

NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHT

An application seeking Geographical Indication (GI) tag for the Arunachal Pradesh Apatani textile product has been filed by a firm, Zeet Zeero Producer Company Ltd. The Apatani weave comes from the Apatani tribe living at Ziro, the headquarters of Lower Subansiri district. The woven fabric of this tribe is known for its geometric and zigzag patterns and for its angular designs. According to the application filed with the Geographical Indications registry in Chennai, the Apatani community weaves its own textiles for various occasions, including rituals and cultural festivals. The tribe predominantly weaves shawls known as jig-jiro, and jilan or jackets called sumpuntarii.

An Israeli air strike hit Syria's Latakia port, sparking a fire that lit up the Mediterranean seafront in the second such attack on the key cargo hub this month, Syrian state media reported.

Beijing on Tuesday accused the U.S. of irresponsible and unsafe conduct in space over two "close encounters" between the Chinese space station and satellites operated by Elon Musk's SpaceX. Tiangong, China's new space station, had to manoeuvre to avoid colliding with one Starlink satellite in July and with another in October, according to a note submitted by Beijing to the UN space agency. The note said the incidents "constituted dangers to the life or health of astronauts aboard the China Space Station.

The Foreigners Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA) registration of Missionaries of Charity (MoC), a Catholic religious congregation set up by Nobel laureate Mother Teresa in 1950, was not renewed because of "audit irregularities", a senior government official said.

Not just Missionaries of Charity, the international trust set up by Mother Teresa, but thousands of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and charitable trusts are awaiting a decision from the government on the renewal of their permissions to receive foreign funds by the year-end. With more than 22,000 NGOs registered under the Foreign Contributions (Regulations) Act (FCRA), experts are saying a tough line by the government means at least 10-15% of the groups that have applied for renewal are likely to be denied permissions, and stopped from accessing funding from abroad.

GOOD GOVERNANCE INDEX 2021

1. Gujarat, Maharashtra and Goa topped the Good Governance Index 2021 launched on the occasion of Good Governance Day (25th December). Good Governance Index (GGI) is a nation-wide comparative study of States on governance which is carried out by the Government of India. GGI was prepared by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG), Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions.

2. This index is a composite rank score covering 10 sectors and 58 indicators especially those pertaining to welfare and infrastructure at the Union, State and District levels. The sectors of GGI 2020-21 are Agriculture and Allied Sectors, Commerce & Industries, Human Resource Development, Public Health, Public Infrastructure & Utilities, Economic Governance, Social Welfare & Development, Judicial & Public Security, Environment, and Citizen-Centric Governance.

3. The GGI 2020-21 categorises States and UTs into 4 categories. Category Top ranking State Group A States-Gujrat, Gujarat Group B States-Madhya Pradesh, North-East and Hill States Himachal Pradesh, Union Territories-Delhi.

STATE HEALTH INDEX

1. NITI Aayog releases the fourth edition of the State Health Index Report for 2019-2020, titled "Healthy States, Progressive India". The State Health Index has been developed by NITI Aayog, with technical assistance from the World Bank, and in close consultation with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW).

2. This annual report, compiled and published since 2017, ranks the states and UTs on their year-on-year incremental performance in health outcomes and their overall status. This index looks at both the states' historical performance and their incremental performance. To ensure comparison among similar entities, the ranking is categorized as 'Larger States', 'Smaller States' and 'Union Territories'.

3. The State Health Index is a weighted composite index based on 24 indicators grouped under the domains of Health Outcomes, Governance and Information, and Key Inputs/Processes. Each domain has been assigned weights based on its importance with higher score for outcome indicators. This tool is linked to incentives under National Health Mission.

4. This has been instrumental in shifting the focus from budget spending and inputs to outputs and outcomes. Findings The recent report focuses on the period 2018-2019 to 2019-2020. On overall ranking based on the composite index score in 2019-20, the top-ranking states were Kerala and Tamil Nadu among the 'Larger States', Mizoram and Tripura among the 'Smaller States', and Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu (DH&DD) and Chandigarh among the UTs.

5. Among the 'Larger States', in terms of annual incremental performance, Uttar Pradesh, Assam & Telangana are the top three ranking states. Among the 'Smaller States', Mizoram and Meghalaya registered the maximum annual incremental progress. Among UTs, Delhi, followed by Jammu and Kashmir, showed the best incremental performance.

GARIMA GREH SCHEME

1. The Madras High Court has asked the Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment to extend Garima Greh scheme to entire LGBTQIA+ community, not just transgenders. Currently, the scheme provides a secure living space and care to only those persons who fall under the category of 'transgender persons'.

2. The main aim of Garima Greh is to provide shelter to transgender persons with basic amenities like food, medical care and recreational facilities.

3. Besides, it will provide support for the capacity-building/skill development of Transgender persons. The Centre had provided 100% financial assistance for setting up such shelters in 12 States.

Stock markets regulator SEBI on Tuesday approved a ceiling on the Initial Public Offering (IPO) proceeds to be used to make unspecified acquisitions. In its Board meeting, the Securities and Exchange Board of India approved rules capping at 35% the amount for future inorganic growth — but where no acquisition target had been identified — combined with that meant for general corporate purpose. Tagging a major portion of a fresh issue for unidentified acquisitions caused uncertainty for investors, the SEBI had noted earlier.

At least two Supreme Court judges have in the past few months openly expressed the need to “Indianise” the legal system. In September, Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana called for the “Indianisation” of the legal system to provide greater access to justice to the poor as the “need of the hour”. “When I say ‘Indianisation’, I mean the need to adapt to the practical realities of our society and localise our justice delivery systems... For example, parties from a rural place fighting a family dispute are usually made to feel out of place in the court,” the CJI clarified. On December 26, Justice S. Abdul Nazeer went a step further to underscore the need to embrace the “great legal traditions as per Manu, Kautilya, Katyayana, Brihaspati, Narada, Parashara, Yajnavalkya and other legal giants of ancient India”.

