Source : www.pib.nic.in Date : 2019-01-01

13 CENTRALLY ASSISTED STATE FOOD CRAFT INSTITUTES ARE CURRENTLY FUNCTIONAL IN THE COUNTRY: SHRI K J ALPHONS

Relevant for: World & Indian Geography | Topic: Factors responsible for location of Tertiary sector Industries incl. Tourism in world & India and related issues

Ministry of Tourism

13 centrally assisted State Food Craft Institutes are currently functional in the country: Shri K J Alphons

Posted On: 31 DEC 2018 4:49PM by PIB Delhi

There are 13 centrally financial assisted State Food Craft Institutes (FCIs) which are presently functional. State/UT wise list of these 13 FCIs is as below.

State wise details of functional FCIs:

Sl. No.	State	Name of the Institute
1	Assam	Food Craft Institute, Nagaon
2	Himachal Pradesh	Food Craft Institute, Dharamsala
3	Jammu & Kashmir	Food Craft Institute, Leh
4		Food Craft Institute, Jammu
5	Karnataka	Food Craft Institute, Mysuru*
6	Madhya Pradesh	Food Craft Institute, Jabalpur
7		Food Craft Institute, Rewa
8	Meghalaya	Food Craft Institute, Tura*
9	Punjab	Food Craft Institute, Hoshiarpur
10	Rajasthan	Food Craft Institute, Ajmer
11		Food Craft Institute, Udaipur
12	Uttar Pradesh	Food Craft Institute, Aligarh
13	West Bengal	Food Craft Institute, Darjeeling

** Functional from temporary campus building.*

Setting up of a new Food Craft Institute at Deoghar in Jharkhand was sanctioned by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India in 2017-18. No proposal to start the teaching session at Food Craft Institute, Deogarh has been received from the State Government of Jharkhand.

This information was given by Shri K. J. Alphons, Union Minister of State (I/C) for Tourism in a

written reply in Lok Sabha today.

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NB/JP

(Release ID: 1557948) Visitor Counter : 76

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Source : www.pib.nic.in Date : 2019-01-01

HRD MINISTRY HAS TAKEN SEVERAL INITIATIVES TO PROMOTE NATIONAL INTEGRATION UNDER EK BHARAT SHRESTHA BHARAT

Relevant for: World & Indian Geography | Topic: Factors responsible for location of Tertiary sector Industries incl. Tourism in world & India and related issues

Ministry of Human Resource Development

HRD Ministry has taken several initiatives to promote National Integration under Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat

Posted On: 31 DEC 2018 6:22PM by PIB Delhi

The Government of India has launched an initiative Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat (EBSB) to foster national integration by a co-ordinated mutual engagement process between States, Union Territories, Central Ministries, Educational Institutions and general public through linguistic, literary, cultural, sports, tourism and other forms of people-to-people exchanges. The States/Union Territories have been grouped in 16 pairs. Detailed background of the scheme, its objectives, implementation strategy / methodology and the pairing of the States/Union Territories are available in www.ekbharat.gov.in. No separate budget allocation has been made for this scheme.

States have expressed their keen interest in being part of the Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat scheme. They have signed MoUs with their paired States/ Union Territories and have been conducting various events covering a gamut of activities in the educational, cultural, geographical, social , tourism, sports, youth-related activities and sharing of best practices, encompassing a wide range of subjects under the programme with an integrative content relating to their paired States/Union Territories. Various States/UTs have organized more than hundred Culturaland Literal Exchange programmes involving the people and artists of the paired States, organized a large number of Food Festivals, programmes such as National Integration Day, Run for Unity, Hornbill Festival, DeepotsavFestival, GeetaUtsav, Bharat Parv, Art Yatra, SadkalGujarat,KabirFestival, Gir Monsoon Festival, BastarMahotsav,Tawang Festival, Cherry Blossom Festival etc. More than 200 Higher Educational Institutions, more than 250 schools under CBSE, more than 100 JawaharNavodayaVidyalayas, more than 40 Sainik schools and schools under KendriyaVidyalayaSangathan have organized more than 1000 programmes under Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat. Ministry of Tourism has been organizing various Food festivals through Institutes of Hotel Management. It has also organized Bharat Parv and ParyatanParv involving the various State Governments. Other Ministries like Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Railwayshave also been conducting a large number of programmes. Department of School Education & Literacy has initiated BhashaSangam, a celebration of Linguistic Diversity which marks the appreciation of the unique symphonyof languages of our country from 20th November to 21st December, 2018.

A Group of Ministers headed by Minister of Human Resource Development periodically reviews the steps taken by the States/UTs and concerned Ministries/Departments to bridge the cultural gap in the country and enhance interaction between people living in different States.

This information was given by the Minister of State (HRD), Dr. Satya Pal Singh today in a written

reply to a Lok Sabha question.

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NB/AKJ/LS-3006

(Release ID: 1557970) Visitor Counter : 105

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Source : www.indianexpress.com Date : 2019-01-02

INTEGRATING THE ISLAND

Relevant for: World & Indian Geography | Topic: Physical Geography of Asia incl. important Geopolitical regions

C. Raja Mohan is Director, Institute of South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore, and the consulting editor on foreign affairs for 'The Indian Express'. Before his association with The Indian Express began in 2004, Raja Mohan worked for The Hindu as its Washington correspondent and Strategic Affairs Editor. He was a distinguished fellow at the Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi. In his academic avatar, Raja Mohan has been professor of South Asian Studies at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, and the Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. As a think tanker, he worked at the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses and Centre for Policy Research in New Delhi. He is on the editorial board of various international affairs journals and is affiliated with the Institute of South Asian Studies, Singapore; the Lowy Institute, Sydney; and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington DC. He is the author, most recently, of Samudra Manthan: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Indo-Pacific.

Prime Ministers of India rarely travel to the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Narendra Modi's visit to the islands over the weekend is only the fourth over the last many decades. Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi visited in 1984 and 1986 respectively and Manmohan Singh went there in early 2005 to review the tsunami relief operations.

For political Delhi, the island chain was at best a remote outpost acquired by default from the departing British Raj. That attitude filtered down the entire system of governance in Delhi. For India's continentalist security establishment, weighed down by difficult land borders to the north and the west, the Indian Ocean is a distant domain. The nation's island territories — the Andaman and Nicobar Islands to the east and the Lakshadweep to the west — barely figure on Delhi's mental map.

Modi's visit will hopefully begin to change India's national narrative on the Andamans. Three imperatives beckon. The first is about history. Modi's decision to time his visit with the 75th anniversary of Subhas Chandra Bose flying the tricolour in Port Blair has helped highlight the role of Andaman and Nicobar Islands in India's freedom struggle. But it should also draw attention to the complexities of India's pre-Independence engagement with the world in the 20th century.

The PM's immediate political motivation may be seen as part of the BJP's strategy to claim the non-Nehruvian legacy of the Indian National Congress. But the focus on Bose inevitably draws attention to the fragmented response of the national movement to the Second World War. The Indian National Congress, led by Mahatma Gandhi, refused to support the British war effort and opposed the mobilisation of Indian resources to defeat the Axis powers. The Communist Party of India, which initially declared Second World War as an "inter-imperialist war", chose to actively support the war effort when Nazi Germany invaded Soviet Russia in 1941. Bose, in contrast, chose to align with Berlin and Tokyo to fight the British colonial rule. His Azad Hind government in Port Blair was founded on imperial Japan's occupation of the Andaman Islands. Japan's support for Bose was part of Tokyo's mobilisation of Asian nationalism against European colonial powers.

Today it is not a question of judging the different political choices that the Indian leaders made

during the War. All of them were for early Indian liberation from the British rule. But they saw the relationship between ends and means somewhat differently. They certainly did not agree on the appropriate balance between the struggle for independence and the larger question of defeating fascism.

Rather than sweep this complex story under the carpet, India must take a dispassionate look at these divisions. Delhi should also reflect on how the political split diminished emerging India's leverage with the great powers. The Muslim League's unreserved support for the War gave it considerable leverage in the domestic politics of undivided India and translated after Partition into enormous goodwill for Pakistan with Britain, US and the West.

Second, the story of Bose, Japan and the Azad Hind government underlines the enduring geopolitical significance of the Andaman Island chain and its waters. In the 17th and 18th centuries, they were the site of contestation between European colonial powers — Portugal, the Netherlands, France and Britain. After the Napoleonic wars in Europe, the Indian Ocean turned into a British Lake through the 19th century.

Britain, which occupied the islands at the end of the 18th century in search of a permanent military base, put them on the back burner in the 19th. From a potential platform for power projection, the islands became a penal colony for the Raj. The challenge for Britain came this time from the first Asian great power in the modern age — Japan. The imperial Japanese forces raced through Malaya, ousted Britain from Singapore, Burma and the Andaman Islands.

It took the combined efforts of the British Empire , the US and nationalist China to reverse Japanese aggression. After the Second World War, the partition of India and the Cold War between America and Russia, the Andamans became marginal to the new geopolitics. Today as a rising China projects its economic and military power into the Indian Ocean, any strategy for regional balance would necessarily involve the economic and military development of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. As in the Second World War, so in the current juncture, it would involve considerable cooperation between India and its major strategic partners.

That in turn leads us to the third imperative — of ending the deliberate isolation of the island chain and promoting economic development, tighter integration with the mainland, strengthening military infrastructure, regional connectivity and international collaboration. The Modi government has initiated some important steps in that direction, including on internet connectivity, visa liberalisation, tourism, building new ports, agreements for cooperation with neighbouring countries in South East Asia.

Finally, any large-scale development would inevitably raise questions about preserving the pristine environment of the Andamans and protecting its vulnerable indigenous populations. As the NDA government seeks to accelerate economic development and enhance the military potential of the Andamans, there will be many challenges ahead. But none of them are unique to India.

As it tries to turn the outpost in the Andamans into a strategic hub, Delhi can draw much from the wealth of international experience on the sustainable transformation of fragile island territories.

The writer is director, Institute of South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore and contributing editor on international affairs for
The Indian Express

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Source : www.thehindu.com Date : 2019-01-02

GANGA WATER QUALITY HAS IMPROVED, GOVT. TELLS RS

Relevant for: World & Indian Geography | Topic: Distribution of key natural resources - Water Resources incl. Rivers & related issues in world & India

Photo: Google Maps

The water quality of the Ganga in 2018 has “improved over last year”, according to a written statement in the Rajya Sabha on Monday by junior Water Resources Minister Satyapal Singh.

