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### 1. Odisha's Koraput Kalajeera rice gets GI tag status ( Sept. 9, 2023 )

Koraput district of Odisha has successfully achieved the prestigious Geographical Indication (GI) status for its famous rice variety 'Koraput Kalajeera Rice', often called the '**Prince of Rice**'.

#### An Overview of the News

- This aromatic rice variety has been cultivated by tribal farmers of Koraput district for generations and is prized for its nutritional value.
- Koraput Kalajeera rice is distinguished by its **black colour, exceptional aroma, pleasing taste and pleasing texture**. Its appearance is often compared to **coriander seeds**.
- Apart from its culinary appeal, this rice is associated with various health benefits, including **memory enhancement, diabetes control, increasing hemoglobin levels, and improved metabolism, as suggested in ancient texts**.
- This fragrant rice is known for its medicinal properties, which include **antispasmodic, carminative, carminative, antibacterial, astringent, and sedative**.

#### What is GI tag?

- A geographical indication (GI) is a name or sign given to products coming from a **specific geographical location**.
- GIs certify that products are made using **traditional methods or have specific qualities due to their origin**.
- It is used for **food, handicrafts, and industrial products**.
- The GI tag ensures that **only authorized users can use the product name**.

### 2. Tamil Nadu's Salem Sago gets GI tag ( Sept. 9, 2023 )

Salem Starch and Sago Manufacturers Service Industrial Co-operative Society Limited, also known as SagoServe, recently received the Geographical Indication (GI) tag for Salem Sago.

#### An Overview of the News

- District Collector S Karmegam presented the GI certificate to Sagoserv Administrator Lalithaditya Neelam at an official program.
- Salem district of Tamil Nadu has previously received the **GI tag for raw silk and Malgoa mango**, thereby contributing to the recognition of the region.
- Other notable products from different regions, such as Tirupati Laddu and Palani Panchamirtham have also received the GI tag.

- This recognition of Salem sago with a GI tag is expected to boost business opportunities for sago farmers and traders in the region.
- Tamil Nadu contributes significantly to the national sago production, accounting for 40% of the total production.
- Salem **holds the leading position in sago production in Tamil Nadu.**
- Sagosarva, established in 1981, is a cooperative society with 374 members from various districts including **Salem, Namakkal, Dharmapuri, Erode, Perambalur, Trichy, Tiruvannamalai and Villupuram.**

### **What is a GI tag?**

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- The GI tag ensures that only authorized users can use the product name.

### **Who awards and regulates geographical indications?**

- These are a type of **Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs)** recognized and protected under the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property.
- The World Trade Organization (WTO)'s Agreement on **Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS)** provides a framework for the **protection of GIs at the international level.**
- In India, registration and protection of GIs is governed by the **Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999**, which came into **effect in September 2003.**

### **3. India's first solar city inaugurated in Madhya Pradesh's Sanchi ( Sept. 8, 2023 )**

Madhya Pradesh (MP) Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan inaugurated Sanchi in Raisen district as India's first solar city.

#### **An Overview of the News**

- The initiative is in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of developing a solar city in every state by 2070.

#### **About Sanchi Solar City:**

- Sanchi Solar City has two solar plants - **a 3 MW solar plant at Nagauri** and a **5 MW solar plant at Gulgaon**, which cater to the city's power and agricultural needs.

- Currently, an 8 MW grid-connected solar plant is under construction within Sanchi city.
- **Madhya Pradesh Urja Vikas Nigam Limited (MPUVNL)** acted as the nodal agency for this solar city project.
- MPUVNL launched an '**Energy Literacy Campaign**' to educate the people of **Sanchi about energy-saving practices**.
- Sanchi Solar City is expected to reduce annual carbon dioxide emissions by about 13,747 tonnes, which is equivalent to the effect of planting more than 2 lakh adult trees.
- The project is expected to save over Rs 7 crore annually in energy-related expenses for both the government and citizens.

**Initiatives under the Sanchi Solar City Project:**

- Electric vehicle charging stations have been set up across the city to promote the adoption of electric vehicles.
- Public establishments have been fitted with rooftop solar systems to harness solar energy.
- Individual rooftop owners have also installed solar systems on their premises, thereby reducing their dependence on grid electricity.

**National Renewable Energy Target:**

- India has set a target of generating 40% of its total installed electricity generation capacity from renewable sources by 2030.

**About Sanchi:**

- Sanchi is famous for its Buddhist Stupa, which is recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- The Great Stupa of Sanchi was built by Emperor Ashoka in the 3rd century BC.

**Important Point:-** In October 2022, Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared Modhera village in Gujarat as India's first 24x7 solar-powered village.

**About Madhya Pradesh**

- It is the second largest state of India by area after Rajasthan.
- Forests occupy 25.14 percent of its area.
- Governor - **Mangubhai Patel**
- Chief Minister - **Shivraj Singh Chauhan**
- Capital - **Bhopal**

#### **4. Jharkhand Cabinet approves Pension and OBC status for the Transgender Community ( Sept. 8, 2023 )**

The Jharkhand cabinet led by Chief Minister Hemant Soren approved the inclusion of the transgender community in the state's universal pension scheme.

