

KRITAGYA



- KRI-TA-GYA explains, KRI for Krishi (Agriculture), TA for Taknik (Technology) and GYA for Gyan (Knowledge).
- The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has started organising KRITAGYA- a National level hackathon in the month of August, 2020 to promote innovation in agriculture and allied sectors in the country.
- This hackathon has given an opportunity to the students / faculties / entrepreneurs / innovators and others to showcase their innovative approaches & technology solutions to promote farm mechanization in India

The theme of the hackathon:

- Provide a platform to showcase and recognize an innovative and disruptive farm mechanization solution preferably to promote 'Women Friendly Farm Machinery & Equipment'
- Students / faculties / innovators from any university/ technical institution across the country can participate
- This initiative under NAHEP along with Agricultural Engineering Division of ICAR will also help in enhancing the learning capabilities, innovations and disruptive solutions, employability and entrepreneurial drive in the FM sector, and hence will boost the Mechanisation level in the country.

Silk Samagra



- It is initiated by the Central Silk Board.
- The main objective of the scheme is to maintain Breeders stock, Breed improvement through R&D Projects, Development of mechanized practices, Technology translation through Sericulture Information Linkages and Knowledge System (SILKS) Portal, Mobile Application for Stakeholders and for seed quality monitoring etc.

- The main aim of “Silk Samagra” Scheme is to empower downtrodden, poor & backward tribal families through various activities of sericulture in the country including women
- While the R&D units develop technology packages, impart training on improved technology programmes to stakeholders and transfer the technology to the field through front line demonstration, the seed production units produce basic and commercial seed of the improved Silkworm breeds developed by the Research Institutes.
- The units under the Quality Certification System maintain and certify the quality standards set by the R&D units for Silkworm seed, cocoon, raw Silk and Silk products covering the entire Silk value chain.
- Under the scheme, assistance is extended to sericulture stakeholders for the beneficiary oriented components like, raising of Kissan nursery, plantation with improved Mulberry varieties, Irrigation, chawki rearing centres with incubation facility and rearing equipment.
- The scheme also provides assistance for door to door service agents for disinfection and input supply, support for improved reeling units like automatic reeling units, multi-end reeling machines, improved twisting machines and support for post yarn facilities for quality silk and fabric production.

Nari Shakti Puraskar



- Ministry of Women and Child Development has extended the last date for submission of nomination for the prestigious Nari Shakti Puraskar-2020 till 6th February, 2021.

- Nari Shakti Puraskar (formerly Stree Shakti Puraskar), which literally means ‘Woman Power Awards’, are “National Award in recognition of exceptional work for women empowerment” conferred by the Hon’ble President of India(Given by Ministry of Women and Child Development) every year on 8 th March, the International Women’s Day as a mark of respect and recognition for those who have demonstrated exemplary courage and stellar contribution towards empowerment of women. The awards were instituted in 1999 under the title of Stree Shakti Puraskar and were renamed and reorganised in 2015.
- There are given in six institutional and two individual categories, which carry a cash prize of rupees two-lakh and one-lakh, respectively
- It is awarded to individuals/ groups/ NGOs/ institutions etc. for encouraging women to;
- participate in decision making roles

- women's skill development in traditional and non-traditional sectors
- facilitating basic amenities for rural women
- promoting women in non-traditional sectors like science and technology, sports, art, culture concretely and for the significant work towards safety and security, health and wellness, education, life skills, respect and dignity of women etc.
- Eligibility criteria: As per the Guidelines, any individual of at least 25 years of age and institutions having worked in the relevant field for at least 5 years are eligible to apply.

