

# GOVERNMENT POLICY REPORT



## Strengthening SEZ under the Union Budget 2026-27 for Enhancing Trade and Investment Outcomes



The Union Budget 2026–27 reinforces the strategic importance of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) in driving India's export-led growth and investment expansion. With over **368 notified SEZs across the country**, these zones have played a crucial role in boosting exports, attracting foreign direct investment, and generating large-scale employment opportunities across sectors. Recognising their evolving role in a volatile global trade environment, the government has **introduced targeted reforms to improve their efficiency, competitiveness, and integration with global value chains.**

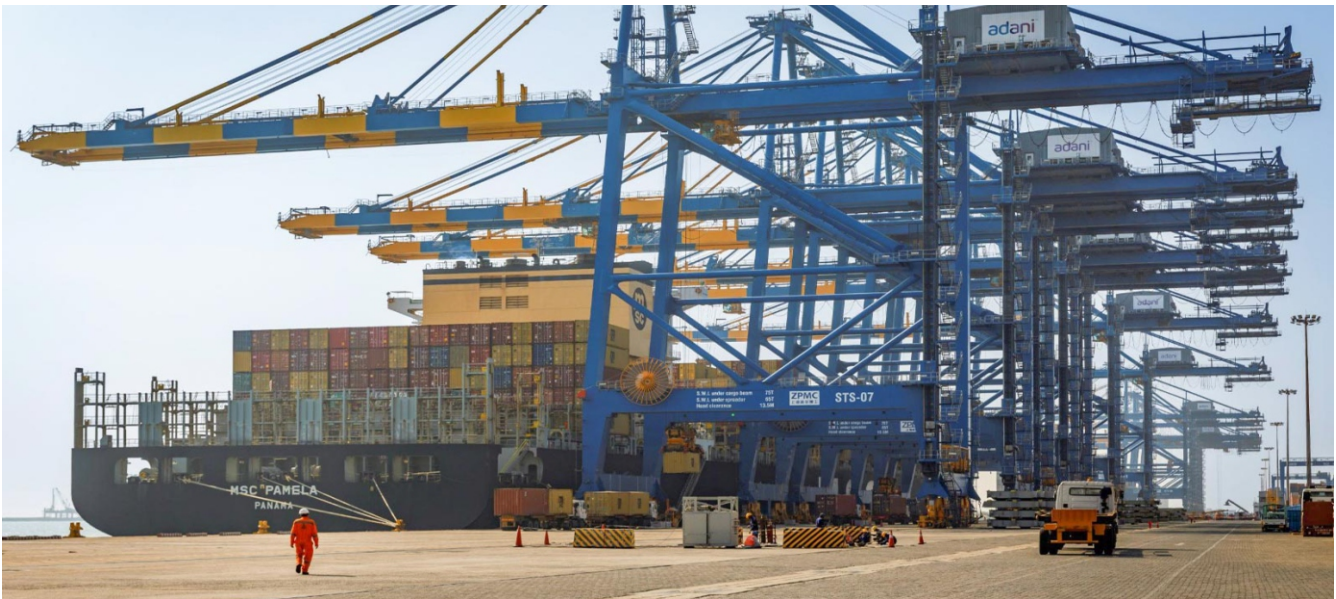


Source: <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2246386&lang=2&reg=3>

A significant policy initiative in the budget is the **introduction of a one-time concessional duty framework, allowing SEZ units to supply a limited portion of goods to the Domestic Tariff Area (DTA).** This reform addresses long-standing concerns of underutilised capacity while maintaining the export-oriented nature of SEZs. By ensuring value addition and limiting domestic sales, the policy directly supports trade expansion, improves capacity utilisation, and enhances investment viability and operational flexibility within SEZ units.

