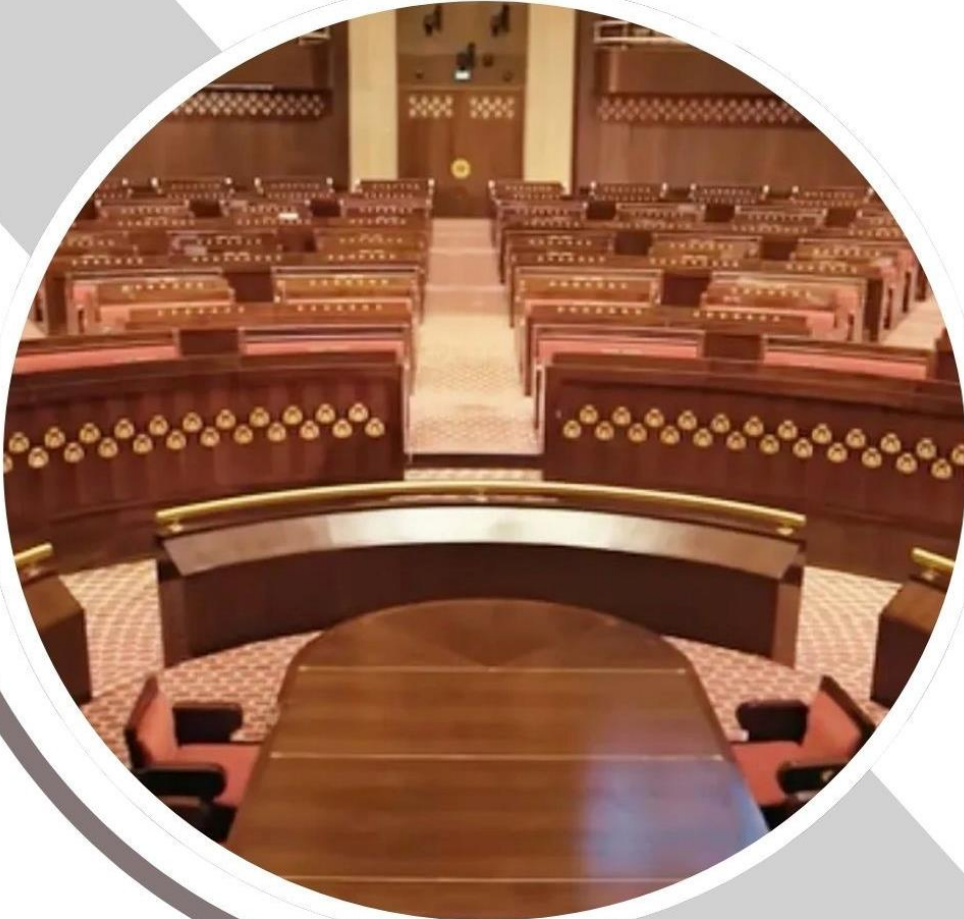


Cabinet Decisions

September 2024



Cabinet approves 'Bio-RIDE' scheme to support cutting edge research and development in Biotechnology

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has approved the continuation and unification of two umbrella schemes under the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) into a single scheme called Biotechnology Research Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development (Bio-RIDE). This newly unified scheme includes a significant new component—Biomanufacturing and Biofoundry—to foster innovation, promote bio-entrepreneurship, and strengthen India's leadership in biotechnology and biomanufacturing. With an outlay of INR9,197 crore for the 15th Finance Commission period (2021-22 to 2025-26), Bio-RIDE is part of India's broader mission to harness bio-innovation to address global and national challenges, including healthcare, agriculture, environmental sustainability, and clean energy.

Bio-RIDE's three main components—Biotechnology Research & Development (R&D), Industrial & Entrepreneurship Development (I&ED), and Biomanufacturing and Biofoundry—are designed to advance scientific research, support bio-based product commercialization, and nurture bio-entrepreneurship. The scheme will encourage startups by providing seed funding, incubation, and mentorship, while fostering industry-academia collaboration to bridge gaps between academic research and industrial applications.