##### **An Overview of the News**

- Transgender persons will now be eligible to receive **monthly financial assistance of Rs 1000 under the 'Chief Minister's State Social Security Pension Scheme'**.
- Eligibility for this scheme is determined on the basis of age, persons of 18 years and above who have voter ID cards are eligible.

##### **Inclusion of Transgender Persons in the Other Backward Classes (OBC) Category:**

- Apart from the pension scheme, the **Jharkhand cabinet also approved the inclusion of transgender persons in the Other Backward Classes (OBC) category.**
- The objective of this decision is to ensure that transgender persons can avail the benefits of reservation in government job opportunities.
- Notably, transgender persons who do not fall under any of the existing caste-based reservation categories will be classified as OBCs at position number 46 in the OBC list.

##### **Transgender Population Statistics:**

- According to the Women, Child Development and Social Security Department (WCDSS) data, the transgender population in Jharkhand was around 11,900 in the year 2011.
- Currently, the transgender population in Jharkhand is around 14,000.

#### **5. Telangana Government and Tabreed sign MoU to develop Asia's largest district cooling system ( Sept. 8, 2023 )**

Telangana Government signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Tabreed, a cooling-as-a-service provider from Abu Dhabi, UAE, to develop Asia's largest District Cooling System (DCS) in Hyderabad.

##### **An Overview of the News**

- Tabreed will invest US\$200 million to build cooling infrastructure with a capacity of 125,000 refrigeration tons (RT) for Hyderabad Pharma City (HPC).
- The project has been undertaken as a Public-Private Partnership (PPP).

##### **District Cooling System (DCS):**

- DCS is an environment-friendly, energy-efficient, and cost-effective cooling method.

- It involves a central chiller plant to cool water, which is then circulated through a closed-loop pipe network to cool industrial, commercial and residential buildings.

**Environmental Goals:**

- This partnership is in line with Telangana's commitment to achieve net-zero emissions by 2047, contributing to a green and healthy environment.

**Sustainable Infrastructure Development:**

- The collaboration between Tabreed and the Government of Telangana aims to reshape the landscape of sustainable infrastructure development.
- Tabreed's expertise at DCS will set an example for environmental responsibility.

**Additional MoU for Cyberabad:**

- The Telangana government has also signed an MoU with Tabreed to explore district cooling infrastructure in Cyberabad, Hyderabad, and other mixed-use development areas.
- This initiative could potentially reduce electricity demand by more than 200 megawatts (MW) and result in an annual reduction of 18 million tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions over 30 years.

**Economic and Environmental Benefits:**

- The project is expected to deliver multiple benefits including reliability, cost-efficiency, and economies of scale.
- This will result in significant power savings of 6,800 gigawatt hours (GWh) and water savings of 41,600 megaliters.
- Greenhouse gas emissions are estimated to be reduced by 6.2 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>.
- This initiative will transform cooling practices in the pharmaceutical industry, contributing to a cleaner and greener environment for bulk drug manufacturing facilities in Hyderabad.

**6. Union Health Minister inaugurates Amrita Patel Public Health Center in Gujarat ( Sept. 2, 2023 )**

Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya inaugurated the Amrita Patel Public Health Center in Anand, Gujarat.

**An Overview of the News**

- The Amrita Patel Center for Public Health was established in honor of Dr. Amrita Patel, a pioneer in both the dairy industry and public health.
- Dr. Patel has held key positions in the dairy industry, including as the first woman executive of Amul and chairperson of NDDB.

- She was devoted to improving the health and livelihoods of India's rural poor, especially women.

**Amrita Patel Awards and Recognitions:**

- Dr. Patel received prestigious awards like 'Padma Bhushan' for his dairy industry contribution and 'Indira Gandhi Environment Award' for his environmental work.
- She has been consistently recognized as a top businesswoman and received the Mahindra Samridhi India Agri Lifetime Achievement Award.

**Centre's Approach:**

- The center aims to be a hub of learning and capacity building, serving public health professionals from diverse backgrounds. It continues Dr. Patel's legacy of public health reform in India.

**About Gujarat**

- Formation (by partition) - **1 May 1960**
- Capital - **Gandhinagar**
- Governor - Acharya **Devvrat**
- Chief Minister - **Bhupendrabhai Patel (BJP)**
- District - **33**
- Rajya Sabha - **11 seats**
- Lok Sabha - **26 seats**

**7. Civil Aviation Minister Inaugurates Utkela Airport and Direct Flight between Utkela and Bhubaneswar ( Aug. 31, 2023 )**

Minister of Civil Aviation, Jyotiraditya M. Scindia and Minister of State, Ministry of Civil Aviation, General Vijay Kumar Singh (Retd) inaugurated the Utkela Airport and a new flight route connecting Utkela and Bhubaneswar through video conferencing.

**An Overview of the News**

- Utkela Airport, owned by the Government of Odisha, has been set up as a regional airport under the UDAN scheme of the Ministry of Civil Aviation with a project cost of Rs 31.07 crore.
- The airport has a 917-metre (2,995 ft) runway and a runway width of 30 metres, which contributes to better regional connectivity.
- This increases the number of airports in Odisha to five, underscoring efforts to boost transport infrastructure.