“Now, drones will be used to monitor illegal liquor manufacturing in Bihar. A trial run has already been done on December 25, State Excise Commissioner B. Kartikey Dhanji told. “Soon, the department will finalise a company to use drones on performance basis.

The Ministry of Civil Aviation has written to Indian airlines and airports in the country asking them to play Indian music following a request from the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) last week. “It is requested to kindly consider playing Indian music in the aircraft being operated in India and at airports following the regulatory requisites.

Russia’s Supreme Court ruled that one of the country’s oldest and most prominent human rights organisations should be shut down, a move that stirred up much public outrage and is the latest step in a months long crackdown on rights activists, independent media and Opposition supporters. The Prosecutor General’s Office last month petitioned the Supreme Court to revoke the legal status of Memorial — an international human

ETHANOL BLENDED PETROL PROGRAMME

1. During Ethanol Supply Year (ESY) 2020-21, 302.30 crore litre of Ethanol has been procured by OMCs for blending purpose till 30.11.2021. Ethanol is an agro-based product, mainly produced by the fermentation of the sugars, namely molasses. Launched in 2003, the Ethanol Blending Programme (EBP) sought to promote the use of alternative and environment friendly fuels and to reduce import dependency for energy requirements.

2. EBP seeks to achieve blending of Ethanol with motor spirit with a view to Reduce pollution, Conserve foreign exchange and Increase value addition in the sugar industry enabling them to clear cane price arrears of farmers. **Implementation - Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas (MoP&NG) Since 2019, this programme is being implemented in the whole of India except UTs of Andaman Nicobar and Lakshadweep islands wherein OMCs sell petrol blended with 10% ethanol.**

3. The Government has reduced the GST rate on ethanol meant for EBP Programme from 18% to 5%. Procurement - OMCs are to procure ethanol from domestic sources. OMCs are advised to continue according priority of ethanol from sugarcane juice/sugar/sugar syrup; B heavy molasses; C heavy molasses; and Damaged Food grains/other sources, in that order.

4. To increase production of fuel grade ethanol and to achieve blending targets, the Govt of India has allowed use of maize and rice with FCI.

5. **Targets - Currently, 8.5% of ethanol is blended with petrol in India. National Policy on Biofuels 2018 has 10% blending target for mixing ethanol with petrol by 2022 & 20% blending target by 2030.** To facilitate achieving of new blending targets, a “grid” which networks distilleries to Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) depots and details quantities to be supplied has been worked out.

BIODIESEL BLENDING PROGRAMME

1. Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas remotely flagged off the first supply of Used Cooking Oil (UCO) based Biodiesel blended Diesel under the EOI Scheme from Indian Oil’s Tikrikalan Terminal, Delhi. Ministry of Finance has reduced the GST rate on biodiesel - which is sold to OMCs for blending with diesel - from 12% to 5%.

2. About - Launched in 2005 by the MoP&NG, the Biodiesel Blending Programme (BBP) seeks to achieve blending of Biodiesel with diesel. Biodiesel is produced from Used Cooking Oil (UCO). It is marketed by OMCs and other agencies. OMCs are to purchase Biodiesel (B100), meeting the fuel quality standard prescribed by BIS for blending with High Speed Diesel (HSD) to the extent of 5% at identified purchase centres across the country.

3. Implementation - Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas (MoP&NG). Targets - **Currently, less than 0.1% of biodiesel is blended into diesel. National Policy on Biofuels 2018 represents a target of 5% of blending biodiesel in diesel by 2030.** Availability of biodiesel has been low in the last few years due to the increase of price and non-availability of feedstock for biodiesel.

Biofuel-Biofuels are a blend of substances that are obtained from biomass.

4. They can be converted directly into liquid fuels that can be used as transportation fuels. The two most common kinds of biofuels in use are ethanol and biodiesel and they both represent the first generation of biofuel technology. Ethanol is renewable and made from many kinds of plants. Biodiesel is produced by combining alcohol with new and used vegetable oils, animal fats or recycled cooking grease.

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1. **A Oday (or zero-day vulnerability) refers to a security flaw which has not been publicly disclosed and for which a software patch or remediation technique is not available.**

2. Considering that attempts at exploiting Log4Shell were observed at least a week prior to it being publicly disclosed, it could be said that it was a Oday vulnerability, however, only for a very brief period.

3. Log4j is a widely used software logging library for Java software. Earlier this month, information about a critical security vulnerability in the library was publicly disclosed.

rights group that rose to prominence for its studies of political repression in the Soviet Union and currently encompasses more than 50 smaller groups in Russia and abroad.

Scheduled commercial banks would need a higher capital cushion to deal with challenges on account of the ongoing stress experienced by borrowers as well as to meet the economy's potential credit requirements, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said in its Report on Trend and Progress of Banking in India 202021. "Concerted strategies for timely capital infusion need to be carried forward by the banks," it said in the report released.

EAST

- 1.The artificial Sun experiment is being developed through a reactor, with the help of nuclear fusion. The mission mimics the energy generation process of the sun.** The reactor consists of an advanced nuclear fusion experimental research device located in Hefei, China.
- 2.**It is one of three major domestic tokamaks that are presently being operated across the country.
- 3.**The Experimental Advanced Superconducting Tokamak (EAST) project is part of the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) facility, which will become the world's largest nuclear fusion reactor when it becomes operational in 2035.
- 4.**The ITER project includes the contributions of several countries, including India, South Korea, Japan, Russia and the United States.