

# National Current Affairs

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## **Government extends Phase-1 of FAME-India scheme by 6 months**

Ministry of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises has extended Phase-1 of FAME India Scheme to provide financial support to electric and hybrid vehicles by another six months till 30 September 2018 or till launch of phase-II. FAME India Scheme stands for Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of (Hybrid &) Electric Vehicles.

- The subsidy amount is yet to be decided but it will be sufficient for next six months. Earlier phase-I of FAME India Scheme was initially for two years viz. FY2015-16 and FY2016-17. But it was further extended for period of six month (till 31 March 2018) or till launching of Phase-II.
- The Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of (Hybrid &) Electric Vehicles (FAME) India was launched in 2015 under National Electric Mobility Mission (NEMM).
- It aims at promoting eco-friendly vehicles in the country. The scheme is being administered by the Heavy Industries Ministry.

## **Ayushman Bharat Scheme: First health & wellness centre inaugurated in Bijapur, Chhattisgarh**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the first Health and Wellness Centre in Bijapur, Chhattisgarh to mark the launch of Ayushman Bharat Yojana- National Health Protection Mission (AB-NHPM).

- The insurance scheme dubbed as Modicare was announced in Union Budget 2018 and was approved by Union Cabinet in March 2018 with budgetary support of Rs 10,500 crore. It is world's largest government-funded healthcare programme.
- It aims to target over 10 crore families belonging to poor and vulnerable population based on Socio Economic and Caste Census 2011 (SECC) database.
- It will cover of Rs. 5 lakh per family per year, taking care of almost all secondary care and tertiary care procedures. There will be no cap on family size and age in the scheme.
- Under it, the government aims to set up 1.5 lakh wellness centres by 2022 that will leverage on comprehensive primary health care for preventive, promotive and curative care.
- Benefits covered under it include pre and post-hospitalisation expenses. It will also cover all pre-existing conditions from beginning of policy. It will also pay defined transport allowance per hospitalization to beneficiary.

### **Government launches Gram Swaraj Abhiyan**

The Union Government launched “Gram Swaraj Abhiyan- Special Interventions”, a high-intensity outreach programme to deliver welfare schemes to select villages which need particular attention. It was launched on the occasion of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Jayanti (14th April).

- The abhiyan was launched on the lines of rural development schemes like Antyodaya based on principle of convergence and saturation.
- The initiative aims for 100% coverage of seven schemes launched by Central Government for eligible beneficiaries in three-week window from April 14 to May 5, 2018.
- The objective of abhiyan is to promote social harmony, reach out to poor rural households, obtain feedback on ongoing programmes, enrol in new initiatives, focus on doubling farmers’ income, enhance livelihood opportunities and re-emphasise national priorities such as cleanliness and strengthen Panchayati Raj institutions.

### **PM Modi arrives in Chhattisgarh**

On the occasion of Ambedkar Jayanti, Prime Minister Modi launched first of 1.5 lakh health and wellness centres, planned under the recently launched Ayushman Bharat Scheme, at Jangla village in Bijapur district of Chhattisgarh.

- The Prime Minister is expected to meet the residents of Naxal-hit Bastar district during his two-day visit to the state.
- The Prime Minister will also launch a scheme for the transformation of 'Aspirational Districts' from Jangala village and also address public there. He is also scheduled to visit Jangala Development Hub.

### **Pradhan Mantri Ujwala Yojana Launched in Telangana**

On April 14, 2018, on the occasion of 127th birth anniversary BR Ambedkar, Union Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister, Dharmendra Pradhan launched Pradhan Mantri Ujwala Yojana (PMUY) in Telangana.

- PMUY was launched in May 2016. The objective of this scheme is to provide deposit-free LPG connections with monetary assistance to women from below poverty line (BPL) households, thereby preventing health hazards emanating from usage of unclean cooking fuel and fossil fuel for domestic cooking purpose.
- PMUY has so far benefited more than 3.5 crore families.
- At the time of launching the scheme in Telangana, Mr. Pradhan stated that by the next year-end, over 20 lakh new gas connections will be provided in Telangana.

- He also added that beneficiaries of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Housing for the rural poor) and Antyodaya Anna Yojana (food scheme) will also be covered under the PMUY.

### **2nd India Mobile Congress to be held in New Delhi in October 2018**

The second edition of India Mobile Congress (IMC-2018) will be held in New Delhi on October 25-27, 2018.

- It will be organised by Department of Telecommunications (DoT) and Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI).
- IMC was launched in 2017 to provide platform for policy makers, industry and regulators to engage in meaningful deliberations to drive the future direction of telecom sector. The first IMC held in September 2017 was attended by around 2,000 delegates, 32,000 visitors, 152 speakers, 100 exhibitors and 100 start-ups.
- The theme of second edition of IMC is NEW DIGITAL HORIZONS Connect, Create, innovate.
- It expects participation of more than 200,000 professionals from telecom industry, encompassing 5G, start-up ecosystem, Internet of Things (IoT), Big Data, Artificial Intelligence (AI), Smart Cities and allied industry sectors.
- The exhibition would feature more than 1,300 exhibitors.

