

Shri Shah launches She-Mart; Opens New Avenues for Women Co-ops



The launch of the Vanitham She-Mart initiative in Kerala on 26 September 2026 marks an important development in using the cooperative sector to connect rural women, Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and women farmers directly with organised markets. The initiative was launched by Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Shri Amit Shah at Kollam, along with several other cooperative-sector initiatives. Kerala, with a long-standing cooperative tradition and more than 23,000 cooperative institutions, provides a strong ecosystem for scaling such initiatives. Vanitham She-Mart seeks to enable women-led enterprises to move beyond production into processing, branding, packaging and retail, thereby creating greater opportunities for value addition and income generation. Under the initiative, more than 300 She-Mart outlets are proposed across Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. The stores will market locally produced goods as well as Bharat Brand products, creating a cooperative-linked retail network that will provides women producers with direct access to consumers. A significant feature of the initiative is the involvement of national cooperative institutions. NAFED, NCCF, Kendriya Bhandar and Amul are expected to support women-led enterprises by strengthening different stages of the value chain, including procurement, processing, branding, including packaging and retail marketing. An MoU was exchanged between NCCF and Bharat Lajhna Sahakari Samiti for establishing 300 She-Mart shops across the three southern states. Other agreements included cooperation between NCCF and The Central Financial Credit and Investment Co-operative (India) Limited (CFCICI) and integration of the fisheries supply chain of Bharatiya Matsya Pravartak Sangham with NCCF's Janah brand.

The programme also demonstrated the broader role of cooperatives in ensuring access to essential commodities. NCCF and NAFED mobile vans were flagged off to sell onions at a subsidised price of ₹35 per kg. Bharat Atta and Bharat Rice were also introduced for sale to women consumers through Vanitham She-Mart outlets. The initiative has a significant farmer-connect dimension. It was stated that approximately eight lakh farmers are associated with NAFED, while nearly six lakh women farmers are associated with NCCF, with efforts proposed to expand these networks further. The Mission for Aatmanirbharta in Pulses was also linked to women farmers through the distribution of urad and gram seed kits. In addition, the NAFED-Kalyan Scholarship Scheme provides scholarships to girl children from registered farmer families. The fisheries sector represents another important area for cooperative-led value addition in Kerala. Given the state's coastline, rivers and extensive backwaters, cooperation across fishing, processing, packaging, branding and exports can potentially strengthen market opportunities and improve returns to producers. Overall, Vanitham She-Mart represents a shift from merely supporting production towards building an integrated market ecosystem for women entrepreneurs. By bringing together SHGs, women farmers, cooperative institutions and national-level marketing organisations, the initiative seeks to create a pathway from production → value addition → branding → retail → consumers. For the cooperative sector, the initiative is particularly relevant because it demonstrates how cooperatives can serve not only as financial or credit institutions but also as market-enabling platforms for women, farmers and rural enterprises. It also provides a possible model for strengthening the participation of Agriculture and Rural Development Banks (ARDBs) and other cooperative institutions in women-focused rural enterprise development, value-chain financing and market-linked livelihood programmes. (Source Indian Cooperative)



Sahakar Sarathi Mobilises ₹803 Crore; 315 RCBs Migrate to Bank.in



Sahakar Sarathi Private Limited (SSPL) was established with RBI approval and registered on 21 July 2025 to accelerate the digital transformation of Rural Cooperative Banks (RCBs).

- SSPL is jointly backed by NABARD, NCDC and participating RCBs, each holding 33.33%, with authorised capital of ₹1,000 crore.
- By March 2026, SSPL had mobilised ₹803.18 crore in equity and helped 315 cooperative banks migrate to the exclusive bank.in domain.
- The initiative addresses major challenges faced by RCBs, including fragmented technology, uneven digital adoption, cybersecurity, compliance requirements and high technology costs.

During FY 2025-26, SSPL piloted:

- Generative-AI based customer-support bots
 - Collections support
 - Common technology and business-support services
 - bank.in domain migration
 - A centralised digital credit platform
- Its vehicle-loan cross-selling initiative generated leads worth ₹191 crore from around 23,000 customers.
- A pilot collections call centre recovered ₹2.91 crore, while the centralised digital credit platform became operational at four RCBs.
- SSPL now reports a network of 385+ RCBs, serving approximately 130 million customers through nearly 15,800 branches.
- Its future roadmap includes shared cybersecurity, cloud infrastructure, payment systems, middleware, Core Banking Solutions, digital platforms and other common technology services.
- The overall objective is to create a secure, scalable and cost-effective shared digital infrastructure, enabling RCBs to modernise their banking services without individually bearing the high cost of advanced technology.