A key feature of Bio-RIDE is its alignment with India's Circular-Bioeconomy and the Lifestyle for the Environment (LiFE) initiative, aimed at promoting environmentally sustainable solutions to tackle global climate change. This new component, Biomanufacturing and Biofoundry, aspires to propel indigenous innovations in biotechnology, improve healthcare, enhance agricultural productivity, and contribute to India's goal of becoming a US\$300 billion bioeconomy by 2030. The scheme also aims to nurture young talent, develop human resources, and contribute significantly toward achieving the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047.

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Cabinet clears establishment of National Centre of Excellence (NCoE) for Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming, Comics, and Extended Reality (AVGC-XR)

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has approved the establishment of the National Centre of Excellence (NCoE) for Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming, Comics and Extended Reality (AVGC-XR) in Mumbai. Formed as a Section 8 Company with FICCI and CII as industry partners, this initiative aims to advance India's AVGC-XR sector in line with the 2022-23 budget announcement.

The NCoE will offer specialized training, foster research and development, and promote the creation of Indian intellectual property based on the nation's cultural heritage. It will also serve as an incubation hub for startups and function as both an academic and production accelerator to drive the growth of the AVGC-XR ecosystem.

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Cabinet approves Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Unnat Gram Abhiyan

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Unnat Gram Abhiyan with an outlay of INR79,156 crore to improve the socio-economic condition of tribal communities. This scheme aims for saturation coverage of around 63,000 villages, benefiting over 5 crore tribal people across 549 districts in 30 States/UTs. The mission envisions addressing critical gaps in infrastructure, health, education, and livelihoods through convergence of various government schemes, ensuring holistic development of tribal areas based on the success of the Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM-JANMAN).

The scheme focuses on building enabling infrastructure, promoting economic empowerment, ensuring access to quality education, and improving health outcomes for tribal communities. This includes providing pucca houses, tapped water, and electricity, alongside better health, nutrition, and education facilities in tribal villages. It will also enhance skill development, self-employment, and support for FRA patta holders in agriculture, animal husbandry, and fisheries, while targeting improved access to education and healthcare.

Key initiatives under the Abhiyan include tribal home stays to promote tourism, enhancing infrastructure in tribal schools, and establishing centers for sickle cell disease diagnosis. The scheme will also set up Tribal Multipurpose Marketing Centers (TMMCs) to facilitate better marketing of tribal products and minimize post-harvest losses. The mission promotes a whole-of-government approach for tribal welfare through cooperative federalism and convergence of resources across 17 ministries.

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Cabinet approves continuation of schemes of Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay SanraksHan Abhiyan (PM-AASHA)

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has approved the continuation of the Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay SanraksHan Abhiyan (PM-AASHA), aiming to provide remunerative prices to farmers and control price volatility of essential commodities. With a financial outlay of INR35,000 crore until 2025-26, the scheme converges the Price Support Scheme (PSS) and Price Stabilization Fund (PSF) to better serve farmers and consumers. PM-AASHA includes Price Deficit Payment Scheme (PDPS) and Market Intervention Scheme (MIS), enhancing procurement efficiency, ensuring fair prices for farmers, and stabilizing essential commodity prices for consumers.

Under PSS, 25 per cent of national production for pulses, oilseeds, and copra will be procured at MSP, with 100 per cent procurement of Tur, Urad, and Masur for the 2024-25 season. The government guarantee has been raised to INR45,000 crore for these crops, facilitating enhanced procurement by NAFED and NCCF. The Price Stabilization Fund (PSF) will maintain buffer stocks of pulses and onions, preventing price volatility and ensuring affordable consumer prices, with procurement triggered when prices exceed MSP. The Market Intervention Scheme (MIS) now covers 25 per cent of perishable horticulture crops, with new options for differential payments directly to farmers. For Tomato, Onion, and Potato (TOP) crops, the government will cover transportation and storage costs, ensuring farmers receive fair prices while stabilizing consumer prices during peak harvest periods.

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Cabinet approves Nutrient Based Subsidy (NBS) rates for Rabi Season, 2024 (from 01.10.2024 to 31.03.2025) on Phosphatic and Potassic (P&K) fertilizers

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has approved the Nutrient Based Subsidy (NBS) rates for Phosphatic and Potassic (P&K) fertilizers for the Rabi season 2024 (from October 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025). The tentative budgetary requirement for the subsidy is INR24,475.53 crore, aimed at ensuring that farmers have access to fertilizers at affordable and reasonable prices.

