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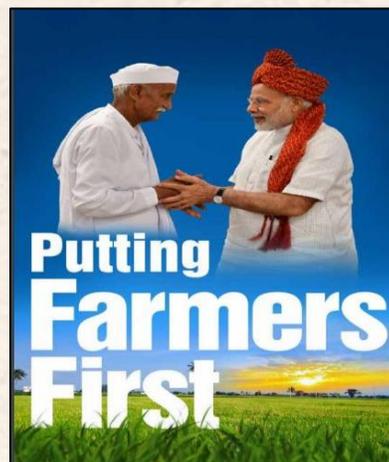
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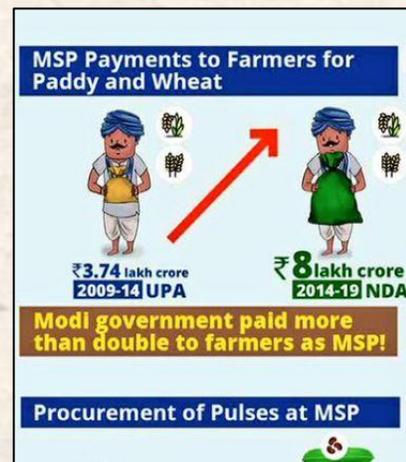
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Happy New Year 2021

Aatma Nirbhar Bharat – Farm Bills



[Read more](#)



[FAQs on Farm Bills. Read here](#)

NEWS ROUND-UP

Benefits of the New Farm Laws in a Nutshell

S.No.	Before Reforms	After Reforms
1	Can sell notified farm produce only in APMC Mandi Monopoly of few Cartels of traders could keep prices artificially low	Freedom of choice to sell in APMC mandi or choose any other seller Multiple options to sell Better price realisation through competition
2	Once produce brought to mandi, farmer has to accept whatever price is offered	Can bargain for price even at door-step
3	Mandi fee, commission, and other charges borne by producers and consumers	No fee, no commission Large savings to benefit producers and consumers.
4.	Large price spread Long chain of intermediaries	Higher share of farmer in consumer's payment Minimum or no intermediary
5.	No opportunity for farm youth to trade agri commodities	Rural farm youth will get opportunity to trade and run supply chain.
6.	Cannot directly sell to consumers	Can sell directly to anyone and earn higher price

S.No.	Before Reforms	After Reforms
7.	Freedom to sell fruits and vegetables outside of APMC mandi existed in some states	This freedom is now extended to all agri produce and all over the country
8.	Small land holders did not have scale and bargaining power in input and output markets	Empowered to access modern input, services and protection against price risk Farmer Producer Organisations help small farmers' organise for better bargaining power
9.	Contract farming restricted only to some pockets	Contract farming now nationally enabled and on terms favourable to farmers
10.	Farmers not part of value chains	Farmers will now be partners in value chain
11.	Exports getting uncompetitive due to long chain of intermediaries and poor logistics	Export competitiveness will increase and benefit farmers

Media briefing by Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare and Minister of Railways and Commerce

Union Minister for Agriculture Shri Narendra Singh Tomar, Union Minister for Railways, Commerce and Industry and Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution Shri Piyush Goyal and Union Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Shri Som Prakash participated in the 6th round of talks with the representatives of farmers' Unions at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi on December 30, 2020. Shri Tomar assured the Farmers' Unions leaders that government is committed to solving farmers' problems and both sides need to take steps forward to arrive at an amicable solution. [Read more](#)



Major Cabinet decisions by the Government of India

9th DECEMBER 2020

Major Cabinet Decisions



-  **Submarine Optical Fibre Cable Connectivity** between Kochi & Lakshadweep Islands
-  **Setting up of Public Wi-fi Networks under 'PM-WANI'** to provide public Wi-fi service through Public Data Offices without levy of any License Fee
-  **Universal Service Obligation Fund Scheme** to provide mobile coverage in Arunachal Pradesh & 2 districts of Assam
-  **AatmaNirbhar Bharat Rojgar Yojana** to boost employment in the formal sector & incentivize creation of new employment opportunities

16 December, 2020

Major Cabinet Decisions



Assistance of about ₹3,500 crore for sugarcane farmers (Ganna Kisan) approved
Will benefit the 5 crore cane farmers & 5 lakh workers of sugar mills & related ancillary activities



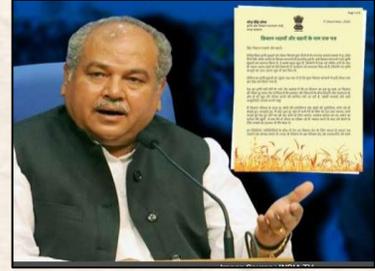
₹6,700 crore revised cost estimate of NERPSIP* for transmission & distribution related infrastructure in 6 North-Eastern States approved
North Eastern Region Power System Improvement Project*