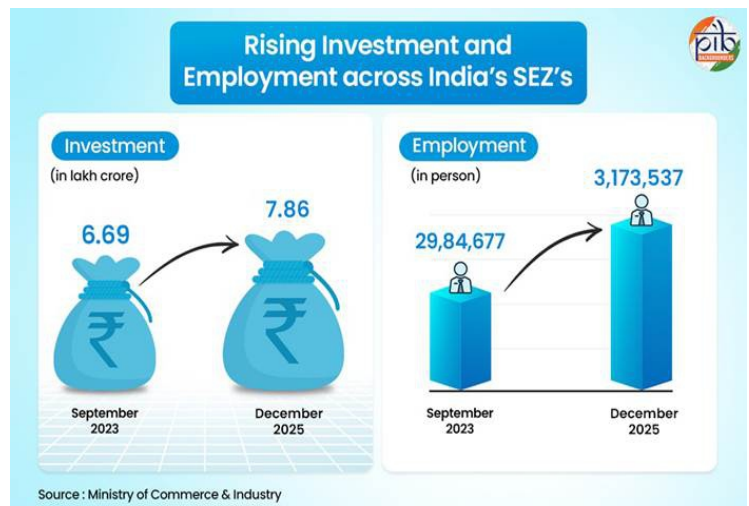
<p><b>EXPECTED IMPACT OF DTA SALES</b></p>	<p><b>Improved capacity utilization</b></p>	<p><b>Accomplished economies of scale</b></p>
<p><b>Reduced export costs</b></p>	<p><b>Elevated global investor confidence</b></p>	<p><b>Influx of global manufacturers and technology firms</b></p>

The budget also focuses on enhancing infrastructure and logistics connectivity, which is crucial for SEZ performance. **Investments in multimodal logistics networks**, including freight corridors, ports, and industrial corridors, aim to reduce transaction costs and improve supply chain efficiency. These improvements are expected to significantly **strengthen export competitiveness**, reduce delays, and attract greater domestic and foreign investment into SEZ-based industries.



Source: <https://ddnews.gov.in/en/government-announces-one-time-relief-for-sez-units-to-boost-domestic-sales-amid-global-trade-disruptions/>

**Regulatory simplification and ease of doing business remain central to SEZ reforms.** Streamlined compliance procedures, digital governance, and investor-friendly policies are being actively promoted to accelerate investment inflows and reduce procedural bottlenecks. Additionally, **cluster-based development and sector-specific SEZs** are encouraged to foster innovation, specialization, and economies of scale, thereby enhancing both trade performance and long-term investment outcomes.



Source: <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressNoteDetails.aspx?Noteld=157960&ModuleId=3&reg=3&lang=1>

Thus, the Union Budget 2026–27 adopts a forward-looking and strategic approach to **strengthen SEZs by combining policy flexibility, infrastructure development, and regulatory efficiency**. These measures are expected to boost export growth, increase foreign investment inflows, improve global competitiveness, and position SEZs as key drivers of India's deeper integration into the global economy.

## Inauguration of Phase I of Noida International Airport Advancing Aviation Growth in Uttar Pradesh

The inauguration of **Phase I of Noida International Airport at Jewar** marks a significant milestone in strengthening aviation growth in Uttar Pradesh and enhancing connectivity across the National Capital Region (NCR). **Launched on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2026**, the project reflects a strategic effort to expand air transport capacity and address the growing demand for domestic and international air travel. It also underlines the **role of modern airport systems** in supporting regional integration and economic progress.



Source: <https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/logistics/pm-modi-inaugurates-phase-i-ofnoidainternationalairportinjewar/article70795891.ece>



Source: <https://ddnews.gov.in/en/pm-modi-shares-pics-of-noida-international-airport-ahead-of-inauguration-on-march-28/>

Developed at an estimated **investment of around Rs.11,200 crore under a public-private partnership model**, the facility has been built as a modern greenfield airport and stands among the largest aviation infrastructure developments in India. Its **strategic location near the NCR** enhances accessibility and is expected to ease pressure on existing airports while enabling smoother movement of passengers.

**In its first phase, the airport is designed to handle approximately 12 million passengers annually**, with scope for substantial expansion in later phases. This forward-looking design allows it to accommodate increasing air traffic and maintain operational readiness for future demand. It is also expected to support a rise in flight operations, thereby strengthening the overall capacity of the aviation sector in the region. This capacity expansion is crucial in meeting the **growing demand for air travel in one of India's fastest-developing regions**.



Source: <https://ddnews.gov.in/en/pm-modi-shares-pics-of-noida-international-airport-ahead-of-inauguration-on-march-28/>

The facility **incorporates advanced systems to streamline passenger handling** and improve the overall travel experience. By reducing congestion at nearby airports and ensuring smoother operations, it contributes to more reliable and efficient air services. These improvements are likely to **enhance travel convenience and encourage greater use of air transport**. Such operational improvements are expected to make air travel more accessible and efficient.

