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1. Amit Shah chairs regional conference on 'Drug Trafficking and National Security' in Bengaluru (March 24, 2023)

Amit Shah chairs regional conference on 'Drug Trafficking and National Security' in Bengaluru

Union Home Minister **Amit Shah** chaired the **Regional Conference** on '**Drug Trafficking and National Security**' in **Bengaluru** on 24 March.

An overview of the news

- Representatives from **5 southern states and 3 union territories** participated in the conference.
- The Union Home Minister also supervised the **destruction of 9,298 kg of seized narcotics worth Rs 1,235 crore** during the meeting.
- The Home Minister focused on aspects such as zero tolerance in the regional conference on ways to reduce drug trafficking through sea routes and consequential stringent punitive action on drug traffickers.

Drug addiction in India

- India is situated between the **world's two largest opium producing regions** (the 'Golden Triangle' on one side and the 'Golden Crescent' on the other).
- The '**Golden Triangle**' region includes **Thailand, Myanmar, Vietnam and Laos**.
- The '**Golden Crescent**' region includes **Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran**.
- According to the World Drug Report 2021, prescription drugs and their ingredients are increasingly being converted into recreational use in India (the world's largest producer of generic drugs).
- India is also linked to shipments of drugs sold in the **19 major darknet markets analysed in 2011-2020**.
- According to the report released by the Ministry of Social Justice and All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) on the quantum of substance abuse in 2019.
- There are **31 million cannabis users in India (of which 2.5 million were dependent users)**.
- There are **23 million opioid users in India (of which 2.8 million were dependent users)**.

2. Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav chairs 1st General Body Meeting of NCSCM (March 23, 2023)

Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav chairs 1st General Body Meeting of NCSCM

Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change **Bhupender Yadav** chaired the **1st General Body Meeting of National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management (NCSCM)** on 22 March in New Delhi.

An overview of the news

- He emphasized the Blue Economy which focuses on **sustainable and climate-resilient coastal infrastructure and livelihoods** of coastal communities.
- The Government is moving forward with a **Marine Spatial Plan** for area-based management with multiple management objectives.
- The minister also directed the NCSCM to contribute to **Mission Mishti (Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats and Tangible Income)** for mangrove conservation with a focus on generating income for coastal communities.

Sustainable Coastal Management (NCSCM)

- It is an institute under the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change**.
- It was established in **February 2011**, as a research institution to support the **protection, conservation, restoration, management, and policy advice on coasts**.
- Its vision is to promote sustainable coasts through increased **partnerships, conservation practices, scientific research, and knowledge management** for the benefit and well-being of current and future generations.

3. 26th edition of 'Elevate' held in Dubai (March 22, 2023)

The **sixth pitching session of the second season of Elevate concluded in Dubai** 22 March.

An overview of the news

- The event saw the **participation of six startups from India** and the registration of **180 investors**.
- The six startups that participated in the Elevate session were **winners of the National Startup Awards 2022**.
- **Season II to Session VI** hosted a special guest, **Padmaja Ruparel**, Co-Founder, Indian Angel Network (IAN).
- She is a member of the **Government's NEAC, the National Expert Advisory Committee on Innovation**, Incubation and Technology Entrepreneurship.
- She shared her insights and thoughts on the **opportunities in the growing startup ecosystem in India**.
- India's Commercial Representative in Dubai Kalimuthu welcomed the guests and set the tone for the programme.

Six startups from India who participated

- Film board Movie Technologies inc,
- Trascender Services Pvt Ltd,
- Cogos Technologies Pvt Ltd,
- Changejar Technologies Pvt Ltd,
- Makerinme Technologies Pvt Ltd,
- Revamp Moto Pvt Ltd

About Elevate

- Elevate is a **pitching series organized by the Consulate General of India in Dubai**, providing a platform for startups to connect with investors and global counterparts.
- The **first season of Elevate started at the India Pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai** and consisted of **twenty sessions**.
- The **second season** debuts in **May 2022**, and this episode marks the **sixth installment of the season**.

4. 2nd G20 Sustainable Finance Working Group meeting begins in Udaipur (March 21, 2023)

2nd G20 Sustainable Finance Working Group meeting begins in Udaipur

The **2nd Sustainable Finance Working Group (SFWG) meeting** under India's G20 chairmanship began in **Udaipur, Rajasthan** and will last for three days.

An Overview of the News

- The focus of the meeting is to identify relevant policies and best practices for **mobilising sustainable finance** to help ensure global growth and stability.
- Two workshops were organised during the meeting, namely **Non-pricing policy** levers to support sustainable investment and efficient finance for the Sustainable Development Goals.
- More than **90 delegates from G20 member states**, guest countries and various international organisations participated in the event.
- The first meeting of the **Sustainable Finance Working Group (SFWG)** was held in **Guwahati on February 2 and 3** this year, and the third and fourth meetings will be held in Mahabalipuram and Varanasi, respectively.