Sahakar Sarathi is emerging as a common digital backbone for rural cooperative banks, combining shared technology, cyber security, digital banking and business-support services to improve efficiency, reduce costs and strengthen the competitiveness of RCBs. (Source Indian Cooperative)

Shri Shah to Lay Foundation for Zero-Waste Co-op Project



Union Cooperation and Home Minister Shri Amit Shah will lay the foundation stone on September 20, 2026 for a ₹600 crore multi-state cooperative project based on the zero-waste concept at Kallappa Anna Awade Jawahar Shetkari Cooperative Sugar Factory in Hupari, Kolhapur. The ceremony will be held at 11 am said, senior director Shri Prakash Awade. The project will process sugar industry by-products including bagasse, molasses and spent wash to manufacture value-added products such as potash, citric acid and compressed biogas (CBG). The initiative involves NCDC, IFFCO,

KRIBHCO, National Cooperative Exports Limited, NDDDB, Amul, Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation and Indian Potash Limited. Shri Awade said the project aims to reduce dependence on sugar production, promote a circular economy and support farmers and cooperative sugar mills. The plant is also expected to boost domestic production of potash and citric acid, potentially reducing imports and saving foreign exchange. (Source: Indian Cooperative)

Ministry Reviews 2 Lakh New Co-ops Drive; Pushes Grassroots Expansion

The NLCC meeting held on 8 September 2026 in New Delhi, chaired by Dr. Ashish Kumar Bhutani, reviewed progress on establishing and strengthening 2 lakh new MPACS, DCS and FCS across Panchayats and villages. The meeting focused on membership expansion, credit access, business diversification and adoption of Model Bye-laws, with emphasis on making cooperatives sustainable and member-centric. NABARD, NDDDB and NFDB shared progress, while States/UTs were urged to strengthen coordination and ensure timely implementation to advance the vision of "Sahkar se Samridhi." (Source MOC-SM)



NABARD opens 'Experience Centre' in Mumbai

NABARD has launched an Experience Centre at its Head Office in Mumbai, inaugurated by Shri Sanjay Lohiya, Secretary, Department of Financial Services, GOI. The centre showcases NABARD's journey, rural development initiatives and success stories through interactive physical and digital exhibits, covering climate-resilient agriculture, SHGs, rural infrastructure and digital financial inclusion. It aims to increase public awareness of NABARD's contribution to inclusive, sustainable and technology-driven rural development and strengthen partnerships with stakeholders.



Shri Dolar Kotecha Cheers Shri Dileepbhai Sanghani's ICA Global Board Victory

NAFCARD Chairman and Cooperative leader from Gujarat Shri Dollar Kotecha has extended his warm congratulations to IFFCO Chairman, Shri Dileepbhai Sanghani on his election to the Global Board of the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA). Shri Kotecha, who shares a close association with Shri Sanghani, conveyed his best wishes on the latter's new international responsibility. He said Sanghani's election is a significant moment for India's cooperative sector and wished him success in his new role on the global platform. Shri Sanghani was elected as an At-Large Director for the 2026–2030 term at the ICA General Assembly held in Panama City on September 15, 2026. Shri Kotecha expressed hope that Shri Sanghani would make a meaningful contribution to the international cooperative movement during his tenure and further highlight the achievements and experience of India's cooperative sector at the global level. The election has been welcomed by cooperative leaders from across India, who have conveyed their wishes to Shri Sanghani following his entry into the ICA Global Board. (Source Indian Cooperative)



NAFED Posts ₹29,885 Cr Turnover, Declares 15% Dividend



NAFED reported a strong performance for 2025-26, with a turnover of ₹29,884.72 crore and net profit of ₹423.14 crore. At its 69th AGM on 26 September 2026, it announced a 15% dividend to member federations and societies.

- NAFED continues to implement PM-AASHA schemes to support farmers and stabilise agricultural prices.
- It plans to establish 50 additional retail stores through PACS, cooperatives and FPOs.
- NAFED revived 500 fisheries cooperatives and helped form 50 Fish FPOs, benefiting over 50,000 farmers.
- It is expanding exports and institutional markets, including the UAE, Canada, Indian Railways and proposed supplies to the Army and CSD canteens.
- Under the FPO promotion programme, NAFED is providing support to 1,274 FPOs and expanding storage infrastructure.
- Digital platforms such as e-Samridhi, ERP, NAFEX.in and DRISHTI are being used to improve farmer registration, payments, procurement, financial management and inventory monitoring.
- The Kalyan Scholarship Scheme will allocate 1% of NAFED's net profit for scholarships of up to ₹1 lakh per student for children of farmers registered on e-Samridhi.

NAFED is combining strong financial performance, farmer support, retail and export expansion, FPO development, digital transformation and cooperative market infrastructure to strengthen agricultural marketing and improve market access for farmers. (Source Indian Cooperative)

NCDC Pushes Innovation; ₹25 Lakh grant to Spur Co-op Innovation

The NCDC's Sahakar Innovation Scheme (SIS), launched in FY 2025-26, aims to promote innovation and modernisation among primary cooperatives by providing 100% grant assistance up to ₹25 lakh for eligible innovative projects. The scheme supports new technologies, products, services, business models, market linkages and sustainable solutions across sectors such as agriculture, dairy, fisheries and food processing. It seeks to help cooperatives overcome financial constraints, diversify their activities and develop viable, competitive and future-ready enterprises. (Source Indian Cooperative)

NABARD Steps Up Oversight, Digital Push for Rural Co-op Banks

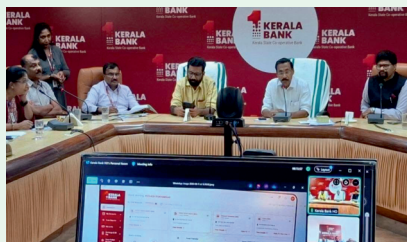
NABARD's 2025-26 Annual Report highlights stronger supervision, institutional strengthening and digital modernisation of rural cooperative banks.

