

Modi Cabinet gets cracking; announces 5 major decisions

MEGA PUSH. ₹2.88-lakh cr outlay covers port at Vadhavan, MSP hike, Varanasi airport expansion

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The Union Cabinet on Wednesday announced five key decisions that will entail an estimated expenditure of over ₹2.88-lakh crore. These include raising the minimum support price (MSP) for 14 kharif crops, setting up a greenfield port, and expanding the Varanasi airport.

"As PM Narendra Modi had said, there will be major decisions during the first 100 days, and these are the first set of such decisions," Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said, while announcing the decisions. This was the first Cabinet meeting after the allocation of portfolios to Union Ministers in the third term of the Modi government.

MSP FOR KHARIF CROPS

Vaishnaw said that MSPs have been raised between ₹117 and ₹983 for kharif crops for marketing season 2024-25 to ensure remunerative prices for farmers. The hike is expected to give a total benefit of ₹2-lakh crore to farmers, Vaish-



MAKING 100 DAYS COUNT. I&B Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw addressing a press conference in New Delhi on Wednesday PTI

naw said, while clarifying that this figure has been arrived at based on procurement data. When asked about the effect of the MSP hike on inflation, he said that there will not be much of an impact and that the interests of farmers have to be kept in mind.

VARANASI AIRPORT

Talking about the expansion of Varanasi airport, Vaishnaw said this will include the construction of a new terminal building, an apron extension, a runway extension, a parallel taxi track, and allied works. The estimated financial outgo will be over ₹2,800 crore for

enhancing the passenger handling capacity of the airport to 9.9 million passengers per annum (mppa) from 3.9 mppa.

The new terminal building, which encompasses an area of 75,000 sq m, is designed to handle 5,000 peak hour passengers.

VADHAVAN PORT

The Cabinet also approved the setting up a major port at Vadhavan near Dahanu in Palghar district, Maharashtra. It will be developed as an all-weather greenfield deep draft major port. The total project cost, including

the land acquisition component, is ₹76,220 crore, the Minister said. "On completion, the port will be one of the top 10 ports in the world," Vaishnaw added.

BOOSTING RE

To boost renewable energy, the Cabinet approved the viability gap funding scheme for offshore wind energy projects with a total outlay of ₹7,453 crore. This will include ₹6,853 crore for the installation and commissioning of 1 GW of offshore wind energy projects and a grant of ₹600 crore for upgrading the ports to meet logistics requirements.

FORENSIC INFRA

To help with the implementation of three new criminal laws, the Cabinet cleared the Home Ministry's proposal for the Central sector's National Forensic Infrastructure Enhancement Scheme with a total financial outlay of ₹2,254.43 crore during 2024-25 to 2028-29.

The financial outlay for the scheme will be provisioned by the Ministry of Home Affairs from its budget.

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