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Gujarat launches data centre policy, targets ₹6-lakh-crore investments, 7.5 GW capacity

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CM Bhupendra Patel during the launch of Gujarat Data Centre Policy 2026-2029 in Gandhinagar on Thursday. X/@CMOGUJ

Seeking to position itself as India's preferred destination for hyperscale data centres, cloud computing and artificial intelligence (AI)-driven digital infrastructure, the Gujarat government on Thursday unveiled its first-ever Data Centre Policy (2026-29), targeting investments of ₹6 lakh crore and the creation of 7.5 gigawatts (GW) of data centre capacity over the policy period.

The policy, launched by Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel in Gandhinagar, offers a wide range of fiscal and non-fiscal incentives, including capital subsidy, interest subsidy, power tariff support, reimbursement of State GST (SGST), exemption from stamp duty and registration charges, and financial assistance for captive desalination plants to meet the sector's high water requirements.

'Preferred destination'

The new policy aims to make Gujarat a preferred destination for data centre investments and help it compete with established hubs such as Telangana, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu. "Gujarat is the first State to bring this policy. We are confident it will attract investments of ₹6 lakh crore, create 7.5 GW of data centre capacity and generate significant employment," Chief Secretary M.K. Das said.

The government said the policy has been designed to capitalise on the rapid growth of AI, cloud computing, digital payments, e-commerce, electronics manufacturing and other data-intensive sectors, while strengthening Gujarat's position in India's digital economy.

1. Context : Gujarat has launched its first Data Centre Policy (2026–29) to emerge as India's leading hub for AI, cloud computing and hyperscale data centres, targeting ₹6 lakh crore investment and 7.5 GW installed data centre capacity.

2. Data Centre: A Data Centre is a secure physical facility where digital data is stored, processed and transmitted using servers, storage devices and networking infrastructure.

Key Components

I. Servers (Data Processing) II. Storage Systems III. Networking Equipment
IV. Cooling Systems V. Power Backup (UPS/Diesel Generators) VI. Cybersecurity Infrastructure

Why are Data Centres Important?

I. Backbone of Cloud Computing
II. Supports Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Big Data Analytics
III. Enables UPI, Digital Payments & E-commerce
IV. Hosts Government Digital Platforms (DigiLocker, CoWIN, etc.)
V. Essential for Data Localisation and Digital Economy

Location Requirements

I. Uninterrupted Power Supply
II. High-speed Fibre Connectivity
III. Reliable Water & Cooling Infrastructure
IV. Low Disaster Risk & Strong Physical Security

Why is the Centre revising the NFSA?

Why has the Centre proposed changing AAY foodgrain entitlements? How will the proposed amendment affect households? Why are Tamil Nadu and Kerala opposing? Could the amendment widen regional disparities in foodgrain allocation?

EXPLAINER

T. Ramakrishnan

The story so far:

On July 6, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay urged the Centre to retain the present provision of 35 kg of foodgrains per household per month under the Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) meant for the poorest of the poor, and not to make it a per capita system. The next day, the CPI(M) Polit Bureau voiced its concern and demanded that the proposed amendment to the entitlement criteria be dropped. About 10 days ago, immediately after the Union government made public its plan to amend the National Food Security Act (NFSA), Kerala's Food Minister Anoop Jacob expressed reservations over the move.

What is the amendment mooted?

On June 24, the Union Food and Public Distribution (F&PD) Department, while publishing a draft amendment Bill to the NFSA, said every person belonging to AAY households would be entitled to seven kg of foodgrains per month, subject to a maximum of 35 kg per household per month. At present, the entitlement is for the entire household with a ceiling of 35 kg per month. The proposed amendment covers the first proviso to sub-section (1) of Section 3 (Right to receive foodgrains at subsidised prices by persons belonging to eligible households) of the Act. The public can comment on the amendments till July 13 and send their views by email to suneel.sachdeva@nic.in and saurabhomar.edu@gov.in.

Why is the change being proposed?

The existing household-based entitlement, though intended as a protective measure for the most vulnerable families, results in significant inequities depending upon the size of the household, according to the F&PD Department. Smaller households receive a higher per-capita entitlement, whereas larger households receive a lower per-capita entitlement, which may fall below the entitlement available to priority households.