- As of March 2026, the rural cooperative structure included 34 StCBs, 353 DCCBs, 1.06 lakh PACS, 12 SCARDBs and 609 PCARDBs.
- NABARD conducted inspections for 34 StCB, 268 DCCB and 8 SCARDB during FY2025-26.
- 65 Speaking Orders were issued, involving penalties totalling ₹152.3 lakhs.
- 96 weak cooperative banks were directed to prepare Turn Around Plans (TAPs), with quarterly monitoring.
- NABARD strengthened grievance redressal through CPGRAMS and its NIVARAN platform; 1,520 complaints were received during FY2026.
- Sahakar Sarathi supported digital banking, cybersecurity, IT governance and loan processing, with ₹803.18 crore equity mobilised by March 2026.
- Under the Cooperation among Cooperatives campaign, the Gujarat pilot generated ₹65,662 crore in cumulative deposits and 8.8 lakh RuPay KCCs, with expansion proposed to five more states.
- Future priorities include better cooperative governance, PACS diversification, the PACS Accelerator Programme and use of Generative AI for preparing DPRs.

NABARD is focusing on stronger supervision, revival of weak banks, better grievance handling, digital transformation and diversification of rural cooperative institutions. (Source Indian Cooperative)



Kerala StCB moves to fourth spot in State Banking Business



Kerala State Cooperative Bank, popularly known as Kerala Bank, has moved up to fourth position among banks in Kerala in terms of total banking business, according to June 2026 SLBC data. The bank, which was earlier ranked fifth, recorded total business of ₹1,28,697 crore as of March 31, 2026, registering its highest annual business growth of ₹7,700 crore since its formation. It now accounts for around 7% of Kerala's total banking business. The bank is set to launch Internet Banking and Merchant Acquisition (QR Code) services on September 22, 2026 at the Adlux Convention Centre, Karukutty, Ernakulam. The services will be inaugurated by Cooperation and Excise Minister, Mr. M.

Liju, followed by the bank's Annual General Meeting. Internet Banking will offer fund transfers through IMPS, NEFT and RTGS, bill payments, account statements, fixed deposits and other services. The QR-based Merchant Acquisition facility will enable traders and cooperative institutions to accept digital payments directly into their Kerala Bank accounts. The bank said the two services mark a major milestone in its digital transformation journey. (Source Indian Cooperative)

Gujarat SCARDB

Celebrating 75 Years of Excellence: A Milestone Platinum Jubilee

The Gujarat Bank celebrated its 75th anniversary with a grand Platinum Jubilee event, in the presence of the Chairman, Board of Directors and NAFCARD MD Shri K.K. Ravindran. The celebration featured motivational sessions, cultural performances and a special drama depicting the Bank's journey, with employees felicitated for their contribution.



Fulfilling Social Responsibility: Bank Observes 'Seva Sankalp Abhiyan' Across 17 Districts and 179 Branches

Gujarat Bank observed 'Seva Sankalp Abhiyan' on September 23, 2026, across its 17 district offices and 179 branches. Officers and staff participated in cleanliness drives, shramdaan, environmental conservation and tree plantation activities, promoting hygiene and social responsibility.



Kheti Bank Participates at Sandesh News 'Krushi Kranti' Conclave

Kheti Bank General Manager Ms. Bhumika Raychada participated in Sandesh News' 'Krushi Kranti' conclave and shared views on modern agricultural finance, technology and the changing the needs of farmers.



ICA NEWS

16 co-operators from 16 countries elected to ICA Global Board for 2026-2030 mandate

Members of the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) have elected its new board for the 2026-2030 period, during its 2026 General Assembly in Panama. The meeting, which took place at the Panama Convention Centre on Tuesday 15 September, 2026 saw Dr Ariel Guarco elected unopposed as President, and 15 At-large Directors elected from 24 candidates, including 7 returning directors and 8 who are new to the ICA Board. The last elective General Assembly was held in Seville, Spain, in 2022. In total, 116 voters representing 193 Members from 66 countries attended the meeting, with the event taking place during the ICA Global Conference week hosted in Panama. The conference is being held under the banner Building Bridges: Cooperative Contributions to a Peaceful World; Peace is a theme that has marked Dr Guarco's premiership since he was first elected President at the 2017 ICA General Assembly in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Dr Guarco thanked directors who chose not to stand again for their service, and welcomed the new board. He said: "Democracy is not just an election mechanism; it's a way to relate to one another...in a cooperative, everyone counts and we must be participatory, democratic and inclusive."



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