

“Dream your own dreams, achieve your own goals. Your journey is your own and unique.”

Roy T. Bennett

NATIONAL

ATAL BHUJAL YOJANA (ABHY)

The World Bank has approved Atal Bhujal Yojana (ABHY). The scheme is to be implemented over a period of five years from 2018-19 to 2022-23, with World Bank assistance.

Atal Bhujal Yojana:

It is a Rs.6000 crore Central Sector Scheme of the Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation. The scheme aims to improve ground water management in priority areas in the country through community participation.

The priority areas identified under the scheme fall in the states of Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. These States represent about 25% of the total number of over-exploited, critical and semi-critical blocks in terms of ground water in India. They also cover two major types of groundwater systems found in India – alluvial and hard rock aquifers- and have varying degrees of institutional readiness and experience in groundwater management.

Funds under the scheme will be provided to the states for strengthening the institutions responsible for ground water governance, as well as for encouraging community involvement for improving ground water management to foster behavioural changes that promote conservation and efficient use of water. The scheme will also facilitate convergence of ongoing Government schemes in the states by incentivizing their focused implementation in identified priority areas.

The implementation of the scheme is expected to have several positive outcomes like better understanding of the ground water regime, focused and integrated community based approach for addressing issues related to ground water depletion, sustainable ground water management through

Convergence of on-going and new schemes, adoption of efficient water use practices to reduce ground water use for irrigation and augmentation of ground water resources in targeted areas.

Central Ground Water Authority (CGWA) is regulating ground water development in 23 States/UTs. As per the assessment of dynamic ground water resources of country carried out jointly by CGWB and State Ground Water Departments, out of the total 6584 numbers of assessment units (Block/ Taluks/ Mandals/ watershed/ Firkka), 1034 units have been categorized as ‘Over-exploited’. This may be due to increase in population, rapid urbanization & industrialization and other related factors.

GEO-INTELLIGENCE ASIA 2018

The Eleventh edition of Geo-Intelligence Asia 2018 is being held in New Delhi.

It is organized by Geo-Spatial Media and Communication with Directorate General of Information System as Knowledge Partners and Military Survey as Co-organizers.

Aim of the seminar: The seminar brings together the military, security officials including BSF and Police Forces, Government and industry together to examine the latest technology solutions and on the critical role of geospatial technology in military and security applications.

Theme: ‘Geo-Spatial: A Force Multiplier for Defence and Industrial Security’.

Geospatial intelligence is a critical foundation for many aspects of defense and internal security. It offers the capability of monitoring, predicting and countering threats, while helping strategize and support various field operations.

It facilitates multi-source information sharing and integration across agencies and organizations by providing a common framework on which other information is based.

The use of big data, advanced geospatial analytics software and sophisticated imaging technologies from (very) high-resolution remote sensing satellites, UAVs and other sensors, enables seamless flow of information in pre-, real-time and post-combat operations.

Real-time views and insights of impacted regions are key to improving emergency response times, especially in vulnerable areas such as a country's border.

Geospatial data is invaluable to the border security operations, to deliver accurate situational awareness information, enabling quick and secure decision-making, while mitigating risks, and increasing national security.

GOVERNMENT IS PLANNING FOR FORTIFIED RICE

The government is planning to provide fortified rice (enriched with essential vitamins and minerals) to all the poor under National Food Security Act (NFSA) across the country, which would cost about Rs 12,000 to Rs 14,000 crore annually. To begin with the scheme is likely to cover the 115 'aspirational' districts across the country.

The proposal is being prepared with the support of Niti Aayog under the National Nutrition Mission.

Fortification is the practice of deliberately increasing the content of an essential micronutrient, i.e. vitamins and minerals (including trace elements) in a food, so as to improve the nutritional quality of the food supply and provide a public health benefit with minimal risk to health. Rice fortification is the practice of increasing the content of essential micronutrients in rice and to improve the nutritional quality of the rice.

Rice is the world's most important staple food. An estimated 2 billion people eat rice every day, forming the mainstay of diets across large of Asia and Africa.

Historians have found evidence of rice being eaten in parts of china some 8,000 years ago and it even has the same word as "food" in Chinese. In Bangladesh, home of 160 million

people, rice is the main stable food with a daily average consumption of 416 grams per capita.

Regular milled rice is low in micronutrients and serves primarily as a source of carbohydrate only. The fortification of rice is a major opportunity to improve nutrition.

Fortified rice contains Vitamin A, Vitamin B1, Vitamin B12, Folic Acid, Iron and Zinc.

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has formulated a comprehensive regulation on fortification of foods namely 'Food Safety and Standards (Fortification of Foods) Regulations, 2016'. These regulations set the standards for food fortification and encourage the production, manufacture, distribution, sale and consumption of fortified foods. The regulations also provide for specific role of FSSAI in promotion for food fortification and to make fortification mandatory. This sets the premise for the national summit on fortification of food.

UNION CABINET APPRISED REPORT OF SPECIAL COMMITTEE FOR INTER-LINKING OF RIVERS

The Union Cabinet was recently apprised of the progress report of Special Committee for Inter-Linking of Rivers.

The progress report on interlinking of rivers has been submitted to the Cabinet in compliance of the Hon'ble Supreme Court judgement. The court had directed the Union Government of India to constitute a Special Committee for Interlinking of Rivers.

The interlinking project aims to link India's rivers by a network of reservoirs and canals that will allow for their water capacities to be shared and redistributed. According to some experts, this is an engineered panacea that will reduce persistent floods in some parts and water shortages in other parts besides facilitating the generation of hydroelectricity for an increasingly power hungry country.