## ADVANCING AVIATION GROWTH IN UTTAR PRADESH

### Global Aviation Hub Vision

Reinforces India's ambition to emerge as a global aviation hub through expanded airport capacity

### Passenger Traffic Expansion

Supports rising air travel demand with scalable infrastructure for future phases

### Cargo and Logistics Development

Positions airport as a major logistics hub, improving trade and freight movement

### Regional Economic Transformation

Drives industrial and commercial expansion across western Uttar Pradesh

### Large-Scale Infrastructure Development

Establishes one of India's largest airport projects, reflecting rapid sectoral expansion

### Multi-Modal Connectivity Integration

Enhances accessibility through seamless integration of multiple transport modes

The project is expected to improve regional accessibility and support increased passenger movement across Uttar Pradesh. **It also creates opportunities for greater integration with national and international air routes.** Overall, the inauguration represents an important step toward strengthening aviation capability and reinforcing the growth trajectory of the aviation sector in the state.

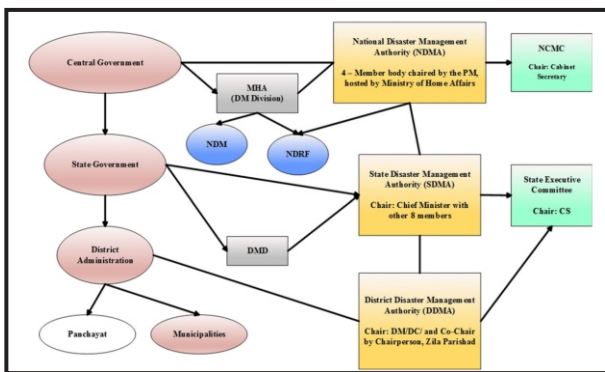
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# 03

# DISASTER MANAGEMENT

## AI for Disaster Risk Reduction in India

India is increasingly **integrating Artificial Intelligence (AI) into its disaster risk reduction (DRR) framework**, marking a transition from a relief-centric approach to a proactive, prevention-oriented system. In the context of rising climate-induced disasters such as floods, cyclones, and heatwaves, AI is enabling a **shift toward data-driven governance, strengthening preparedness, minimizing vulnerabilities, and enhancing national resilience**. It also supports timely policy interventions and improves institutional readiness across multiple administrative levels, ensuring adaptive governance.



Source: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320535131\\_Impact\\_of\\_internet\\_of\\_things\\_loT\\_in\\_disaster\\_management\\_a\\_task-technology\\_fit\\_perspective](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320535131_Impact_of_internet_of_things_loT_in_disaster_management_a_task-technology_fit_perspective)

A major application of AI lies in **improving early warning systems**. Machine learning models process vast volumes of meteorological and environmental data to generate more accurate and timely forecasts. This enhances the ability of authorities to **issue advance alerts, facilitating early evacuation and reducing loss of life and property, particularly in disaster-prone regions**. It further improves hazard tracking and strengthens last-mile communication of warnings to vulnerable communities, especially in remote areas.

## Role of AI in effective disaster management



Damage Assessment



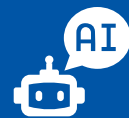
Prediction of Natural Disasters



AI-Powered Dispatching



Cloud-Based Emergency Management



Lifesaving AI Communication

Source: <https://nextbrain.ai/blog/future-of-ai-in-disaster-management>

AI is also transforming disaster risk assessment through the development of integrated digital data platforms. **Centralized systems enable real-time collection, analysis, and sharing of disaster-related data, including hazard exposure and population vulnerability**. These platforms improve coordination among agencies and support evidence-based policymaking at multiple administrative levels. They also enhance transparency and ensure better prioritization of risk reduction strategies and resource efficiency.

## CORE DIGITAL INITIATIVES IN DISASTER MANAGEMENT

### National Disaster Database (NDD)

- Centralized repository for disaster-related data
- Enables real-time sharing and coordinated risk management

