SHORTNEWS

1.SCHEME FOR NATIONAL AWARDS FOR E-GOVERNANCE 2026

Recently, the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances has invited nominations (1 Sept–15 Oct 2025) for the 23rd National Awards for e-Governance 2026 to honor excellence and innovation in digital governance.

Scheme for National Awards for e-Governance 2026

The National Awards for e-Governance was first instituted in 2003.

Objective

These are presented annually to honor and encourage excellence in implementing e-Governance initiatives.

1. The awards seek to recognize significant achievements, foster the sharing of effective practices, and promote innovations in digital governance.
2. Awards given annually during the National Conference on e-Governance (NCeG).
3. The 2026 awards will highlight achievements in Digital Governance in line with the vision of "Viksit Bharat@2047".
4. Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions (Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances – DARPG)

Categories

1. Excellence in Government Process Re-engineering for Digital Transformation
2. Excellence in Providing Citizen-Centric Delivery
3. Excellence in Government Data Sharing and Use for Socio-Economic Development
4. Excellence in District-level Initiative in e-Governance (North-East & Hill States + Other States)
5. Innovative Use of Emerging Technologies for e-Governance
6. Excellence in Adopting Emerging Technologies in AI, Blockchain, IoT, etc.
7. Best Use of Data for Disaster Management

Special Category for Start-ups in e-Governance

1.Eligibility

1. Central Ministries/Departments, State/UT Governments, District Administrations, and Start-ups.
2. Projects must have been operational for at least one year.

2.Award Benefits

1. Trophy & Certificate to the winning organization.
2. Recognition at national level to inspire replication of best practices.

3.Significance

1. Promotes replication of successful e-Governance models.
2. Encourages competition among government entities for improved public service delivery.
3. Aligns with Digital India, Ease of Living, and Atmanirbhar Bharat goals.

2.ANIMAL STEM CELL BIOBANK AND LABORATORY

Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh inaugurated India's first-of-its-kind State-of-the-Art Animal Stem Cell Biobank and Animal Stem Cell Laboratory at the National Institute of Animal Biotechnology (NIAB), Hyderabad. The Minister also unveiled a set of five breakthrough technologies developed by NIAB for protecting animal health and safeguarding farmer livelihoods.

Animal Stem Cell Biobank

1. Location & Institution: Situated at NIAB, a premier institute under the Department of Biotechnology's Biotechnology Research Innovation Council (BRIC). Backed by the National Biopharma Mission (NBM)
2. Function: Stores and preserves high-quality stem cells from various animal species.
3. Partnership: Developed in collaboration with HiMedia Laboratories.
4. Purpose: To provide quality-controlled animal stem cells and indigenous, cost-effective cell culture media to veterinary clinics, research institutions, hospitals, and industry.
5. Equipment: Stem cell culture unit, 3D bioprinter, bacterial culture lab, cryostorage, autoclave rooms, advanced air handling systems, uninterrupted power backup.
6. Focus Areas: Regenerative medicine, cellular therapies for livestock, disease modelling, tissue engineering, reproductive biotechnology.

Stem cell banking

It is the process of collecting, processing and storing potentially lifesaving stem cells for future use in therapies and regenerative medicine.

3.KALAHANDI'S TRANSFORMATION

Once symbolic of deprivation, Kalahandi in Odisha has transformed from one of the state's most underdeveloped districts into a thriving hub of inclusive rural development.

Earlier condition (before 2000s)

1. One of Odisha's poorest districts, known for hunger and poverty.
2. GDDP share < 1% of Odisha's economy (2001).
3. Per capita income ~ ₹19,000.
4. Dependent on subsistence farming, poor roads, low investment in health and education.

Turning Point

1. Vedanta's Alumina Refinery at Lanjigarh, set up in early 2000s, became the catalyst for social and economic change.
2. Industrialisation here was community-rooted, not exploitative.

Economic Growth

1. Growth Rate: Between 2003–2015, GDDP grew over 16%, more than double Odisha's state average of 6–8%.
2. Development has been participatory and symbiotic, with industry coexisting with tribal identity.

Impact

1. NITI Aayog Rankings (Aspirational Districts Programme):
   a. Health & Nutrition: 1st in Odisha with 35.48% improvement.

b. Education: 2nd in Odisha with 45.72% growth.

