAXES

- There has been no changes in the Income Tax slabs.

Cooperative societies

- Alternate Minimum Tax paid by cooperatives brought down from **18.5 per cent to 15 per cent**.
- Surcharge on cooperative societies reduced from **12 per cent to 7 per cent** for those having total income of more than Rs 1 crore and up to Rs 10 crores.

Tax relief to persons with disability

- Payment of annuity and lump sum amount from insurance scheme to be allowed to differently abled dependent during the lifetime of parents/guardians, i.e., on parents/guardians attaining the age of 60 years.

Parity in National Pension Scheme Contribution

- Tax deduction limit increased from **10 per cent to 14 percent** on employer's contribution to the NPS account of State Government employees.
- This measure will bring the state government employees at par with central government employees.

Incentives for Start-ups

- Period of incorporation extended by **one year, up to 31.03.2023** for eligible start-ups to avail tax benefit. Earlier startups were offered tax incentives for the first three years of their incorporation by the government and now it has been extended by another year.

Scheme for taxation of virtual digital assets

- Specific tax regime for virtual digital assets introduced.
- Any income from transfer of any virtual digital asset to be taxed at the rate of **30 per cent**.
- No deduction in respect of any expenditure or allowance to be allowed while computing such income except cost of acquisition.
- Loss from transfer of virtual digital asset cannot be set off against any other income.
- To capture the transaction details, TDS to be provided on payment made in relation to transfer of virtual digital asset at the rate of 1 per cent of such consideration above a monetary threshold.
- Gift of virtual digital asset also to be taxed in the hands of the recipient.

Tax incentives to IFSC

- Subject to specified conditions, the following to be **exempt from tax**
 - Income of a non-resident from offshore derivative instruments.
 - Income from over the counter derivatives issued by an offshore banking unit.
 - Income from royalty and interest on account of lease of ship.
 - Income received from portfolio management services in IFSC.

Health and Education Cess

- Any surcharge or cess on income and profits **not allowable** as business expenditure.

INDIRECT TAXES**Special Economic Zones**

- Customs Administration of SEZs to be fully IT driven and function on the **Customs National Portal** – shall be implemented by 30th September 2022.

Project imports and capital goods

- Gradually phasing out of the concessional rates in capital goods and project imports; and applying a moderate tariff of **7.5 percent** – conducive to the growth of the domestic sector and 'Make in India'.

Gems and Jewellery

- Customs duty on cut and polished diamonds and gemstones being reduced **to 5 per cent**; Nil customs duty to simply sawn diamond - To give a boost to the Gems and Jewellery sector
- Customs duty of at least Rs 400 per Kg to be paid on imitation jewellery import - To disincentivise import of undervalued imitation jewellery.

MSME

- Customs duty on umbrellas being raised to 20 per cent. Exemption to parts of umbrellas being withdrawn.

Tariff measure to encourage blending of fuel

- Unblended fuel to attract an additional differential **excise duty of Rs 2/ litre** from the 1st of October 2022 - to encourage blending of fuel.

3. Portugal PM Antonio Costa party wins Parliamentary majority (Feb. 1, 2022)

Prime Minister Antonio Costa, **Socialist party** has won an absolute majority in the recently held parliamentary election in the country. It won 117 seats in the 230 seat parliament.

The parliament of Portugal, officially called **The Assembly of the Republic** or **Assembleia da República in Portuguese, is a** unicameral legislature.

- Portugal is a European country and is a member of the 27 member European bloc, the European Union.
- The currency of Portugal is Euro.
- The capital of Portugal is Lisbon.

4. Mentally retarded child entitled to family pension (Jan. 31, 2022)

As per Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions mentally retarded child of a deceased Government employee/Pensioner is entitled to Family Pension.

- Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology; Minister of State (Independent Charge) Earth Sciences; MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, **Dr Jitendra Singh** said, “this reiteration in public was necessitated by the fact that it has come to the notice of the Department of Pension & Pensioners’ Welfare that in some cases the Banks are not allowing Family Pension in respect of a mentally retarded child through the person nominated by the Pensioner or his/her spouse and they insist for a Guardianship Certificate issued by a Court of Law.”
- The minister also asked the Chairman and Managing Directors of all Pension Disbursing Banks not to insist on a Guardianship Certificate issued by the Court of Law in such cases.

5. Telecom companies to store call details for two years (Jan. 31, 2022)

The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) under the Ministry of Communication has directed the telecom communication (telcos) to store data of international calls, satellite phone calls, conference calls and messages over normal networks and on the Internet for a period of at least two years.

- This follows the DoT amendment in the unified telecom licence in December which mandated the storage of call data as well as internet log data to 2 years from the previous one year.
- The latest directive includes voicemail, audiotex and unified messaging service.
- The telecom companies which hold unified licenses in India are Vodafone-Idea, Reliance Jio, Airtel and BSNL. They have been ordered by the government to keep the record for two years and after that they can destroy the data.
- But they will have to keep the data for a longer period if the government orders them to do so in the name of national security.

Union Telecommunication Minister: Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw

6. SPMCIL sets up New Bank Note Printing Lines each at Currency Note Press, Nashik and Bank Note Press, Dewas (Jan. 29, 2022)

Security Printing and Minting Corporation of India Limited (SPMCIL) under its modernization initiatives has set up New Bank Note Printing Lines each at **Currency Note Press (CNP), Nashik and Bank Note Press(BNP), Dewas.**

SPMCIL, a Government of India owned Miniratna company, is engaged in the manufacture/production of Currency and Bank Notes, Security Paper, Non-Judicial Stamp Papers, Postal Stamps, Passport, Visa, Cheques, Bond, Warrant, Special Certificates with security features, Security Inks, Circulation & Commemorative Coins, Medallions

Chairman and Managing Director, SPMCIL - Smt. Tripti Patra Ghosh

There are four currency note printing presses in India.

