

## Shigmo Festival

- Shigmo is the traditional spring festival celebrated by farmers in rural Goa.
- It is an annual float parade held in major cities of the state.
- The Goan folk art such as **GhodeModni, Goff, and Fugdi** are performed.
- It was traditionally celebrated as the homecoming of the warriors who had left their homes and families at the end of Dusshera to fight invaders.

## World Wetlands Day

- February 2<sup>nd</sup> of every year is celebrated as world wetlands day, marking the adoption of Ramsar Convention on Wetlands
- The MoEF&CC in collaboration with Department of Forests, Assam government is organizing the national-level celebration of World Wetlands Day (WWD), 2018 at DeeporBeel, a Ramsar Site in Guwahati, Assam.
- The 2018 theme '**Wetlands for a sustainable urban future**' marks the role of healthy wetlands play in making cities and towns liveable.

## Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

- The Convention was adopted in 1971 at the Iranian City of Ramsar.
- It is an intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources.
- India is a party to the Convention since 1982.
- The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change is the nodal Ministry for wetlands conservation in India.
- Wetlands in India account for 4.7% of the total geographical area

## Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI)

- IWAI signed an project agreement with the world bank for the **Jal Marg Vikas** on Ganga (NW1)
- The IWAI came into existence for development and regulation of inland waterways for shipping and navigation.
- Functions of IWAI with respect to National Waterways

1. Survey
2. Navigation, Infrastructure and Regulations
3. Fairway Development
4. Pilotage
5. Coordination of IWT with other modes

## Initiatives of FSSAI for Nutritional and Safe Food

- Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has developed science-based standards for various categories of food products to ensure availability of safe and wholesome food in the country.
- FSSAI has introduced **+F Logo** for **fortified** foods.
- To promote awareness among consumers on Nutrition, mandatory labelling requirements for pre-packaged foods, is prescribed.
- FSSAI has also undertaken '**Safe and Nutritious Food (SNF)**' initiative to promote awareness towards consumption of safe and nutritious food.

## Rabi Crops Sowing

- The area under the sowing reached 324 lakh hectares
- The word 'rabi' in Arabic means **winter**
- Rabi crops are sown in winter from October to December and harvested in summer from April to June.
- Some of the important rabi crops are wheat, barley, peas, gram and mustard.
- Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh are important for the production of rabi crops.
- Western temperate cyclones during winter provide the precipitation in these areas

## Dust mitigation plan must for firms:

The Environment Ministry has made it mandatory for companies seeking environment clearance to ensure that they put in place a dust mitigation plan.

## What are the requirements?

- The requirements, specified in a gazette notification on January 25, say that roads leading to or at construction sites must be paved and black-topped.
- There could be no soil excavation without adequate dust mitigation measures in place. No loose soil, sand, construction waste could be left uncovered.
- A water sprinkling system was mandatory, and the measures taken should be prominently displayed at the construction site.
- Moreover, the grinding and cutting of building materials in open area were prohibited and no uncovered vehicles carrying construction material and waste would be permitted.

### Background:

The standards were developed by the Central Pollution Control Board as part of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS), and will now empower the organisation to fine companies and agencies for not complying with norms.

### Need for dust mitigation:

- A study by the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur and commissioned by the Delhi government reported, in 2015, that road dust, burning of biomass and municipal solid waste, constituted the lion's share of the city's air pollution.
- Road dust contributed 56% of all PM10 pollution, while it was 38% for PM2.5. Another estimate by the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, Pune had different numbers but still ranked dust as the major contributor — 52% — to the city's PM10 load.

### Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahaabhiyan or KUSUM scheme

As part of Union Budget 2018-19, the government has announced Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahaabhiyan or KUSUM scheme.

#### About KUSUM scheme:

- **What is it?**
  - ✓ It is a 1.4 lakh-crore scheme for promoting decentralised solar power production of up to 28,250 MW to help farmers.
  - ✓ It would provide extra income to farmers, by giving them an option to sell additional power to the grid through solar power projects set up on their barren lands.
  - ✓ It would help in de-dieselising the sector as also the DISCOMS.
- **Components of the scheme:**
  - **The** components of the scheme include building 10,000 MW solar plants on barren lands and providing sops to DISCOMS to purchase the electricity produced,

- 'solarising' existing pumps of 7250 MW as well as government tube wells with a capacity of 8250 MW and distributing 17.5 lakh solar pumps.
- The 60% subsidy on the solar pumps provided to farmers will be shared between the Centre and the States while 30% would be provided through bank loans.

The balance cost has to be borne by the farmers.

➤ **Significance of the scheme:**

Expected positive outcomes of the scheme include promotion of decentralised solar power production, reduction of transmission losses as well as providing support to the financial health of DISCOMs by reducing the subsidy burden to the agriculture sector.

The scheme would also promote energy efficiency and water conservation and provide water security to farmers.

**Source: PIB, The Hindu, BusinessLine, Business Standard**