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1. NEDFI Announces New Scheme Atmanirbhar Hastshilpkar Scheme for the Artisans under Ministry of Doner (Dec. 11, 2021)

With the objective to develop the petty artisans of the North Eastern Region by providing financial assistance in the form of term loan for income generating activities for setting up / expansion / modernization / working capital requirement and other activities related to the sector **NEDFi has introduced Atmanirbhar Hastshilpkar Scheme** to the grass root Artisans of the region.

- The scheme was **officially launched on 9/12/2021**. During the launching ceremony, a total of **17 artisans** have been **provided with credit assistance of Rs.1 lakh per artisan**.
- The credit facility is collateral free and carries a subsidized interest rate of 6% p.a., which is repayable in 24 months.

For regular repayment, an incentive of 1% on the interest rate is provided, which will be refunded to the artisans on successful repayment of loans.

NEDFI

NEDFi is notified as a Public Financial Institution under Section 4A of the Companies Act 1956 and was registered as an NBFC in 2002 with RBI. NEDFi provides financial assistance to micro, small, medium and large enterprises for setting up industrial, infrastructure and agri-allied projects in the North Eastern Region of India and also Microfinance through MFI/NGOs. Besides financing, the Corporation offers Consultancy & Advisory services to the state Governments, private sectors and other agencies.

Ministry of Doner

The **Ministry of Development of the North-Eastern Region (MoDONER)** established in 2001 functions as the nodal department of the Central Government to deal with the matters relating to the planning, execution and monitoring of development schemes and projects in the North Eastern Region. Its vision is to accelerate the pace of socio-economic development of the Region so that it may enjoy growth parity with the rest of the country.

Headquarters: **Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi**

2. Bird Flu confirmed in Ducks (Dec. 10, 2021)

The Alappuzha district was put on alert, after an outbreak of bird flu was confirmed at Kunnumma South (ward 10) in Thakazhy grama panchayat.

Highlights:

- The **Animal Husbandry Department (AHD)** sent samples of dead birds to the **National Institute of High-Security Animal Disease (NIHSAD), Bhopal** for analyses, which tested positive for avian influenza.
- The presence of **H5N1 subtype of the Influenza A** virus was reported in ducks.
- Between 8,000 and 10,000 ducks were culled within a 1-km radius of the hotspot.
- Earlier this year, avian flu caused by the **H5N8 strain of the Influenza A** virus was detected from six places in **Kuttanad at Nedumudi, Thakazhy, Pallippad, Karuvatta, and Kainakary in Alappuzha district and Neendoor in Kottayam district.**

Bird Flu

Avian influenza (AI) is caused by an influenza type A virus that can infect poultry such as chickens, turkeys, pheasants, quail, domestic ducks, geese, and guinea fowl

Avian influenza (AI) viruses are classified by a combination of two groups of proteins: **hemagglutinin or “H” proteins**, and **neuraminidase or “N” proteins**,

In rare cases, it can affect humans. There are lots of different strains of bird flu virus. Most of them don't infect humans.

National Institute of High-Security Animal Diseases (NIHSAD)-ICAR

The National Institute of High Security Animal Diseases (NIHSAD) of Indian Council of Agricultural Research is a premier institute of India for research on exotic and emerging pathogens of animals.

- NIHSAD came into existence on **8th Aug., 2014** as an independent institute under ICAR from its original status as **High Security Animal Disease Laboratory (HSADL)**, a regional station of **Indian Veterinary Research Institute (IVRI), Izatnagar.**
- Director: **Dr. V.P. Singh**
- Headquarters: **Bhopal**

3. Kerala Moves Supreme Court against Water Release by Tamil Nadu (Dec. 10, 2021)

The Kerala Government has moved the Supreme Court seeking a direction to Tamil Nadu not to release a huge quantity of water in the early hours from the 126 year old Mullaperiyar dam, saying it causes heavy damage to the people living downstream of the dam.

The two judges' bench of Justice A.M. Khanwilkar and C.T. Ravikumar will hear the plea.

For more details on Mullaperiyar dam kindly refer to 1 December 2021 post.

4. Nagaland Government cancel Hornbill festival (Dec. 8, 2021)

Nagaland Government has cancelled the famous annual “Hornbill festival “ as a respect to the 14 villagers mistakenly killed by the army during an anti-insurgent operation in the Mon district of Nagaland on 4 December .