The statement said “dissolved oxygen” levels had improved at 39 locations, and “biological oxygen demand” (BOD) levels and faecal coliform had decreased at 42 and 47 locations respectively. These three parameters are a proxy for both the presence of aquatic life as well as microbes that may be harmful to these biota, and are conventionally used to assess the quality of the river.

These improved stretches of the river included places such as Rishikesh, the Har-Ki-Pauri Ghat at Haridwar; Ranighat in Kanpur; Tarighat in Ghazipur; Narora in Bulandshahr; Kachhla Ghat in Badaun, Aligarh; Buxar, Mokama and Munger — all in Bihar; Uluberia, Dakshineshwar and Diamond Harbour in West Bengal.

The government said 5,100 crore, of the 20,000 crore allotted to clean the Ganga, had been spent under the Namami Gange Programme from 2014-15 to 2018-19.

Last year, 1,725.86 crore had been spent till December 26, taking the cumulative expenditure to 5,187.37 crore.

More than half the funds had been directed towards making new sewage treatment plants (STP) and effluent treatment plants (ETP), as well as making sub-par plants work better. From April 2014 to March 2018, a total of 145 projects were sanctioned at an estimated cost of 15,074.76 crore.

However, independent experts have said the cleaning efforts were half-hearted and there was little effort to ensure that the river’s voluminous flow in the upper stretches of Uttarakhand is maintained downstream.

The great Indian bustard, that narrowly missed being christened India’s national bird, is now teetering on its last legs. Several threats — including

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Source : www.pib.nic.in Date : 2019-01-03

CABINET APPROVES CONTINUATION OF UMBRELLA SCHEME FOR "FAMILY WELFARE AND OTHER HEALTH INTERVENTIONS" DURING 2017-18 TO 2019-20

Relevant for: Government Policies & Welfare Schemes | Topic: Rights & Welfare of Women – Schemes & their Performance, Mechanisms, Laws Institutions and Bodies

Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)

Cabinet approves Continuation of Umbrella scheme for "Family Welfare and Other Health Interventions" during 2017-18 to 2019-20

Posted On: 02 JAN 2019 5:46PM by PIB Delhi

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has given its approval for continuation of five schemes under the "Umbrella Scheme for Family Welfare and Other Health Interventions" during the Fourteenth Finance Commission period 2017-18 to 2019-20.

Expenditure:

An overall outlay of Rs. 2381.84 crore for the scheme will be spent during the Fourteenth Finance Commission period 2017-18 to 2019-20 and would be funded 100% by Central Government Budgetary support.

Benefits:

Components of, Social Marketing of Contraceptives, Free Supply of Contraceptives are specifically targeted towards low income group people. However, the overall scheme is not restricted to any particular group or category and has a mandate to cover the population throughout India.

Impact:

The five schemes listed in the proposal are crucial to attaining the goals and objectives laid out in National Health Policy (NHP) 2017, and international commitments in the form of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SNA scheme has a very ambitious target of improving health seeking behaviour of the population through increased awareness and enhanced uptake of health services. The other components as HSHR would assist in keeping a tab on the progress of

entire set of health programmes/schemes run by Government of India, assisting in timely course corrections. The free and social marketing of contraceptives will enable better child and mother health, besides population stabilisation.

Implementation strategy and targets:

The target is to support the key goals of the National Health Policy 2017 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to which India is a signatory. The attempt through Media / IEC outreach is to move from care for sickness to the concept of wellness by using 360 degree approach in conventional and social media. The target of the free distribution and social marketing of contraceptives is to improve the Modern Contraceptive Prevalence Rate (mCPR), help Family Planning and reach population stabilization. The target for NFHS is to provide reliable data on all health indicators.

All the five schemes are Central Sector Schemes with 100% funding from Central Government. These are as follows:

a. SwasthaNagrikAbhiyan(SNA): For dissemination of information on health issues to create awareness among citizens of India of ail age/sex/locations and appropriately influence their health seeking behavior to encourage healthy lifestyles and empower the citizens. SNA has been approved, with an estimated outlay of Rs. 1030.15 crore for three years.

b. Free Supply of Contraceptives: For providing free supply of contraceptivesincluding condoms, Oral Contraceptive Pills, Pregnancy Test Kits, othercontraceptives, etc. to States with a view to improve Maternal and Child Health andachieving population stabilization.

c. MIS Scheme now proposed as Health Surveys and Health Research (HSHR): For sourcing of data on population, health and nutrition for India and its States including through periodically conducted National Family Health Survey, which is one of the largest surveys of its kind worldwide. The NFHS provides valuable data for policy and programmes right up to the district level.

d. Social Marketing of Contraceptives: For branding, attractively packaging, marketing arid selling of products and services related to Family Planning for low-income groups at affordable prices.

e. Population Research Centres (PRCs): For third party evaluation of the scheme on PRCs and specially of those centres which are being

considered for continuation will be carried out.

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AKT/SH

(Release ID: 1558207) Visitor Counter : 307

Read this release in: Marathi

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Source : www.pib.nic.in Date : 2019-01-04

PROMOTION OF NORTH EAST INDIAN TRIBAL CULTURE

Relevant for: World & Indian Geography | Topic: Factors responsible for location of Tertiary sector Industries incl. Tourism in world & India and related issues

Ministry of Development of North-East Region

Promotion of North East Indian tribal culture

Posted On: 03 JAN 2019 3:40PM by PIB Delhi

As per information available, an amount of Rs.23.50 crore has been sanctioned for construction of a Regional Convention Centre at North East Zone Cultural Centre (NEZCC) Complex, Dimapur. Out of an amount of Rs.13.00 crore released to NEZCC, Rs.5.72 crore has been spent towards construction of the Convention Centre. Under Tagore Cultural Complex Scheme, from 2013 till date, an amount of Rs.41.65 crore has been allocated and Rs.22.50 crore spent for construction of Tagore cultural complexes at Chedema, Aboi, and Dimapur in Nagaland and at Raga and Upper Subansiri District in Arunachal Pradesh.

Government has set up Tribal Research Institutes (TRIs) in Sikkim, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram during 2016-17 and 2018-19, which, *inter alia*, function as a body of knowledge & research and preservation of tribal art and culture. From 2014-15 till date, Rs.86.18 crore have been provided to the TRIs in North East Region to carry out various activities *viz*. research studies, evaluation studies, organization of training/seminar/workshop, organization of tribal festivals, baseline survey, publications, documentaries/documentation, organization of exchange visits etc., catering to promotion of tribal culture.

In addition, North Eastern Council also provided funds for projects aimed towards promotion of the cultural heritage in the North Eastern Region, including for allotment of land for construction of cultural and information centre in Delhi. New projects are considered based on proposals received as per the extant guidelines, within the overall availability of resources.

This information was provided by the Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Development of North-Eastern Region (DoNER), MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh in written reply to a question in Rajya Sabha today.

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BB/NK/PK/SS/sk

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Source : www.pib.nic.in Date : 2019-01-05

CYCLONIC STORM “PABUK” OVER SOUTH CHINA SEA AND ITS EMERGENCE INTO ANDAMAN SEA ON 05TH JANUARY 2019: PRE-CYCLONE WATCH FOR ANDAMAN ISLANDS

Relevant for: World & Indian Geography | Topic: Important Geophysical Phenomenon – Tropical Cyclones

Ministry of Earth Science

Cyclonic storm “PABUK” over South China Sea and its emergence into Andaman Sea on 05th January 2019: Pre-cyclone watch for Andaman Islands

Posted On: 03 JAN 2019 6:53PM by PIB Delhi

A cyclonic storm “PABUK” lay centred at 0830 hours IST of 03rd January 2019 over south China Sea near latitude 6.0°N and longitude 105.0° E, about 1500 km east-southeast of Port Blair. It is very likely to move west-northwestwards and emerge into Andaman Sea around the forenoon of 05th January 2019. Thereafter it is very likely to move northwestwards and cross Andaman Islands around evening/ night of 06th January. Thereafter, it is very likely to move north-northwestwards and then recurve northeastwards towards Myanmar coast and weaken further during 7th-8th January, 2019.

Warnings:

i. **Heavy rainfall warning**

- Rainfall at many places with heavy falls at isolated places likely to commence over Andaman Islands from 5th January evening. Intensity is very likely to increase with rainfall at most places and heavy to very heavy rainfall at a few places on 6th and at isolated places on 7th.

(ii) Wind warning

Squally wind speed reaching 40-50 kmph gusting to 60 kmph is likely to commence over Andaman Sea along and off south Myanmar and Thailand coast from 4th January evening. It is very likely to increase gradually becoming 55-65 kmph gusting to 75 over Andaman Sea on 5th and over Andaman Islands, Andaman Sea and adjoining areas of eastcentral and southeast Bay of Bengal on 6th and 7th.

(iii) Sea condition

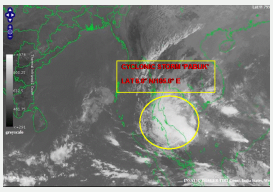
The sea condition will be rough to very rough over Andaman Sea along and off south Myanmar and Thailand coast from 4th January evening. It is very likely to become very rough to high over Andaman Sea on 5th and over Andaman Sea and adjoining areas of eastcentral and southeast Bay of Bengal on 6th and 7th.

(iv) Fishermen Warning

The fishermen are advised not to venture into Andaman Sea during 4th-7th and into adjoining southeast and eastcentral Bay of Bengal during 6-7th January.

The system is under continuous surveillance and concerned state governments are being informed regularly.

Kindly visit www.imd.gov.in and www.rsmcnewdelhi.imd.gov.in for updates on the system.



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GK/nb

Read this release in: Hindi

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Source : www.thehindu.com Date : 2019-01-07

DARK MATTER CAN BE MOVED AROUND: STUDY

Relevant for: World & Indian Geography | Topic: The Earth, its Evolution and Origin of Life on Earth

Image shows the gamma-ray signal from the computer simulation of annihilations of dark matter particles. Photo credit: NASA Goddard/Jeremy Schnittman

In a first, scientists have found evidence that the mysterious dark matter — believed to make up most of the mass of the universe — can be heated up and moved around, as a result of star formation in galaxies. The findings, published in *Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society*, provide the first observational evidence for the effect known as ‘dark matter heating’, offering clues as to what makes up dark matter.

Scientists from the University of Surrey in the U.K., Carnegie Mellon University in the U.S. and ETH Zurich in Switzerland set out to hunt for evidence for dark matter at the centres of nearby dwarf galaxies.

Dwarf galaxies are small, faint galaxies that are typically found orbiting larger galaxies like our own Milky Way. They may hold clues that could help us to better understand the nature of dark matter.

