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1.RABARIS - THE PASTORAL COMMUNITY

- Rabaris are nomadic herders who live scattered throughout Gujarat and Rajasthan.



Originally only camels were their source of livelihood. However, now, they keep goat, sheep, cow or buffalo. Rabaris are highly adaptive and hence there appears to be some differences among the community, living in different locations.

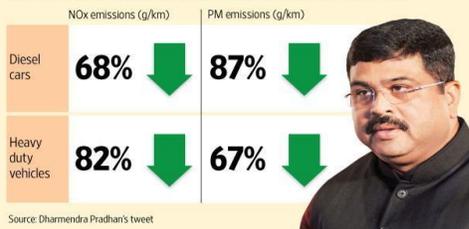
- The Rabaris have permanent villages, which are occupied half the year. Also, women live in the villages as men go out with their cattle. One of the most striking features of the Rabari community is their artistic embroidery.

2.DELHI TO GET BS-VI FUEL TWO YEARS EARLY TO TACKLE POLLUTION

The Union government said, as it seeks to reduce vehicular pollution the world's cleanest fuel Bharat **Stage VI**

BENEFITS OF SWITCHING TO BS-VI FUEL IN DELHI

The gap between emissions from diesel and petrol will narrow down with the reduction in nitrogen oxide emissions and particulate matter.



(BS-VI) will be introduced in the national capital two years earlier (by 1 April 2018) than planned and added that it is examining the possibility of introducing BS-VI fuel across the national capital region by 1 April 2019. In January last year, the Government decided to move the country up to BS-VI from the current BS-IV standards by 2020, skipping an intermediate level.

- Delhi's air quality reached hazardous levels, prompting the state government to contemplate enforcing an odd-even scheme under which vehicles with licence plates ending in odd and even numbers would ply on the roads on alternate days.
- A 2016 report by Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur, showed that cars and jeeps emit less than 10% of particulate matter, while trucks are the bigger culprits. A big contributor to Delhi's air pollution is road dust, which accounts for about 35% of tiny particles known as PM 2.5 in the air, followed by vehicles at 25%. Other contributors are domestic cooking, power plants and industries.
- PM 2.5 are tiny particles in the air that reduce visibility and cause the air to appear hazy when levels are elevated.

- ✚ Seattle-based Global Burden of Disease Study estimates that 586,787 premature deaths in India were attributable to fine particulate matter pollution in 2013. NO_x, or oxides of nitrogen, are also major pollutants. They are a family of poisonous, highly reactive gases that form when fuel is burned at high temperatures.
- ✚ Oil marketing companies are also confident that they shall be able to provide BS-VI fuel in Delhi.

3.GOURMET DELIGHT MAY FIND FAME AS STATE FISH OF TAMIL NADU



Fisheries university pushes for official recognition of Ayirai.

- ✚ Ayirai meen (loach) has so far been known as a pricey delicacy worthy of the gourmet's palate. Soon, the fish may well get official recognition as the State fish of Tamil Nadu.
 - ✚ The Centre has asked every State to identify its own official fish species. Kerala has already declared Karimeen as the State fish and murrel has gained that status in Telangana.
- ✚ TNFU has succeeded in raising the fish through pond culture, and sees potential in the technique. Priced between Rs.1,200 and Rs.1,500 per kg in the market, Ayirai (*Lepidocephalichthys thermalis*) is available in lakes, ponds and rivers.
 - ✚ The fish has nutritional and medicinal value since it is consumed as a whole. Ayirai consumers get more calcium as the bones are not discarded

4.TAMIL NADU LIKELY TO APPEAL IN SUPREME COURT

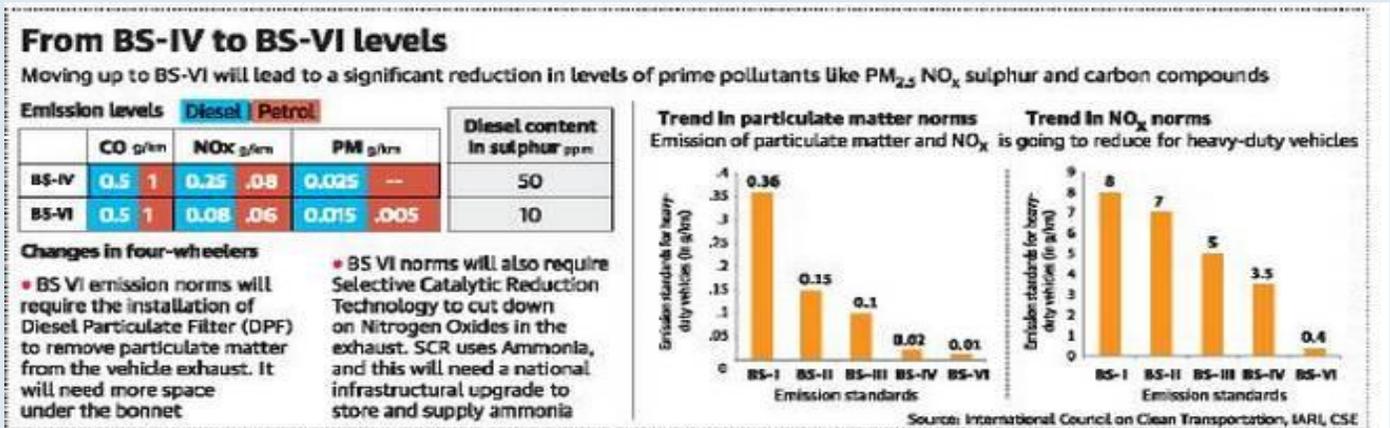


within its leased area and the water spread area of the dam, and hence will affect the ecology of the region.