This approval aims to rationalize the subsidy in response to recent international price trends for fertilizers and their inputs, such as Urea, DAP, MOP, and Sulphur. The NBS scheme, introduced in 2010, governs the subsidy provided to fertilizer manufacturers and importers, ensuring smooth and subsidized availability of 28 grades of P&K fertilizers to farmers during the Rabi season.

With this decision, the government reaffirms its commitment to maintaining the availability of fertilizers at affordable prices, addressing price volatility in the global market, and supporting farmers in meeting their fertilizer needs efficiently.

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Cabinet approved CHANDRAYAAN-4 Mission in the series of Chandrayaan-1,2&3

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has approved the Chandrayaan-4 mission, with the goal of developing and demonstrating critical technologies for a return journey to Earth after successfully landing on the Moon. This mission will also involve collecting lunar samples and analyzing them on Earth. It forms a crucial step towards building the foundational capabilities for a future Indian manned mission to the Moon, targeted for 2040.

The mission aligns with the Government of India's expanded space vision for Amrit Kaal, which includes establishing an Indian Space Station (Bharatiya Antariksh Station) by 2035 and achieving an Indian Moon Landing by 2040. Chandrayaan-4 will demonstrate the key technologies required for landing, lunar sample collection, safe docking/undocking, and returning the samples to Earth. These technological advancements will build on the success of Chandrayaan-3, which marked India's capability for safe and soft lunar landings, a feat achieved by only a few nations.

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will be responsible for spacecraft development and launch, with the project expected to be completed within 36 months of approval. The mission involves substantial participation from Indian industry and academia, offering high employment potential and technological spin-offs for other sectors.

The total budget for Chandrayaan-4 is INR2104.06 crore, covering spacecraft development, two LVM3 launch vehicle missions, deep space network support, and tests for design validation. This mission is a stepping stone for India's self-sufficiency in key technologies for future manned missions and lunar exploration, ensuring the establishment of facilities for the curation and analysis of returned lunar samples, which will become valuable national assets

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Cabinet approves mission to Venus for scientific exploration and for better understanding of Venusian atmosphere, geology and generate large amount of science data probing into its thick atmosphere

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has approved the Venus Orbiter Mission (VOM), marking a key step in India's planetary exploration beyond the Moon and Mars. This mission aims to study Venus's surface, subsurface, and atmospheric processes to understand its evolution and how it diverged from Earth, despite having formed in similar conditions.

Scheduled for launch in March 2028 by ISRO, the mission will generate valuable scientific data, contributing to global research on planetary environments. The total approved budget is INR1,236 crore, with INR824 crore allocated for spacecraft development, including payloads and launch vehicle costs.

The mission will involve significant participation from Indian industries and academic institutions, creating employment opportunities and training students. It will also provide the Indian scientific community access to new data, enabling further research and strengthening India's capabilities for future planetary missions.

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Cabinet clears development of Next Generation of satellite Launch Vehicle

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has approved the development of the Next Generation Launch Vehicle (NGLV). This project is pivotal for India's vision of establishing the Bharatiya Antariksh Station and achieving an Indian Crewed Landing on the Moon by 2040. The NGLV will offer a payload capacity three times greater than the current LVM3, with 1.5 times the cost, enhanced reusability, and modular green propulsion systems, ensuring more cost-effective access to space.

The NGLV aims to achieve a maximum payload of 30 tonnes to Low Earth Orbit (LEO) and features a reusable first stage. This advancement supports India's ambitious space goals, given the current capabilities of PSLV, GSLV, LVM3, and SSLV for various orbits. The development project will see significant involvement from Indian industry and is expected to transition smoothly into operational use following three developmental flights over a period of 96 months (8 years).

With a total budget of INR8,240 crore, the NGLV project includes costs for development, three test flights, essential facilities, and management. This new vehicle will facilitate national and commercial missions, including human spaceflight to the Bharatiya Antariksh Station and lunar/inter-planetary exploration, greatly enhancing India's space capabilities and ecosystem.