Dark matter is thought to make up most of the mass of the universe. However since it does not interact with light in the same way as normal matter, it can only be observed through its gravitational effects.

The key to studying it may however lie in how stars are formed in these galaxies.

When stars form, strong winds can push gas and dust away from the heart of the galaxy. As a result, the galaxy’s centre has less mass, which affects how much gravity is felt by the remaining dark matter.

With less gravitational attraction, the dark matter gains energy and migrates away from the centre, an effect called ‘dark matter heating’

The team of astrophysicists measured the amount of dark matter at the centres of 16 dwarf galaxies with very different star formation histories.

Scientists found that galaxies that stopped forming stars long ago had higher dark matter densities at their centres than those that are still forming stars today. This supports the theory that the older galaxies had less dark matter heating.

“We found a truly remarkable relationship between the amount of dark matter at the centres of these tiny dwarfs, and the amount of star formation they have experienced over their lives,” said Justin Read from the University of Surrey.

“The dark matter at the centres of the star-forming dwarfs appears to have been ‘heated up’ and pushed out,” said Read.

The findings provide a new constraint on dark matter models: dark matter must be able to form dwarf galaxies that exhibit a range of central densities, and those densities must relate to the amount of star formation.

“This study may be the “smoking gun” evidence that takes us a step closer to understanding what dark matter is. Our finding that it can be heated up and moved around helps to motivate searches for a dark matter particle,” said Matthew Walker, a professor at Carnegie Mellon University.

The team hopes to expand on this work by measuring the central dark matter density in a larger sample of dwarfs, pushing to even fainter galaxies, and testing a wider range of dark matter models.

China’s Chang’e-4 lunar rover scripted history on January 3 when it made the first-ever soft landing on the far side of the moon and sent back

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Source : www.pib.nic.in Date : 2019-01-08

FINAL ‘SITE POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT REPORT’ PREPARED FOR 4 ISLANDS IN ANDAMAN & NICOBAR AND 5 ISLANDS IN LAKSHADWEEP: SHRI K J ALPHONS

Relevant for: World & Indian Geography | Topic: Islands & Coral Reefs, chganges therein and in Flora & Fauna and the Effects of such changes

Ministry of Tourism

Final ‘Site Potential Development Report’ prepared for 4 islands in Andaman & Nicobar and 5 islands in Lakshadweep: Shri K J Alphons

Posted On: 07 JAN 2019 5:30PM by PIB Delhi

The holistic development of identified Islands in the country has been taken up by NITI Aayog. The final Site Potential Development Report has been prepared for four islands in Andaman & Nicobar (A&N) namely Smith, Ross, Long and Aves Islands and five islands in Lakshadweep namely Minicoy, Bangaram, Thinnakara, Cheriyam and Suheli Islands. **Tourism based projects have been identified in Long, Aves, Smith and Neil Islands of A&N and Minicoy, Kadamat and Suheli Islands of Lakshadweep** while according priority to air and sea connectivity and the construction of airport at Minicoy in Lakshadweep by the Indian Air Force.

The Ministry of Tourism has also sanctioned a project for Rs. 42.19 Crore during 2016-17 for Development of Coastal Circuit (Long Island-Ross Smith Island- Neil Island- Havelock Island-Baratang Island-Port Blair) in Andaman & Nicobar under the Coastal thematic circuit of Swadesh Darshan Scheme for development of island tourism in the country.

Islands Development Agency (IDA) has been constituted on 1st June, 2017 under the Chairmanship of the Home Minister, Government of India to oversee the comprehensive development of Islands. Further, a Committee has been constituted in NITI Aayog to recommend a road map for harnessing the development potential of Little Andaman and Great Nicobar Islands in Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

This information was given by Shri K. J. Alphons, Union Minister of State (I/C) for Tourism in a written reply in Lok Sabha today.

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NB/JP

Read this release in: Tamil

END

Source : www.pib.nic.in Date : 2019-01-11

SIX STATES TO SIGN AGREEMENT FOR RENUKAJI MULTIPURPOSE DAM PROJECT TOMORROW

Relevant for: World & Indian Geography | Topic: Distribution of key natural resources - Water Resources incl. Rivers & related issues in world & India

Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation

Six States to Sign Agreement for Renukaji Multipurpose Dam Project Tomorrow

The Dam will Augment Water Availability for Delhi, Haryana, UP, HP, Uttarakhand and Rajasthan

Concession Agreement also to be Signed for Namami Gange Projects in Prayagraj

Posted On: 10 JAN 2019 5:32PM by PIB Delhi

An agreement for Renukaji Dam Multipurpose Project will be signed here tomorrow among six states- Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi, Rajasthan and Uttarakhand in the presence of Union Minister for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Road Transport & Highways and Shipping Shri Nitin Gadkari. All the six Chief Ministers will also be present on the occasion.

In addition to this a concession agreement will also be signed for Namami Gange projects for the city of Prayagraj, under Hybrid Annuity Mode and One City One Operator Concept. The Prayagraj Agreement will be signed between U.P. Jal Nigam, NMCG and Prayagraj Water Pvt. Ltd.

Renukaji Multi Purpose Project:

Three storage projects are proposed to be constructed on the river Yamuna and two of its tributaries - Tons and Giri in the hilly regions of Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh of Upper Yamuna Basin. These include Lakhwar project on river Yamuna in Uttarakhand , Kishau on river Tons in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh and Renukaji on river Giri in Himachal Pradesh.

These three projects were identified as National Projects in 2008 under which 90% funding of the cost of irrigation & drinking water component will be provided by the Govt. of India as central assistance and the rest 10% cost of the irrigation and drinking water component will be borne by the beneficiary states.

In continuation to it, an agreement in respect of sharing of cost and benefits of Lakhwar MPP amongst basin States viz. Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and NCT of Delhi was signed by the Chief Ministers of these states in the presence of Union

Minister, Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation at New Delhi on 28th August, 2018. A similar agreement is scheduled to be signed tomorrow for the implementation of Renukaji Dam Project.

Renukaji Dam project has been conceived as a storage project on Giri River (tributary of river Yamuna) in Sirmour District of Himachal Pradesh. The project envisages construction of 148 M high rock filled dam for supply of 23 cumec water to Delhi and other basin states. The project will also generate 40 MW of power during peak flow. The project is proposed to be executed by Himachal Pradesh Power Corporation Ltd. (HPPCL). The live storage of Renukaji MPP is 0.404 MAF and total submergence area is about 1508 hectares in the territory of HP.

After the construction of the said dam, the flow of river Giri will increase about 110% which will meet the drinking water needs of Delhi & other basin states up to some extent in lean period. Stored water of Renukaji Dam will be used by UP, Haryana & NCT of Delhi from Hathnikund Barrage, by NCT of Delhi from Wazirabad Barrage and by UP, Haryana and Rajasthan from Okhla Barrage.

Investigation works in respect of Renukaji dam project was started in 1976. But, due to some unavoidable reasons, the construction works could not be started. The total cost of the project was estimated on Price Level 2015 is Rs. 4596.76 Crores out of which the cost of irrigation/drinking water component is Rs. 4325.43 crores and the cost of power component is Rs. 277.33 crore. The 90% cost of irrigation/drinking water component of the project i.e. Rs. 3892.83 crore will be provided by the Central Govt. and rest 10% of the above cost i.e. Rs. 432.54 crore will be provided by the basin States of Haryana, UP/UK, HP, Rajasthan & NCT of Delhi in the proportion as allocated in MoU dated 12.05.1994 signed by the CMs of the basin states for the allocation of surface water of river Yamuna up to Okhla Barrage. The shares of these states viz. Haryana, UP/UK, HP, Rajasthan and NCT of Delhi are 47.82%, 33.65%, 3.15%, 9.34% and 6.04% respectively. Govt. of NCT of Delhi has agreed to fund 90% of the cost of power component of the said project.

For the investigation and land acquisition of the project, Central government has released Rs. 446.96 crore, Govt. of Delhi has released Rs. 214.84 crore & Govt. of Haryana has released Rs. 25 crore till date. All the mandatory clearances in respect of Renukaji dam project except Stage-II forest clearance, invest clearance and approval from CCEA have been obtained.

Projects for Concession Agreement:

The trans-Ganga/Yamuna areas in Prayagraj (namely Naini, Phaphamau & Jhunsi) currently do not have any sewage treatment facility and thereby pollute rivers Ganga and Yamuna.

Prayagraj town already has a comprehensive sewerage network and sewage treatment facilities. However, these are with different operators and without long term sustainable mechanism for Operation and Maintenance (O&M).

Accordingly, two projects have been sanctioned for sewage management in the trans-Ganga/Yamuna areas and O&M of existing sewerage assets costing Rs. 908.16 crore. These projects will lead to creation of I&D network and 3 STPs of total capacity 72 MLD (Naini - 42 MLD, Phaphamau - 14 MLD and Jhunsi - 16 MLD) and O&M of all the sewerage assets for 15 years. These two projects are under One City One Operator concept for implementation on Hybrid Annuity based PPP mode for the sewerage management of the town in sustainable and accountable manner and improve governance.

These projects would lead to creation of new capacity of 72 MLD, rehabilitation of 80 MLD, operation & maintenance of existing STPs of 254 MLD capacity and 10 Sewage Pumping Stations.

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(Release ID: 1559390) Visitor Counter : 393

END

Source : www.pib.nic.in Date : 2019-01-11

YEAR END REVIEW 2018-19: MINISTRY OF MINES

Relevant for: World & Indian Geography | Topic: Distribution of Key Natural Resources - Minerals & Oil Resources of the World

Ministry of Mines

Year End Review 2018-19: Ministry of Mines

Posted On: 10 JAN 2019 10:52AM by PIB Delhi

AMENDMENTS IN THE MINERAL AUCTION RULES

The Mines and Mineral Development and Regulation Act, 1957 was amended in 2015. Subsequent to the amendment, the Ministry of Mines notified the Mineral Auction Rules, 2015 on 20/05/2015 to prescribe the procedure of the auction process.

Auction of concessions for major minerals (other than coal, petroleum and natural gas) was done for the first time in the history of mineral administration in the country. 53 blocks were successfully allocated. The value of minerals auctioned out is Rs. 2,25,850.97 crore. Revenue to states over lease period are estimated at Rs. 1,83,181.59 crore. The additional revenue on account of auction process is Rs. 1,43,169.29 crore.

The Ministry of Mines was monitoring the process very closely with the state governments. The consensus emerged that the Mineral Auction Rules need to be amended to make the process more pragmatic without sacrificing the checks on successful bidders. Accordingly, the Mineral Auction Rules have been amended on 30/11/2017.