The aim and purpose are to remove intra-category inequities, provide for more rational foodgrain allocation, and better align entitlements with nutritional requirements, a note prepared by the department said.

However, the proposed amendment does not seek to address the inclusion of ineligible persons as beneficiaries, a problem that persists at the State level.

What is the story behind the two southern States' opposition?

It is not for the first time that the two States are articulating their opposition to matters concerning the food policy, as their contemporary political history has an important ingredient – the politics of food. Kerala, which has a long history of the public distribution system (PDS) dating back to the now-abolished princely State of Travancore, introduced informal food distribution mechanisms to mitigate the food shortage of the poor and vulnerable, and was perhaps the first to launch a formal PDS in 1962, three years before the establishment of the Food Corporation of India (FCI). At least on two occasions – 1952 and 1967 – Tamil Nadu saw political upsets, the incumbent regime getting reduced to a minority in 1952 and being shown the door (in 1967). The reason was that the governments of the periods in question were not being swift in handling the rice shortage. Since 1967, successive Chief Ministers of the State have been cautious in taking decisions with regard to the subject of rice.

It was no wonder that the two States were vociferous in their stand in the run-up to the formulation of the NFSA. Though the Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) took charge in 2011 in Kerala, the government did not agree to the implementation of the 2013 law – an Act of Parliament – despite the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance regime at the Centre pushing the legislation. The main reservation it had was that the NFSA would lead to the removal of a "large number of poor families" from the list of beneficiaries and put an "enormous financial burden" on the State. However, the then Chief Minister, Oommen Chandy, at one point in time, committed himself to the enforcement of the law in his State, though it was left to his successor, Pinarayi Vijayan, to take the formal decision.

In Tamil Nadu, Jayalalithaa, as Chief Minister, virulently opposed the law because immediately after she came to power in May 2011, her government started the distribution of rice, free to all the ration cardholders, regardless of their economic status. She had criticised the government for stating that those who would be left out of the NFSA would not be eligible to receive free rice. Eventually, she extracted a major concession from the Union government that the existing allocations, as they stood in 2013, for all the States would be legally safeguarded.

Hence, it was no surprise that the two southern neighbours joined the rest of the country in November 2016 in implementing the law.

'The existing household-based entitlement, though intended as a protective measure for the most vulnerable families, results in significant inequities depending upon the size of the household'

Why are Tamil Nadu and Kerala opposing the amendment to NFSA?

Explaining how Kerala would be affected by the latest move, Mr. Jacob has pointed out that States such as his, characterised by nuclear families, will be at a disadvantage as there will be a reduction in the quantity of free foodgrains for families with fewer than five members. He has recalled that even in 2013, when the law took effect, his State took the stand that the AAY cardholders deserved "special consideration," a position that it continues. "As a consumption State, any cut in Kerala's allocation is a matter of concern," Mr. Jacob stated.

Mr. Vijay, who referred in his letter to Mr. Modi about how the amendment would cause a fall in the monthly allocation of foodgrains from 65,261 tonnes to 42,040 tonnes, stated that the number of AAY cardholders below the family size of five members is 15.75 lakh (out of a total of 18.64 lakhs), covering 58.51 lakh beneficiaries (total: 69.27 lakhs). "Rice provided to the AAY cardholders is a staple ingredient of all three meals of the day and cannot be substituted with any other commodity from the open market, resulting in substantial out of pocket expenses," he said.

Besides, Anuradha Talwar, a functionary of the Right to Food Campaign, said that the amendment would bring a "North-South divide" in foodgrain allocation, as families in northern States would get higher allocations as their average family size was bigger than that of the southern States.

What is the way forward?

Ideally, such a change should have been subjected to greater public scrutiny to arrive at a consensus. However, T. Sadagopan, president, Tamil Nadu Progressive Consumer Centre and veteran activist who served on the State government's panels on food, suggests that the Centre chalk out a middle path by making the allocation of 30 kg per family, irrespective of family members. This would help the Union government to cut down its subsidy bill.