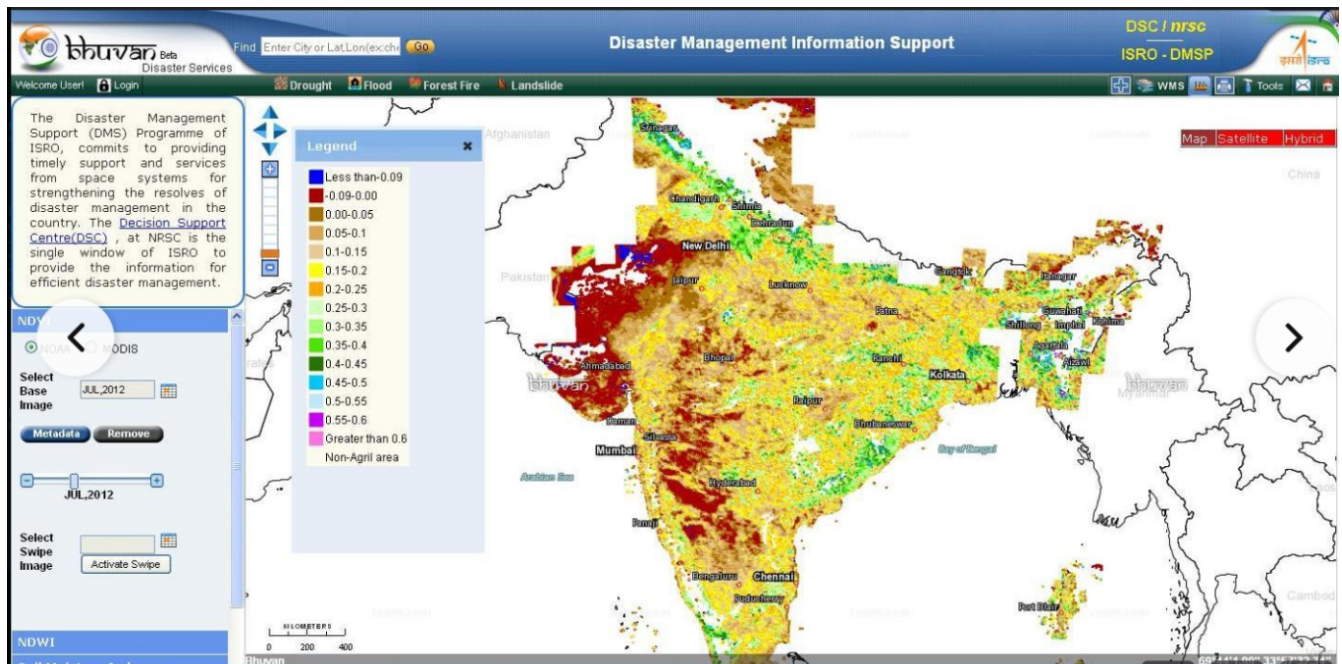
### Decision Support System (DSS)

- AI-enabled platform for real-time analysis and response planning
- Supports efficient resource allocation during disasters

### Dynamic Composite Risk Atlas (DCRA)

- Multi-hazard risk mapping system using integrated datasets
- Helps identify vulnerable regions for targeted mitigation

In addition, **AI-driven tools support predictive analytics and environmental monitoring, enabling the identification of high-risk zones and simulation of disaster scenarios.** These systems are increasingly being applied in real-time disaster situations, improving response efficiency, inter-agency coordination, and overall disaster governance. They also facilitate rapid damage assessment and support efficient deployment of emergency services and logistics coordination.



Source: [https://bhuvan.nrsc.gov.in/updates/Bhuvan\\_dec2012.htm](https://bhuvan.nrsc.gov.in/updates/Bhuvan_dec2012.htm)

**AI is reshaping disaster risk reduction in India by integrating early warning, data systems, and predictive capabilities** into a cohesive framework. This technology-driven approach not only enhances preparedness and response but also strengthens long-term resilience, positioning India toward a more adaptive and disaster-ready future. It ensures a comprehensive and sustainable approach to managing disaster risks in a changing climate and uncertain environments.

# 04

## MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION

### Collaborative Initiative of BCCI and Google India for AI-Driven Fan Engagement in IPL 2026

The **Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI)**, in partnership with **Google India**, has introduced an advanced AI-enabled fan engagement initiative for the **Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026**. This partnership marks a significant milestone in the digital transformation of sports in India, aiming to **redefine how audiences interact with live cricket** through intelligent technologies and expanding access to richer digital experiences across multiple platforms.



Source: <https://www.livemint.com/sports/cricket-news/ipl2026-bcci-partners-with-google-india-to-bring-in-interactiveaimode-for-cricket-fans-what-does-this-mean-11774584437305.html>

A central feature of this collaboration is the **introduction of "AI Mode" within Google Search**, designed specifically for IPL 2026. This feature enables fans to access real-time match updates, in-depth player statistics, and predictive insights directly through search. Unlike conventional scorecards, the AI Mode **delivers contextual and analytical information**, allowing users to explore match dynamics, team strategies, and performance trends in a more comprehensive manner with greater clarity and depth of understanding.

