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1. Uttarakhand government frees the temples from government control (Dec. 1, 2021)

The Uttarakhand Government took back the **The Uttarakhand Char Dham Devasthanam Management Act, 2019** that sought to extend control over **51 temples** in Uttarakhand and have been opposed tooth and nail by their seers and managements.

About Char-Dham

Char Dham means four religious places. Char Dham is located in **Garhwal Himalayas range of Uttarakhand**. It is a circuit of hindu religious pilgrimage

It includes :

Badrinath :

It is dedicated to Lord Vishnu. The head priest, or Rawal, is traditionally a Nambudri Brahmin chosen from Kerala. It is located in the Chamoli district of Uttarakhand

Kedarnath

It is dedicated to Lord Shiva .It is located in the Rudraprayag district of Uttarakhand .

Gangotri

It is in Uttarkashi district of Uttarakhand . It is on the bank of river Bhagirathi.

It is believed that goddess Ganga descended from heaven to this place.

The Ganga river at its origin is called Bhagirathi which originates from gomukh in the Gangotri glacier. It merges with Alaknanda river at Devprayag and then it is called Ganga .

Yamunotri

It is located in the Uttarkashi district of Uttarakhand.

It is the source of Yamuna river and a seat of goddess Yamuna.

2. Role of Stubble burning in Delhi Pollution (Dec. 1, 2021)

As per **SAFAR (System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research)** data, the average contribution of stubble burning in neighboring states of Punjab, Haryana and Western Uttar Pradesh to Delhi's PM 2.5 level in November was 14.6%,. The highest contribution of stubble burning to PM2.5 in Delhi for a day was 58% in 2018, 43% in 2019, and 46% in 2020.

The number of effective fire counts in OctoberNovember (the stubble burning season) according to SAFAR data is around 77,000, the highest in four years.

Stubble Burning

Stubble Burning is the process of setting fire to the straw stubble that remains after grains like paddy and wheat are harvested. It is often preferred by farmers because it's cheaper and easier than other methods, helps to combat pests and also reduces soil nitrogen tie-up. But on the negative side it releases harmful particulate matter and greenhouse gases in the atmosphere causing severe AQI(Air Quality Index) deterioration in Delhi every winter during October –November.

Major pollutants in Delhi

Ozone (O₃): Also referred to as ground-level ozone. This is a colorless gas that forms above the earth's surface and is created by a chemical reaction when two primary pollutants (volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and nitrogen oxides (NO_x)) react in sunlight and stagnant air.

Particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}): Particulate matter is a mixture of solid and liquid droplets suspended in air and are distinguished by their size. When the skies are hazy, it means there is a high concentration of particulate matter (PM) in the air. The PM is categorised as PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}. PM₁₀ particles are less than or equal to 10 micrometers in diameter. Whereas, PM_{2.5} particles are less than or equal to 2.5 micrometers in diameter. 95% of emissions from diesel, petrol, and natural gas combustion, open waste burning, biomass burning, coal combustion, falls under PM_{2.5}.

Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂): Another dangerous air pollutant is a mixture of gases called nitrogen oxides. These groups of gases are odorless and react in the air to form particulate matter (PM) and ozone. Vehicles, power plants and fuel burning are the major source of nitrogen oxides.

Carbon monoxide (CO): This gas is highly toxic while at the same time being odorless and colourless. This gas constitutes one of the major outdoor pollutants. The burning of fossil fuels like diesel and petrol caused the emission of this gas.

Sulphur dioxide (SO₂): The highly reactive gas called sulphur dioxide is released due to the burning of diesel in vehicles. The Sulphur dioxide then reacts with air to form particulate matter and also lead to smog.

SAFAR(System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research)

Under the scheme “**Metropolitan Advisories for Cities for Sports, Tourism (Metropolitan Air Quality and Weather Services)**”, Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), Govt. of India, has introduced a major national initiative, “**System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research**” known as “**SAFAR**” for greater metropolitan cities of India to provide location specific information on air quality in near real time and its forecast 1-3 days in advance for the first time in India. It is developed by **Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, Pune**, along with partner institutions namely **India Meteorological Department (IMD)** and **National Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting (NCMRWF)**.

3. “Back to work” scheme of Rajasthan Government for women (Dec. 1, 2021)

The Congress government of **Rajasthan** has come up with a unique scheme to provide regular employment to women who have had to quit their earlier jobs due to personal/family issues.

Key Highlights

- A unique Employment scheme was announced by Rajasthan Chief Minister **Mr. Ashok Gehlot**.
- Name of the Scheme: **“Back to Work”**.
- Aim: **“To provide employment to 15,000 women in next three years”**.
- **Priority will be given to the women who are divorcees, widows and victims to the violence.**
- **Skill training programs** will be organised by **Rajasthan Corporate Limited** to make women employable.
- **“Work from Home”** opportunity will be provided to the women who are not able to go to a regular workplace.

Rajasthan

- **Rajasthan (northern Indian State) is the largest Indian state by area and seventh by population.**
- Capital: **Jaipur**
- Largest City: **Jaipur**
- Folk Dance: **Ghoomar**
- Chief Minister: **Ashok Gehlot**

4. Kerala accuses Tamilnadu of causing flood (Dec. 1, 2021)

Kerala government has accused Tamil Nadu of releasing 5000 cusecs of water to the Periyar River from Mullaperiyar reservoir, without any sufficient warning to Kerala, causing flood in Vallakadavu, Vandiperiyar, Chappathu and Upputhara area of Kerala.

The Mullaperiyar dam is built on river Periyar and is located in the Idukki district of Kerala but is controlled by Tamilnadu. In october 1886 an agreement was signed between the Maharaja of Travancore and British India on behalf of Madras Presidency for a 999 year lease of the dam to the Madras Presidency.

After Independence Travancore's part of the treaty was inherited by Kerala and Madras Presidency part was inherited by Tamilnadu.

Additional Information regarding Mullaperiyar Dam

Period of Construction - **1887-1895**

Main reason behind Construction - To provide water to the arid **rain shadow region of Tamil Nadu** especially the districts of Theni, Dindigul, Madurai, Sivagangai, Ramanathapuram.

Protected wildlife areas around the dam -

Periyar National Park

- It became a national Tiger park under project tiger in 2017
- It is also an Elephant Reserve under Project Elephant from 2002.
- Main wildlife: Rare lion-tailed macaque(type of monkey), The Nilgiri langur, The common langur, and Bonnet macaque

Type of Dam - Masonry Gravity Dam (**Gravity dams use their weight and the force of gravity to support the reservoir and remain stable**)

River: It is on the Periyar river.