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1. 30 startups identified through 'Swachhata Startup Challenge' (Sept. 20, 2022)

On 19 September, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) organized a Startup Conclave at the Ambedkar International Center in New Delhi.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) will felicitate 30 startups identified through the **Swachhta Startup Challenge** to help strengthen the sanitation and waste management sector.
- The day-long conclave will provide a platform to startups to gain experience, knowledge and learning that will help them find their way into the sector to successfully scale up their solutions.
- Some Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) will engage in a 'reverse pitch' to highlight specific grassroots challenges, to motivate startups to work towards finding innovative solutions to the challenges.
- **Swachh Bharat Mission - Urban**, implemented by MoHUA, focuses on innovation and encouragement for startups to adopt locally innovative, implementable solutions and business models and promote waste management.

About Swachhta Start-up Challenge ?

- It was launched to increase innovation in waste management.
- It was launched by the **Agence Francaise de Developpement (AFD)** and the **Department of Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, DPIIT.**
- The AFD is a **French public financial institution** that implements the policies of the French government.
- The objective of this challenge is to harness the entrepreneurial potential of the waste management sector in India and promote an enabling environment for enterprise development.
- The top ten winners of this challenge will be given a prize money of **Rs 25 lakh.**
- **Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) - Hardeep Singh Puri**

2. Rajnath Singh signs MoU with Egypt on Defence Cooperation (Sept. 20, 2022)

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, who is on a three-day visit to Egypt, met the Egyptian Defence Minister, General Mohamed Zaki in Cairo on 20 September and signed a MoU on Defence Cooperation to further expand the bilateral defence ties between the two countries.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- During the meeting, both sides discussed steps to strengthen defense ties and a consensus was reached for **joint military exercises and training**, especially in the area of counter-terrorism.
- In addition, they also exchanged views on regional security and acknowledged the contribution of India and Egypt to peace and stability in the world.
- Egyptian President **Abdel Fattah el-Sisi** agreed to focus on enhancing bilateral cooperation and security aspects.
- Singh has also invited his Egyptian counterpart to the **India-Africa Defence Dialogue and the IOR Defence Ministers' Conference**, which is scheduled to be held in Gujarat from **October 18-22** this year as part of the **12th DefExpo**.
- Egypt is one of the largest investment destinations for India in the region with an existing Indian investment of USD 3.15 billion.

India - Egypt defence cooperation :

- To boost defence cooperation between the two countries, an Indian Air Force team arrived in Egypt on **22 June** to participate in a bilateral 'Strategic Leadership Program' with the Egyptian Air Force.
- The year 2022 has special significance as it marks the **75th anniversary** of diplomatic relations between India and Egypt.
- There was close cooperation between the Air Forces of both countries, with efforts at jointly developing a fighter aircraft in the **1960s**.
- Indian Air Force pilots had also trained **Egyptian pilots from the 1960s until 1984**.
- In recent times, since 2015, there have been a number of high-level exchanges of visits by defense delegations.

3. Lumpy skin disease virus different from 2019 version (Sept. 20, 2022)

The Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD) virus that has killed nearly 50,000 cattle in India this year may be structurally different from the version of the virus prevalent in India in 2019.

A new vaccine is being developed to protect cattle from this disease.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

What is Lumpy Skin Disease ?

- It is caused by infection of **cattle or buffalo** with the poxvirus Lumpy skin disease virus (LSDV).
- The virus is one of three closely related species of the genus **Capripoxavirus**.
- The other two species are **Sheeppox virus** and **Goatpox virus**.
- Due to its infectious nature and its impact on the economy, the World Organization for Animal Health (WOIE) has declared it a notable disease.

Symptoms of disease :

- The main symptoms are fever in animals, discharge from eyes and nose, saliva from the mouth, lump-like soft blisters all over the body, decreased milk production, difficulty in eating, which sometimes leads to the death of the cattles.

Transmission of disease :

- The virus is easily transmitted through blood-sucking insects such as mosquitoes, flies and ticks, and through saliva and contaminated water and food.
- The virus was first reported in Asia and the Pacific region in 2019 in north west China, Bangladesh and India.
- There is no treatment available for the disease.

Vaccine for disease :

- The vaccine **Lumpi-ProVacInd**, jointly developed by **ICAR's National Research Centre on Equines (NRCE)** and **the Indian Veterinary Research Institute (IVRI)**.
- Experimental trials with the vaccine on animals afflicted by the ongoing 2022 outbreak have yielded encouraging results.