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Cabinet approved Gaganyaan Follow-on Missions and building of Bharatiya Antariksh Station

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has approved the expansion of the Gaganyaan program to include the development of the Bharatiya Antariksh Station (BAS-1). This extension will see the construction of the first module of BAS and support missions to validate the technologies necessary for its operation. The scope of the Gaganyaan program has been revised to accommodate these new developments, including an additional uncrewed mission and updated hardware requirements. The program now plans eight missions, with the first unit of BAS-1 targeted for launch by December 2028.

Originally approved in December 2018, the Gaganyaan program was aimed at achieving human spaceflight to Low Earth Orbit (LEO) and laying the groundwork for future Indian space exploration. With the new vision for the Amrit Kaal, the program now includes the goal of establishing the Bharatiya Antariksh Station by 2035 and a Crewed Lunar Mission by 2040. The updated program will be led by ISRO in collaboration with industry, academia, and national agencies, aiming to demonstrate and develop critical technologies for long-duration human space missions.

The total funding for the Gaganyaan program has been increased to INR20,193 crore, with an additional INR11,170 crore allocated. This funding will support the development of BAS, enhance industrial participation, and drive economic activity, particularly in high-tech space and allied sectors. The program offers unique opportunities for scientific and technological careers, fostering innovations and technological advancements that will benefit society.

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Cabinet approves 'Mission Mausam' to create a more weather-ready and climate-smart Bharat

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved Mission Mausam, with an outlay of INR2,000 crore over two years. This initiative, led by the Ministry of Earth Sciences, aims to significantly enhance India's capabilities in weather and climate science, benefiting citizens and key sectors in dealing with extreme weather events and the challenges of climate change.

Mission Mausam will focus on expanding research and development in atmospheric sciences, incorporating advanced technologies like AI, machine learning, and high-performance computing. The mission seeks to improve weather surveillance, modelling, and forecasting through enhanced observation systems and next-generation radars. It will provide accurate and timely information on monsoons, cyclones, air quality, and other extreme weather events.

The mission will benefit sectors such as agriculture, disaster management, aviation, water resources, energy, and health, while also supporting data-driven decision-making in urban planning and transport. The program will be implemented by key institutions under the Ministry of Earth Sciences, including the India Meteorological Department and the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, in collaboration with national and international partners, boosting India's leadership in weather and climate services.

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Cabinet approves implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana - IV (PMGSY-IV)

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana - IV (PMGSY-IV), to be implemented from FY 2024-25 to 2028-29. With a total outlay of Rs. 70,125 crore, the scheme aims to construct 62,500 km of all-weather roads to provide new connectivity to 25,000 unconnected habitations. The financial contribution will be INR49,087.50 crore from the central government, and INR21,037.50 crore from the states.

The scheme focuses on habitations with populations of 500+ in plains, 250+ in NE and hill states, and 100+ in Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected districts, based on the 2011 Census. In addition to roads, essential bridges will be constructed to ensure comprehensive connectivity. The program emphasizes sustainability by incorporating Cold Mix Technology, waste materials like Fly Ash, and construction waste for environmentally conscious road-building.

This initiative will benefit 25,000 rural habitations, connecting them to vital services such as schools, healthcare facilities, and markets. It aims to promote socio-economic development in remote areas, enhancing access to essential services and improving livelihoods. The planning and alignment of roads will be managed through the PM Gati Shakti portal, ensuring the efficient use of resources and international construction standards.

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Cabinet approves PM Electric Drive Revolution in Innovative Vehicle Enhancement (PM E-DRIVE) Scheme

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved the PM Electric Drive Revolution in Innovative Vehicle Enhancement (PM E-DRIVE) Scheme to promote electric mobility in India, with an outlay of INR10,900 crore over two years. The scheme provides INR3,679 crore in subsidies to incentivize the purchase of e-vehicles, supporting e-2Ws, e-3Ws, e-ambulances, and e-trucks, and introduces an e-voucher system for EV buyers to claim incentives. Additionally, INR4,391 crore is allocated for the procurement of 14,028 e-buses in nine major cities, while INR500 crore is dedicated to deploying e-trucks and e-ambulances.