- ✚ The Southern Bench of National Green Tribunal (NGT) gave the go-ahead to Kerala's proposal to undertake development works in **Periyar Tiger Reserve**, pointing out that National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) had already approved the works. Tamil Nadu has been opposing the project, which also includes construction of a parking lot in the area abutting Mullaperiyar dam, claiming that the construction falls

- The bench in its order held that the proposed construction activity in the area for tourism purposes was as per Tiger Conservation Plan (TCP) and in conformity with National Wildlife Action Plan.
- The bench observed that the NTCA was a statutory body headed by the Minister for Environment and Forests and comprising responsible authorities and experts in the field as members.
- The order said tourism activities in the TCP had been approved by the competent authority, and such activities do not amount to diversion of forest land and utilisation of forest land for non-forest purpose attracting the provisions of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980.
- The bench also said there was no necessity to get a further approval from the MoEF & CC, since the Chairperson of the Forest Advisory Committee (FAC), who decided forest clearance proposals, was also a member of the NTCA that approved the TCP. The Tamil Nadu government is likely to go on appeal in the Supreme Court.

5. ENVIRONMENTALISTS WELCOMED THE CENTRE'S DECISION TO ADVANCE THE ROLLOUT OF CLEANER FUEL



They say norms should be expanded to other mega cities for effective reduction of emissions

Environmentalists welcomed the Centre's decision to advance the rollout of cleaner fuel, compliant to Bharat Stage-VI (BS-VI) norms, in Delhi by two years, but added that a regional approach was needed to make it more effective.

The Union Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas announced that BS-VI fuel norms would be implemented in Delhi by April 1, 2018, instead of the scheduled deadline of April 2020.

6.NHRC ISSUES NOTICE TO ASSAM GOVERNMENT



'Poor harassed over nationality checks'

✚ Terming it a violation of the right to equality and dignity, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) said that the nationality checks being conducted in ASSAM were leading to "harassment of poor people".

✚ Taking suo motu cognisance of media reports, the NHRC issued a notice to the Assam Chief Secretary over the alleged

harassment by the police in the garb of verification of nationality.

- ✚ The Assam government had set up a Foreigners Tribunal to look into cases where a resident's nationality was in question, keeping in mind the illegal immigration from Bangladesh.
- ✚ While the NHRC observed that it would not intervene in the steps taken by the government to verify the nationality of residents, the harassment and humiliation meted out during the checking was a violation of rights.
- ✚ One case cited by the NHRC was of Moinal Molla, whose citizenship was questioned by the government, though his parents, wife, children, brother and other family members were Indians. He ended up spending more than two years at a detention centre set up by the government before the Supreme Court intervened and justice was done.
- ✚ As per reports, over 89,000 people are living in Assam as illegal immigrants.

7.FUTURISTIC COMBAT VEHICLE PLAN A GAME CHANGER: ARMY



- ✚ The Futuristic Infantry Combat vehicle (FICV) and Future Ready Combat Vehicle (FRCV) programmes are going to be the biggest game changers for the Indian defence industry ecosystem.

- ✚ The FICV is an ambitious effort to design and manufacture indigenously a futuristic infantry vehicle by the private industry by roping in foreign original equipment manufacturers.
- ✚ The Army has a requirement for more than 2,600 vehicles.
- ✚ the FRCV is a tender for the procurement of futuristic tanks through the Strategic Partnership.

8.HIGHWAYS TO BE RATED ON SAFETY FEATURES



NGO unveils IndiaRAP assessment

✚ In a bid to make Indian roads safer and curb fatalities, a global unveiled an **India Road Assessment Programme (IndiaRAP)** that will rate highways' safety levels, and seek to eliminate the most unsafe roads.

✚ The ratings are assigned on the basis of the level of safety which is 'built-in' to a road for vehicle occupants, motorcyclists, bicyclists and pedestrians. Five-star roads are the safest while one-star roads are the least safe.

✚ The IndiaRAP programme is being supported by FedEx Express and will be hosted by the Asian Institute of Transport Development, and will work with government agencies as well as investors, researchers and NGOs to assess existing highways and promote the use of better design to make roads safer.

