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1. 3rd session of National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction begins in New Delhi (March 10, 2023)

Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** inaugurated the **third session of the National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (NPDRR)** in **New Delhi** on 10 March.

An overview of the news

- The **main theme** of the 3rd session of this Platform is “**Building Local Resilience in a Changing Climate**”.
- The theme of the session is in line with the **10-point agenda** announced by the Prime Minister for building local capacities, especially in the context of the rapidly changing disaster risk landscape in the wake of climate change.
- The session will identify gaps, recommendations and partnerships to further accelerate disaster risk reduction efforts.
- During the event, the Prime Minister presented awards to the winners of the **Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar**.
- The **winners of the 2023** award are **Odisha State Disaster Management Authority and Lunglei Fire Station of Mizoram**.
- The Prime Minister also inaugurated the exhibition to showcase innovative ideas and initiatives and technologies in the field of Disaster Risk Reduction.
- More than **a thousand dignitaries** will participate in this two-day, third session.
- Home Minister **Amit Shah** chaired the ministerial session in which wide-ranging consultations were held with ministers from states and union territories.

About NPDRR

- NPDRR is a **multi-stakeholder forum** constituted by the Government to facilitate dialogue and share experiences, ideas, action oriented research and explore opportunities in the area of disaster risk reduction.

2. Coarse Grain Fair cum Exhibition organised in Madurai (March 9, 2023)

Mota Anaj Mahotsav

The Union Ministry of Food Processing Industries organised a two-day **Coarse Cereals Fair-cum-Exhibition** from March 6-7, 2023 in **Madurai, Tamil Nadu**.

An Overview of the news:

- The fair cum exhibition was organised as part of the **Mota Anaj Mahotsav** series in collaboration with the **Department of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises** and the Department of Agricultural Marketing and Agriculture, Government of Tamil Nadu.

- Tamil Nadu is known for the production of various coarse cereals. These cereals include Pearl Millet (Bajra), Jowar, Ragi, Little Millet-Kutki (Foxtail Millet-Kangni, Sawan, Kodo, Chena-Punarva) and Small Millet.
- During the event, the first Common Incubation Center under the **Prime Minister's Formalization of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME) scheme** was inaugurated at Tamil Nadu Agricultural University's **Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Madurai**.
- The objective of the two-day event was to provide a platform to micro and food processing entrepreneurs to interact with leading industry people through B2B and B2C interactions organised during buyer-seller meets.

Megafood Event World Food India 2023

- In addition to Mota Anaj Mahotsav, the Ministry will also organise **the megafood event World Food India 2023** from 3 to 5 November 2023 at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi.
- The event will be the biggest ever gathering of dignitaries, global investors and leaders from leading global and domestic companies that will place India firmly on the global food scene.
- 2023 has been declared by the United Nations General Assembly as the International Millet Year.**
- Grown in more than 130 countries, millets** are a traditional food for more than half a billion people in Asia and Africa.
- India is one of the leading producers of coarse cereals in the world with an estimated share of about 41 per cent in global production.**

PMFME Scheme

- Prime Minister's Formalization of **Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME) scheme** is a centrally sponsored scheme launched by the Ministry of Food Processing Industries on 29 June 2020 as part of the **Atma Nirbhar Bharat campaign**.
- Its objective is to enhance the competitiveness of individual micro enterprises in the unorganised sector and encourage formalisation of this sector.

3. Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese's visit to India (March 9, 2023)

Free Trade Agreement

Australian Prime Minister **Anthony Albanese** arrived in **Ahmedabad** on 8 March on a four-day (8-11 March) visit to India to participate in the **India-Australia Annual Summit**.

An Overview of the news:

- After reaching Ahmedabad, the Prime Minister of Australia visited the Sabarmati Ashram and paid homage to Mahatma Gandhi. He also participated in a cultural program at the

Raj Bhavan in Gandhinagar, followed by a program at an Australian university in Albany Ahmedabad.

- Albanese will visit Ahmedabad, Mumbai and Delhi respectively during his visit. This is the first visit to India by an Australian Prime Minister since 2017.
- On the first day of his visit, the Prime Minister of Australia participated in the **Holi program at the Raj Bhavan beside the Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad.**
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Prime Minister of Australia Anthony Albanese watched part of the **4th Memorial Cricket Test match of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad.**
- On March 9 itself, the Australian Prime Minister went to Mumbai, where he was given a **guard of honour at INS Vikrant.**
- This is the first visit of Anthony Albanese, who became the Prime Minister of Australia in May 2022, and during this time there will be talks on various bilateral issues ranging from economic cooperation, defence cooperation.
- Australia and India have committed to a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) to further economic cooperation and trade agreement.