Auction of spectrum approved
Will increase the quality of telecom services for the consumers

Open letter from Mr. Narendra Singh Tomar, Agriculture Minister of India, to the farmers of India

The Union Agriculture Minister of India, Narendra Singh Tomar wrote an open letter to the farmers of the country, in a bid to clear confusion over the three farm laws and to dispel misconceptions and assure the farmers. He also said that the MSP and APMC mandis will continue and the government is ready to give a written assurance in this regard. Highlights of this letter can be [read here](#)



Prime Minister Modi lays foundation stone of New parliament Building



Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of the New Parliament Building on December 10, 2020. The new building is an intrinsic part of the vision of 'Aatma Nirbhar Bharat' and will be a landmark opportunity to build a peoples' Parliament for the first time after independence, one which will match the needs and aspirations of 'New India' in the 75th anniversary of independence in 2022. He added that the start of the construction of Parliament House of India is one of the most important stages of our democratic traditions. [Read more](#)

PM Modi at UN Climate Ambition Summit

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his speech at the UN Climate Ambition Summit, on December 11, 2020 pledged that by 2047, centennial India will exceed the world's expectations in implementing actions to counter climate change. He said that on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the Paris Agreement - the most ambitious step in fight against climate change - the world shouldn't lose sight of historical emissions. He called for a review of actions taken by all countries based on the commitments they had made under the agreement.



Various COVID-19 vaccines being developed in India.

Product	Indian Manufacturer	Collaborator	Current Stage
Covishield (Chimpanzee Adenovirus)	Serum Institute of India, Pune	Astra Zeneca	Phase II/III Applied for EUA*
Covaxin (Inactivated Virus)	Bharat Biotech International Ltd, Hyderabad	Indian Council of Medical Research, India	Phase III Applied for EUA*
ZyCoV-D (DNA vaccine)	Cadila Healthcare Ltd, Ahmedabad (Zydus Cadila)	Department of Biotechnology, India	Phase II
Sputnik V (Human Adenovirus vaccine)	Dr. Reddy's lab., Hyderabad	Gamaleya National Center, Russia	Phase-II over, Phase-III to start next week

*Emergency Use Authorization

Product	Indian Manufacturer	Collaborator	Current Stage
NVX-CoV2373 (Protein Sub-unit)	Serum Institute of India, Pune	Novavax	Phase III under consideration in India
Recombinant (Protein Antigen based vaccine)	Biological E Ltd, Hyderabad	MIT, USA	Pre-clinical animal studies concluded Phase I plus II human clinical trials started
HGCO 19 (mRNA based vaccine)	Genova, Pune	HDT, USA	Pre-clinical animal studies over Clinical trials (Phase I and II) to start
Inactivated rabies vector platform	Bharat Biotech International Ltd, Hyderabad	Thomas Jefferson University, USA	Pre-clinical (Advanced)

• Another vaccine, which is in the initial stage, is being developed by Aurobindo Pharma

Historical Fort cities of Madhya Pradesh declared UNESCO World Heritage Sites

The Historical fort cities of Gwalior and Orchha in Madhya Pradesh have been included in the World Heritage Sites under the urban landscape city programme of the UNESCO. After being labelled in the list, cities will see the following works:

1. Restoration and chemical treatment of the forts.
2. Carvings and the painting on the wall would become distinctly clear and approach roads would be widened.
3. Guards would be posted to protect the sites.



60 Heads of Missions visits Bharat Biotech, Biological E vaccine facilities in Hyderabad



A delegation of 60 foreign envoys visited manufacturing facilities of vaccine makers Bharat Biotech and Biological E in Hyderabad's Genome Valley on December 09, 2020 as part a visit to familiarise them with the work underway for Covid-19 vaccines. The participants were briefed on India's indigenous efforts to develop Covid-19 vaccines, including ongoing clinical trials. As the world's largest vaccine manufacturer, India will contribute significantly to global efforts for vaccines. As PM Narendra Modi said, India's vaccine

ISRO launches new communication satellite CMS-01 successfully

The Indian Space Research Organisation, ISRO, has successfully launched the country's new communication satellite CMS-01 in the intended orbit in space. The workhorse rocket PSLV-C50 carrying the satellite lifted off from the second launch pad of the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota at 15.41 hours as planned. In just about 21 minutes, the launch mission was accomplished, and the satellite was injected into the geo-synchronous transfer orbit. [Read more](#)