A major component of the scheme is the promotion of electric vehicle public charging stations (EVPCS), with 22,100 fast chargers for e-4Ws, 1,800 fast chargers for e-buses, and 48,400 fast chargers for e-2Ws and e-3Ws. This infrastructure will address range anxiety and be installed in high EV penetration areas and along selected highways. To support this growing EV ecosystem, the modernization of MHI testing agencies with INR780 crore has also been approved.

The PM E-DRIVE scheme aims to accelerate EV adoption, reduce environmental impact, and boost air quality. It promotes domestic manufacturing through a Phased Manufacturing Programme (PMP), supporting the Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative. The scheme is expected to spur investment in the EV sector, create employment opportunities, and contribute to sustainable transportation solutions across the nation.

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Cabinet approves PM-eBus Sewa-Payment Security Mechanism (PSM) scheme

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved the PM-eBus Sewa-Payment Security Mechanism (PSM) scheme for the procurement and operation of 38,000 electric buses (e-buses) by Public Transport Authorities (PTAs) across India. With a total outlay of INR3,435.33 crore, the scheme will cover operations for up to 12 years from the date of deployment, supporting the shift to more sustainable and eco-friendly public transportation.

The scheme addresses the high upfront cost of e-buses and the hesitancy of Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) and operators to engage in the Gross Cost Contract (GCC) model. Under this model, PTAs do not bear the upfront cost of the buses; instead, OEMs/operators handle procurement and operation, receiving monthly payments. However, the risk of payment defaults has discouraged participation. The PM-eBus Sewa scheme solves this issue by creating a dedicated fund to ensure timely payments to operators, with CESL as the implementing agency stepping in if PTAs fail to pay.

By promoting private sector participation in e-bus operations, the scheme will lead to reduced greenhouse gas emissions, lower fossil fuel consumption, and enhance the environmental sustainability of public transport systems. It is expected to benefit all PTAs in State/UTs that choose to participate in the program

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Cabinet approves Modification of the scheme of Budgetary Support for the cost of Enabling Infrastructure for Hydro Electric Projects

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has approved the Ministry of Power's proposal to modify the budgetary support scheme for enabling infrastructure for Hydro Electric Projects (HEP) with an outlay of INR12,461 crore. The scheme will be implemented from FY 2024-25 to FY 2031-32 and aims to address challenges in hydro power development, such as remote locations and lack of infrastructure, while promoting the sector's viability. Key policy measures include designating large hydro projects as Renewable Energy sources, introducing Hydro Power Purchase Obligations (HPOs), and tariff rationalization.

Under the modified scheme, budgetary support now covers additional infrastructure beyond roads and bridges, such as transmission lines, ropeways, railway sidings, and communication infrastructure. The scheme targets hydro projects with a capacity above 25 MW, including Pumped Storage Projects (PSPs). It will support cumulative generation capacity of 31,350 MW, with a 15,000 MW share for PSPs. Budgetary support limits have been rationalized based on project size, and the scheme is open to private sector projects, provided they are allotted transparently.

The revised scheme is expected to significantly boost the development of hydro-electric projects, particularly in remote and hilly regions. It will generate employment opportunities, stimulate investment in the hydro sector, and support the timely completion of projects, benefiting local economies through entrepreneurial and tourism-related activities.

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Cabinet approves health coverage to all senior citizens of the age 70 years and above irrespective of income under Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY)

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has approved extending Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY) to cover all senior citizens aged 70 and above, regardless of income. This initiative will benefit approximately 4.5 crore families and provide free health insurance coverage of INR5 lakh per family per year for secondary and tertiary care. The move is set to support six crore senior citizens, enhancing access to quality healthcare.

Under this expansion, senior citizens aged 70 and above, already part of AB PM-JAY families, will receive an additional top-up of INR5 lakh, which is exclusively for them and not shared with other family members. Those not previously covered by the scheme will also receive INR5 lakh on a family basis. Senior citizens under other public schemes like the Central Government Health Scheme (CGHS) or Ex-Servicemen Contributory Health Scheme (ECHS) may choose between their current scheme and AB PM-JAY. Those with private health insurance or Employees' State Insurance (ESI) will also be eligible for AB PM-JAY benefits.