Categories of Awards:

- Rani Rudramma Devi Award for Best Panchayat /Village Community
- Mata Jijabai Award for Best Urban Local body for providing services and facilities to women
- Kannagi Devi Award for Best State which has appreciably improved Child Sex Ratio (CSR)
- Rani Gaidinliu Zeliang Award for Best Civil Society Organization (CSO) doing outstanding work for the welfare and well-being of women
- Devi Ahilyabai Holkar Award for Best Private Sector Organization/Public Sector Undertaking in promoting the well-being and welfare of women
- Rani Lakshmibai Award for Best Institution for Research & Development in the field of women empowerment

Award for Courage & Bravery

- Awards for making outstanding contributions to women's endeavour/community work/making a difference/women empowerment
- The Puraskars acknowledge the achievers who have not allowed age, geographical barriers or in accessibility to resources to come in the way of fulfilling their dreams.
- Their indomitable spirit inspires society at large and young Indian minds in particular to break gender stereotypes.
- It encourages them to stand up against gender inequality and discrimination.
- These awards are an effort to recognize women as equal partners in the advancement of society

Centres of Excellence scheme of the AYUSH Ministry



- A recent evaluation of the Centres of Excellence scheme of the AYUSH Ministry carried by the Centre for Market Research and Social Development (CMRSD), New Delhi has lauded the scheme for its innovative and creative projects that are promoting AYUSH-based healthcare solutions in different parts of the country.

What is the Centres of Excellence(CoE) scheme of the AYUSH Ministry?

- Under the CoE Scheme of the Ministry of AYUSH, support is provided to reputed AYUSH institutions for upgrading their functions and facilities to levels of excellence.
Centres of Excellence

The Centres of Excellence selected under this Scheme are the institutions that engaged in activities like

- Clinical Research
 - AYUSH Healthcare (hospitals)
 - Research based on the fundamentals of AYUSH
 - Interdisciplinary research in areas like pharmacognosy and pharmacology
 - Product development and bridging AYUSH and modern science.
- Objectives of the scheme
- To support creative and innovative proposals for upgrading both functions and facilities of reputed AYUSH institutions to levels of excellence.
 - Upgrading functions implies adding new long-term functions and making significant qualitative improvements in the existing functions including support for human resources.
 - Upgrading facilities implies adding infrastructure and equipment that will result in a qualitative improvement.

Eligibility under the scheme:

- Government aided Institutions/ Undertaking/Universities/Research Councils, Autonomous Organizations and Non – Profit Non-Governmental organizations engaged in one or more of the above fields listed in the introduction to the scheme.
- The applicants should have a track record of at least -five years of meritorious work in the AYUSH sector specifically in the proposed activity as a Centre of Excellence and should have adequate infrastructure in terms of building, land, equipment and manpower.
- It should possess adequate land for further expansion of the building and to house the equipment to be purchased from the grant.
- Purchase of land and vehicle, except ambulance, is not allowed from the grant.

- The organization should furnish the necessary evidence for its potential in having achieved a level of eminence in the respective field at state level, and further potential to become a Centre of Excellence at the National level, as per the illustrative list placed at Annexure – D of the scheme guidelines.
- Legal status of the organization: – The organization should be registered under Societies Registration Act / Trust / Companies Act or any other Act.
- The applicant should have a competent core staff in the field in which the Centre of Excellence is proposed
- The applicant should have a credible and transparent governing body and management committee consisting of reputed persons.
- Any institution that has obtained funding from any other scheme of the Department of AYUSH / any other Central Government Ministry / Department for the same purpose in the last five years shall not be eligible for funding under this scheme.
- Applicants shall have to make information available regarding any assistance if ever taken from the Government.
- Evaluation by Centre for Market Research and Social Development (CMRSD)
- The evaluation study noted that all the CoEs have credible governance structures and have also raised competent groups of core staff in the fields in which the projects function.
- The evaluation covered 18 Centres of Excellence from 10 different States, including Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, West Bengal and Kerala.
- The purpose of the evaluation exercise was to assess the impact of the CoEs in achieving the objectives of the Scheme, and in assessing challenges, if any, faced by the organization for achieving the standards fixed by the Ministry.
- The evaluation of the Scheme carried out by CMRSD was based on the Explorative, Descriptive and Analytical-Research approach.
- Both secondary research and primary research were conducted as part of the evaluation.
- As per the study, the healthcare services provided by these Centres include integrated cancer treatment incorporating Ayurveda solutions, Ayurvedic treatment for conditions like bronchial asthma and rheumatoid arthritis, geriatric care through Regimental Therapy (Ilaj bil tadbeer) of Unani medicine, quality ophthalmologic care through Ayurveda and Homoeopathic care for disability.
- A major finding was that through the innovative and creative projects taken up by these Centres, they not only promoted AYUSH systems, but also provided health care at quality hospitals having National Accreditation Board for Hospitals & Healthcare Providers (NABH) accreditation