Amendments in the MINERAL CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT RULES (MCDR), 2017

The lease period of merchant miners extended under the section 8A(6) of the MMDR Act, would expire on 31stMarch, 2020. The auction process needs to be initiated well in advance to ensure a seamless transition from the existing to the new lessees as the new auctioned leases and that the mineral production is not affected due to expiry of these leases. Exploration of the blocks was required to done for the auction process of these mineral blocks. For expediting the exploration in these mines to be make them auction compliable, sub rule 4A was inserted in Rule 12 of Mineral Conservation and Development Rules, 2017 (MCDR-2017) by way of an amendment notification, published in Gazette of India vide G.S.R. No. 289 dated 27.03.2018. The rule mandates exploration in G2 level as stipulated under clause (a) of rule 5 of the Mineral (Evidence of Mineral Contents) Rules 2015, to be carried out in the mining leases expiring in 2020 by 1stApril, 2019. The rule also lays down the timelines for implementation of the exploration plan prepared with the approval of IBM for satisfying the requirements.

AERO-GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY

GSI has launched National Aero-geophysical Mapping Programme to cover 27 lakh line km of Obvious Geological Potential (OGP) and adjoining area in the country, The mapping of the total area divided into 12 blocks is envisaged to be completed in a period of 3 years by 2019 with total estimated cost of Rs.351 crore.

New National Mineral Policy

- Ministry of Mines vide its order No. 15/1/2017-M.V dated 14.08.2017 had constituted a Committee under the Chairmanship of Dr. K, Rajeswara Rao, Additional Secretary, M/o Mines, to review the National Mineral Policy, 2008 in accordance with the judgment dated 02.08.2017 delivered by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the matter of Common Cause Vs. UOI & Ors. [Writ Petition (Civil) No. 114 of 2014].

- Based on the report submitted by the committee on 31.12.2017. Ministry of Mines prepared a draft National Mineral Policy (NMP) 2018 and uploaded it on the official website of the Ministry on 10.01.2018 for seeking comments/suggestions from the Stake Holders.

- After suitably incorporating the comments/suggestions received from the concerned, a draft Cabinet Note on NMP 2018 was prepared and circulated to the concerned Ministries/ Departments for their comments/ views as part of the Inter Ministerial Consultation. Comments/ suggestions received from the Ministries/Departments have been suitably incorporated.

STAR RATING OF MINES

- Ministry of Mines, in its endeavor for taking up exhaustive and universal implementation of the Sustainable Development Framework (SDF) in mining, has evolved a system of Star Rating of Mines.
- The Ministry of Mines instituted the Sustainable Development Framework (SDF) for taking up mining activity, encompassing inclusive growth, without adversely affecting the social, economic and environmental well-being, at present and also in future generation.
- It has been institute as a two tier system providing self-evaluation templates to be filled in by the mine operator followed by validation through Indian Bureau of Mines.
- The evaluation templates for Star Rating was notified vide notification dated 23.05.2016 for major minerals
- Based on the performance of the mining lease, 1 to 5 star rating, the positive impact of getting higher Star Rating will drive miners to quickly adopt sustainable mining practices.
- The Star Rating has been included as statutory provision in the MCDR for time- bound (2 years) achieving of minimum 4 stars.
- A web enabled online system for evaluation of measures has been developed and launched on 18th August, 2016 as a vital step for ensuring compliance of environmental protection and social responsibility by the mining sector.
- A template for star rating of miner minerals is also being prepared.
- Since its inception, 9 mines in July 2016, 32 mines in February 2017 and 57 mines in March 2018 have been awarded **“Five Star”** rating so far, for assessment years 2014-15, 2015-16 & 2016-17 respectively. For the Assessment Year 2017-18, 966 mine operators have submitted online templates till date, out of which 246 lessee have self assessment of Five Star. Field verification/validation by IBM is in progress and so far 20 mines have been rated

as five star.

MINING SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM (MSS)

- Mining Surveillance System (MSS) is a satellite-based monitoring system which aims to establish a regime of responsive mineral administration by curbing instances of illegal mining activity through automatic remote sensing detection technology.
- Ministry of Mines & Indian Bureau of Mines (IBM) have developed the MSS, with assistance from Bhaskaracharya Institute for space applications and Geo-informatics (BISAG), Gandhinagar and Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MEITY).
- The system works on the basic premise that most minerals occur in the continuity and their occurrence is not limited to the lease area but is likely to extend in the vicinity. The MSS checks a region of 500 meters around the existing mining lease boundary to search for any unusual activity which is likely to be illegal mining. Any discrepancy is found is flagged-off as a trigger.
- The MSS is a transparent & bias-free system, having a quicker response time and capability of effective follow-up. The deterrence effect of 'Eyes watching from the Sky' would be extremely fruitful in curbing instances of illegal mining.
- A user friendly mobile app for MSS has been created and launched on 24th January, 2017 at Gandhinagar for enabling public participation in assisting the governments endeavor to curb illegal mining, which was being used by the inspecting officials to submit compliance reports of their inspections.
- In the initial phase, a total of 296 triggers across the country covering a total area of 3994.87 hectares wherein, 48 unauthorized mining have been detected after inspection of the triggers by the state government officials.
- The training of all the States for its adoption of the MSS for minor minerals has also been done.
- In the second phase, 52 major mineral triggers, have been detected from the **3280** plotted leases (Working Mines 1689 plotted out of 1694 and Non Working Mines 1596 plotted out of 2129) across the country, out of which 36 have been verified by the State Governments and in 4 cases unauthorized mining activities have been identified.
- Similarly, in respect of minor minerals, so far, 130 triggers have been generated, out of which 62 have been verified and in 5 cases unauthorized mining activities have been identified.

GEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA (GSI)

- GSI has completed 8652.5 sq. km Specialized Thematic Mapping (on 1:25,000 scale) out of 22,865 sq. km target during Annual Programme 2018-19 till the end of November 2018.
- GSI has completed 62,032 sq. km National Geochemical Mapping (on 1:50,000 scale) out of 1,78,356 sq. km target during Annual Programme 2018-19 till the end of November 2018.
- GSI has completed 42,804.5 sq. km National Geophysical Mapping (on 1:50,000 scale) out of 78,150 sq. km target during Annual Programme 2018-19 till the end of November 2018.
- GSI has completed preliminary marine mineral investigation for 24583 sq. km in Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) out of 24,000 sq. km target during Annual Programme 2018-19 till the end of November 2018 and close grid mineral investigation for 1959 sq. km in EEZ out

of 3500 sq. km till the end of November 2018.

- GSI has been engaged in 45 programmes of National Landslide Susceptibility Mapping (NLSM on 1: 50,000 scale) during 2018-19. GSI has covered 30,900 sq. km by Landslide Susceptibility Mapping out of 77,000 sq. km target during Annual Programme 2018-19 till the end of November 2018.
- GSI has digitized all its mineral exploration, baseline data generation, fundamental geoscience and Geoinformatics reports and uploaded 22641 reports in OCBIS Portal.

- In the calendar year 2018, GSI has reported augmentation of natural mineral resources to National Mineral Inventory (NMI of Indian Bureau of Mines) of copper (38.832 million tonne), iron (163.134 million tonne), bauxite (3.13 million tonne), limestone (2013.77 million tonne), gold (0.9437 million tonne), potash (10.80 million tonne), andalusite (34.35 million tonne), Lead & Zinc (4.34 million tonne), REE (0.046 million tonne) and coal (6346.97 million tonne).
- Geological Survey of India (GSI) has signed MoU with National Remote Sensing Centre-Indian Space Research Organization (NRSC-ISRO) on 05.09.2018 to utilize airborne hyperspectral data by the scientists of GSI and ISRO to find surface signatures of mineralization in 14 promising areas in the coming 3 years; with National Geophysical Research Institute (NGRI), Hyderabad on 25.10.2018 for analyses for NGCM samples; with IIT (Indian School of Mines), Dhanbad on 16th August 2018 on Collaboration for Academic and Research Program; with Haryana Sarasvati Heritage Development Board (HSHDB) on 20th August 2018 on the “comprehensive studies to reconstruct the fluvial history of the palaeo course of ancient Sarasvati River system in parts of Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan and Gujarat” and signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) on 03.05.2018 for outsourcing ground geophysical survey (Gravity and Magnetic) to CSIR-NGRI, Hyderabad over an area of total 25,000 sq.km.
- The “Program 100x100 VAQ (Visibility, Activity, Quality) Enhancement Model” was launched by the DG, GSI, through Video Conference from Oldham Hall, CHQ Kolkata on 14.8.2018.
- GSI deployed an experimental People-centric Landslide Early Warning System at Giddapahar Village, Kurseong, Darjeeling district, West Bengal.

- GSI has implemented an integrated IT-enablement system - Online Core Business Integrated System (OCBIS) with a goal towards comprehensive data management across Missions and Support systems. OCBIS has facilitated digital data collection from field, online submission and tracking of samples, end to end field season project management, and dissemination of data and products through a single standard based interface to all stakeholders, including Ministry of Mines, national and state level earth science organizations / departments, industry and citizens.

INDIAN BUREAU OF MINES

Reviewing the mandate of IBM and opening of new Regional offices:

Recommendations of the Committee for review and restructuring of the functions and role of the Indian Bureau of Mines (IBM) for manpower creation was optimized by the Ministry of Mines without considering increase in sanctioned strength in consultation with the Department

of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance.The Department of Expenditure and thereafter the Cabinet accorded approval to the proposal for upgradation, creation and abolition of certain posts of Joint Secretary-level and above but maintaining the total cadre strength of IBM at the existing strength of 1477. The detailed discipline-wise, revised sanctioned strength of IBM is notified vide Gazette Notification No. 31/72/2009-M.III.Vol.I (part–I) dated 15th May, 2018.For implementation of new manpower strength, finalization of recruitment rules of various disciplines is in progress.

Mining Tenement System (MTS)

The IBM is in the process of establishing a MTS, which would primarily involve ***automation of the entire mineral concession life-cycle***, starting from identification of the potential mineralized area and ending with closure of the mine; and connecting the various stakeholders for real-time transfer of electronic files and exchange of data. M/s Wipro has been identified as implementing agency andM/s NISG, Hyderabad as Project Management Unit(PMU)for MTS. Later on PradhanMantriKhanijKshetraKalyanYojna (PMKKKY),was included as a part of MTS. The SRS Document of PradhanMantriKhanijKshetraKalyanYojna (PMKKKY) along with System Design Document (SDD) for Phase-1 was approved on 30.01.2018 by Core Committee. Three modules of MTS Project viz. PMKKKY, Registration and Daily Returns were launched by Honorable Minister of Mines Shri Narendra Singh Tomar on 20.03.2018 during 3rd National Conclave on Mines & Minerals at New Delhi. PMKKKY is currently live w.e.f. 27.08.2018 for data entry at district level and most of the States have started data entry. The Grievance Management and Mobile app for PMKKKY will be launched shortly. The Registration and Return modules will also go live shortly.