AB PM-JAY, the world's largest publicly funded health assurance program, already provides healthcare coverage to 55 crore individuals, with over 7.37 crore hospital admissions and 49 per cent women beneficiaries. The scheme has continuously expanded since its inception, with the most recent extension in April 2024, adding all senior citizens aged 70 and above to the coverage. The government's effort aims to further enhance healthcare access and security for the elderly, contributing to a healthier population across India

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Cabinet approves seven major schemes for improving farmers' lives and livelihoods

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved seven schemes with a total outlay of INR14,235.30 crore aimed at improving farmers' lives and increasing their incomes. These schemes focus on digital agriculture, crop science, education, livestock, horticulture, and natural resource management, leveraging modern technologies to drive sustainable growth in agriculture.

The Digital Agriculture Mission will enhance efficiency through the use of AI, big data, and geospatial tools, driving innovation in the agri-tech sector. Agricultural education and research reforms, aligned with the New Education Policy 2020, will equip future farmers with skills to tackle current challenges, such as climate resilience and sustainable farming.

These initiatives are expected to boost agricultural productivity, increase farmer incomes, and enhance rural economic growth. The focus on crop science and livestock health will improve food security and climate resilience, ensuring long-term benefits for the sector.

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Cabinet approves one more semiconductor unit under India Semiconductor Mission (ISM)

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved Kaynes Semicon Pvt Ltd's proposal to establish a semiconductor manufacturing unit in Sanand, Gujarat, with an investment of INR3,300 crore. This new unit will have the capacity to produce 60 lakh chips per day, catering to sectors such as industrial, automotive, electric vehicles, consumer electronics, telecom, and mobile phones.

This approval is part of India's broader Programme for Development of Semiconductors and Display Manufacturing Ecosystem, launched in December 2021 with an outlay of INR76,000 crore. The program aims to create a vibrant semiconductor ecosystem in the country, with Sanand becoming a key hub. In June 2023, the first semiconductor unit was approved in Sanand, followed by three more in February 2024, including Tata Electronics' fab in Dholera, Gujarat, and units in Morigaon, Assam, and Sanand by CG Power.

Collectively, these four semiconductor units, which are being rapidly constructed, will bring nearly Rs 1.5 lakh crore in investments and have a combined capacity of about 7 crore chips per day. This is a major milestone for India's ambition to become a global semiconductor manufacturing hub.

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Cabinet approves a 309 Km long new line project

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved a new railway line project between Indore and Manmad for INR18,036 crore. This 309 km line will connect six districts across Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, providing direct rail connectivity, improving mobility, and enhancing service reliability for Indian Railways. The project aligns with the PM-Gati Shakti National Master Plan, ensuring seamless multi-modal connectivity for people, goods, and services.

The project will add 30 new stations and benefit around 1,000 villages and 30 lakh people, including the Aspirational District of Barwani. It will also boost tourism by offering a shorter route from the western and southwestern regions of India to Central India, increasing access to key tourist spots, such as the Sri Mahakaleshwar Jyotirlinga Temple in Ujjain.

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Cabinet approves the Digital Agriculture Mission with an outlay of INR2,817 crore

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the Digital Agriculture Mission with an outlay of INR2,817 crore. The mission aims to support digital agriculture initiatives like Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI), the Digital General Crop Estimation Survey (DGCES), and various IT projects by central and state governments.

Key components include AgriStack, providing farmers with digital identities for easier access to government services; Krishi Decision Support System, unifying geospatial data for better agricultural decision-making; and Soil Profile Mapping. The mission aims to create digital identities for 11 crore farmers and generate 2.5 lakh jobs.

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Cabinet Committee on Security approves procurement of 240 aero-engines for IAF

The Cabinet Committee on Security has approved the procurement of 240 AL-31FP aero-engines for the Su-30 MKI aircraft of the Indian Air Force (IAF) from Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) at a cost exceeding INR26,000 crore. These engines, with over 54 per cent indigenous content, will be produced at HAL's Koraput division. Deliveries will begin in a year and continue over eight years.

The Su-30 MKI is a key component of the IAF's fleet, and the procurement ensures the sustenance of its operational readiness. This move strengthens India's defence preparedness and boosts the domestic defence manufacturing sector, aligning with the "Make in India" initiative.

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