### **First regional conference of eastern states on Water Resources held in Kolkata**

The first regional conference of eastern states on Water Resources was held in Kolkata, West Bengal in a bid to address outstanding water resources issues. It was conveyed by Ministry of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation.

- The conference was aimed at addressing outstanding water resources issues, inter-state issues, intra and inter-basin issues among five eastern states of Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, and West Bengal.  
It was attended by Water Resources ministers and secretaries of the five states and chairman of Central Water Commission.
- It also deliberated on finding solution to mitigate intra and intra-basin issues relating to water resources in these five states.
- It also discussed on the issue of interlinking of rivers. Issues pertaining to unified and scientific control of all reservoirs, erosion on banks of river Bhagirathi and non-availability of 100% central grant for 19 anti-erosion work executed near international border with Bangladesh during 12th Plan period were also discussed.

### **ITDC bags Rs.550 crore project for developing infrastructure in Andhra Pradesh**

India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Hyderabad based firm M/s Suraas Impex Pvt. Ltd. for developing a Mega Tourism Destination project in Kakinada, Andhra Pradesh.

- The proposed Mega Tourism Destination project in Kakinada, Andhra Pradesh will be implemented at an estimated cost of Rs. 550 crore.
- ITDC will be the Consulting Agency as well as Implementing Agency for this project.
- ITDC has a commendable track record for executing such projects. So far, it has completed 67 infrastructure projects for Union Ministry of Tourism, Union Ministry of Culture and various State Governments.
- It also provides Engineering Consultancy Services through its division, Ashok Consultancy & Engineering Services.

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## **International Current Affairs**

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### **Kazakhstan, India agree to enhance energy cooperation**

The state of cooperation between Kazakhstan and India in the energy sector was discussed and analysed at the 16th International Energy Forum held in New Delhi from 10th to 12th April 2018.

- A delegation from Kazakhstan, led by the Vice-Minister of Energy, M. Mirzagaliyev, held talks with the Indian delegation led by Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas Dharmendra Pradhan.
- The talks were focused on “The future of global energy security – transition, technology, trade and investment”, and how Kazakhstan and India can improve cooperation in the energy sector within the framework of the IEF and the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF).

### **Generalized System of Preferences: US announces eligibility review of India**

The United States Trade Representative (USTR) has formally announced that it is reviewing eligibility of India, Indonesia and Kazakhstan in Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) based on concerns about countries' compliance with program.

- The reviews are based on Trump administration's new GSP country eligibility assessment process as well as GSP country eligibility petitions.

- For India, GSP country eligibility review is based on concerns related to its compliance with GSP market access criterion and two petitions related to same criterion.
- The petitions were filed by US dairy industry and US medical device industry requested review of India's GSP benefits, given Indian trade barriers affecting US exports in those sectors.

### **US adds India to the currency practices and macroeconomic policies monitoring list**

The US Department of Treasury has included India in the monitoring list of its major trading partners that merit close attention to their currency practices and macroeconomic policies.

- The list was part of semi-annual report on Macroeconomic and Foreign Exchange Policies of Major Trading Partners of the United States.
- The US Treasury Department report is required by Congress to identify countries that are trying to artificially manage value of their currency to gain trade advantage, for example by keeping exchange rate low to promote cheaper exports.
- It uses three parameters to determine currency manipulator: Bilateral trade surplus with US to be \$20 billion, current account surplus at 3% of country's GDP, and net purchases of foreign currency to 2% of country's GDP over a year.
- Once country is listed, it remains on it for at least two consecutive report cycles which is submitted to US Congress to help ensure that any improvement in performance versus criteria is durable and is not due to temporary factors. India is sixth addition to the watch list which comprises China, Japan, South Korea, Germany and Switzerland.
- US Treasury Department has asked these countries to implement economic reforms to manage their respective surpluses.

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## **Banking & Finance**

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### **Government raises NABARD's authorised capital to Rs 300 billion to aid rural economy**

The government has raised the authorised capital of NABARD (National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development) by 6 times to Rs 300 billion, aimed to increase its lending to the rural economy, as a part of the initiative to double farmers' income by 2022.

- A notification regarding this was released by the Finance Ministry on 10th April 2018. A bill in this regard was approved by Parliament at the start of this year.
- The increased authorised capital will enable NABARD to perform the commitments it has undertaken, especially with respect to Long Term Irrigation Fund and on-lending to cooperative banks.

- Also, it will help NABARD to expand its business and activities, resulting in promotion of integrated rural development, prosperity of rural areas and generation of more employment.

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## Business

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### **Reliance Jio raises Rs 3250 crore from Japanese banks to fund capex**

Reliance Jio has signed an agreement to raise nearly Rs 3,250 crore as samurai term loan from Japan-based banks.

- It has signed approximately JPY 53.5 billion samurai term loan with 7 year bullet maturity.
- The facility is guaranteed by Reliance Industries Limited. It will be used for funding Reliance Jio Infocomm Limited's ongoing capital expenditure.
- With exchange rate of 60 paise per Japanese yen, the loan value amounts to nearly Rs 3,248 crore.
- This deal is said to be the largest samurai loan (low interest loans from Japanese investors) for an Asian corporate company.
- Reliance Jio Infocomm Limited said that, the facility has been fully underwritten by Mizuho Bank, Ltd., MUFG Bank, Ltd. and Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation Singapore Branch. It added that, it will be launched into syndication soon.