Free Trade Agreement (FTA):

- FTA is an agreement between two or more countries to reduce barriers to imports and exports.
- Goods and services can be bought and sold across international borders with little or no government tariffs, quotas, subsidies, or prohibitions to constrain their exchange.

FTAs of India:

- India has signed 13 Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with its trading partners, including 3 agreements:
- India-Mauritius Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA).
- India-UAE Comprehensive Partnership Agreement (CEPA).
- India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (IndAus ECTA).

India-Australia ECTA:

- Australia exports largely raw materials to India, while India exports finished goods.
- ECTA is based on this complementarity, creating better opportunities for both countries.
- India's imports from Australia are estimated at US\$17 billion, while its exports to Australia are estimated at US\$10.5 billion in 2022.
- However, India's imports from Australia are mainly (96%) raw materials and intermediate goods.

4. President of India confers Swachh Sujal Shakti Samman 2023 (March 6, 2023)

“Swachh Sujal Shakti Samman 2023”,

The “**Swachh Sujal Shakti Samman 2023**”, organized by the **Ministry of Jal Shakti** to honour the **women champions of rural water and sanitation sector**, was graced by the President **Droupadi Murmu**.

An overview of the news

- The President launched the **Jal Shakti Abhiyan - Catch the Rain 2023 campaign** in New Delhi.

About Swachh Sujal Shakti Samman

- The Swachh Sujal Shakti Samman is to highlight and **acknowledge the leadership and contribution of women** at the grassroots level in the journey of creating a 'Swachh Sujal Bharat'.
- Women who have made significant contributions in **ODF Plus Model Villages, Har Ghar Jal Villages, Water Conservation etc.** under the National Flagship Mission were felicitated.
- This year's event was organized by the Union Ministry of Jal Shakti to honor women champions of the rural water and sanitation sector.

About Catch the Rain campaign

- It is a **mass movement campaign** that encourages all stakeholders to build **Rain Water Harvesting Structures (RWHS)**.
- Tag Line: **Catch the rain where it falls, when it falls.**
- The campaign is implemented by the **National Water Mission (NWM)** under Ministry of Jal Shakti.
- The campaign is run across the country in both **rural and urban areas**.

5. UN inks first 'High Seas Treaty' in a bid to protect ocean bodies of the world (March 6, 2023)

world's oceans located outside national boundaries.

For the first time in history, the **United Nations** signed the '**High Seas Treaty**' to protect the **world's oceans located outside national boundaries**.

An overview of the news

- The treaty is the result of nearly a decade of negotiations on environmental concerns.

- The treaty was agreed upon on 4 March after 38 hours of negotiations at the **United Nations Headquarters in New York.**
- The last international agreement on ocean conservation was signed 40 years ago **in 1982.**

What is the UN High Seas Treaty?

- The treaty will create a **new body to manage the conservation of marine life** and establish marine protected areas in the high seas.
- The treaty brings **30 percent of the world's oceans** into a protected area, spends more on marine conservation, and sets new rules for ocean mining.
- The treaty aims to protect against potential impacts such as **deep-sea mining.**
- The treaty would put restrictions on how much fish could be caught in the high seas.

What are High Seas?

- **International water bodies** that cross the boundaries of nations are considered high seas.
- They cover about **two-thirds of the world's oceans.**
- These are water bodies where all countries have the right to **fish, sail and conduct research.**
- But so far only about **1% of this water** – known as the high seas – has been protected.
- These are also important areas for exploration of **valuable minerals, pharmaceuticals, oil and gas reserves.**

Vulnerable marine species

- According to the **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)**, about **10% of marine species** are at risk of extinction.
- In addition, **41% of threatened species** are affected by climate change.
- **Shellfish, sharks and whales** are under particular pressure due to their use as seafood and medicines.

6. Government approves nano liquid DAP fertilizer for benefits of farmers (March 5, 2023)

Union Chemicals and Fertilizers Minister **Mansukh Mandaviya** on 5 March said the **government has approved the launch of nano liquid DAP (di-ammonium phosphate) fertilizer** for the benefits of farmers and making the country self-reliant.

An overview of the news

- Fertilizer cooperative **IFFCO**, which is set to launch **Nano Liquid Urea in 2021**, also announced that the government has approved the launch of its Nano DAP fertilizer.
- One bottle will be equivalent to one bag of DAP, which **costs Rs 1,350**.
- IFFCO is also planning to launch **Nano-Potash, Nano-Zinc and Nano-Copper fertilizers**.
- In June 2021, IFFCO launched Nano Urea in liquid form as an alternative to conventional urea.
- It has set up several manufacturing plants in **Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh** to produce Nano Urea.
- There is no government subsidy on Nano Urea and it is being sold at **Rs 240 per bottle**.

What is Liquid Nano Urea (LNU)?