Grains of debate

The Centre's proposed amendment to the National Food Security Act has triggered concerns that foodgrain allocations under the Antyodaya Anna Yojana could fall for many households in the southern States

Fine balance: The aim and purpose of the amendment are to remove intra-category inequities, provide for more rational foodgrain allocation, and better align entitlements with nutritional requirements. M. SRINATH

Table 1: AAY coverage, beneficiaries and foodgrain allocation

State	Ceiling of AAY households (lakhs)	AAY coverage		Allocation of foodgrains** for 2026-27 (in tonnes)
		No. of AAY households (in lakh)	No. of persons (in lakh)	
Andhra Pradesh	9.09	8.48	22.48	3,81,557
Karnataka	12	10.3	42.72	4,60,740
Kerala	5.96	5.93	18.53	2,50,236
Tamil Nadu	18.65	18.57	62.21	7,82,771
Telangana	6.49	5.64	15.66	2,38,074
Puducherry* (U.T.)	0.32	0.24	0.77	0*
Share of the South	52.51	49.16	162.37	21,13,378
All India	250	217.01	777.41	99,33,042

Source: Foodgrain bulletin for May 2026, Department of Food and Public Distribution, Government of India

*As Puducherry follows the concept of direct benefit transfer, no allocation has been made.

** foodgrains - rice, wheat and coarse grains

Table 2: Off-take and distribution in the Southern States

How the South fared during the current financial year up to the month of May 2026 (tonnes)

State	Allocation	Off take (drawal)	Distributed
Andhra Pradesh	63,593	63,593	57,837
Karnataka	76,790	57,316	35,003
Kerala	41,706	39,812	20,458
Tamil Nadu	1,30,462	1,90,135	1,21,709
Telangana	39,679	59,519	38,893
Share of the South	3,52,230	4,10,375	2,73,900
All India	16,55,505	17,24,185	13,75,621

THE GIST

- The Centre has proposed amending the NFSA to change AAY foodgrain entitlements from a household-based system to a per capita allocation of 7 kg per person, subject to a maximum of 35 kg per household, to address inequities in the existing system.
- Tamil Nadu and Kerala have opposed the proposal, arguing that it will reduce foodgrain allocations for households with fewer than five members and increase the burden on poor families, particularly in States with predominantly nuclear families.
- While the Centre says the amendment will make foodgrain distribution more equitable, critics warn it could widen regional disparities, and some have suggested a middle path of a fixed 30 kg allocation per household.

With reference to the provisions made under the National Food Security Act, 2013, consider the following statements :

1. The families coming under the category of 'below poverty line (BPL)' only are eligible to receive subsidised food grains.
2. The eldest woman in a household, of age 18 years or above, shall be the head of the household for the purpose of issuance of a ration card.
3. Pregnant women and lactating mothers are entitled to a 'take-home ration' of 1600 calories per day during pregnancy and for six months thereafter.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct ?

(a) 1 and 2

(b) 2 only

(c) 1 and 3

(d) 3 only

1. Context: The Union Government has proposed amendments to the National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013 to revise the foodgrain entitlement under the Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY). The proposal seeks to shift from the existing household-based allocation to a per-person entitlement, triggering opposition from Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

2. National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013

I. Objective: Provide legal entitlement to subsidised foodgrains and strengthen food and nutritional security through the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS).

II. Coverage

* Rural: Up to 75% of the population.
* Urban: Up to 50% of the population.

III. Beneficiary Categories

A. Priority Households (PHH): Eligible members receive 5 kg foodgrains/person/month at subsidised prices.

B. Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY)

* Covers the poorest and most vulnerable households.
* Present entitlement: 35 kg foodgrains per household per month, irrespective of family size.
* The proposed amendment concerns only this category.

3. What is the proposed amendment?

Present System

* I. Every AAY household receives 35 kg/month.
* II. Quantity is linked to the household, not the number of family members.

Proposed System

* I. 7 kg/person/month.
* II. Maximum entitlement remains 35 kg per household.
* III. Allocation will depend on the number of eligible members instead of treating every household equally.

4. Why does the Centre want this change?

* I. Existing household-based allocation creates inequities.
* II. Small households receive the same quantity as large households.
* III. Align foodgrain allocation with the actual number of beneficiaries.
* IV. Improve fairness and nutritional targeting while rationalising food subsidy expenditure.

