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News: Biopharmaceutical Alliance

- Recently, South Korea, India, the United States, Japan, and the European Union (EU) have launched the Biopharmaceutical Alliance to address drug supply shortages and enhance supply chain resilience in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Biopharmaceutical Alliance

- The Biopharmaceutical Alliance is a strategic partnership alliance aims to ensure a steady and secure supply of biopharmaceutical products worldwide and aid in vaccine diplomacy.
- It aims to coordinate bio policies, regulations, and research and development support measures among participating countries.
- The initiative originated from discussions between South Korea and the U.S. and expanded to include Japan, India, and the EU. By collaborating, the member countries hope to build a system that can withstand future global health crises.

Need

- The alliance was formed in response to the drug supply shortages experienced during the Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic highlighted the need for a reliable and sustainable supply chain for biopharmaceuticals.
- By aligning bio policies, and regulations, the alliance promotes a cohesive approach to biopharmaceutical development.

Operating Mechanism

- **Implementation:** The member countries will start implementing the agreed coordination of bio policies and research support.
- **Supply Chain Mapping:** Developing a comprehensive map of the pharmaceutical supply chain to identify and mitigate vulnerabilities.
- **Ongoing Collaboration:** Continued collaboration and dialogue among the participating countries to ensure the alliance's goals are met.

News: North Eastern Region Agri-Commodity E-Connect Web Portal (NE – RACE)

- Recently, North Eastern Region Agri-Commodity E-Connect Web Portal was launched by North Eastern Council (NEC) in collaboration with North Eastern Development Finance Corporation (NEDFi).

North Eastern Region Agri-Commodity E-Connect Web Portal (NE –RACE)

- Recently, North Eastern Region Agri-Commodity E-Connect Web Portal was launched by North Eastern Council in collaboration with North Eastern Development Finance Corporation (NEDFi).
- The aim of this web portal is to provide market linkage for agricultural and horticultural products from the North Eastern Region (NER) in both fresh and processed forms.
- The NE-RACE digital platform is funded by NEC and is developed and managed by the NEDFi.
- Through this portal/app, producers such as Farmers Producer Organizations (FPOs)/ farmer’s collectives, Self-Help Groups, progressive farmers, and entrepreneurs in the agri and food processing sectors can directly showcase

their products to prospective buyers minimizing the role of middlemen and fostering trust and long term business relationships.

- These buyers include exporters, aggregators, organized sector buyers, wholesale and retail buyers and individual consumers.
- The platform also onboards agri-value chain service providers such as transporters, cold storage facilities, warehousing and cold chain services.
- The portal is supported by a help-line number providing one-on-one assistance to buyers, sellers, and service providers in English, Hindi and major regional languages such as Assamese, Bengali, Nepali, Manipuri, Khasi and Mizo.
- Additionally, there is provision for making available on-ground support through field-level manpower for buyers and sellers.
- The initiative includes provisions for State-wise and cluster-based farmer onboarding camps to build the capacity of growers, enabling them to use the digital platform effectively to reach global markets.
- There is also provision for collaboration amongst Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), Spices Board, North Eastern Regional Agricultural Marketing Corporation Limited (NERAMAC), North East Region Community Resource Management Society (NERCRMS) and Small Farmers' Agri-Business Consortium (SFAC) as well as State Government Departments to ensure the success of this initiative.

Benefits of NE – RACE

- Leveraging the unique agricultural strengths of North East India by promoting exotic and premium agro-horticultural crops that have high demand.
- Enabling producers to negotiate directly with buyers, ensuring fair compensation for their products.
- Advance booking of upcoming products under mutually agreeable terms and conditions between producers and buyers.
- Addressing the critical challenges of logistics by onboarding service providers and facilitating their services.
- Providing a one-stop shop for products from North East India that has been produced under various missions and projects.
- Providing empirical evidence on the potential and prospects of the agri-horticultural sector in the North East, enabling the government to undertake more data-driven initiatives for farm sector development, particularly in agri-infrastructure development.

North-Eastern Council (NEC)

- North Eastern Council (NEC) is constituted under the **North Eastern Council Act, 1971**.
- It was constituted for securing the balanced development of North Eastern Areas comprising of **seven states – Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura**.
- The North Eastern Council Act was amended in 2002 **to include Sikkim**.
- The term North Eastern Areas now means **Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, and Tripura**.
- The North Eastern Council is chaired by **Union Home Minister as Ex-Officio Chairperson, Minister of State (Independent Charge), Ministry of Department of North East Region as ex – officio vice chairperson, Chief Ministers and Governors of all 8 states and 3 members nominated by President of India**.
- The North Eastern Council is the **nodal agency for the economic and social development of the North Eastern Region**.

Functions

- To discuss any matter in which some or all of the States represented in the Council have a common interest and advise the Central Government and the Governments of the States concerned as to the action to be taken on any such matter, particularly with regard to –
 - Any matter of common interest in the field of economic and social planning.
 - Any matter concerning inter-State Transport and Communications.
 - Any matter relating to Power or Flood-control projects of common interest.
- To formulate and forward proposals for securing the balanced development of the North-Eastern Areas particularly with regard to –
 - A unified and coordinated Regional Plan, which will be in addition to the State Plan, in regard to matters of common importance to that area.
 - Prioritizing the projects and schemes included in the Regional Plan and recommend stages in which the Regional Plan may be implemented.
 - Regarding the location of the projects and schemes included in the Regional Plan to the union plan.