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West Bengal News

"Sustainable water management in rice cultivation reduces arsenic contamination and boosts productivity: Study"

What is AWD?

- Alternate Wetting and Drying (AWD) is a water-saving technology without decreasing its yield.
- In AWD, irrigation water is applied a few days after the disappearance of the ponded water.
- Hence, the field gets alternately **flooded and non-flooded**.
- The number of days of non-flooded soil between irrigations can vary from **1 to more than 10 days depending on several factors such as soil type, weather, and crop growth stage**.

Context:

A recent study conducted by **premier Indian institutes in collaboration with leading UK institutions** has demonstrated that **implementing sustainable water management practices** in rice cultivation can reduce arsenic contamination.

Key findings:

- The study, which focused on the use of the **Alternate Wetting-Drying (AWD) technique**, found that this method can reduce arsenic bioavailability by up to 26%.
- The two-year field trial, conducted across various geographic locations with seasonal changes, **supports adopting AWD irrigation as a sustainable water management strategy**.
- The study, the first of its kind to investigate **AWD's impact on As-Si distribution in fluvio-alluvial soils of the entire Ganga valley**, involved 24 study sites across six divisions.

Jal Swapno project

Context:

The Jal Swapna project is set to provide drinking water to **20,000 households**. Construction of reservoirs and pipeline installation is underway in Bhetaguri Gram Panchayat I, Dinhata.

About:

- Mamata Banerjee in 2020 announced Rs 58,000-crore Jal Swapno project to provide pipeline water supply to **2 crore rural households in Bengal in the next five years**.
- In the first phase of the project, it focussed on providing water supply connections to **households in the so-called dry region of the state**.
- Districts like **Jhargram, West Midnapore, Bankura, Purulia, West Burdwan** and parts of **Birbhum** are considered to be dry zones in the state.



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Daily Current Affairs Encyclopedia

"Efforts to Mitigate Annual Flooding in Jalpaiguri: Diverting Water from Bhutan's Hatinala River"

Context:

- Plans are underway to redirect water flow from Bhutan to prevent annual flooding in the **Banarhat and Binnaguri regions of Jalpaiguri** caused by the Hatinala River.

Key points:

- The Irrigation department aims to divert the excess water to the **Dayna, Reti, and Sukriti rivers** before it reaches Hatinala, as increasing the depth of the river is not feasible due to Indian Oil pipelines under the riverbed.

Riverside Tourist Center Planned for Cooch Behar, Boosting Heritage City Status

Context:

- Cooch Behar is set to have a new **riverside tourist center along the Mora Torsha River, similar to 'Bhorer alo' in Gajoldoba, Jalpaiguri.**

Key points:

- Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has supported designating **Cooch Behar as a heritage city, with 154 structures** already declared as heritage sites and ongoing renovation work.
- The upcoming heritage city designation is expected to significantly increase tourist numbers, making the development of a tourist center along the **Mora Torsha River a promising prospect.**

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