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29 February 2024

West Bengal News

KRISHAK BANDHU



Context:

- The state Agriculture department, in February, released **Rs 80 crore to provide one-time financial assistance under the Krishak Bandhu Death Benefit scheme, benefitting 4,000 families of deceased farmers.**
- In the current financial year, 34,000 farmer families have received **financial assistance of Rs 680 crore till date.**
- More than 1.03 crore beneficiary farmers, including Bargadars, are enrolled under the scheme at present and have already received Rs 2815 crore in their bank accounts for **Rabi season 2023-24.**

About:

- The Krishak Bandhu scheme was launched in **2018-19 by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and is a fully state-funded** direct cash benefit transfer to farmers, including Bargadars.
- Earlier, the amount of financial assistance was **Rs 5,000 for cultivable lands of one acre and more and a minimum of Rs 2,000 per annum, which was doubled in 2021** with the relaunch of the Krishak Bandhu (Natun) scheme on June 17, 2021.
- As per commitments by Banerjee, the financial assistance was increased to **Rs 10,000 for cultivable lands of one acre and more** and a proportionate amount for the land area **below one acre with a minimum of Rs 4,000 per annum** in two equal installments before Kharif and Rabi season every year.
- **Under the Krishak Bandhu scheme on the death of any farmer between 18 to 60 years of age, the next of kin are extended one-time financial assistance of Rs 2 lakh each and covers any farmer irrespective of cause of death.**

Banga Matsya Yojana

Context:

- The Jalpaiguri district Fisheries department is pioneering an innovative concept of fisheries tourism.
- This unique addition complements **existing tourism categories like tea tourism, religious tourism, and village tourism.**



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	<p>Key points: Features of the Project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The initiative involves constructing cottages around a reservoir where tourists can engage in fishing activities. Additional attractions include swimming and fish spa facilities, with fish sourced externally. The project also features a separate meditation area, providing tourists with a serene atmosphere. The estimated cost for this venture is approximately Rs 50 lakh. <p>Government Support and Future Plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Jalpaiguri district Fisheries department explained that the scheme receives financial support from the government. Projects are executed through beneficiaries following government directives. The government provides a 40 to 60 percent grant to encourage more participants in these ventures. Numerous innovative ideas are in the pipeline for future resourcing.
<p>Bengal Himalayan Carnival</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Himalayan Hospitality & Tourism Development Network (HHTDN), a leading body of tourism stakeholders in north Bengal, is set to organize a three-day festival, the Bengal Himalayan Carnival, across three locations from March 1 to 3. This event aims to promote tourism in the plains and hills of north Bengal. <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The carnival will take place in Darjeeling, Kalimpong, and the Dooars. Lataguri, known for its proximity to reserve forests, has emerged as an eco-tourism destination over the years. Currently, around 150 tourist resorts are located in and around Lataguri, which is on the fringes of Gorumara National Park.
<p>Ganga River Pollution: A Concern for National Green Tribunal</p>	<p>Context: The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has observed that the entire stretch of the Ganga River in West Bengal is unfit for bathing due to high levels of faecal coliform.</p> <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The tribunal highlighted that 258.67 million litres per day (MLD) of untreated sewage is directly flowing into the river.



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- The bench expressed surprise that not even a single Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) was set up in some districts like Purba Medinipur.
- The tribunal warned that if sufficient progress is not shown in the reduction of pollutant discharge into the Ganga River in the next report, it may have no option but to impose Environmental Compensation (EC).

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