Project “Sudoor Drishti”

IBM has signed a MoU with National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC), ISRO on 21.01.2016 to undertake a pilot project on “***monitoring of mining activities using satellite imagery and capacity building*** of IBM officers for three years including technical support for setting up of remote sensing laboratory in IBM”. Two Remote Sensing Labs are being set up at Hyderabad and Nagpur. AnMoU has been signed with MOIL Ltd. on 25.04.2018 for field use of the remote sensing technology.

Revision of Threshold Values of Minerals

IBM is vested with the responsibility to review the threshold value of minerals periodically under sub rule 7 of rule 12 of Mineral Conservation and Development Rules, 2017. In order to take stock of the situation and assess the stakeholder’s views through deliberations, IBM invited comments and suggestions from the stakeholders and general public and also organized a series of five workshops on “threshold value of minerals at Goa, Bhubaneshwar, Naumundi, Gandhinagar and Nagpur during the year 2017. After examination of the suggestions and comments of the stakeholders through an expert committee constituted for the purpose and based on the recommendations of the committee, the threshold value of eleven minerals are notifiedvide Notification No. C-284/3/CMG/2017 Dated 25.04.2018.

NATIONAL ALUMINIUM COMPANY LIMITED (NALCO)

Performance Highlights for FY 2017-18:

- The Company registered more than 100% growth in net profit i.e. Rs. 1,342 crore in FY 2017-18 against Rs. 669 crore in previous year.
- The Net sales turnover for the year is Rs. 9,376 crore (highest ever since inception) registering a growth of 26% over last year.
- Export earning of Rs. 4,076 crore also highest ever since inception registering a growth of 12% over last year.
- The Company paid highest ever dividend since inception amounting to Rs. 1102 crore (114%).
- CAPEX of Rs 1080 crore achieved in FY 2017-18 is highest since FY 2009-10.

Corporate Social Responsibilities:

- In FY 2017-18, NALCO has spent Rs. 29.01 crore towards CSR activities against allocated fund of Rs. 27.88 crore.

- Joining hands with Hon'ble Prime Minister's call of Beti Bachao & Beti Padhao Abhiyan NALCO has adopted 100 poor & meritorious girls in FY 2017-18 (Cumulative- 277) under Nalco Ki Ladli scheme.

- Under Prime Minister's Swachh Bharat Mission and Iconic Shrine Development Programme, the Company has taken up 22 projects for comprehensive development of the holy city Puri. Some of the projects completed under this program are development and beautification of Gandhi Park, installation of 12 nos. of water posts to supply safe & clean drinking water, renovation of museum inside the Shree Jagannath Temple and facilitating commutation for senior citizens and differently-abled through launching of Battery Operated Vehicles.

- To provide better health-care services to inhabitants of periphery villages, NALCO is operating 9 Mobile Health Units (MHU) at Angul and Damanjodi. More than one lakh patients treated through the MHUs in 2017-18.

- Launched Free of cost Battery-operated vehicle service for senior citizens, differently-abled passengers and sick people in twin city Bhubaneswar- Cuttack.

- Health Care: Foundation stone laid for construction of a night shelter at AIIMS, Bhubaneswar in Aug'18 which will benefit the attendants and patients coming from far flung places. Construction of Super specialist eye care centre at Angul is in full pace which will cater to the critical care needs of interior masses.

SWACHHA ICONIC CITY

NALCO has taken up beautification of Shri Jagannatha Temple, Puri under Swachha iconic city initiative. Shri Jagannatha Temple illumination completed. Both side walls of VIP road, Puri beautified with thematic painting based on Jagannatha culture. Renovation and beautification of Gandhi Park taken up at Puri.

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU ALUMINIUM RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT & DESIGN CENTRE

(JNARDDC, NAGPUR)

During the year 2017-18, JNARDDC filed a record eight patent for indigenous R&D process developed. One patent was granted for the process for preparation of light weight Foamed bricks (LWFBs) utilizing red mud and fly ash admixture. Two copyrights were granted for software developed for real time determination of liquid us temperature and for cost optimization of recycling of different types of aluminum scraps. Director, JNARDDC being the Chairman of task force of aluminium sector nominated by Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) contributed appreciably by monitoring the evaluation of energy audit reports of Indian aluminium industries for setting up normalization patterns for evaluating the performance of industries in terms of energy efficiency.

National Conclave on Mines & Minerals (NCMM)

Ministry of Mines organized the 4th National Conclave on Mines & Minerals on 13th July, 2018 at Indore, Madhya Pradesh. State Mining ministers, officials of central ministries including MOEFCC, officials of the state government, CEO's of mining industries, industry associations, academic institutions and others participated in the conclave.

For the first time, conclave had an exhibition in which States put up stalls to showcase their mineral blocks which have been prepared to be put up on auctions in year 2018-19. The agencies concerned with pre-auction preparations such as Exploration agencies (GSI & MECL), transaction advisors (SBICAP, CRISIL, KPMG), DGPS survey agency (MECON), etc also put up their Stalls. IBM & MoEFCC also put up stalls on mining plan and EC & FC processes. Participation from the public sector and private sector companies in the exhibition on mineral and metal industry also provided an overview for better appreciation of mining sector by the investors in terms of making investment decisions.

Two technical sessions were also held during the conclave. The State governments showcased the mineral blocks which are to be auctioned in the financial year 2018-19 in the first technical session. In the second technical session, presentations for the different stages in auctioning of a mineral block and its operationalization were highly appreciated.

Hon'ble Mines ministers also held a round table conference with the industry leaders, in which several key issues related to statutory clearances were discussed and sought suggestions in improvement and development of the mineral sector.

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APS/SNC

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Source : www.pib.nic.in Date : 2019-01-12

FOUR MORE PROJECTS OF RS. 190.46 CRORE SANCTIONED UNDER SWADESH DARSHAN AND PRASHAD SCHEMES OF M/O TOURISM

Relevant for: World & Indian Geography | Topic: Factors responsible for location of Tertiary sector Industries incl. Tourism in world & India and related issues

Ministry of Tourism

Four more projects of Rs. 190.46 crore sanctioned under Swadesh Darshan and PRASHAD schemes of M/o Tourism

Posted On: 11 JAN 2019 6:18PM by PIB Delhi

The Ministry of Tourism has sanctioned four new projects for Rs. 190.46 Crores under the tourism infrastructure development schemes, Swadesh Darshan and PRASHAD in the states of Meghalaya, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh recently. Following are the sanctioned projects and the details.

1. Under North East Circuit of Swadesh Darshan Scheme, the Ministry has sanctioned the project '**Development of West Khasi Hills (Nongkhlaw- Krem Tirot - Khudoi & Kohmang Falls – Khri River- Mawthadraishan, Shillong), Jaintia Hills (Krang Suri Falls- Shyrmang- Iooksi), Garo Hills (Nokrek Reserve, Katta Beel, Siju Caves)' in Meghalaya** for Rs. 84.95 crore. The above project focuses on development of lesser known destinations in Meghalaya in above Districts. Through this project the Ministry will be developing facilities like Festival Grounds, Tourist Facilitation Centre, Last Mile Connectivity, Public Conveniences, Cable Suspension Bridge, Cafeteria, Trekking Routes, Boating Facilities, Illumination, Solid Waste Management, Drinking Water Facility, Caving Facilities, Visitor Centres, Adventure Sports Activities, Craft Haats etc. in the state.
2. **Development of Gorakhnath Temple (Gorakhpur), Devipattan Temple (Balrampur) and Vatvashni Temple (Domariyagunj) has also been sanctioned for Rs. 21.16 Crores under Spiritual Circuit of Swadesh Darshan Scheme. The facilities being developed under this project includes Tourist Facilitation Centre, Toilet Blocks, Pathways, Shelters, Landscaping, Gazebos, Illumination, CCTV Camera, Benches, Dustbins, Informative & Directional Signages etc.**
3. Under the PRASHAD scheme, the Ministry has sanctioned the project '**Development of Govardhan' in District Mathura in Uttar Pradesh** for Rs. 39.74 Crores. The sites taken up for development in the project include Govardhan Parikrama Marg, Kusum Sarovar, Chandra Sarovar and Manasi Ganga. The facilities like development of Bus Stand, Toilets, Illumination of Ghats, Parking, Pathways, Landscaping and Beautification, PA System, Benches, Toilets etc being developed under the project.
4. The Ministry has also sanctioned the project '**Development of Pilgrimage Amenities at Somnath – Phase II' for Rs. 44.59 Crores** under the PRASHAD scheme. The facilities being developed under the project includes Development of pathways, seating arrangement, Drinking Water Facilities., lighting and illumination, Solid Waste Management etc.

The Ministry of Tourism has launched the schemes of Swadesh Darshan - Integrated

Development of Theme-Based Tourist Circuits and PRASHAD-Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive in the year 2014-15 for the development of tourism infrastructure in the country.

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NB/JP

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Source : www.pib.nic.in Date : 2019-01-12

ENOUGH WATER AVAILABLE, KEY IS EFFICIENT WATER MANAGEMENT: NITIN GADKARI

Relevant for: World & Indian Geography | Topic: Distribution of key natural resources - Water Resources incl. Rivers & related issues in world & India

Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation

Enough Water available, Key is efficient Water Management: Nitin Gadkari

MoU signed for Renukaji Multipurpose Dam Project among Six States

Concession agreement for Namami Gange projects in Prayagraj also signed

Posted On: 11 JAN 2019 1:35PM by PIB Delhi

Shri Nitin Gadkari, Union Minister for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Shipping and Road Transport & Highways today signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Chief Ministers of Uttar Pradesh - Shri Yogi Adityanath, Rajasthan –Sh. Ashok Gehlot, Uttarakhand -Shri Trivendra Singh Rawat, Haryana- Shri Manohar Lal, Delhi - Shri Arvind Kejriwal, and Himachal Pradesh - Shri Jai Ram Thakur in New Delhi for the construction of Renukaji Multi-Purpose Dam project in the Upper Yamuna Basin.