Young Scientist Programme



- ISRO has postponed the Young Scientist Programme (YUVIKA) 2020 scheduled between May 11 and 22 due to nation-wide lockdown caused by the outbreak of Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

- About Young Scientist Programme
- The programme is primarily aimed at imparting basic knowledge on Space Technology, Space Science and Space Applications to the younger ones with the intent of arousing their interest in the emerging areas of space activities.
- According to ISRO, the programme will be of two weeks duration during summer holidays and the schedule will include invited talks, experience sharing by the eminent scientists, facility and lab visits, exclusive sessions for discussions with experts, practical and feedback sessions
- It is proposed to select 3 students each from each State/ Union Territory to participate in this programme covering CBSE, ICSE and State syllabus.
- There are a few seats left for the programme and it is proposed to select through online registration.
- Those who have just completed 9th standard and are waiting to join 10th Std (or just joined 10th Std) will be eligible for the online registration.
- The programme includes 2 weeks residential training, involving 4 centers of ISRO viz. VSSC, URSC, SAC and NESAC and a visit to SDSC, SHAR as a part of the programme.

Eligibility criteria

- Those who have finished class VIII and currently studying in class IX can apply for the programme.
- The selection is based on academic performance.
- Students from rural areas have been given special weightage in the selection criteria.
- Three students from each state/Union Territory will participate in this programme every year covering CBSE, ICSE and state-board syllabus.

National Science and Technology Entrepreneurship Development Board



- The National Science & Technology Entrepreneurship Development Board (NSTEDB), established in 1982 by the Government of India under the aegis of Department of Science & Technology.

- Institutional mechanism to help promote knowledge driven and technology intensive enterprises.
- The Board, having representations from socio-economic and scientific Ministries/ Departments, aims to convert “job-seekers” into “job-generators” through Science & Technology (S&T) interventions.

Major Objectives of NSTEDB

- To promote and develop high-end entrepreneurship for S&T manpower as well as self-employment by utilising S&T infrastructure and by using S&T methods.
- To facilitate and conduct various informational services relating to promotion of entrepreneurship.
- To network agencies of the support system, academic institutions and Research & Development (R&D) organisations to foster entrepreneurship and self-employment using S&T with special focus on backward areas as well.
- To act as a policy advisory body with regard to entrepreneurship.

The functions of the NSTEDB

- To act as a policy advisory body to the Government in matters relating to S&T Entrepreneurship Development.
- To guide the Department in implementation, monitoring and evaluation of Schemes/ programmes related to S&T Entrepreneurship.
- To guide in generating new programmes/schemes.

The programmes are broadly classified into the following areas

- Training programmes
- Entrepreneurship Awareness Camp (EAC)
- Entrepreneurship Development Programme (EDP)
- Faculty Development Programme (FDP)
- Technology Based EDP (TEDP)
- Institutional mechanisms for entrepreneurship development
- National Initiative For Developing And Harnessing Innovations (NIDHI)
- Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development Centre (IEDC)

- Science & Technology Entrepreneurship Development (STED) Project
- Science & Technology Entrepreneurs Park (STEP)
- Technology Business Incubator (TBI)

Women Entrepreneurship under Startup India



- Free Coworking Space
- Startup India in collaboration with select organizations across India, is providing free co-working space for startups led by women entrepreneurs.

- These startups will be able to work in a collaborative and flexible environment based on mutual trust between the organizations and entrepreneurs.
- Over fifty free seats are up for grab for a period of three months. The following leading co-working partners of the Startup Ecosystem are providing this free co-working opportunity.

Speed Mentoring

- As a way to provide instant mentorship to aspiring women entrepreneurs, Startup India is organizing a Speed Mentoring session.

Several panels will be set up and each panel will consist of 4 eminent women personalities:

- An Investor
- A Government/Industry Official
- A Successful Woman Entrepreneur and
- A Legal Specialist.
- The selected entrepreneur will receive an opportunity to spend 10 minutes with each stakeholder in the panel, hence receiving 40 minutes of dedicated interaction and facetime with the panelists.
- The purpose of this interaction is to enable these entrepreneurs to develop their own skills and strategies and take their ideas to the next level.