Chief Minister of Nagaland : Neiphiu Rio

Governor : Jagdish Mukhi

Hornbill festival

The Hornbill Festival is a celebration held every year from 1 to 10 December, in Nagaland to commemorate the founding of the State of Nagaland on 1 December 1963.

Nagaland was created after the partition of Assam.

To encourage inter-tribal interaction and to promote cultural heritage of Nagaland, the Government of Nagaland organizes the Hornbill Festival every year in the first week of December. The first festival was held in 2000.

The festival is named after the Indian hornbill bird , which is displayed in the folklore of most of the state's tribes.

5. KVIC Rolls Out Project RE-HAB in Assam to Prevent Elephant - Human Conflicts Using Tiny Bees (Dec. 6, 2021)

Following the success of its innovative Project **RE-HAB (Reducing Elephant-Human Attacks using Bees)** in Karnataka, **Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC)** has now replicated the project in Assam.

Under Project **RE-HAB, “Bee-fences” are created by setting up bee boxes in the passageways of elephants to block their entrance to human territories.** The boxes are connected with a string so that when elephants attempt to pass through, a tug or pull causes the bees to swarm the elephant herds and dissuade them from progressing further. It is a cost-effective way of reducing human-wild conflicts without causing any harm to the animals. It is scientifically recorded that elephants are annoyed by the honey bees.

- Elephants also fear that the bee swarms can bite their sensitive inner side of the trunk and eyes. The collective buzz of the bees is annoying to elephants that force them to return.

6. State News (Dec. 5, 2021)

Kerala

1. Norovirus Cases in Thrissur

Norovirus cases have been reported for the first time in India from Kerala.

Norovirus:

Norovirus causes **inflammation of the stomach or intestines**. This is called **acute gastroenteritis**.

2. Kerala accuses Tamilnadu of causing flood

Kerala government has accused Tamil Nadu of releasing 5000 cusecs of water to the Periyar River from Mullaperiyar reservoir, without any sufficient warning to Kerala, causing flood in Vallakadavu, Vandiperiyar, Chappathu and Upputhara area of Kerala.

Rajasthan**3. “Back to work” scheme of Rajasthan Government for women:**

The **Congress government of Rajasthan** has come up with a **unique scheme to provide regular employment to women** who have had to quit their earlier jobs due to personal/family issues.

Delhi**4. Role of Stubble burning in Delhi Pollution**

As per **SAFAR (System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research)** data, the average contribution of stubble burning in neighboring states of Punjab, Haryana and Western Uttar Pradesh to Delhi's PM 2.5 level in November was 14.6%.

Telangana**5. Padma Shri awardee ‘Sirivennela’ Seetharama Sastry passed away.**

Veteran Telugu film lyricist '**Sirivennela' Sitarama Sastry (66)**, a recipient of the Padma Shri and numerous other awards, died due to lung cancer-related complications on November 30.

Uttarakhand**6. Uttarakhand government frees the temples from government control**

The Uttarakhand Government took back the **The Uttarakhand Char Dham Devasthanam Management Act, 2019** that sought to extend control over **51 temples** in Uttarakhand and have been opposed tooth and nail by their seers and managements.

7. PM inaugurated Vyasi Hydroelectric Project (Dec. 5, 2021)

- The Prime Minister inaugurated the 120 MW Vyasi Hydroelectric Project, built over Yamuna river at the cost of over 1,700 crore rupees.
- Located in Dehradun district, the Vyasi power project is a run-of-the-river scheme on the Yamuna.
- It is operated by Uttarakhand Jal Vidyut Nigam Limited

8. Uttarakhand government frees the temples from government control (Dec. 1, 2021)

The Uttarakhand Government took back the **The Uttarakhand Char Dham Devasthanam Management Act, 2019** that sought to extend control over **51 temples** in Uttarakhand and have been opposed tooth and nail by their seers and managements.

About Char-Dham

Char Dham means four religious places. Char Dham is located in **Garhwal Himalayas range of Uttarakhand**. It is a circuit of hindu religious pilgrimage

It includes :

Badrinath :

It is dedicated to Lord Vishnu. The head priest, or Rawal, is traditionally a Nambudri Brahmin chosen from Kerala. It is located in the Chamoli district of Uttarakhand

Kedarnath

It is dedicated to Lord Shiva .It is located in the Rudraprayag district of Uttarakhand .