**Increase in connectivity through Utkela-Bhubaneswar flight route**

- The newly launched Utkela-Bhubaneswar flight route, operated by IndiaOne, is set to strengthen regional air connectivity and boost economic growth in the region.
- This route will be operated by 9-seater Cessna C-208 aircraft, which is a part of the UDAN scheme initiative.
- The travel time between Utkela and Bhubaneswar, which usually takes about 8 hours by road, will now be reduced to just one hour and twenty minutes by air.

**Economic benefits and development for Kalahandi region**

- The new Utkela-Bhubaneswar air connection is set to stimulate economic activities and create many employment opportunities in the Kalahandi region.
- Collaboration between the Central Government and the Government of Odisha in advancing civil aviation infrastructure was highlighted as an important step towards development.

**About Odisha**

- Formation - **April 1, 1936**
- Capital - **Bhubaneswar**
- Districts - **30 (3 divisions)**
- Governor - **Ganeshi Lal**
- Chief Minister - **Naveen Patnaik**

**8. Assam's Chokuwa rice gets GI tag ( Aug. 31, 2023 )**

Chokuwa rice, popularly known as "magic rice", received the Geographical Indication (GI) tag.

**An Overview of the News**

- The GI tag recognizes its exceptional qualities and heritage.
- Chokuwa rice is closely linked to the history of Assam and has a historical connection with the **Ahom dynasty**.
- This variety of rice is specially cultivated in the **Brahmaputra river region**.
- Cultivation areas include **Tinsukia, Dhemaji, and Dibrugarh in Assam**.

**Geographical Indication (GI) Tag:**

- Geographical Indication (GI) is a label given to products from a **specific geographical area**.

- GIs confirm that products have unique properties or have been produced using traditional methods because of their **geographical origin**.
- Applicable to various products such as **food, handicrafts, and industrial goods**.
- GI tags ensure that **only authorized producers can use the product name**.

### **Who awards and regulates geographical indications?**

- Geographical indications are a form of intellectual property rights (IPR) protected under the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property.
- The World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) establishes an international framework for GI protection.
- In India, GI registration and protection of goods is governed by the **Geographical Indications (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999**.
- This act came into effect in **September 2003**.

### **About Assam**

Formation (as a state) - **26 January 1950**

Capital - **Dispur**

Chief Minister - **Himanta Biswa Sarma**

Governor - **Gulab Chand Kataria**

Rajya Sabha - **7 seats**

Lok Sabha - **14 seats**

### **9. Bhaderwah Rajma and Ramban Sulai honey get GI tag in Jammu and Kashmir ( Aug. 30, 2023 )**

Bhaderwah Rajma and Ramban Sulai honey of Jammu and Kashmir were granted Geographical Indication (GI) tag.

### **An Overview of the News**

- Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Jammu started the GI tagging process for these products.
- GI tag provides exclusive use rights to authorized users while preventing unauthorized exploitation.
- This recognition is expected to increase exports, increase brand presence internationally and prevent misuse.
- The GI tag is set to benefit local economies and promote socioeconomic development for producers.



**What is GI Tag?**

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**Who grants and regulates Geographical Indications?**

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**About Jammu and Kashmir**

- Jammu and Kashmir was a state of India until August 2019, when it was bifurcated as two union territories named Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh on 31 August 2019.
- Capital- Srinagar (May-October), Jammu (November-April)
- Lieutenant Governor - Manoj Sinha
- Legislative Council - 36 seats
- Legislative Assembly - 89 seats

**10. Kolkata becomes the third Indian city to adopt an Air Quality Early Warning System (AQEWS) ( Aug. 28, 2023 )**

Kolkata became the third Indian city to adopt the **Air Quality Early Warning System (AQEWS)** to combat rising air pollution.

**An Overview of the News**

- The system, developed by the **Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) in Pune**, aims **to address rising air pollution levels in urban areas**.
- AQEWS in Kolkata uses an advanced sensor network to provide real-time monitoring of the **Air Quality Index (AQI)**.
- AQI is a standardized measure of the level of air pollution, with a value ranging from 0 to 500.

- The system focuses on **PM2.5 (particles with a diameter of 2.5 micrometers or smaller) levels**, which is a major contributor to health problems due to its ability to enter the lungs.

**Air pollution status in Kolkata:**

- Kolkata is facing severe air pollution, which is mainly driven by **pollutants like PM2.5**.
- Recent AQEWS measurements show that the AQI is 74, which is expected to rise above **170 by 30 August**.
- These forecasts highlight the urgency of tackling air pollution and emphasize the role of early warning systems.

**Data Integration and Accuracy:**

- AQEWS integrates data from the National Air Quality Network and satellite sources to generate accurate air pollution forecasts.
- The accuracy of the system was proved during the experimental phase that started in **September 2022**.
- The inclusion of data from 420 air quality monitoring stations across India ensures a comprehensive approach to the assessment of air quality.

Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change - **Bhupendra Yadav**