Women Entrepreneurship under Stand up India

- Female Founders
- Women trailblazing innovation
- The increasing presence of women as entrepreneurs has led to the change in the demographic characteristics of business and economic growth of the country.
- Women-owned businesses enterprises are playing a prominent role in society inspiring others and generating more employment opportunities in the country.

- There is a need for sustainable growth of women entrepreneurs, to promote a balanced growth in the country, and Startup India is committed to strengthening the women entrepreneurship ecosystem, through policies and initiatives, and creation of enabling networks.

Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP)

- The idea of setting up a Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) to promote and support established as well as aspiring women entrepreneurs in India took seed at the 8th Annual Global Entrepreneurship Summit (GES) 2017 held in Hyderabad, jointly by NITI Aayog in partnership with the Government of the United States of America.
- The platform was formally launched on 8 March 2018.
- It is the first of its kind facilitation platform which is mandated to work in collaboration with public as well as private sector organizations and bring them on a single platform by listing their women focused entrepreneurship schemes, initiatives and programmes on WEP website.
- It also enables sharing of best practices amongst women entrepreneurs and partner organizations and promotes evidence based policy making.

WEP, through its partners, tends to offer services to members under various support areas:

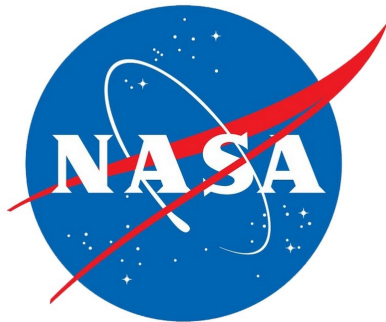
- Incubation and Acceleration
- Entrepreneurship Skilling
- Marketing Assistance,
- Funding and Financial Assistance
- Compliances Support
- Social Entrepreneurship
- WEP has more than 30 partners from various industries and sectors and have signed Statement of Intent (Sol) with many of those who have committed specific deliverables towards WEP users.
- These partners include, Atal Innovation Mission, CRISIL, SIDBI, FICCI, NASSCOM, Google, Facebook, Institute of Chartered Accountants of India, Institute of Company Secretaries of India, CII, WEE Foundation, Nexus Incubator, MannDeshi Foundation, ShopClues, SEWA Bank amongst others.

US extends New START Nuclear Arms Control Treaty with Russia for five years



- United States has extended the New START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty) nuclear arms control treaty with Russia for five years. Announcing the move, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said it made the world safer. He said an unconstrained nuclear competition would endanger us all.
- The treaty had been set to lapse on 5 February, as the Trump administration had refused to approve the extension. Now the pact has been extended to 5th February 2026.
- The treaty, which first went into effect in 2011, limits the United States and Russia to deploying no more than 1,550 strategic nuclear warheads each and imposes restrictions on the land- and submarine-based missiles and bombers to deliver them.

NASA appoints Indian-American scientist Bhavya Lal as acting chief of staff



- Indian-American Bhavya Lal was appointed by NASA as the acting chief of staff of the US space agency yesterday.
- In a statement, NASA said Lal brings extensive experience in engineering and space technology, serving as a member of the research staff at the Institute for Defence Analyses Science and Technology Policy Institute (STPI) from 2005 to 2020.
- There, she led analysis of space technology, strategy, and policy for the White House office of science and technology policy and national space council, as well as federal space-oriented organisations, including NASA, the department of defence, and the intelligence community.
- For her many contributions to the space sector, she was nominated and selected to be a corresponding member of the International Academy of Astronautics

Firms dealing with hazardous substances must compensate for deaths: NGT



- National Green Tribunal (NGT) directed Chief Secretaries of all the states and Union Territories (UT) to evolve a mechanism to ensure compensation for deaths and injuries of workers at companies dealing with hazardous substances. NGT said the decision was taken "in view of frequent accidents resulting in deaths and injuries". Safety audits were also ordered by the statutory body.