Shri Gadkari also presided over the ceremony of signing of concession agreement for Namami Gange projects in Prayagraj under Hybrid Annuity Mode and One-City-One-Operator concept. The agreement was signed amongst Shri Akhil Kumar from National Mission for Clean Ganga, Shri Anil Kumar Srivastava from U.P. Jal Nigam and Shri Dilip Pormal from Prayagraj Water Pvt. Ltd.

Speaking on the occasion, Shri Gadkari said that there is enough water available in the country but the real issue is effective water management. Terming the signing of Agreement for Renukaji Dam project a historic moment, he said that the government will try to get the Cabinet approval as soon as possible.He added that a consensus on Kishau Multi Purpose project on River Yamuna has also been developed and soon an agreement for it will also be signed. He also informed about the Lakhwar Multi Purpose project for which agreement was signed on August 28th, 2018 among six basin states.

Extending his gratitude to all Chief Ministers, Shri Gadkari said that these projects will benefit all basin states and it is a win-win situation for everyone. He added that these projects will also

ensure more flow in River Yamuna which is the need-of-the-hour.

Ministers of State for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation Shri Arjun Ram Meghwal and Dr. Satya Pal Singh along with Secretary, Shri U.P. Singh were also present on the occasion. During the event, documentaries on Renukaji Multi Purpose Dam project and Namami Gange projects in Prayagraj were shown.

Renukaji Dam project has been conceived as a storage project on Giri River (tributary of river Yamuna) in Sirmour District of Himachal Pradesh. The project envisages construction of 148 M high rock filled dam for supply of 23 cumec water to Delhi and other basin states. The project will also generate 40 MW of power during peak flow. The project is proposed to be executed by Himachal Pradesh Power Corporation Ltd. (HPPCL). The live storage of Renukaji MPP is 0.404 MAF and total submergence area is about 1508 hectares in the territory of HP.

After the construction of the dam, the flow of river Giri will increase about 110% which will meet the drinking water needs of Delhi & other basin states up to some extent in lean period. Stored water of Renukaji Dam will be used by UP, Haryana & NCT of Delhi from Hathnikund Barrage, by NCT of Delhi from Wazirabad Barrage and by UP, Haryana and Rajasthan from Okhla Barrage.

Investigation works in respect of Renukaji dam project was started in 1976. But, due to some unavoidable reasons, the construction works could not be started. The total cost of the project was estimated on Price Level 2015 is Rs. 4596.76 Crores out of which the cost of irrigation/drinking water component is Rs. 4325.43 crores and the cost of power component is Rs. 277.33 crore. The 90% cost of irrigation/drinking water component of the project i.e. Rs. 3892.83 crore will be provided by the Central Govt. and rest 10% of the above cost i.e. Rs. 432.54 crore will be provided by the basin States of Haryana, UP/UK, HP, Rajasthan & NCT of Delhi in the proportion as allocated in MoU dated 12.05.1994 signed by the CMs of the basin states for the allocation of surface water of river Yamuna up to Okhla Barrage. The shares of these states viz. Haryana, UP/UK, HP, Rajasthan and NCT of Delhi are 47.82%, 33.65%, 3.15%, 9.34% and 6.04% respectively. Govt. of NCT of Delhi has agreed to fund 90% of the cost of power component of the said project.

All the mandatory clearances in respect of Renukaji dam project except Stage-II forest clearance, invest clearance and approval from CCEA have been obtained.

Renukaji Dam project is part of three storage projects which are proposed to be constructed on the river Yamuna and two of its tributaries - Tons and Giri in the hilly regions of Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh of Upper Yamuna Basin. The other two include Lakhwar project on River Yamuna and Kishau project on River Tons.

These three projects were identified as National Projects in 2008 under which 90% funding of the cost of irrigation & drinking water component will be provided by the Govt. of India as central assistance and the rest 10% cost of the irrigation and drinking water component will be borne by the beneficiary states.

An agreement in respect of sharing of cost and benefits of Lakhwar Multi Purpose Project amongst among basin States viz. Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and NCT of Delhi was signed by the Chief Ministers in the presence of Shri Nitin Gadkari, Union Minister, Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation at New Delhi on 28th August, 2018.

Signing of concession Agreement for Namami Gange projects in Prayagraj

Shri Nitin Gadkari, Union Minister for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Shipping and Road Transport & Highways today also presided over the ceremony of signing of concession Agreement for Namami Gange projects in Prayagraj.

The trans-Ganga/Yamuna areas in Prayagraj (namely Naini, Phaphamau &Jhunsi) currently do not have any sewage treatment facility and thereby pollute rivers Ganga and Yamuna.

Prayagraj town already has a comprehensive sewerage network and sewage treatment facilities. However, these are with different operators and without long term sustainable mechanism for Operation and Maintenance (O&M).

Accordingly, two projects have been sanctioned for sewage management in the trans-Ganga/Yamuna areas and O&M of existing sewerage assets costing Rs. 908.16 crore. These projects will lead to creation of I&D network and 3 STPs of total capacity 72 MLD (Naini - 42 MLD, Phaphamau - 14 MLD and Jhunsi - 16 MLD) and O&M of all the sewerage assets for 15 years. These two projects are under One City One Operator concept for implementation on Hybrid Annuity based PPP mode for the sewerage management of the town in sustainable and accountable manner and improve governance.

These projects would lead to creation of new capacity of 72 MLD, rehabilitation of 80 MLD, operation & maintenance of existing STPs of 254 MLD capacity and 10 Sewage Pumping Stations.

Director General, NMCG Shri Rajiv Ranjan Mishra informed the gathering that six projects in Prayagraj have already been completed which include Sewerage & Non sewerage Scheme for pollution abatement of river Ganga at District 'B' & 'E' with STP Capacity 85 MLD and sewer network 10.88 km, Sewerage Schemes for pollution abatement of river Ganga at District 'A' with STP Capacity 20 MLD and sewer network 9.24 km, Sewerage work in Sewerage District 'E' with sewer network 109.2 km, Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) at Salori (14 MLD), Sewer network of 42.66 km in District E of Prayagraj - Part 2 (Additional Work) and Sewerage System of 134.19

km in Sewerage District 'C' & Allahapur. Besides, two projects will be completed by March 2019 which include Sewerage works of 241.63 km in Sewerage District 'A' and Sewerage System with Sewer network of 214.88 km in Sewerage District 'B'.

For Kumbh 2019, several interventions have been made under Namami Gange programme which include installation of 25,500 toilets and 20,000 urinals costing Rs. 113 crore, installation of 16,000 dustbins & lining bags for solid waste management, bioremediation of drains project for 53 drains etc.

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NP/SKP/IA

Read this release in: Marathi

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Source : www.thehindu.com Date : 2019-01-15

WATER DESALINATION PLANTS HARM ENVIRONMENT: UN

Relevant for: Geography | Topic: Important Geophysical Phenomenon - Tides, Oceanic Circulation and Ocean Bottom Relief

Brine often includes toxins such as chlorine & copper.

Almost 16,000 desalination plants worldwide produce bigger-than-expected flows of highly salty waste water and toxic chemicals that are damaging the environment, a U.N.-backed study said on Monday.

Desalination plants pump out 142 million cubic metres of salty brine every day, 50% more than previous estimates, to produce 95 million cubic metres of fresh water, the study said.

About 55% of the brine is produced in desalination plants processing seawater in Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, according to the study by the U.N. University's Canadian-based Institute for Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH).

The hyper-salty water is mostly pumped into the sea and, over a year, would be enough to cover the U.S. state of Florida with 1 foot of brine, it said of the fast-growing and energy-intensive technology that benefits many arid regions.

Brine, water comprising about 5% salt, often includes toxins such as chlorine and copper used in desalination, it said. By contrast, global sea water is about 3.5% salt.

Waste chemicals "accumulate in the environment and can have toxic effects in fish", said Edward Jones, the lead author.

Brine can cut levels of oxygen in seawater near desalination plants with "profound impacts" on shellfish, crabs and other creatures on the seabed, leading to "ecological effects observable throughout the food chain", he said.

Vladimir Smakhtin, director of UNU-INWEH, said the study was part of research into how best to secure fresh water for a rising population without harming the environment.

"There are all sorts of under-appreciated sources of water," he said, ranging from fog harvesting to aquifers below the seabed. The study also involved the Gwangju Institute of Science and Technology in South Korea.

Uttarakhand High Court dismissed a case filed by Baba Ramdev's Divya Pharmacy that pleaded against sharing revenues from indigenous biological resources with local communities

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Source : www.thehindu.com Date : 2019-01-19

CHILIKA LAKE POSSESSES 20% OF INDIA'S SEAGRASS

Relevant for: Geography | Topic: Indian River System including HEPs

Seaweed being cultivated in Chilika Lake.File photo

Chilika Lake is claimed to have 20% of India's seagrass distribution, which plays a vital role in oxygen production and absorption of carbon dioxide and acts as a purifier in aquatic ecology.

According to the Chilika Development Authority, the apex body for the Lake's management, seagrass species such as *Holodule uninervis, Holodule pinifolia, Halophila ovalis, Halophila ovata* and *Halophila beccarii* were recorded during annual monitoring of the Chilika Lake held on Thursday.

"Seagrass distribution has been estimated over an area of 152 sq. km, an increase from 135 sq km in the last year. Increase in seagrass has been reported against its declining trend throughout the world and now Chilika has 20% of India's seagrass," said CDA Chief Executive Susanta Nanda.

"Seagrass plays a vital role in oxygen production and absorption of carbon dioxide. It acts as a purifier in aquatic ecology. The seagrass area increases only when the water is clean. Seagrass will rejuvenate fishing ground by providing nursery habitat to important fish species," Mr. Nanda said.

Another heartening outcome of the annual monitoring was reappearance of sponges. "Due to disturbance in habitat, the sponges were not observed in the lake after 1985. But after the recent eviction of large area of prawn gherry in the southern sector of the lake, the sponges are observed abundantly in Patanasi and Kumarpur area," he said.

Some of the indicators that emerged during the monitoring established the lake's resilient ecosystem. The annual survey of endangered Irrawaddy dolphins conducted on Thursday finds population of aquatic mammals in the range of 130-150.

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Source : www.thehindu.com Date : 2019-01-19

SATURN’S RINGS ARE YOUNGER THAN THOUGHT

Relevant for: Geography | Topic: The Earth and the Solar System

Lord of the rings: A file photo of Saturn by Cassini spacecraft acquired from a distance of about 870,000 miles. | Photo Credit: HO

Saturn’s rings are one of our solar system’s magnificent sights, but may be a relatively recent addition, according to data obtained from NASA’s Cassini spacecraft before the robotic explorer’s 2017 death plunge into the giant gas planet.