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## Awards & Recognition

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### **65th National Film Awards**

The 65th National Film Awards for year 2017 were announced by Ministry of Information and Broadcasting on 13 April 2018.

- Dada Saheb Phalke Award: Vinod Khanna
- Best Feature Film: Village Rockstars (Assamese)
- Best Director: Jayaraj for Bhayanakam (Malayalam)
- Best Actress: Sridevi for 'Mom'
- Best Actor: Riddhi Sen for 'Nagar Kirtan'
- Best Action Direction: 'Baahubali 2: The Conclusion'
- Best Choreography: Ganesh Acharya for 'Toilet Ek Prem Katha'

- Best Special Effects: 'Baahubali 2: The Conclusion'
- Special Jury Award: Nagar Kirtan (Bengali)
- Best Lyrics: Muthurathinam
- Best Music Direction: AR Rahman for 'Katra Veliyidayi'
- Best Make-up Artist: Ram Rajak for 'Nagar Kirtan'
- Best Costume: Gobinda Mandal for 'Nagar Kirtan'
- Best Production Design: Santosh Rajan 'Take Off'
- Best Editing: Rima Das for 'Village Rockstar'
- Best Sound Design: 'Walking With The Wind'
- Best Audiography (Location Sound): Mallika Das, Village Rockstar'
- Best Screenplay Original: Thondimuthalum Driksakshiyum
- Best Screenplay Adapted: Bhayanakam
- Best Cinematography: Bhayanakam
- Best Female Playback Singer: Sashaa Tirupati for 'Katra Veliyidayi'
- Best Male Playback Singer: K.J Yesudas for song 'Poy Maranja Kalam' from 'Viswasapoorvam Mansoor'
- Best Child Artist: Anita Das for 'Village Rockstar'
- Best Children's Film: 'Mhorkya'
- Best Film on Environmental Conservation: 'Irada'
- Best Direction: Jayaraj for 'Bhayanakam'
- Best Feature Film on National Integration: Dhappa (Marathi)
- Best Debut Film of Director: 'Sinjar'
- Best Popular Film Providing Wholesome Entertainment: 'Baahubali 2: The Conclusion'
- Best Regional Films Special Mention:
  - Marathi: Mhorkya
  - Malayalam: Take Off
- Best Regional Films:
  - Hindi: Newton
  - Tulu: Paddayi
  - Malayalam: Thondimuthalum Driksakshiyum
  - Kannada: Hebbettu Ramakka
  - Telugu: Ghazi

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## Science & Technology

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**Pakistan successfully test fires enhanced version of Babur cruise missile**

Pakistan successfully test fired Babur Weapon System-1 (B), an enhanced version of indigenously-built Babur cruise missile.

- The cruise missile is important part of Pakistan's strategic deterrence.
- The missile has been named after the first Mughal emperor Babur. It can deliver conventional and non-conventional weapons with range of 700 kilometres.
- It incorporates advanced aerodynamics and avionics that can strike targets both at land and sea with high accuracy.

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## Sports

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### **17-year-old Pune swimmer double crosses Bangla Channel, sets world record**

Sampanna Ramesh Shelar, a 17-year-old swimmer from Pune has set a world record to double cross the Bangla Channel.

- Shelar, is the first person to swim to and fro from Saint Martin's Island Jetty to Teknaf in Bangladesh also known as the Bangla Channel
- He started swimming at about 5 am on Friday and completed the journey of 32.2 kilometers in 9 hours and 10 minutes.
- Ramesh Shelar has been practicing at Shark Aquatic Club situated at Pune and this is his maiden international record.

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## Books & Authors

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### **President of India Receives first copy of book 'Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar: Vyakti Nahin Sankalp'**

On 14th April 2018, President Ram Nath Kovind received the first copy of the book 'Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar: Vyakti Nahin Sankalp' from Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu, who formally released it at a function at Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi.

- The book covered the inspiring life of Dr Ambedkar and several dimensions of his ideas and personality.
- It also referenced how Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been inspired by the life and message of Dr Ambedkar.



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# Important Days

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## South Western Command celebrates 14th Raising Day – April 15

On 15th April 2018, South Western Command celebrated its 14th Raising Day.

- Tributes were paid to martyrs of Indian Army at a ceremony at 'Prerna Sthal' in Jaipur, Rajasthan, on the 14th raising day of South Western Army Command.
- Lt Gen Vijay Singh, chief of staff, South Western Command and other officers paid tributes. He said that, South Western Command is the seventh and the youngest command of the Indian Army.
- It was formed on 15th April 14 years ago. It is named as the Sapta Shakti. Its motto is Forever Victorious.
- Apart from performing its primary functions like operational preparedness, the command has also contributed to environmental protection, national integration, welfare of veterans, women and disabled soldiers, Mukhyamantri Jal Swablamban Abhiyan (MJSA) etc.

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