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West Bengal News

Calcutta High Court Directs 1% Reservation for Transgender Persons in Public Employment

Context:

- The Calcutta High Court has instructed the Bengal government to implement a **one percent reservation for transgender individuals in all public employment sectors within the state.**

Key points:

- This directive emphasizes the need for equal treatment in employment opportunities for transgender persons, a policy already adopted by the state government but not yet fully realized.
- The court's decision aligns with a **2014 Supreme Court judgment, which recognized 'hijras' and eunuchs as "third gender,"** thereby safeguarding their rights under **Part III of the Constitution.**
- The Supreme Court had affirmed the right of transgender individuals to self-identify their gender and instructed both the Centre and state governments to legally recognize their gender identities, whether as male, female, or third gender.

Samudra Sathi

Context:

- The Fisheries Department has received over 56,000 applications from fishermen for the **'Samudra Sathi' scheme, which aims to provide livelihood support during the fishing ban period from mid-April to mid-June.**

Key points:

- The scheme covers fishermen from East Midnapore, South 24-Parganas, North 24-Parganas, and Howrah districts.



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	<p>Announced by state Finance Minister Chandrima Bhattacharjee during the state Budget in February, the scheme's modalities were subsequently framed and notified.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The 'Samudra Sathi' scheme offers financial assistance of Rs 5,000 per month for two months to each registered fisherman in the coastal districts. The state has allocated Rs 200 crore for this initiative, aiming to support approximately 200,000 fishermen.• Additionally, under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY), the Centre provides Rs 4,500 (Rs 1,500 each for three months) to fishermen during bans or lean seasons. However, the PMMSY requires beneficiaries to contribute Rs 1,500 to receive the full amount. In contrast, the state's scheme provides a total assistance of Rs 10,000 (Rs 5,000 for two months) without requiring any payment from the fishermen.
<p>Cultivation of macadamia nuts</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The University of North Bengal's Centre for Floriculture and Agri-Business Management (COFAM) department has cultivated macadamia nuts in the hills as a new farming opportunity. <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This initiative aims to involve a new generation in farming, reviving traditional agricultural practices. Previously, the university has successfully introduced strawberries, potatoes, and orchids.• COFAM hopes to reignite interest in farming among the younger generation by introducing new and potentially profitable crops like macadamia nuts.



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- Macadamia nuts, alongside hazelnuts, almonds, and walnuts, are already cultivated in regions like Kashmir, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Pune. However, this is the first instance of macadamia nut cultivation in the Darjeeling hills, where the temperature often stays below 30 degrees Celsius, making it ideal for this crop.
- Macadamia trees take about four years to bear fruit.

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