About the Sustainable Finance Working Group (SFWG)

- Sustainable Finance Working Groups are collaborative initiatives that bring together stakeholders to advance sustainable finance practices.
- They aim to promote best practices, share **knowledge and resources, and develop standards and guidelines** for sustainable finance.
- Members may include financial institutions, companies, regulators, civil society organisations and academia.
- Examples of sustainable finance working groups include the **United Nations Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI), the Sustainable Accounting Standards Board (SASB) and the Network for Greening the Financial System (NGFS).**

About the G20

- **The G20 (Group of Twenty) is an international forum** consisting of **19 countries** and the **European Union**, representing the world's major economies.
- Its members include **Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States.**
- It is an international forum of the world's leading economies, **established in 1999**, and its primary objective is to promote international financial stability and sustainable economic growth.
- The G20 serves as a forum to discuss and coordinate policies related to a wide range of economic and financial issues such as **trade, investment, employment, energy and climate change.**

5. Indian Higher Education Meet 2023 inaugurated in Dhaka (March 19, 2023)

Indian Higher Education Meet 2023 inaugurated in Dhaka

High Commissioner **Pranay Verma** and Minister of Education of Bangladesh **Dr Dipu Moni** on 18 March jointly **inaugurated the Indian Higher Education Meet 2023 in Dhaka, Bangladesh.**

An overview of the news

- It is being organized under the aegis of the **Study in India program in Dhaka.**
- Top ranking higher educational institutions from different parts of India participated in the event.
- A large number of Indian students are pursuing higher education in each other's country.

- The Indian High Commissioner invited Bangladeshi students to take advantage of
- **India's globally prestigious higher education system** and build new bridges of friendship and understanding between the youth of the two countries.
 - Bangladesh Education Minister Dr. Deepu Moni recognized the important role of education in promoting better understanding between India and Bangladesh and thanked Study in India for taking the initiative to organize the event in Dhaka.

Study in India programme

- It is a **flagship project launched by the Ministry of Education, Government of India in 2018.**
- Its main goal is **to increase the number of international students in the country** and improve the global reputation and ranking of Indian educational institutions.
- The programme provides **meritorious foreign students fee waiver and scholarship.**
- The program is designed to encourage and invite the global student community to pursue their higher education in India.
- Since its inception, the Study in India program has attracted students from over **150 countries, including Bangladesh.**

6. India's G-20 Presidency: Startup-20 Group holds second meeting in Sikkim (March 18, 2023)

Startup 20 Engagement Group

The **Startup 20 Engagement Group** under India's G-20 Presidency began a two-day meeting in **Gangtok, Sikkim.**

The group aims to bring together the global startup system and give each country the freedom to develop its own unique ecosystem.

An Overview of the News

- Chief Minister **Tamang** also acknowledged the significant scope for aggregators in developing end-to-end chains of organic farm and livestock products as well as medicinal plants and tourism in Sikkim.
- The state government has set up an incubation center under the **Atal Innovation Mission at Sikkim Manipal University** and launched schemes like **One Family, One Entrepreneur in Sikkim** to address the challenges faced by startups in the state.
- Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Som Prakash reiterated the commitment of the Union Government to strengthen the startup ecosystem of the Northeast.

- The meetup aims to connect large businesses under B20 with small entrepreneurs from Startup20.

About Sikkim

Located - **Eastern part of the country**

Establishment - **16 May 1975 as the 22nd state of India**

Capital - **Gangtok**

Chief Minister - **PS Tamang**

Minister of State for Commerce and Industry - **Som Prakash**

Borders - **China, Bhutan, West Bengal and Tibetan region of Nepal**

Highest peak of India and third highest peak of the world - **Mount Kanchenjunga is located in Sikkim**

Rivers - **River Teesta and its tributaries like Rangit, Lhonak, Talung and Lachung**

7. Global Millets Conference to be inaugurated by PM Modi in New Delhi (March 18, 2023)

Global Millets Conference

The **Global Millets Conference** will be inaugurated by Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** on March 19, 2023 in **New Delhi**

An Overview of the News

- **Agriculture ministers from six countries, international scientists, nutritionists, health experts**, start-up leaders and other stakeholders from over 100 countries will participate in the conference.
- The Prime Minister will **unveil a customised postage stamp and currency coin on the International Year of Millets (IYM) - 2023** during the event.
- The two-day conference will have sessions on a **wide range of issues related to millets, including publicity and awareness, value chain development, health and nutrition, market linkages and research and development.**
- An exhibition-cum-buyer-seller meet will also be organised with a focus on millets with the participation of over **50 domestic and international buyers, importers, exporters and processors.**
- The exhibition will showcase millet and millet-based ready-to-cook and ready-to-eat products, by millet-based startups and exporters, and live cooking sessions by various international and national chefs.
- Based on India's proposal, the year 2023 was declared by the **United Nations General Assembly as the International Millet Year.**

- Engaged all Ministries and Departments of the Central Government, States and Union Territories, farmers, start-ups, exporters, retail businesses and other stakeholders to promote and spread awareness about the benefits of millets to the farmer, consumer and the climate.