Scientists said that a calculation of the mass of the rings based on gravitational measurements of the planet collected by Cassini indicated they formed between 100 million and 10 million years ago in roughly the final 2% of Saturn’s current age.

The findings challenge the notion favoured by some astronomers that the rings developed soon after Saturn formed about 4.5 billion years ago along with the other planets, including the earth.

Others felt the rings were much younger, but lacked crucial data like their mass to estimate their age reliably.

The ring mass turned out to be 45% lower than previous estimates based on 1980s data from NASA’s Voyager spacecraft. Lower mass indicates a younger age, the researchers said in a study published in *Science*.

Scientists suspect the rings formed perhaps when a large icy comet or moon ventured too close to Saturn and was shattered by gravitational forces or moons collided in orbit. Scientists hope that they can, in the future, get samples of ring material to find the precise date of origin.

China’s Chang’e-4 lunar rover scripted history on January 3 when it made the first-ever soft landing on the far side of the moon and sent back

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Source : www.thehindu.com Date : 2019-01-19

MORE ASTEROIDS BOMBARDED EARTH, MOON BEGINNING 290MN YEARS AGO: STUDY

Relevant for: Geography | Topic: The Earth and the Solar System

The number of asteroid impacts on the Earth and the Moon increased by two to three times starting around 290 million years ago, according to a study.

The finding, published in the journal Science, challenges our understanding of a part of Earth's history by looking at the Moon, the most complete and accessible chronicle of the asteroid collisions that carved our solar system.

"Our research provides evidence for a dramatic change in the rate of asteroid impacts on both Earth and the Moon that occurred around the end of the Paleozoic era," said Sara Mazrouei from the University of Toronto in Canada.

"The implication is that since that time we have been in a period of relatively high rate of asteroid impacts that is 2.6 times higher than it was prior to 290 million years ago," Ms. Mazrouei said.

It had been previously assumed that most of the Earth's older craters produced by asteroid impacts have been erased by erosion and other geologic processes.

However, the new research shows otherwise.

"The relative rarity of large craters on Earth older than 290 million years and younger than 650 million years is not because we lost the craters, but because the impact rate during that time was lower than it is now," said Rebecca Ghent, an associate professor at the University of Toronto.

"We expect this to be of interest to anyone interested in the impact history of both Earth and the Moon, and the role that it might have played in the history of life on Earth," Ms. Ghent said.

Scientists have for decades tried to understand the rate that asteroids hit Earth by using radiometric dating of the rocks around them to determine their ages.

Since it was believed erosion caused some craters to disappear, it was difficult to find an accurate impact rate and determine whether it had changed over time.

A way to sidestep this problem is to examine the Moon, which is hit by asteroids in the same proportions over time as Earth.

However, there was no way to determine the ages of lunar craters until NASA's Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter (LRO) started circling the Moon a decade ago and studying its surface.

Using LRO data, the team was able to assemble a list of ages of all lunar craters younger than about a billion years.

During the lunar night, rocks radiate much more heat than fine-grained soil called regolith. This allows scientists to distinguish rocks from fine particles in thermal images.

The team then calculated the ages for previously un-dated lunar craters.

When compared to a similar timeline of Earth's craters, the researchers found the two bodies had recorded the same history of asteroid bombardment.

"It became clear that the reason why Earth has fewer older craters on its most stable regions is because the impact rate was lower up until about 290 million years ago," said William Bottke, an asteroid expert at the Southwest Research Institute in the US.

The reason for the jump in the impact rate is unknown, though the researchers speculate it might be related to large collisions taking place more than 300 million years ago in the main asteroid belt between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter.

Such events can create debris that can reach the inner solar system, researchers said.

China's Chang'e-4 lunar rover scripted history on January 3 when it made the first-ever soft landing on the far side of the moon and sent back

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SUPER BLOOD WOLF MOON: TOTAL LUNAR ECLIPSE MEETS SUPERMOON ON JANUARY 20 NIGHT

Relevant for: Geography | Topic: The Earth and the Solar System

In this Saturday Aug. 28, 2018 file photo, Earth starts to cast its shadow on the moon during a complete lunar eclipse seen from Jakarta, Indonesia. Starting January 20 evening, all of North and South America will be able to see the only total lunar eclipse of 2019 from start to finish this weekend. | Photo Credit: AP

Here comes a total lunar eclipse and supermoon, all wrapped into one.

The moon, Earth and sun will line up this weekend for the only total lunar eclipse this year and next. At the same time, the moon will be ever so closer to Earth and appear slightly bigger and brighter than usual a supermoon.

“This one is particularly good,” said Rice University astrophysicist Patrick Hartigan. “It not only is a supermoon and it’s a total eclipse, but the total eclipse also lasts pretty long. It’s about an hour.”

The whole eclipse starts on January 20 night or early on Monday, depending on location , and will take about three hours.

It begins with the partial phase around 10-34 p.m. EST on January 20. That’s when Earth’s shadow will begin to nip at the moon. Totality when Earth’s shadow completely blankets the moon will last 62 minutes, beginning at 11-41 p.m. EST on Sunday.

If the skies are clear, the entire eclipse will be visible in North and South America, as well as Greenland, Iceland, Ireland, Great Britain, Norway, Sweden, Portugal and the French and Spanish coasts. The rest of Europe, as well as Africa, will have partial viewing before the moon sets. Some places will be livestreaming it, including the Griffith Observatory in Los Angeles.

During totality, the moon will look red because of sunlight scattering off Earth’s atmosphere. That’s why an eclipsed moon is sometimes known as a blood moon. In January, the full moon is also sometimes known as the wolf moon or great spirit moon.

So informally speaking, the upcoming lunar eclipse will be a super blood wolf or great spirit moon.

In the U.S., the eclipse will begin relatively early on January 20 evening, making it easier for children to stay up and enjoy the show. Plus the next day is a federal holiday, with most schools closed. But the weather forecast for much of the U.S. doesn’t look good.

Parents “can keep their kids up maybe a little bit later,” said, Hartigan, who will catch the lunar extravaganza from Houston. “It’s just a wonderful thing for the whole family to see because it’s fairly rare to have all these things kind of come together at the same time.”

“The good thing about this is that you don’t need any special equipment,” he added.

Asia, Australia and New Zealand are out of luck. But they had prime viewing last year, when two total lunar eclipses occurred.

The next total lunar eclipse won't be until May 2021.

As for full-moon supermoons, this will be the first of three this year. The upcoming supermoon will be about 222,000 miles (357,300 kilometres) away. The Feb. 19 supermoon will be a bit closer and the one on March 20 will be the farthest.

On January 1, 2019, NASA's New Horizons spacecraft flew past a celestial body. What is so special about the flyby? For answer and more interesting questions, take this quiz.

China's Chang'e-4 lunar rover scripted history on January 3 when it made the first-ever soft landing on the far side of the moon and sent back

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Source : www.thehindu.com Date : 2019-01-25

HOLLOWED BY EXCESSIVE WATER PUMPING, AREA AROUND TEHRAN IS SINKING

Relevant for: Geography | Topic: Distribution of key natural resources - Water Resources incl. Rivers & related issues in world & India

This frame grab from an August 8, 2018 video provided by Iranian Students' News Agency shows an aerial view of a massive hole caused by drought and excessive water pumping at Kabudarahang in Irana's Hamadan Province. | Photo Credit: AP

Fissures appear along roads while massive holes open up in the countryside, their gaping maws a visible sign from the air of something Iranian authorities now openly acknowledge — the area around Tehran is literally sinking.

Stressed by a 30-year drought and hollowed by excessive water pumping, the parched landscape around Iran's capital has begun to sink dramatically. Seen by satellite and on foot around the city, officials warn that what they call land subsidence poses a grave danger to a country where protests over water scarcity already have seen violence.

"Land subsidence is a destructive phenomenon," said Siavash Arabi, a measurement expert at Iran's cartography department. "Its impact may not be immediately felt like an earthquake, but as you can see, it can gradually cause destructive changes over time."

Tehran, which sits 1,200m (3,900 feet) above sea level against the Alborz Mountains on a plateau, has rapidly grown over the last 100 years to a sprawling city of 13 million people in its metropolitan area. All those people have put incredible pressure on water resources on a semi-arid plateau in a country that saw only 171 mm (6.7 inches) of rain in 2018. Over-reliance on ground aquifers has seen increasingly salty water pumped from below ground.

What causes sinkholes?

"Surface soil contains water and air. When you pump water from under the ground surface, you cause some empty space to be formed in the soil," Mr. Arabi said. "Gradually, the pressure from above causes the soil particles to stick together and this leads to sinking of the ground and formation of cracks."

Rain and snow to recharge the underground aquifers have been in short supply. Over the past decade, Iran has seen the most prolonged and severe drought in more than 30 years, according to the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organisation. An estimated 97% of the country has faced some level of drought, Iran's Meteorological Organisation says.

That has caused the sinkholes and fissures now seen around Tehran.

Iranian authorities say they have measured up to 22 cm (8.6 inches) of annual subsidence near the capital, while the normal range would be only as high as 3 cm (1.1 inches) per year. Even higher numbers have been measured in other parts of the country. Some sinkholes formed in western Iran are as deep as 60 m (196 feet).

Those figures are close to those found in a study by scientists at the GFZ German Research Centre for Geosciences in Potsdam previously discussed by the journal *Nature* and accepted by the journal *Remote Sensing of Environment*. Using satellite images between 2003 and 2017, the

scientists estimate the western Tehran plain is sinking by 25 cm (9.8 inches) a year.

Either way, the numbers are alarming to experts.

“In European countries, even 4 mm (0.15 inches) of yearly subsidence is considered a crisis,” Iranian environmental activist Mohammad Darvish said.

The sinking can be seen in Tehran’s southern Yaftabad neighbourhood, which sits close to farmland and water wells on the edge of the city. Cracks run down walls and below windows, and waterpipes have ruptured. Residents fear poorly built buildings may collapse.

The sinking also threatens vital infrastructure, like Tehran’s Imam Khomeini International Airport. German scientists estimate that land under the airport is sinking by 5 cm (1.9 inches) a year.

Tehran’s oil refinery, a key highway, automobile manufacturing plants and railroads also all sit on sinking ground, said Ali Beitollahi, a Ministry of Roads and Transportation official. Some 2 million people live in the area, he said.

Masoud Shafiee, head of Iran’s cartography department, also acknowledged the danger. “Rates (for subsidence) are very high and in many instances it’s happening in densely populated areas,” Mr. Shafiee told the AP. “It’s happening near sensitive infrastructures like airports, which we consider a top priority.”

