



Biodegradable Yoga Mat

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Why in News

Recently, six young girls from the fishing community from **Assam** have developed a **biodegradable** and **compostable yoga mat** called '**Moorhen Yoga Mat**'.

- The intervention was triggered through an initiative by **North East Centre for Technology Application and Reach (NECTAR)**.
- **NECTAR** is an autonomous society, set up under the Department of Science & Technology, with its headquarter at Shillong, Meghalaya.

Key Points

- **About the Mat:**
 - The 'Moorhen Yoga mat' is **named after Kam Sorai** (Purple moorhen, a resident bird of Deepor Beel Wildlife sanctuary).
 - It is a **hand-woven 100% biodegradable and 100% compostable mat developed from water hyacinth**.
 - The mat could **improve the aquatic ecosystem of the wetland (Deepor Beel) through removal of water hyacinth**, help **sustainable production of utility products** with community engagement and generate **livelihood for indigenous communities** to become completely '**Atamanirbhar**'.
- **Water Hyacinth:**
 - Water hyacinth is a **type of invasive floating plant** found in water bodies across the world.
 - These **invasive species** block the sunlight reaching and oxygen level in water systems, which results in damaging water quality and seriously affecting various life forms in the ecosystem.
 - It is **also referred to as the terror of Bengal** given its effect on the local ecology and lives of the people.
 - It has an effect on irrigation, hydroelectric generation and navigation.
 - It also leads to a drastic reduction in fish production, aquatic crops and an increase in diseases caused by mosquitoes.

- **Deepor Beel:**

- Deepor Beel (Beel means wetland or large aquatic body in Assamese) **located about 10 km Southwest of Guwahati city** is considered **one of the large and important riverine wetlands in the Brahmaputra Valley of lower Assam.**
- Deepor Beel has both biological and environmental importance besides being the **only major storm-water storage basin** for Guwahati city.
- It is considered **one of the staging sites for migratory birds in India;** and some of the large congregations of aquatic birds in Assam during winter.
- Because of the richness of avian fauna it enjoys, Deepor Beel has been selected as **one of the Important Bird Area (IBA) sites** by Birdlife International.
- Deepor Beel has also been designated as a **Ramsar Site** in November 2002.

Source: PIB