## AI-ENABLED ENGAGEMENT ECOSYSTEM IN IPL

Match Data Intelligence

Search-Based Interaction for Viewers

Live Match Experience Enhancement

Fan Learning & Insight Development

Strategic Collaboration Framework (BCCI-Tech Integration)

The initiative also **emphasizes conversational engagement, where fans can interact with the AI by asking detailed questions about ongoing matches**. For instance, users can inquire about tactical decisions, compare players' past performances, or analyze match situations in real-time. This transforms the fan experience from passive viewing to an interactive, knowledge-driven process, effectively turning viewers into informed participants and fostering deeper cognitive involvement during gameplay.



Source: <https://www.theunitedindian.com/news/ipl-2026-ai-mode-google-bcci-partnership>

Furthermore, **AI-generated summaries, key highlights, and contextual explanations are integrated into live match coverage.** These features ensure that fans remain updated with crucial developments, even if they miss parts of the game. The system also enhances storytelling by presenting insights in a simplified and engaging format, thereby catering to both casual viewers and cricket enthusiasts across varied levels of familiarity with the sport.



Source: <https://thebrewnews.com/science-technology/google-ai-mode-ipl-2026-partnership-bcci-cricket-fans/>

Thus, the BCCI–Google India partnership represents **a paradigm shift in sports consumption by combining artificial intelligence with large-scale sporting events.** By introducing AI Mode in search and enabling conversational queries, IPL 2026 enhances real-time analytical access for fans. Further, it sets a new benchmark for immersive, personalized, and technology-driven fan engagement in global cricket.

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# 05

## NORTH-EAST CORNER

### Strategic Partnership between NEITC and ABTO to Promote Tourism

The strategic partnership between **North East India Tourism Confederation (NEITC)** and **Association of Buddhist Tour Operators (ABTO)** marks an important initiative to promote tourism in India's northeastern region. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was **signed in Anini, located in the Dibang Valley district of Arunachal Pradesh**, as a non-binding agreement that outlines a strategic framework for collaboration between the two organizations. The partnership seeks to leverage the region's cultural, spiritual, and natural assets to strengthen its presence in the broader tourism sector.



Source: <https://www.indiatodayne.in/arunachal-pradesh/story/northeast-indias-tourism-future-shines-bright-as-neitc-concludes-landmark-2026-convention-in-arunachal-pradesh-1366218-2026-03-27>



Source: <https://www.indiatodayne.in/arunachal-pradesh/story/arunachal-mousigned-to-boost-buddhist-tourism-in-northeast-1365692-2026-03-26>

The Northeast holds significant potential for **Buddhist tourism, with numerous monasteries, pilgrimage sites, and culturally important sites** across states such as Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim. The region's unique blend of scenic landscapes and spiritual heritage offers a distinctive experience that appeals to both religious pilgrims and cultural tourists alike. The collaboration focuses on **developing structured tourism circuits that connect these destinations**, thereby improving accessibility and encouraging more organized and immersive travel experiences.

A central feature of this initiative is institutional coordination among stakeholders. By involving tour operators, local communities, and tourism authorities, the partnership aims to establish a **more efficient system for service delivery and destination management**. It also encourages capacity building, skill development, and knowledge sharing among stakeholders to ensure consistent quality standards. This approach supports long-term planning and ensure reliability in tourism-related services across the region.



Source: <https://www.msn.com/en-in/news/India/arnachal-pradesh-inks-mou-to-boost-buddhist-tourism/ar-AA1Zr5Sw>

The partnership also contributes to India's cultural diplomacy by promoting its Buddhist heritage to countries where the religion has a strong presence. This initiative helps foster deeper cultural connections and mutual understanding between India and other nations. **By highlighting the Northeast's spiritual significance, it enhances India's soft power and further strengthens its engagement with international communities through heritage-based tourism.**

## KEY FEATURES OF NEITC-ABTO PARTNERSHIP



Additionally, the initiative is expected to support regional development **creating employment opportunities and strengthening local enterprises.** Improved connectivity and increased visitor movement will benefit sectors such as handicrafts, hospitality, and transport, while maintaining a focus on sustainability and cultural preservation. It also helps to integrate remote areas into the mainstream tourism economy.

# RESOURCES

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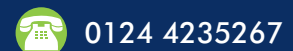
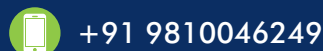
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