About Millet

- India is the **largest producer of millets in the world and the second largest exporter of these grains.**
- Millets have been an integral part of India's food culture for centuries, and several types of millets are grown in the country, including **jowar, ragi, bajra, kuttu, ramdana, kangni, kutki, kodo, china, and sama.**
- Millets are known for their many health benefits, including being a good source of protein, fibre and micronutrients.
- Rajasthan, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Uttarakhand** being the top 10 states in terms of millet production.
- Together, these **10 states account for almost 98% of millet production in India** during the 2020-21 period.

8. Union Minister Anurag Thakur inaugurates 16th meeting of SCO Youth Council (March 15, 2023)

16th meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Youth Council

The **16th meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Youth Council** was held in hybrid mode in **New Delhi** on 14 March, under the **chairship of India.**

An overview of the news

- Youth Affairs and Sports Minister **Anurag Singh Thakur** inaugurated the meeting of the SCO Youth Council.
- The meeting was chaired by **Nitesh Kumar Mishra**, Joint Secretary, Department of Youth Affairs, Government of India.
- In the meeting, SCO member states shared information on the activities of the **SCO Youth Council in 2022-2023.**
- The report of the SCO Youth Conference held on March 13, 2023 in virtual mode on the theme "**Effective Community Development Activities**" was delivered to all SCO member states.
- The Protocol was signed on March 14, 2023 in New Delhi in **eight copies in the Russian and Chinese languages.**

Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)

- It is a permanent **intergovernmental international organization**.
- It was **founded in 2001**.
- The **SCO Charter was signed in 2002**, and came into force in 2003.
- It is a Eurasian political, economic and military organization.
- Its aim is to maintain **peace, security and stability** in the region.
- **China, Russia and four Central Asian states - Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan** - were founding members of the SCO.
- Its members include **China, Russia, India and Pakistan, as well as 4 Central Asian countries - Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan**.
- Official Languages - **Russian and Chinese**
- Chairmanship - **On the basis of rotation for a year by Member States**

9. India to showcase organic farming of Sikkim at B20 conference in Gangtok (March 15, 2023)

The **vibrant organic farming of Sikkim** will be prominently showcased to the world through the **3rd B20 Summit** to be held in **Gangtok, Sikkim** from 15 to 17 March 2023.

An overview of the news

- The **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)** is organizing four **B20 conferences in the North Eastern Region** to showcase the untapped potential and opportunities within the region.
- Out of which two conferences have already been held in **Imphal and Aizawl**.
- The **third and fourth conferences** are to be held in **Gangtok and Kohima** respectively.
- The hosting of the B20 summit in Sikkim is important to showcase the vibrant organic farming of the state to the world.
- In addition, the B20 event to be held in Gangtok will throw light on organic farming.

G20 Tracks

- G20 has two Tracks- **Sherpa Track and Finance Track**.
- Sherpa Track has **13 working groups** and **11 engagement groups**.
- **DPIIT is the nodal ministry** for two working groups namely Startup 20 and Business 20 (B20).

- Working groups consist of non-governmental participants from each G20 member who
- provide recommendations to G20 leaders and contribute to the policy-making process.

Business 20 (B20)

- It was **formed in 2010** and is the **official G20 dialogue platform** with the global business community.
- The B20 aims to provide concrete actionable policy recommendations on each Presidency's priorities **to drive economic growth and development.**
- The B20 has scheduled a total of **100 meetings, including 65 in-person meetings and 35 hybrid meetings.**
- B20 summit to be held in **New Delhi from 26 -27 August 2023.**

The Startup 20

- Startup 20 has been established under the **G20 Presidency of India.**
- It aims to act as a dialogue platform with stakeholders of the global startup ecosystem.
- It aims to represent the global startup ecosystem with G20 leaders to raise macroeconomic concerns and challenges faced by entrepreneurs.
- A total of **60 meetings of the Start-up 20 Engagement Group** will be held, of which **5 are in-person meetings.**
- The upcoming event is Startup **20 Gangtok, Sikkim** on 18-19 March 2023.
- The **Startup 20 Summit** will be held in **Gurugram from 2 -4 July 2023.**

10. Second G20 Sustainable Financial Working Group (SFWG) meeting to be held in Udaipur (March 15, 2023)

mobilize sustainable finance to help ensure global growth and stability.

The **Second G20 Sustainable Financial Working Group (SFWG) meeting** will be held at **Udaipur in Rajasthan** from 21 to 23 March.

An overview of the news

- The purpose of the meeting is to **mobilize sustainable finance to help ensure global growth and stability.**
- Around **150 delegates from G20 member states**, guest countries and various international organizations will participate in the meeting.
- Cultural programs and sightseeing tours will also be organized for the guests during the event.

- The G20 focuses on promoting international economic cooperation and addressing key
- economic challenges faced by its member states, including issues related to finance, trade, and global economic development.
 - The first meeting of the Sustainable Finance Working Group under G20 was organised in **Guwahati on 3 February 2023.**