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11 March 2024

West Bengal News

State Announces Handloom & Khadi Weavers' Financial Benefit Scheme 2024

Context:

- The West Bengal government, under the leadership of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, has introduced the **West Bengal Handloom and Khadi Weavers' Financial Benefit Scheme 2024**.
- This initiative aims to support the development of handloom and khadi weavers across the state.

Key points:

- **Objective:** The scheme aims to make Primary Weavers Societies (PWCs) debt-free by providing financial support for one-time settlement of Non-Performing Asset (NPA) accounts in the West Bengal State Cooperative Bank and district cooperative banks.
- **Financial Support:** The state government will pay the principal loan amount and 25% interest, while the remaining 75% will be waived by the banks. This support is intended to accelerate the development of handloom and khadi weavers and their societies in West Bengal.
- **Yarn Subsidies:** Yarn will be supplied at subsidized rates to PWCs, Khadi Weavers Societies, and individual weavers. Tantuja, a government organization, will provide yarn to handloom societies at a 10% concessional rate on the purchase price, with an additional 5% administrative cost for transportation, storage, and handling.
- **One-time Assistance:** Handloom weavers who are not part of any PWCs will receive one-time financial assistance of Rs 5,000 per weaver for repair/renovation of work sheds and looms, as well as Rs 10,000 towards raw material assistance. To receive this benefit, yarn must be procured through Tantuja.

₹800 crore project to revamp Kolkata's Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port

Context:

- The Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways has greenlit a significant project aimed at transforming Kolkata's Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port.



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Key points:

- This ambitious endeavor involves reconstructing berth number 8 and mechanizing berth numbers 7 and 8 at Netaji Subhash Dock of KDS, Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port, Kolkata.
- The project will be implemented under a Design, Build, Finance, Operate, and Transfer (DBFOT) framework through a Public-Private Partnership (PPP).
- The estimated cost of the project stands at ₹809.18 crore, emphasizing its substantial scale.
- The initiative aims to revolutionize the operational landscape of the Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port.
- Key benefits include the establishment of an efficient and environmentally sustainable integrated cargo handling system, which is expected to greatly enhance operational efficiency.

State shifting to LPG in Anganwadi centres

Context:

- **Transitioning from earthen stoves to LPG as cooking fuel in Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) is underway in the state, marking a significant infrastructure upgrade.**

Key points:

- The State Women & Child Development and Social Welfare department is spearheading this transition.
- 81,321 AWCs have been earmarked for the switch to LPG.
- A budget exceeding Rs 40.31 crore has been allocated for the fiscal year 2023-24.
- The Anganwadi Services scheme provided hot cooked meals to 69.11 lakh children below 6 years and 12.29 lakh pregnant and lactating mothers for 26 days each month in 2023-24.
- Nutritional improvements were observed, with only 3.98% of children below 5 years found underweight in 2023-24 compared to 5.1% in 2022-23.
- Currently, 66,126 Shishu Aloy (AWCs offering early childhood care and education) are operational statewide.



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National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day



Context:

- **March 10** is celebrated as **National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (NWGHAAD)**.
- This day highlights the **impact of HIV/AIDS on women and girls**, and the importance of prevention, testing, care, and treatment.
- **This day was first observed in 2005.**

Theme:

- The theme for NWGHAAD 2024 is: **“Prevention and Testing at Every Age. Care and Treatment at Every Stage”**.

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