Global Teacher Prize - 2020



A primary school teacher from Maharashtra's Solapur district has won the Global Teacher Prize 2020 and one-million US dollar for promoting girls' education. Mr. Ranjit Singh Disale from Paritewadi village, was awarded in recognition of his efforts to promote girls' education and initiating a quick-response (QR) coded textbook revolution in India.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi speech on Farm Bill

Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his speech on December 18, 2020 addressed the farmers in Madhya Pradesh through video conferencing. "Farm laws have not been introduced overnight. Over last 20-30 years, central government and state governments had detailed discussions on these reforms. Agriculture experts, economists and progressive farmers have been demanding reforms,". [Read more](#)



HIGH COMMISSIONER'S CORNER

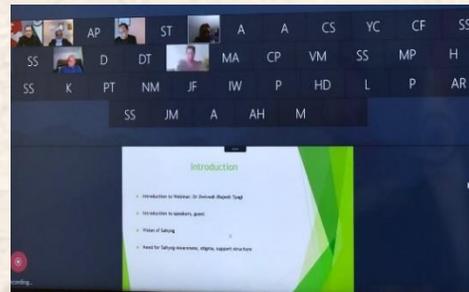


On December 02, 2020 High Commissioner Ajay Bisaria along with Toronto Consul General Mrs. Apoorva Srivastava had a virtual meeting with Mr. Alex Mihailidis, Associate Vice President of University of Toronto and his team. University of Toronto is among the top global universities of the world and hosts growing cohorts of Indian students. The main discussion involved opportunities for collaborations including visiting professors, Indian students, India Day celebrations in Toronto.

High Commissioner Ajay Bisaria had a virtual meeting with the President of The Great India Festival (TGIF), Ottawa on December 10, 2020. They discussed the activities for the forthcoming 10th edition of the festival in 2021. TGIF is a premier annual cultural event, with an objective to showcase the culture and heritage of India through multifaceted programs covering music, arts, handicrafts, workshops, food, movies, etc.



On December 10, 2020, a webinar on issues related to mental health was organised by SAHYOG in collaboration with High Commission of India in Canada. The webinar was organised for the International Indian students in Canada and focussed on mental health of students, especially during COVID-19 pandemic. The speakers in the webinar were High Commissioner Ajay Bisaria, Dr. Amresh Shrivastava, a retired professor of Psychiatry and Ms. Shalini Tuscano, Mental Health advocate.



High Commissioner Ajay Bisaria met with Hon'ble Bob Zimmer, Member of Parliament from the northern Rockies, British Columbia on December 17, 2020 at Thali Restaurant, Ottawa. They discussed several ideas on strengthening of India-Canada partnership in various sectors.



High Commissioner Ajay Bisaria delivered special remarks on 20th December, 2020 at the event titled 'Anubhava : Soliloquies on Ayurveda. The Science of life' organised by Soft Power, India. High Commissioner spoke about the challenges being faced in promotion of Ayurveda in Canada where it is not yet recognized as a medical stream.

ARTS & CULTURE

Mamallapuram Indian Dance Festival



Source: [December 2020 India Festivals and Events Guide \(tripsavvy.com\)](#)

The open-air India Dance Festival is held against a background of rock sculptures in the beach town of Mamallapuram, just south of Chennai. It runs for a month and showcases a range of classical and folk dances from all over India.

When: December 25 to January 25 every year.

Where: Arjuna's Penance, Mamallapuram, near Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Export Promotion Council to boost export of AYUSH products

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry and The Ministry of Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy (AYUSH) have decided to work together to set up an Export Promotion Council to boost AYUSH exports. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Government is committed to making India a leading exporter in this segment and holistic development of the healthcare sector. [Read more](#)



EDUCATION

Computer science students drawn to classes on Sanskrit, a 3,500-year-old language



More computer science students are being drawn to taking up Sanskrit courses, a 3500 year old language, at University of Toronto. The lingual connection between Sanskrit and Computer Science has been the subject of interest for quite some time. In addition, the rigidity of Sanskrit makes it less likely that an artificial intelligence algorithm would misinterpret commands. The same can't be said of a language like English, which is looser with its rules and where words have multiple meanings. [Read more](#)

Cabinet approves transformatory changes in Post Matric Scholarship for SCs

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has today approved major and transformatory changes in the Centrally Sponsored Scheme 'Post Matric Scholarship to students belonging to Scheduled Castes (PMS-SC)' to benefit more than 4 Crore SC students in the next 5 years so that they can successfully complete their higher education. The Cabinet has approved a total investment of Rs. 59,048 Cr of which Central Government would spend Rs. 35,534 Cr (60%) and the balance would be spent by the State Govts. [Read more](#)