India receives most of its rain during monsoon season from June to September, most of it falls in northern and eastern part of India, the amount of rainfall in southern and western part are comparatively low. It will be

these places which will have shortage of water. Interlinking of rivers will help these areas to have water throughout the year.

The main occupation of rural India is agriculture and if monsoon fails in a year, then agricultural activities come to a standstill and this will aggravate rural poverty. Interlinking of rivers will be a practical solution for this problem, because the water can be stored or water can be transferred from water surplus area to deficit.

The Ganga Basin, Brahmaputra basin sees floods almost every year. In order to avoid this, the water from these areas has to be diverted to other areas where there is scarcity of water. This can be achieved by linking the rivers. There is a two way advantage with this – floods will be controlled and scarcity of water will be reduced.

Interlinking of rivers will also have commercial importance on a longer run. This can be used as inland waterways and which helps in faster movement of goods from one place to other.

Interlinking also creates a new occupation for people living in and around these canals and it can be the main areas of fishing in India.

GLOBAL PEACE INDEX (GPI)

India improves in global peacefulness rankings

- India's rank has marginally improved in global peacefulness, according to the Global Peace Index (GPI)
- India's GPI rank was 137 out of 163 countries in 2017, when the year 2016 was assessed. India's rank moved up to 136 for 2017.
- Pakistan's rank too has improved marginally. Pakistan's rank moved from 152 to 151.
- However, the best performer of South Asia, Bhutan, slipped from 13th to 19th position, while Bangladesh' peace index deteriorated sharply. Bangladesh moved from 84th to 93rd position.

Global Peace Index (GPI):

- Global Peace Index (GPI) is released by Australia-based Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP).
- The GPI gauges global peace using three broad themes: the level of societal safety and security, the extent of ongoing domestic and international conflict and the degree of militarization.

Amid continuing social and political turmoil, the world continues to spend enormous resources on creating and containing violence but very little on peace.

The countries that displayed the most significant growth in heavy weapons capabilities over the last 30 years are primarily in unstable regions where there are high tensions with neighbouring countries. These include Egypt, India, Iran, Pakistan, South Korea, and Syria.

Overall, the global level of peace has deteriorated by 0.27% in the last year, marking the fourth successive year of deteriorations. Ninety-two countries deteriorated, while 71 countries improved.

The four most peaceful regions – Europe, North America, Asia-Pacific, and South America – all recorded deteriorations, with the largest overall deterioration occurring in South America, owing to falls in the safety and security domain, mainly due to increases in the incarceration rate and impact of terrorism.

URBAN CO-OPERATIVE BANKS (UCB) TO CONVERT INTO SMALL FINANCE BANKS (SFB)

The Reserve Bank of India has decided to allow urban co-operative banks (UCB) to convert into small finance banks (SFB), a move aimed at bringing these entities into mainstream banking. It has been decided to allow voluntary transition of UCBs meeting the prescribed criteria into SFBs.

UCBs currently face regulation by both the RBI and the respective State governments. By turning into SFBs, they will be regulated only by the RBI.

The small finance bank will primarily undertake basic banking activities of

acceptance of deposits and lending to unserved and underserved sections including small business units, small and marginal farmers, micro and small industries and unorganized sector entities.

Take small deposits and disburse loans.

Distribute mutual funds, insurance products and other simple third-party financial products.

Lend 75% of their total adjusted net bank credit to priority sector.

Maximum loan size would be 10% of capital funds to single borrower, 15% to a group.

Minimum 50% of loans should be up to 25 lakhs.

Guidelines:

Promoter must contribute minimum 40% equity capital and should be brought down to 30% in 10 years.

Minimum paid-up capital would be Rs 100 cr.

Capital adequacy ratio should be 15% of risk weighted assets, Tier-I should be 7.5%.

Foreign shareholding capped at 74% of paid capital, FPIs cannot hold more than 24%.

Priority sector lending requirement of 75% of total adjusted net bank credit.

50% of loans must be up to Rs 25 lakh.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

LONG-RANGE S-400 TRIUMF

India has decided to purchase S-400 Triumph long-range air defence system from Russia.

Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman indicated that India would go ahead with the deal.

S-400 'Triumph' long-range air defence missile system is one of the most advanced long-range defence systems in the world.

It can destroy incoming hostile aircraft, stealth fighters, missiles and drones at ranges of up to 400-km.

It is referred to as SA-21 Growler by NATO.

India will be the second export customer, after China to purchase this most advance defence system.

DEFENDING THE AEROSPACE FRONTIER

Multi-spectral, multi-layered air defence network being slowly erected with a wide range of sensors and weapons to detect, track & destroy incoming aircraft, drones, missiles etc

<p>SPYDER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Israeli low-level quick-reaction missile system ➤ IAF to induct 4 Spyder systems from Feb 2017 onwards ➤ Army to induct its own Spyder units <p>RANGE 15KM</p>	<p>MEDIUM-RANGE SURFACE-TO-AIR MISSILE SYSTEM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Joint DRDO-Israeli Aerospace Industries project ➤ IAF to induct initial 9 MR-SAM squadrons from 2016-17 onwards for ₹10,076 crore ➤ Navy also to get it for its frontline warships for ₹2,606 crore <p>RANGE 70KM</p>	<p>LONG-RANGE S-400 TRIUMF</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ New-generation advanced Russian anti-aircraft/anti-missile system ➤ Defence Acquisitions Council to consider IAF proposal ➤ India likely to go in for 10-12 systems <p>RANGE 400KM</p>
<p>AKASH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Indigenous area defence missile system ➤ IAF already inducting 15 squadrons for ₹10,900 crore ➤ Army already inducting 2 regiments for ₹14,180 crore <p>RANGE 25KM</p>		