2. Project Sakhi: Nearly 5,000 tribal women engaged in micro-enterprises (mushroom farming, marigold cultivation, Dhokra and Saura arts).
3. Educational Progress: Students scoring 96% and 97% in 2025 board exams; tribal students pursuing engineering, medicine, and research careers.

Aspirational Districts Programme

Launched in 2018, the scheme aims to transform districts that have showed relatively lesser progress in key social areas, compared to other districts.

4.INS SANDHAYAK

Indian Naval Ship Sandhayak, entered Changi Naval Base, Singapore, for a three-day visit coinciding with Singapore's National Day.

1. Purpose: Facilitate technical/professional exchanges and sustain hydrographic support engagements with Singapore's maritime agencies.
2. Diplomacy: Demonstrates India's growing role in regional hydrographic capacity building under the Indian Navy's Hydrographic Department.

INS Sandhayak

1. The first indigenous Survey Vessel Large (SVL) with advanced hydrography capability,
2. Commissioned in February 2024.
3. Developed by: Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE), Kolkata
4. Roles:
   a. Primary: Conduct full-scale hydrographic surveys of ports, harbours, navigational channels/routes, coastal areas, and deep seas for safe marine navigation.
   b. Secondary: Capable of SAR/humanitarian operations, naval missions, and carrying an onboard helicopter with hospital facilities.
5. Legacy: Successor to the erstwhile Sandhayak, decommissioned on 4 June 2021.
6. Significance: Showcases India's shipbuilding prowess under the AatmaNirbhar Bharat vision and aligns with the national Amrit Kaal objectives.

5.DEFENCE PRODUCTION SOARS TO AN ALL-TIME HIGH

India's annual defence production reached an all-time high of ₹1,50,590 crore in FY 2024–25, marking significant growth in the country's defence manufacturing capabilities under the Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative.

Production Milestone

1. Growth: About 18% over FY 2023–24 output of ₹1.27 lakh crore.
2. Long-Term Increase: 90% growth from ₹79,071 crore in FY 2019–20.
3. Defence Exports:
   a. FY 2024–25: ₹23,622 crore, the highest ever.
   b. Growth: Increase of ₹2,539 crore (12.04%) from FY 2023–24 exports of ₹21,083 crore.

Significance

1. Strategic: Strengthens India's self-reliance in defence manufacturing.

2. Economic: Expands industrial base and boosts export capabilities.
3. Future Outlook: Sustained growth expected with continued policy support, private sector participation, and expanding global market presence.
4. Aim: ₹3 lakh crore in defence production and ₹50,000 crore in exports by 2029

Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative

Atmanirbhar Bharat represents a vision of a self-reliant India engaging with the world on its own terms, without being protectionist or isolationist. Its five pillars are,

1. Economy: Aiming for a quantum leap to convert adversity into advantage.
2. Infrastructure: Shaping the identity of modern India.
3. Systems: Driven by 21st-century cutting-edge technology.
4. Demography: Focusing on a vibrant and healthy demography.
5. Demand: Utilizing the strength of the demand and supply chain intelligently.

6.BHARAT FORECAST SYSTEM

Recently Union Minister of Earth Sciences Dr. Jitendra Singh launched the Bharat Forecast System (BharatFS), a high-resolution global weather prediction model.

Bharat Forecast System

BharatFS (Bharat Forecast System) is India's own super-advanced weather prediction model. It's like a super-smart "weather computer" that predicts the weather for very small areas – as small as 6 km apart – which is far more detailed than most other countries' systems.

Grid

Operates at 6 km horizontal resolution using Triangular Cubic Octahedral (TCo) dynamical grid. Surpasses GFS T1534 (~12 km) and typical global models (9–14 km).

Super Computer's Role

New supercomputers Arka (IITM-Pune) and Arunika (NCMRWF-Noida) reduced forecast runtime from ~12 hours to 3–6 hours.

Improved Forecasting

30% better accuracy for extreme rainfall prediction over previous operational model.

Localized Benefits

Captures small-scale weather features, aiding agriculture, reservoir management, and flood risk reduction.

Development & Collaboration

1. Lead Institution: Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), Pune.
2. Supporting Agencies: NCMRWF-Noida and India Meteorological Department (IMD).

Applications

1. Sectors Benefited: Monsoon tracking, aviation, cyclone and disaster management, agriculture, waterways, defence, and flood forecasting.
2. Disaster Preparedness: Faster and targeted disaster response for extreme weather events.
3. Panchayat-Level Coverage: Supports crop planning, irrigation scheduling, and harvesting decisions.