ECONOMY

Walmart Commits to Sourcing \$10 Billion of India-Made Goods Each Year by 2027



Endorsing India's continuing rise as a global hub of manufacturing, Walmart today announced that it will triple its exports of goods from India to \$10 billion each year by 2027. Walmart's new export commitment is expected to provide a significant boost to micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in India. The expansion in sourcing will include helping develop hundreds of new suppliers in categories such as food, pharmaceuticals, consumables, health & wellness, and general merchandise, along with apparel, homeware and other key Indian export categories. [Read more](#)

MSP Operations during Kharif Marketing Season 2020-21

In the ongoing Kharif Marketing Season (KMS) 2020-21, Government continues to procure Kharif 2020-21 crops at its MSP from farmers as per its existing MSP Schemes. Paddy procurement is continuing smoothly in the procuring States & UTs of Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Telangana, Uttarakhand, Tamil Nadu, Chandigarh, Jammu & Kashmir, Kerala, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Bihar with purchase of over 362.31 LMTs of paddy up to 09.12.2020 against the last year corresponding purchase of 298.79 LMT showing an increase of 21.25 % over last year. [Read more](#)



Invest - Uttar Pradesh



Uttar Pradesh is rapidly transforming its business climate and has achieved 2nd Rank in Ease of Doing Business reforms in India. Known as land of infinite opportunities, the State has identified several focus sectors and sunrise sectors with huge potential for investment. For the ease of investment, Uttar Pradesh Government has launched "Invest UP" to rejuvenate its investment potential and create new opportunities. For website, [click here](#)

The cobwebs of lies and misinformation are now being removed, and the truth is becoming apparent to our hard-working farmers

Union Minister for Housing & Urban Affairs and Civil Aviation, Hardeep Puri lays bare the truth of farm reforms. The govt has repeatedly requested the farmers to talk and help resolve any of their concerns. States will be allowed to impose taxes on the mandis and even though the govt has made time-bound dispute resolution mechanisms, we have also agreed to give access to civil courts in case of disputes. [Read full article here](#)



MEA Performance Smart Board

an initiative aimed at putting performance indicators of the ministry at the disposal of the people

COMMUNITY VIBES

16th Pravasi Bhartiya Divas

Website of 16th Pravasi Bhartiya Divas (PBD) was inaugurated by Minister of State for External Affairs on December 08, 2020. Due to COVID-19, PBD 2021 will be held in a virtual format with the participants joining the convention online. The theme of the PBD 2021 will be “Contributing to Aatmanirbhar Bharat”. PBD 2021 will not only provide opportunity to Indian diaspora to come together but also deliberate on solutions to the socio-economic challenges currently faced



Launch of Global Pravasi Rishta Portal and Mobile App by Minister of State for External



The External Affairs Ministry on 30th December 2020 launched the Global Pravasi Rishta portal and app to connect with the nearly 3.12-crore strong Indian diaspora across the world. Speaking at the launch of the portal and app, Minister of State for External Affairs V Muraleedharan said it aims to create a three-way communication between the ministry, Indian missions, and the diaspora. He added that the mobile app will be used by the diaspora and the Indian nationals, while the portal web interface will be used by the missions. Portal is created to enable the registration of Indian diaspora members i.e. NRIs, PIOs and the OCIs which is not just going to facilitate the Indian government to connect with the overseas Indian community but also facilitate NRIs, OCIs and PIOs community by connecting them to various new and existing government schemes benefiting them in various areas of interest. [Watch launch ceremony video](#)

ADVISORIES

- **Vande Bharat Mission Phase 8 - Revised Flight Schedule.** [Click here](#)
- **Notice for Issue of Life Certificate.** [Click here](#)
- **Advisory for Walk-in Consular Services at High Commission.** [Click here](#)
- **Latest Advisory: Travel and Visa Restrictions Related to COVID-19.** [Read here](#)
- **Advisory relating to travel and visa restrictions for availing flights under bilateral air travel arrangements ('air bubble' scheme) and 'Vande Bharat Mission' flights between India and Canada.** [Read here](#)
- **Beware about Scam Telephone Calls.** See our advisory [here](#)



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High Commission of India,
10, Springfield Road,
Ontario, Canada
K1M 1C9,
Ottawa.

Telephone Numbers: 613 744 3751,
613 744 3752, 613 744 3753

Compiled by the Press, Information and Culture Wing of the High Commission of India, Ottawa

To subscribe/unsubscribe, please email
inf.ottawa@mea.gov.in

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