5. **Why are Tamil Nadu and Kerala opposing it?**
* I. Southern States have a higher proportion of nuclear/small families.
* II. Many AAY households with fewer than five members would receive less than 35 kg.
* III. They argue this could reduce foodgrain allocation to their States and widen regional disparities.
* IV. Tamil Nadu also cites its long-standing Universal Public Distribution System (PDS) model.

6. **Centre's Position**
* I. No beneficiary will lose eligibility under NFSA.
* II. Only the method of calculating entitlement is being changed.
* III. The reform aims to make allocation more equitable and person-centric.

7. **Significance**
* I. Balances equity (per-person allocation) with food security.
* II. Has implications for food subsidy, Centre–State relations, and regional distribution of foodgrains.
* III. The debate reflects the challenge of designing a uniform national welfare policy while accounting for differences in State-level demographic patterns.

PIB ANALYSIS

10TH JULY 2026
FRIDAY

PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

01 SUSTAINABLE HARNESSING OF FISHERIES IN HIGH SEAS

A NEW CHAPTER IN INDIA'S MARITIME JOURNEY

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- National programme launched at Bhubaneswar
- Letters of Authorisation (LoAs) issued
- Sustainable fishing in India's EEZ and High Seas
- Priority to Cooperatives, FPOs & Indian Fishermen
- Odisha Deep Sea Fishing Mission Document launched

INDIA'S MARINE STRENGTH

COASTLINE	EEZ	FISH PRODUCTION
11,000+ km	24 Lakh sq km	2nd Largest in the World

GLOBAL SHARE	SEAFOOD EXPORTS
8% of Global Fish Production	₹73,000+ Cr (Last FY)

SUSTAINABLE MEASURES

- Digital Authorisation System
- Vessel Tracking
- International Certification
- Measures against IUU (Illegal, Unreported & Unregulated) Fishing
- Conservation with Economic Growth

02 SUB-MISSION ON AGRICULTURAL MECHANIZATION

Enhancing Productivity through Farm Mechanization

SCHEME SNAPSHOT

- Launched: 2014–15
- Centrally Sponsored Scheme
- Under: RKVY
- Aim: "Reach the Unreached" Small/Marginal Farmers, Women, SC/ST, FPOs, SHGs, Rural Entrepreneurs
- Special focus on North-Eastern States

ACHIEVEMENTS (2014–15 TO 2025–26)

₹9,404.47 Cr	21.61 Lakh	27,554	646	25,608
Central Assistance	Farm Machines Distributed	Custom Hiring Centres	Hi-Tech Hubs	Farm Machinery Banks

- **₹52.5 Cr** Financial Support
- **40,928** Demonstrations
- **40,918** Hectares Covered

WOMEN FARMERS

30%

SMAM funds earmarked for women farmers

SUBSIDY SUPPORT

General Farmers	40%
SC/ST, Small & Marginal Farmers, North-East	50%
North-East: Small Machinery	100%
Farm Machinery Banks (North-East)	95%

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR INSTITUTIONS

- Custom Hiring Centres (CHCs): **40%** of project cost (Up to ₹250 lakh)
- Farm Machinery Banks (FMBs): **80%** of project cost (Up to ₹30 lakh)

FUNDING PATTERN

- General States: 60:40
- North-East & Himalayan States: 90:10
- Union Territories: 100% Central Assistance

03 IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

SMAM LAUNCHED 2014–15

Scheme supports mechanization & modern farming practices across the country.

DRONE DEMONSTRATIONS

40,928

demonstrations conducted to promote agri-technology.

SEAFOOD EXPORTS

₹73,000+ Crore

India's seafood exports in the last financial year.

04 QUICK FACTS

- India has 11,000+ km coastline
- India ranks 2nd in fish production
- 24 Lakh sq km – India's EEZ
- 25,608 Farm Machinery Banks
- 30% funds reserved for women farmers

05 IMPACT & WAY FORWARD

- Strengthening fisheries in High Seas ensures food security & global leadership.
- Agri-mechanization is boosting productivity, inclusivity & rural income.
- Technology, sustainability & support for small holders are driving India's growth story.

"Empowering Farmers. Strengthening Fisheries. Building **Aatmanirbhar Bharat.**"