- Two of the currency note printing presses are owned by The Government of India, which are situated at Nasik(Western India) and Dewas(Central India).
- The other two are owned by the Reserve Bank, through its wholly owned subsidiary, the Bharatiya Reserve Bank Note Mudran Ltd.(BRBNML), which are situated at Mysore(Southern India) and Salboni(West Bengal).

Coins are minted in four mints owned by the Government of India.

- The mints are located at Mumbai, Hyderabad, Kolkata and Noida.

7. India-Israel agree to further enhance cooperation in the agricultural sector (Jan. 29, 2022)

Israeli ambassador to India Shri Naor Gilon called on the Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Shri Narendra Singh Tomar at Krishi Bhawan on 27th January 2022.

- India and Israel have completed 30 years of diplomatic relations.
- India and Israel signed a three-year work programme for cooperation in Agriculture.
- In the agriculture sector, India and Israel had bilateral relations since 1993. So far, 4 action plans have been completed and this one is 5th Indo-Israel Agriculture Action Plan (IIAP)
- The aim of the work programme is to grow existing Centres of Excellence (CoE) by.
 - Establishing new centres
 - Increasing CoE's value chain
 - Bringing the Centres of Excellence into self-sufficient mode
 - Encouraging private sector companies and collaboration

INDO-ISRAEL Villages of Excellence

- The "INDO-ISRAEL Villages of Excellence", is a new concept aimed at creating a model ecosystem in agriculture across 8 states, alongside 13 Centres of Excellence within 75 villages.
- 29 operational Centers of Excellence in 12 States of India are producing more than 25 million vegetable plants, over 387 thousand quality fruit plants and train more than 1.2 lakh farmers per year about the latest technology in the field of horticulture.
- Union Minister Shri Tomar informed that it has been decided to convert 150 villages around the Centers of Excellence into Villages of Excellence with technical assistance from Israel.
- Out of which 75 villages are being taken up to convert into 'Villages of Excellence' to commemorate the 75th year of India's independence.

8. Supreme Court judgement on reservation in Promotion (Jan. 29, 2022)

The Supreme Court on 28 January 2022 delivered its judgement on the issue relating to the reservation in promotions for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes.

A three judge bench of Justice L Nageswara Rao, Sanjiv Khanna and B R Gavai gave its judgement on a petition by the Central and State government to settle the confusion regarding the norms for reservation in promotion for Scheduled Caste(SC) and Scheduled Tribes(ST) .

The main points of the judgement are as follows:

1. The court cannot lay any yardstick to determine the inadequacy of representation of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe in the services of the states.
2. It is the duty of the State to collect the quantifiable data before providing for reservation in promotion for SC/ST employees.
3. Cadre should be the unit for the collection of quantifiable data for reservation. The collection cannot be with respect to the entire class/group, but it should be relatable to the Grade/Category of post to which promotion is sought.
4. It also held that collection of information regarding inadequacy of representation of SCs and STs cannot be with reference to the entire service or 'class'/'group' but it should be relatable to the grade/category of posts.
5. It also declared that the Supreme Court judgement in the M Nagaraj case 2006 , which had laid down conditions like collections of quantifiable data, adequacy of representation and overall impact on efficiency of administration, for granting reservations in promotion in government would be applied prospectively.
6. The court also declared the judgement of the Supreme Court in the B K Pavitra II 2019 case, which had allowed the collection of data on the basis of groups not cadres, as null and void.

9. Release of a pictorial book on India's Women Unsung Heroes of Freedom Struggle as part of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav (Jan. 28, 2022)

Union Minister of State for Culture Smt. Meenakashi Lekhi released a pictorial book on India's Women Unsung Heroes of Freedom Struggle as part of Azadi ka Mahotsav, in New Delhi on 27th January.

- The book has been released in partnership with Amar Chitra Katha which is a household name in India.
- The Ministry of Culture has decided to release pictorial books on 75 Unsung Heroes of the Freedom Struggle in partnership with Amar Chitra Katha.
- The second edition will be on 25 unsung Tribal Freedom Fighters which is under process and will take some time.
- The third and final edition will be of 30 unsung heroes drawn from other areas.
- This book celebrates the lives of some of the women who led the charge and lit the flame of protest and rebellion throughout the country.
- It contains the stories of queens who battled colonial powers in the struggle against imperial rule and women who dedicated and even laid down their lives for the cause of the motherland.

10. Supreme Court quashes the suspension of 12 BJP MLA from Maharashtra Assembly (Jan. 28, 2022)

In a significant judgement the Supreme Court on 28 January 2022 has set aside the Maharashtra Assembly's decision to suspend 12 legislators of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) for a one-year period beginning July 5, 2021.

- A bench headed by Justice A M Khanwilkar said the MLAs cannot be suspended beyond the session. The apex court held that the suspension beyond the remainder of the session of the Assembly was substantially unconstitutional and irrational.
- Reinstating them, the court held that the resolutions passed by the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly were illegal and it was beyond the powers of the assembly.
- The court held that the suspended 12 MLAs will now be entitled to all consequential benefits after the conclusion of the session in July, last year.
- The legislators were suspended for a year for allegedly misbehaving with Bhaskar Jadhav, the presiding officer in the Assembly.

Kindly also see 12 January 2022 post on the issue