4. To curb use of chemical fertilizers, Govt to give nod to PM PRANAM Scheme (Sept. 20, 2022)

The central government is preparing to launch a scheme called PM PRANAM to reduce the use of chemical fertilizers by encouraging the states.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- This new scheme will not have a separate budget and will be funded through savings of existing fertilizer subsidies under schemes run by the Department of Fertilizers.

- **50 percent** of subsidy savings will be passed on as a grant to the state that saves the money.
- The remaining **30 per cent** grant money can be used to reward and encourage farmers, Panchayats, Farmer Producer Organizations and Self Help Groups who are involved in fertilizer use reduction and creating awareness in society.

What is in the proposed PM PRANAM scheme ?

- The full name of PM PRANAM is **Promotion of Alternative Nutrients for Agriculture Management** Scheme.

Aim of the Scheme :

- **to reduce** the use of chemical fertilisers
- Reducing the **subsidy burden** on chemical fertilisers, which is projected to reach Rs 2.25 lakh crore in 2022-23 - 39 per cent more than last year's figure of Rs 1.62 lakh crore.
- **70 percent** of the grant provided under the scheme can be used for asset creation related to technology adoption of alternative fertilizers and alternative fertilizer production units at village, block and district level.

Fertilizer Manufacturing Sectors :

- **Fertilizer Manufacturing Companies (PSUs)** - National Fertilizers Limited, Rashtriya Chemicals and Fertilizers Limited
- **Fertilizer Manufacturing Cooperatives** - IFFCO, KRIBHCO
- **Decision Making Body** - Department of Fertilizers, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers, Govt of India
- **Position of india in the World** - Third in terms of production and second in terms of consumption

5. Nanmadol Typhoon wreaks havoc in Japan, high alert issued (Sept. 19, 2022)

Due to the Nanmadol typhoon in Japan, people living in the southwest have been warned to move to safer places.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- Due to the storm, there has been heavy rain with strong winds throughout the night of 19 September and landslides have also occurred at many places.
- One person was killed and fifty others were injured as the storm passed through the island of Kyushu.

- Government sources have said that Prime Minister **Fomyo Kishida** was to attend the UN General Assembly but has stopped to take stock of the damage caused by the storm and will now go a day later.
- Nanmadol is the **14th Pacific hurricane** of the season, and the largest to hit Japan.

6. Andaman and Nicobar Islands declared India's first Swachh Sujal Pradesh (Sept. 19, 2022)

The Union Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat has declared Andaman and Nicobar Islands as India's first Swachh Sujal Pradesh, by handing over the certificate to the Lieutenant Governor Admiral DK Joshi.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- All villages of Andaman and Nicobar Island have been certified as Har Ghar Jal and also verified as open defecation free - ODF plus.
- In order to be certified as a Swachh Sujal Pradesh, the State or the Union Territory has to be certified Har Ghar Jal as well shall be open defecation free.
- Certified Har Ghar Jal means that the Gram sabha of every village in the state or the Union Territory has to pass a resolution certifying that all households in the villages have access to safe drinking water through taps.
- The villages also have to confirm through a resolution of the Gram Sabha, that every household is getting regular supply of water of prescribed quality and not a single household is left out.
- They have to also confirm that all schools, anganwadi centres and other public institutions are also getting tap water.

Open Defecation Free (ODF) :

- '**Open Defecation Free (ODF)**' is a term used to describe communities that are using toilets instead of open defecation.
- A village that maintains Open Defecation Free (ODF) status, ensures solid and liquid waste management and is visually clean is called "**ODF Plus Village**".
- Toilet facilities should be ensured in all households, primary schools, panchayat houses and Anganwadi centres in these villages.
- At least 80% of households should manage their solid and liquid waste effectively and have minimum litter and minimum stagnant water.
- ODF Plus villages have been divided into three categories -Aspiring, Rising and Model.

Note :

- **Burhanpur district of Madhya Pradesh** is the first certified **Har Ghar Jal** District in India.
- **Goa is the first state** to be certified as Har Ghar Jal state.
- **Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu** are the first Har Ghar Jal certified Union Territory(UT) in the country.

