Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) - Year End Review 2017

Bamboo Cultivation

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- This Indian Forest (Amendment) Ordinance, 2017 was passed.
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- This exempted bamboo grown in non-forest areas from the definition of “Tree”.
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- The provision would help dispense with the requirement of obtaining a permit for felling of bamboo for economic use.
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- Notably, Bamboo was defined as a "Tree" under the Indian Forest Act, 1927.
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- This was a major impediment for bamboo cultivation by non-farmers on non-forest land.
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Flood Management

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- NER witnessed unprecedented floods this year.
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- And the rainfall was more than 100% higher than that in the preceding months during the same period of time.
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- Responding to adverse conditions following floods, the Government constituted a high-level committee.
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- Formed under the Chairmanship of Niti Aayog Vice-Chairman, it is tasked with proper management of water resources in the region.
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- The Committee would facilitate optimising benefits of appropriate water management in the form of -

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i. hydro-electric power, agriculture
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ii. bio-diversity conservation
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iii. reduced flood damage erosion
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iv. inland water transport
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v. forestry, fishery and eco-tourism
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Innovation

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- There is a proposal to reorient and rejuvenate the North Eastern Council (NEC) in a new format.
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- This is with the objective for it to perform the role of an important resource-cum-research centre for the entire region.
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- And also to develop it as the hub of innovation for the upliftment of entire Northeast.
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- NEC was set up in early 1970s with the intention to give special focus to the development of this region.
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Development

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- The Hill Area Development Programme (HADP) for Northeast was launched recently.
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- The scheme is aimed at benefitting the hilly areas of Manipur, Tripura and Assam.
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- The first meeting of the Japan-India Coordination Forum (JICF) for DoNER was held in New Delhi.
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- Identified priority areas of cooperation include Connectivity and Road Network Development, Disaster Management, Food Processing, Organic Farming and Tourism.
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Business

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- The 12th North-East Business Summit was organised in New Delhi.
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- It aimed to explore the scope for business opportunities in the North-Eastern region of India.
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- Focus areas were -
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i. Infrastructure and Connectivity with Public Private Partnership
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ii. Skill Development
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iii. Financial Inclusion
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iv. Services Sector Development, particularly in Tourism, Hospitality & Food Processing
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- The Union Minister for Railways proposed to launch an e-commerce portal.
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- This was to facilitate the sale of NER handicrafts and handloom worldwide on the IRCTC website.
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- Besides, a joint initiative of Ministry of DoNER and North Eastern Development Finance Corporation Ltd launched the North East Venture Fund.
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- The objective of the fund is to promote entrepreneurship and Start up in the

North Eastern Region.
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- In the Parliamentary Consultative Committee for Ministry of DoNER, MPs from the region highlighted the concerns with GST provisions.
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- The concerns were related to the impact on North Eastern handicrafts & handloom products, broom-sticks and bamboo products.
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Health

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- Union Ministry of Civil Aviation is processing the DoNER Ministry's proposal to introducing a helicopter based Dispensary/OPD service.
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- This will facilitate health care services in far-flung and remote areas where no doctor or medical facility is available.
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- If approved, Northeast would get the India’s first-ever "Air Dispensary" based in a helicopter.
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Cultural and Information Centre

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- An announcement was made on setting up of a North Eastern Cultural and Information Centre in Delhi.
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- This Centre will act as a cultural and convention/information hub of the North Eastern Region in Delhi.
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- The Delhi Development Authority (DDA) had allotted a land to the North Eastern Council (NEC) for the purpose of construction of the Centre.
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Organic Production

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- Conference titled “North East India: Organic Production Hub; Opportunities Unexplored” was organized during the World Food India 2017 in New Delhi.
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- Notably, NE region has numerous species and varieties of bamboo, banana and citrus fruits, and huge production of fruits such as pineapple and oranges.
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- It also has 3 Mega Food Parks in the states of Assam, Tripura and Mizoram.
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- The state of Sikkim has been recently declared the first Organic State of India.
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Source: PIB

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