Gangotri

It is in Uttarkashi district of Uttarakhand . It is on the bank of river Bhagirathi.

It is believed that goddess Ganga descended from heaven to this place.

The Ganga river at its origin is called Bhagirathi which originates from gomukh in the Gangotri glacier. It merges with Alaknanda river at Devprayag and then it is called Ganga .

Yamunotri

It is located in the Uttarkashi district of Uttarakhand.

It is the source of Yamuna river and a seat of goddess Yamuna.

9. Role of Stubble burning in Delhi Pollution (Dec. 1, 2021)

As per **SAFAR (System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research)** data, the average contribution of stubble burning in neighboring states of Punjab, Haryana and Western Uttar Pradesh to Delhi's PM 2.5 level in November was 14.6%,. The highest contribution of stubble burning to PM2.5 in Delhi for a day was 58% in 2018, 43% in 2019, and 46% in 2020.

The number of effective fire counts in OctoberNovember (the stubble burning season) according to SAFAR data is around 77,000, the highest in four years.

Stubble Burning

Stubble Burning is the process of setting fire to the straw stubble that remains after grains like paddy and wheat are harvested. It is often preferred by farmers because it's cheaper and

easier than other methods, helps to combat pests and also reduces soil nitrogen tie-up. But on the negative side it releases harmful particulate matter and greenhouse gases in the atmosphere causing severe AQI(Air Quality Index) deterioration in Delhi every winter during October –November.

Major pollutants in Delhi

Ozone (O₃): Also referred to as ground-level ozone. This is a colorless gas that forms above the earth's surface and is created by a chemical reaction when two primary pollutants (volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and nitrogen oxides (NO_x)) react in sunlight and stagnant air.

Particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}): Particulate matter is a mixture of solid and liquid droplets suspended in air and are distinguished by their size. When the skies are hazy, it means there is a high concentration of particulate matter (PM) in the air. The PM is categorised as PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}. PM₁₀ particles are less than or equal to 10 micrometers in diameter. Whereas, PM_{2.5} particles are less than or equal to 2.5 micrometers in diameter. 95% of emissions from diesel, petrol, and natural gas combustion, open waste burning, biomass burning, coal combustion, falls under PM_{2.5}.

Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂): Another dangerous air pollutant is a mixture of gases called nitrogen oxides. These groups of gases are odorless and react in the air to form particulate matter (PM) and ozone. Vehicles, power plants and fuel burning are the major source of nitrogen oxides.

Carbon monoxide (CO): This gas is highly toxic while at the same time being odorless and colourless. This gas constitutes one of the major outdoor pollutants. The burning of fossil fuels like diesel and petrol caused the emission of this gas.

Sulphur dioxide (SO₂): The highly reactive gas called sulphur dioxide is released due to the burning of diesel in vehicles. The Sulphur dioxide then reacts with air to form particulate matter and also lead to smog.

SAFAR(System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research)

Under the scheme “**Metropolitan Advisories for Cities for Sports, Tourism (Metropolitan Air Quality and Weather Services)**”, Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), Govt. of India, has introduced a major national initiative, “**System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research**” known as “**SAFAR**” for greater metropolitan cities of India to provide location specific information on air quality in near real time and its forecast 1-3 days in advance for the first time in India. It is developed by **Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, Pune**, along with partner institutions namely **India Meteorological Department (IMD)** and **National Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting (NCMRWF)**.

10. “Back to work” scheme of Rajasthan Government for women (Dec. 1, 2021)

The Congress government of **Rajasthan** has come up with a unique scheme to provide regular employment to women who have had to quit their earlier jobs due to personal/family issues.

Key Highlights

- A unique Employment scheme was announced by Rajasthan Chief Minister **Mr. Ashok Gehlot**.
- Name of the Scheme: **“Back to Work”**.
- Aim: **“To provide employment to 15,000 women in next three years”**.
- **Priority will be given to the women who are divorcees, widows and victims to the violence.**
- **Skill training programs** will be organised by **Rajasthan Corporate Limited** to make women employable.
- **“Work from Home”** opportunity will be provided to the women who are not able to go to a regular workplace.

Rajasthan

- **Rajasthan (northern Indian State) is the largest Indian state by area and seventh by population.**
- Capital: **Jaipur**
- Largest City: **Jaipur**
- Folk Dance: **Ghoomar**
- Chief Minister: **Ashok Gehlot**