- Nano urea is a **liquid form of nitrogen** providing plant nutrient as a conventional alternative to urea.
- It has been developed in place of conventional urea and has the potential to reduce the requirement of conventional urea by at least **50 percent**.
- One **500 ml bottle contains 40,000 mg/l nitrogen**, which can provide nitrogen nutrients equivalent to one bag/sack of normal urea.
- The effectiveness of Nano Urea Liquid is **more than 80%**.
- Its use has been found to increase the yield by **about 8%**.
- Its aim is to reduce **farmers' dependence on packaged urea**.

7. Belarus court jails Nobel Peace Prize winner Ales Bialiatski for 10 years (March 4, 2023)

A court in Belarus on March 3 sentenced **2022 Nobel Peace Prize winner** and human rights activist **Ales Bialiatski** to **10 years in prison** for financing protests and other crimes.

An overview of the news

- He has been given this sentence in the case of activities disturbing public order, financing and smuggling.
- A fine of 65 thousand US dollars has also been imposed on **60-year-old Bialiatsky**.
- He is co-founder of the **Viasna human rights group**.
- In October 2022, he was awarded the **Nobel Peace Prize for his work on human rights and democracy**.

- Along with Bialyatsky, representatives of the Vesna Human Rights Center, **Valentin Stefanovich and Vladimir Labkovich**, were also sentenced to **9 years and 7 years**, respectively.
- Investigation revealed that Ales Bialyatsky and other members received funds from various organizations in Lithuania during April **2016 to July 2021**.
 - After this these funds were sent outside the Eurasian Economic Union with the help of many people.
 - According to the law of Belarus, this is a crime and the maximum **punishment for this crime is 12 years**.
 - Bialyatsky, a Belarusian litterateur, school teacher and museum director, has been involved in pro-democracy protests since the **1980s**.
 - He was an avid supporter of Belarus' independence from the **Soviet Union in the early 1980s**, organizing anti-Soviet protests across the country.

8. NADA and NCERT tie up to strengthen value based sports education (March 4, 2023)

The **National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT)** and the **National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA)** signed an MoU on 3 March 2023 to strengthen value-based sports education among school children and teachers.

News Overview

- The MoU will help in developing an **accessible format on sports values and ethics in e-content**.
- The MoU will also help in creating awareness at the grass root level.

About NADA

- The **National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA)** was established on **24 November 2005** as a registered society under the **Societies Registration Act 1860** with a mandate for dope free sports in India.
- Its objectives are to promote education and research, enforce anti-doping rules, regulate dope control programs, promote education and research, and create public awareness about doping and its ill-effects.
- Headquarters - **New Delhi**
- Director General - **Ritu San**

About NCERT

- The **National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT)** was established by the Government of India for the purpose of advising the Central Government and the Provincial Governments on matters related to school education.

- Objective - **To bring quality in education**
- Headquarters - **New Delhi**
- Director - **Hrishikesh Senapati**

9. Jan Aushadhi Train flagged off by Mansukh Mandaviya and Ashwini Vaishnav (March 4, 2023)

Union Health and Family Welfare Minister **Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya** and Railway Minister **Ashwini Vaishnav** flagged off the **Jan Aushadhi train (Chhattisgarh Sampark Kranti Express)** in **New Delhi** on 3 March.

An overview of the news

- The train is dedicated to the **Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Jan Aushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP)**.
- The train has been wrapped with branding of **Jan Aushadhi scheme** to spread the awareness among public about generic medicines available at **Jan Aushadhi centers**.
- Medicines are available at affordable prices in more than **nine thousand Jan Aushadhi Kendras** in India.
- This train will travel through **184 stations** covering more than four states in two months.
- **Jan Aushadhi Kendras** provide quality and affordable medicines.
- Indian Railways is also running a special campaign for promotion of affordable generic medicines to create awareness among the public.
- The Ministry of Railways has decided to open Jan Aushadhi Kendras at some major railway stations which will prove beneficial for the passengers.
- This train will travel to more than **4 states in 2 months**.

About Jan Aushadhi Scheme

- The Jan aushadhi scheme was launched in **2008 by the UPA government**.
- This scheme was **relaunched in the year 2015**, by the **Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi**.
- This campaign was started across the country by selling generic medicines through "**Jan Aushadhi Medical Stores**".
- In 2015, the name of '**Jan Aushadhi Yojana**' was changed to '**Pradhan Mantri Jan Aushadhi Yojana**' (**PMJAY**), but it was changed to "**Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Yojana**" in November 2016.
- Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Jan Aushadhi Pariyojana (**PMBJP**) scheme was launched by the **Department of Pharmaceuticals, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers**,

Government of India with the objective of providing quality generic medicines available at affordable prices to all.

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