



## Rapid Fire Current Affairs

### BHARAT Campaign Launched to Boost Agri Infra Funding

Recently, the **Ministry of Agriculture** has called upon banks to **actively promote the [Agriculture Infrastructure Fund \(AIF\)](#)**, a financing facility aimed at developing **post-harvest infrastructure** and **community farm assets** in the agricultural sector. With a target disbursement of **Rs 1 lakh crore by 2025-26**, the AIF will provide **interest reduction and credit guarantee assistance until 2032-33**. To accelerate the flow of funds, the ministry has launched the **BHARAT (Banks Heralding Accelerated Rural & Agriculture Transformation) campaign**, urging banks to participate actively in the promotion of the Agri Infra Fund. During the one-month campaign, banks are encouraged to **achieve a target of Rs 7,200 crore**. The involvement and support of over 100 banking executives from commercial banks, regional rural banks, small finance banks, NBFCs, and select cooperative banks have been sought.

**Read more:** [Agriculture Infrastructure Fund \(AIF\)](#)

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### India and EFTA Accelerate TEPA Negotiations

Recently, the **Union Minister of Commerce & Industry, Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution and Textiles**, concluded a successful meeting with the **European Free Trade Association (EFTA)** delegation in London. The discussions centered around advancing the **Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA)** negotiations between India and EFTA. The primary objective of these negotiations is to establish a **fair, mutually beneficial, and comprehensive trade deal** between India and EFTA.

EFTA is an intergovernmental organization that was established in 1960 as an alternative trade bloc for those **European states that were unable or unwilling to join the [European Union \(EU\)](#)**. **EFTA is India's 9<sup>th</sup> largest trading partner**, accounting for about 2.5% of India's total merchandise trade in 2020-21.

The TEPA aims to **create opportunities for trade and investment between India and EFTA by eliminating/reducing tariffs and non-tariff barriers** on a wide range of products.

**Read more:** [India and EFTA](#), [India and EFTA states](#)

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### GACL Initiates Domestic Production of Hydrazine Hydrate and Purified Phosphoric Acid

In a significant stride towards achieving self-reliance under the **[Atmanirbhar Bharat mission](#)**, **Gujarat Alkalies and Chemicals Ltd (GACL)**, a leading **chlor-alkali producer**, has commenced the **shipment of Hydrazine Hydrate**. Furthermore, **GACL has also** addressed the scarcity of **Purified Phosphoric Acid** manufacturers in India by setting up a plant with a capacity of 33,870 MTA.

Hydrazine hydrate is a chemical compound with the formula  **$N_2H_4 \cdot H_2O$** . It is primarily used as a **reducing agent in various chemical reactions**, such as the synthesis of **pharmaceuticals and agricultural chemicals**.

Read more: [Atmanirbhar Bharat Mission](#)

## Punjab Agricultural University Develops Nutrient-Rich Wheat Variety with Health Benefits

In a groundbreaking development, the Punjab Agricultural University (PAU) has successfully bred a **new variety of wheat called PBW RS1**, which contains **high levels of amylose starch known to reduce the risks of type-2 diabetes and cardiovascular diseases.**

**PBW RS1 has a total starch content similar to other wheat varieties (66-70%),** but it boasts a remarkable **30.3% resistant starch content compared to the 7.5-10% found in other varieties.** The variety not only offers nutritional benefits but also exhibits complete resistance to yellow rust and **moderate resistance to brown rust fungal diseases.**

Despite its nutritional advantages, PBW RS1 poses a **challenge in terms of cultivation due to its lower average grain yield** compared to other wheat varieties in Punjab.

Read more: [Food security](#), [Nutritional security](#), [Diabetes](#), [Cardiovascular diseases](#)

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