

NATIONAL**Success of Saubhagya scheme**

Nine States have achieved complete household electrification under the Saubhagya scheme. They are Madhya Pradesh, Tripura, Bihar, Jammu and Kashmir, Uttarakhand, Mizoram, Sikkim, Telangana and West Bengal. With this, 16 States in the country now have 100 per cent household electrification.

Saubhagya Scheme:

- Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana – ‘Saubhagya’ was launched in September, 2017.
- Under Saubhagya free electricity connections to all households (both APL and poor families) in rural areas and poor families in urban areas will be provided.
- Rural Electrification Corporation (REC) has been designated as nodal agency for the Saubhagya scheme.
- The scheme aims to achieve universal household electrification in all parts of the country.

All DISCOMs including Private Sector DISCOMs, State Power Departments and RE Cooperative Societies shall be eligible for financial assistance under the scheme in line with Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana (DDUGJY).

Eligibility: The prospective beneficiary households for free electricity connections under the scheme would be identified using SECC 2011 data. However, un-electrified households not covered under SECC data would also be provided electricity connections under the scheme on payment of Rs. 500 which shall be recovered by DISCOMs in 10 instalments through electricity bill.

INTERNATIONAL AND BILATERAL**Rohingya refugees**

India has handed over to Myanmar the first 50 houses built by the country for the displaced minority Rohingya Muslims in the restive Rakhine province. India had signed a development programme for Rakhine State in Myanmar late last year which was designed to assist the Myanmar government in Rakhine State to build housing infrastructure for displaced persons.

More than 700,000 minority Rohingya Muslims fled from Myanmar's Rakhine state to neighbouring Bangladesh since August 2017 after a military crackdown, triggering a massive refugee crisis.

Rohingyas: They are an Ethnic group, mostly Muslims. They were not granted full citizenship by Myanmar. They were classified as “resident foreigners or associate citizens”. They speak a dialect of Bengali and not Burmese. Ethnically they are much closer to Indo-Aryan people of India and Bangladesh than to the Sino-Tibetans of the Country.

Golden VISA:

The UK government has put on hold plans to suspend “golden visa” category in reference to its use by super-rich foreign nationals, including Indians, to acquire fast-track settlement rights in Britain.

Golden Visas or Tier 1 Visas: They provide a faster route for wealthy investors coming from outside the European Union and Switzerland to settle in Britain. The program was introduced in 2008 to attract wealthy foreign nationals willing to invest large amounts of capital in Britain.

Criteria:

- To qualify, foreign nationals must put down a minimum of 2 million pounds (around \$2.5 million) as an investment in Britain. Such an investment in United Kingdom bonds, share capital or companies allows investors to apply for permanent residency within five years.
- For a £5 million investment, they can apply for permanent residency after three years.
- An investment of £10 million can open the door to permanent residency after two years. After that, the nationals theoretically could apply for citizenship.

World's first floating nuclear plant in Russia

Akademik Lomonosov is the world's first “floating” nuclear power plant (FNPP). It is coming up in Russia.

Key facts: An FNPP is basically a mobile, low-capacity reactor unit operable in remote areas isolated from the main power distribution system, or in places hard to access by land. They are designed to maintain both uninterruptible power and plentiful desalinated water supply in remote areas.

ECONOMY

FAME-India Scheme

To promote manufacturing of electric and hybrid vehicle technology and to ensure sustainable growth of the same, Department of Heavy Industry is implementing FAME-India Scheme Phase – I [Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of (Hybrid &) Electric Vehicles in India] from 1st April 2015. The scheme was initially up to 31st April 2017, has been extended up to 31st March 2019 or till Notification of FAME-II, whichever is earlier.

FAME-India Scheme Phase – II:

- The scheme proposes to give a push to electric vehicles (EVs) in public transport and
- It seeks to encourage adoption of EVs by way of market creation and demand aggregation.
- Automobile Sector:
- 100% FDI by automatic route is permitted in the automobile sector.
- Further, the sector is deregulated, both private sector and public sector are free to carry out investment in the automobile sector, including for manufacturing of Electric Vehicles and E-Buses.

Background:

- FAME India is a part of the National Electric Mobility Mission Plan. Main thrust of FAME is to encourage electric vehicles by providing subsidies.
- Vehicles in most segments – two wheelers, three wheelers, electric and hybrid cars and electric buses obtained the subsidy benefit of the scheme.
- FAME focuses on 4 areas i.e. Technology development, Demand Creation, Pilot Projects and Charging Infrastructure.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

LCAVR and CVVRS

Ministry of railway started installing Loco cab audio-video recording system (LCAVR) / Crew Voice/Video Recording System (CVVRS) in Diesel and Electric locomotives which are similar to Black Box.

This system provides invaluable data to investigators which will help them in understanding the sequence of events leading up to an accident and for identifying operational issues and human factors.

IT Initiatives by Indian Railways:

Indian Railways undertakes various IT initiatives to improve train operations and provide better passenger experience.

Handheld Devices on trains (HHT)

- Handheld Terminals (HHTs) are being provided to the Train Ticket Examiners (TTEs) to be able to check the reserved coaches, allot the vacant berths and transmit information on available berths to the subsequent stations.
- The HHT can also access the ticketing application and collect excess fares as per rules.
- The terminal can potentially connect to a Point of Sale (POS) machine and charges can be collected digitally.
- Paperless Unreserved Ticketing through Mobile Phones
- Paperless Unreserved ticketing on mobile phones was launched on 2014 at Mumbai.
- This has eliminated the need for passengers to stand in queue for getting tickets for the journey in unreserved compartments of trains.

Indian Railway e-Procurement System (IREPS)

- The complete tendering activity of Indian Railways for procurement of goods, services & works and e-auction of scrap sale is on IREPS.
- IREPS system is largest such G to B portal in India.
- It has helped in achieving the objectives of transparency, efficiency, and improvement of ease of doing business.
- Central Vigilance Commission has recognized and awarded the system under “Vigilance Excellence Award – 2017” for outstanding contribution in the category of “IT initiatives for transparency in the organization”.

ISRO and ROCOSMOS

ISRO and ROSCOSMOS have signed a MoU in on ‘Joint Activities in the field of Human Spaceflight Programme’

Roscosmos: The Roscosmos State Corporation for Space Activities commonly known as Roscosmos is a state corporation responsible for the space flight and cosmonautics program for the Russian Federation. The headquarters of Roscosmos are located in Moscow, capital of Russia.

Indian Human Spaceflight Programme: The Indian Human Spaceflight Programme was created by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) to develop the technology needed to launch crewed orbital spacecraft into low Earth orbit. The first crewed flight is planned with a spacecraft called Gaganyaan for December 2021 on a home-grown GSLV-III rocket.

DEFENCE

The Indian Navy has inducted its first Deep Submergence Rescue Vehicle (DSRV) System at the Naval Dockyard in Mumbai.

DSRV:

- DSRV is used to rescue crew members stranded in submarines that get disabled. The Indian Navy joins a select group of naval forces in the world that boasts of this niche capability. The DSRV can be operated at a depth of 650 meters and can hold around 15 people.
- The Indian Navy in March 2016 had commissioned two DSRVs, the second will be deployed at the Eastern Naval Command in Visakhapatnam.
- The induction of the DSRV marks the culmination of years of effort of the Indian Navy in acquiring this niche submarine rescue capability.