9.IN YEMEN, SAUDI BLOCKADE RATCHETS UP FEARS OF FAMINE



Riyadh and its allies have tightened the screws on all land, sea and air borders in response to a Houthi missile attack

Seven million at risk

- ✚ After years of war that has seen a Saudi-led coalition battling Iran-backed Houthi rebels impose a blockade on the country, the UN has already warned that seven million people in Yemen are on the verge of starvation.

- ✚ But now a decision by Riyadh and its allies to tighten the screws on all land, sea and air borders in response to a Houthi missile attack has sent prices spiralling further — and ratcheted up fears of a looming famine.
- ✚ Prices have soared in Sana'a since the Saudi-led coalition upped the pressure on Yemen a week ago. The cost of fuel has gone up by nearly two-thirds, the price of trucked water has increased by 133% and bus fares have doubled or even tripled.
- ✚ Saudi Arabia and its allies intervened in Yemen's conflict in March 2015 with the stated aim of rolling back the Iran-backed Houthis and restoring the government of President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi to power. More than two and a half years later, thousands have died in the conflict and the rebels still control Sana'a and much of northern Yemen.

Tougher checks

- ✚ Riyadh is insisting that there must be tougher checks at rebel-held ports before they can open — a demand the UN contends is proving catastrophic.
- ✚ Yemen's government-held bastion of Aden lacks the capacity to ensure a steady flow of distribution to the millions who depend on it. Rebel-held Hodeida port, on the other hand, is closest to the majority of people in need.

10.CENTRE TO AID START-UPS IN CYBER SECURITY PUSH

- ✚ To encourage development of new technologies in the field of cyber security, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology will offer challenge grants of up to Rs. 5 crore to start-ups to spur research and development.
- ✚ India would invite cyber security scholars from the Asia Pacific region to do their research in India.
- ✚ The government is also in process of setting up a centre of excellence for block chain technology which holds immense potential to use it in various areas, including banking, entertainment, e-governance and land records.

11.MORE BANKS MAY SIGN MOU'S WITH GOVT



The government is planning to ask more public sector banks to enter into an agreement with it if they want more capital, provided banks improve their performance.

This was communicated by finance ministry officials to the bankers.

Earlier, the government had entered into an agreement with 11 banks, and had asked them to submit a turnaround plan and had linked capital infusion with the pace of turnaround.

Conditional infusion

- ✚ In the earlier round of MoUs, banks were asked to achieve several parameters such as reduction in gross non-performing assets, increase in recovery, restriction of slippages, among others. In other words, capital infusion in these laggard banks was to be linked to their performance.
- ✚ Recently, the government had announced a capital infusion of Rs.2.11 lakh crore in public sector banks over two financial years, starting from the current fiscal. Of the amount, the government plans to issue recapitalisation bonds worth Rs.1.35 lakh crore and the remaining would come from budgetary provisions and fund raising by banks from the market.
- ✚ While finance ministry officials have not committed any time frame by which the first tranche of capital will be infused, bankers said they expected it by December.
- ✚ In the past two years, banks have seen a sharp rise in non-performing assets, adding to their provisions. While there are some signs that asset quality is stabilising, as indicated in the July-Sept. earnings, banks are still facing higher provisioning requirements for cases filed for bankruptcy.
- ✚ The Reserve Bank of India has mandated 50% provision for cases admitted in the National Company Law Tribunal. Initially, the RBI had handed over a list of 12 companies for insolvency and bankruptcy proceedings. It added a second list comprising 28 companies, bad loans to which were to be resolved by December, failing which they too were to be referred for bankruptcy proceedings.

12.CENTRE GIVES EFFECT TO GST RATE CHANGES

‘Product prices must reflect change’

The Centre notified the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council’s latest decisions, giving effect to the revised tax rates on goods from November 15. The government said all product prices must reflect the change.

A consumer shall be charged the revised reduced rates of 18% on those items with effect from the 15th November, 2017. On 178 items the GST rate has been brought down from 28% to 18%.

The GST Council had pared the number of items in the highest tax slab of 28% to 50. It had also cut the rate on restaurants — except for those in hotels having a room tariff of Rs. 7,500 or more — to 5% and removed their eligibility to claim input tax credits.

Deadline extensions

-  The Council also allowed companies having an annual turnover of less than Rs. 1.5 crore to file their July-September GSTR-1 forms by December 31, the October-December GSTR-1 forms by February 15, 2018, and the January-March GSTR-1 forms by April 30, 2018. Similarly, firms clocking Rs. 1.5 crore or more a year can now file their forms for July to October by December 31. Thereafter, they would have to file monthly returns, but with a delay of 40 days from the end of taxable period. That is, the returns for November would have to be filed by January 10, those for December by February 10, and so on.
-  The latest notifications come as a huge sigh of relief for businesses both in terms of compliance as well as working capital loss.
-  Tax consultants said that there were still issues that needed to be addressed For example, the car leasing companies are one of the largest employment intensive sectors in the country. Every car needs a driver, every four cars need a technician, and every 10 cars need a cleaner. The majority of corporate go for car leasing. These leasing firms have to pay tax at 28% without input tax credit.