Geopolitics play a role in Iran’s water crisis. Since the country’s 1979 Islamic Revolution, Iran has sought to become self-sufficient across industries to thwart international sanctions. That has included agriculture and food production.

The problem, however, comes in inefficient water use on farms, which represents over 90 percent of the country’s water usage, experts say.

Already, the drought and water crisis has fed into the sporadic unrest Iran has faced over 2018. In July, protests around Khorramshahr, some 650 km southwest of Tehran, saw violence as residents of the predominantly Arab city near the border with Iraq complained of salty, muddy water coming out of their taps amid the yearslong drought.

The unrest there only compounds the wider unease felt across Iran as it faces an economic crisis sparked by President Donald Trump’s decision to withdraw America from Tehran’s nuclear deal with world powers.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who long has opposed Iran’s theocratic government, even released an online video in June offering his country’s water technology in a jab at Iran’s leaders. “The Iranian regime shouts- ‘Death to Israel,’” Netanyahu said. “In response, Israel shouts: ‘Life to the Iranian people’.”

Iranian officials shrugged off the offer. But solutions to the water crisis will be difficult to find.

The crisis “stems from decades of sanctions and compounding political mismanagement that is likely to make it very difficult to alleviate the emerging crisis before it wreaks lasting damage upon the country”, wrote Gabriel Collins, a fellow at Rice University’s Baker Institute.

Iranian authorities have begun to crack down on illegal water wells. They also are exploring using desalination plants along the Persian Gulf as well, though they require tremendous energy. Farming practices also need to change as well, experts say.

“We need to shift our development model so that it relies less on water and soil,” Mr. Darvish, the activist, said. “If we don’t act quickly to stop the subsidence, it can spread to other areas.”

Uttarakhand High Court dismissed a case filed by Baba Ramdev’s Divya Pharmacy that pleaded against sharing revenues from indigenous biological resources with local communities

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Source : www.pib.nic.in Date : 2019-01-25

INS KOHASSA – A NEW BIRD'S NEST IN THE ANDAMANS

Relevant for: Geography | Topic: Islands & Coral Reefs, changes therein and in Flora & Fauna and the Effects of such changes

Ministry of Defence

INS Kohassa – a New Bird's Nest in the Andamans

Posted On: 24 JAN 2019 4:20PM by PIB Delhi

Naval Air Station (NAS) Shibpur was commissioned as INS Kohassa by Admiral Sunil Lanba, PVSM, AVSM, ADC, Chairman COSC and Chief of the Naval Staff today, on 24 Jan 19. The grand ceremony was attended by many dignitaries and senior officials including VAdm Bimal Verma, AVSM, ADC Commander-in-Chief, Andaman and Nicobar Command. The ceremony included presentation of Ceremonial Guard, hoisting of the Commissioning Pennant and reading of the Ship's Warrant by the Commanding Officer, Commander Kuldeep Tripathi. INS Kohassa has been named after a White-Bellied Sea Eagle, which is a large bird of prey, endemic to Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

NAS Shibpur was established in 2001 as a Forward Operating Air Base (FOAB) for enhanced surveillance in North Andaman. The close proximity of Coco Islands (Myanmar) and wide expanse of Indian Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) makes the base a very vital asset. The airfield provides sustained detached operations of Indian Navy, Indian Air Force and Coast Guard aircraft. The Air Station presently operates Short Range Maritime Reconnaissance (SRMR) aircraft and helicopters. These aircraft undertake EEZ Surveillance, Anti-Poaching Missions, Search and Rescue (SAR) and Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief (HADR) missions within the ANC Area of Responsibility. As a point of interest, during the search operations of the Malaysian Airlines Flight 370, Dornier DO 228s of the Navy and Coast Guard operated from this very base.

NAS Shibpur was identified by NITI Aayog as one of the 'Early Bird' project as part of holistic island development. Towards this, IN has been ready in all respects to facilitate civil flight operations from NAS Shibpur. The runway extension to 10,000 ft is also planned in the near future to facilitate operations of wide-bodied aircraft.

DKS/AC

(Release ID: 1561266) Visitor Counter : 521

Read this release in: Hindi

END

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GOVERNMENT TO LAUNCH TECHNOLOGY MISSION CENTRE ON SOLAR ENERGY & WATER TREATMENT IN CHENNAI.

Relevant for: Geography | Topic: Distribution of key natural resources - Water Resources incl. Rivers & related issues in world & India

Ministry of Science & Technology

Government to launch Technology Mission Centre on Solar Energy & Water Treatment in Chennai.

Posted On: 24 JAN 2019 11:56AM by PIB Delhi

Union Minister for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences and Environment, Forests & Climate Change, Dr. Harsh Vardhan will be launching three important centre's set up by Department of Science and Technology (DST), nucleated at Indian Institute of Technology, Madras (IITM) on 25th January 2019 at IIT Madras in Chennai.

The first of these is the establishment of DST –IITM Solar Energy Harnessing Centre. The Centre will focus on a wide range of research and technology development activities such as silicon solar cells that promise high efficiency and are suited for Indian conditions. The network of researchers engaged in centre comprise of scientists from IIT Madras, IIT-Guwahati, Anna University, ICT-Mumbai, BHEL and KGDS, which will be further expanded. The objective is to create a platform that can be extended readily to strengthen the knowledge eco-system .The centre is likely to be true change agent in the energy landscape of India. The consortium will be duly poised to address the sustainability requirements in the spirit of 'Make in India'.

Second in line is the **DST-IITM Water –IC for SUTRAM of EASY WATER (DST- IITM Water Innovation Centre for Sustainable Treatment, Reuse and Management for Efficient, Affordable and Synergistic Solutions*)*** which has been established with an aim to undertake synchronized research and training programs on various issues related to wastewater management, water treatment, sensor development, storm water management and distribution and collection systems. This multi institutional Virtual Centre will be looking into a sustainable approach for water resources protection and augmentation through wastewater treatment and reuse and storm water management. The Centre will provide a unique opportunity for the various groups in different premier organizations working in the area of wastewater management, water treatment, sensor development and storm water management to collaborate and work in synergized manner to ensure adequate, safe, reliable and sustainable sources of drinking water for rural and urban India and process water for highly polluting and water intensive industries, through research, technology development and capacity building.

The third one would be **the Test bed on Solar thermal desalination solutions** which are being established by IIT Madras and Empereal KGDS as solution providers in Naripaaiyur, Ramanathapuram District, Tamil Nadu with the aim to deliver customized technological solutions to address prevalent water challenges in the arid coastal village located on the shores of the Bay of Bengal. The development would provide customized technological water solution to provide potable water to coastal areas using solar energy.

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INAUGURATION OF IREP KOCHI IS NOT JUST PROUD MOMENT FOR KERALA, BUT FOR THE ENTIRE COUNTRY: PM

Relevant for: Geography | Topic: Distribution of Key Natural Resources - Minerals & Oil Resources of the World

Prime Minister's Office

Inauguration of IREP Kochi is not just proud moment for Kerala, but for the entire country: PM

PM dedicates to the nation Integrated Refinery Expansion Complex and
Mounded Storage Vessel at LPG Bottling Plant in Kochi

Foundation stone for Petrochemical complex at BPCL Kochi Refinery laid by PM

Posted On: 27 JAN 2019 6:50PM by PIB Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Kochi , Kerala today and dedicated to the nation and also laid foundation stone for various projects in the state.

Among the projects dedicated to the nation include Integrated Refinery Expansion Project Complex (IREP) at Kochi. IREP will be a modern expansion complex and transform Kochi refinery into the largest PSU Refinery in India with world class standards. It will be equipped for production of cleaner Fuels for India. It will double the production of LPG & diesel and commence production of feedstock for petrochemical projects in this plant.

Inaugurating IREP Complex PM said, “Today is a historic day when the largest industrial unit of Kerala is entering its next phase of development. It is indeed a proud moment not just for God's Own Country, but also for the entire nation”. He also praised Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) Kochi for playing a critical role in popularizing clean fuels among masses in Kerala and neighbouring states over the past 50 years.

Talking about the strides made by the Government, PM said Ujjwala has brought cheers to many and nearly six crore LPG connections have reached to the households of the poorest of the poor since May 2016. More than 23 crore LPG consumers have joined the Pahal scheme. The transparency in the scheme has helped in identifying ghost accounts, multiple accounts and inactive accounts. Over 1 crore customers have given up LPG subsidies under Give it up initiative. PM lauded the role of Kochi refinery and said it is making a great
contribution towards Ujjwala Yojana, by doubling the LPG production with the help of the recent expansion”.

PM said that use of CNG a clean fuel is being promoted by expanding the coverage of City Gas Distribution (CGD) network in the country. After the successful completion of 10 CGD bidding rounds more than 400 districts of the country will be connected for providing piped gas supply. The National Gas Grid or Pradhan Mantri Urja Ganga has also been created to have a gas based economy and enhance the share of gas in the energy basket.” He revealed that the Government has thought of developing additional 15000 km of gas pipeline network. Besides , the Government has reduced oil import by 10% and saved precious Foreign Exchange.

.PM said that India as the second largest oil refiner in Asia is emerging as a refining hub He congratulated all for the timely completion of IREP, especially the labourers who worked day and night during the construction. He said that at the peak of the project over 20000 labours were working at the site and they are the real heroes of the project.

He praised the strategic move of BPCL to diversify into non fuel sector through this project. He said, “Friends, petrochemicals are a grade of chemicals which we don't speak much about. But they exist invisibly and touch many aspects of our daily However most of these chemicals are imported from other countries. It is our endeavour to see that these petrochemicals are manufactured in India itself.”

He expressed happiness that Kochi refinery will now be able to produce propylene after execution of IREP. Besides the other niche petrochemicals will find use in different products such as paints, inks, coating, detergent and many other articles. He expressed hope that all these many ancillary industries will come to Kochi and business opportunities will be expanded.

PM said that the nation is proud of the works by Kochi refinery. He recalled ,when Kerala was passing through worst floods in a 100 years last August, BPCL came running against all odds to ensure continuous production of Petrol, Diesel and LPG. He added, We are proud of Kochi refinery's contribution towards nation building but now we have greater expectations.” PM wished that Kochi refinery leads a petrochemical revolution in southern India and support the of growing needs of New India.

Prime Minister laid the foundation stone of second campus of the Skill development institute set up by BPCL at Ettumanoor. He said, it will help skill development and create employment opportunities for the youth.

PM also dedicated to the nation mounded storage facility by Indian Oil at its Kochi LPG based bottling Plant at a cost of Rs 50 crores. This will enhance LPG storage capacity and also reduce road movement of LPG tankers.

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