7. India Overtakes China To Become Sri Lanka's Largest Lender (Sept. 19, 2022)

According to a media report, India has emerged as the largest bilateral lender to Sri Lanka, overtaking China in the process, with a total loan of USD 968 million in the four months of 2022.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- In the last five years from 2017-2021, China has been the largest bilateral lender to Sri Lanka.
- **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** has been the largest multilateral lender in the past five years and disbursed funds amounting to **610 million dollars** in year 2021.
- India's Permanent Representative to the United Nations **Ruchira Kamboj** had said that India has provided food and financial assistance of about **\$ 4 billion to Sri Lanka.**
- On 22 August, India provided 21,000 tonnes of fertilizers to the beleaguered Sri Lanka.
- India has been at the forefront of providing financial assistance to Sri Lanka as per requirements of this country and is one of the countries which has provided maximum assistance in times of need.
- Since the beginning of 2022, Sri Lanka has been grappling with an economic crisis.

8. Defence Minister reaches Cairo on two-day official visit to Egypt (Sept. 19, 2022)

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh reached Cairo on 19 September on a two-day official visit to Egypt.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- During the visit, Rajnath Singh will hold bilateral talks with the Minister of Defence and Defence Production, General Mohammad Zaki.

- Rajnath Singh's visit aims to further strengthen defence cooperation and friendship between **India and Egypt**.
- The two ministers will review bilateral defence ties, explore new initiatives to intensify military ties and focus on deepening cooperation between the defence industries of the two countries.
- An MoU will also be signed to promote defence cooperation between India and Egypt.
- Singh will also meet Egyptian **President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi**.

India - Egypt Relations :

- Egypt is one of the largest investment destinations for India with the current Indian investment of **USD 3.15 billion**.
- Indian companies are working on several projects in Egypt.
- To strengthen defence cooperation between the two countries, an Indian Air Force team arrived in Egypt on 22 June to participate in a bilateral '**Strategic Leadership Program**' with the Egyptian Air Force.
- Earlier in November last year, Chief of **Air Staff Chief Marshal VR Chowdhury** had gone to Egypt for his five-day visit to attend the Air Power Symposium and **Defence Exhibition (EDEX) in Cairo**.
- The year 2022 has special significance as it marks the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations between India and Egypt.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION -

About Egypt :

- Capital - **Cairo**
- President - **Abdel Fattah al-Sisi**
- Official Language - **Arabic**
- Official Religion - **Islam**
- Currency - **Egyptian pound**

9. MAS and IFSCA sign agreement to advance cross-border fintech innovations (Sept. 19, 2022)

The Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS) and the International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA) on 18 September signed a FinTech Co-operation Agreement (CA) to facilitate regulatory collaboration and partnership in FinTech.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- This formal treaty is called the **Fintech Cooperation Agreement (CA)**.
- Sopanendu Mohanty, Chief Fintech Officer, MAS and Joseph Joshi, Chief Technology Officer, IFSCA were present at the signing of the agreement.

Objectives of agreement :

- Through the CA, the two collaborating bodies aim to overlook sandbox collaboration and promote objectives such as the dissemination of information.
- MAS and IFSCA will maximise the use of existing sandboxes in their respective jurisdictions.
- This is to support the use of technological innovations.

What steps will be taken to achieve this ?

- Both bodies will refer and connect companies to each others' sandboxes.
- They will innovatie cross-border experimentation in both jurisdictions.
- This agreement will allow IFSCA and MAS to determine suitable use cases which could benefit from these kinds of cross-border experiments.
- Inviting relevant jurisdictions to participate in this global regulation would be another initiative taken under this agreement.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION -***What is Financial Technology (Fintech) ?***

- Fintech refers to the integration of technology by financial services companies to improve their use and delivery to consumers.
- Fintech is used to help companies, business owners and consumers to better manage their financial operations and processes etc.
- Examples of fintech applications are - robo advisors, payments apps, peer-to-peer (P2P) lending apps, investment apps, and crypto apps etc.

10. Vice President asks media to be extra careful while reporting about judiciary (Sept. 19, 2022)

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar, in his address as the Chief Guest at the first 'Justice JS Verma Memorial Lecture' held in Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh on September 18, urged the media to be extra careful while reporting about the judiciary.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- He said that we must uphold the dignity of the judges and respect for the judiciary, as these are the fundamental principles of the rule of law and constitutionalism.
- He said that a strong, fair and independent justice system is the guarantee of democratic values to flourish and be effective.
- In the first 'Justice JS Verma Memorial Lecture', the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul delivered the keynote address.
- After the memorial lecture, the Vice President paid homage by garlanding the statues of Raja Shankar Shah and Kunwar Raghunath Shah.

Justice J S Verma :

- Justice Jagdish Sharan Verma was the **Chief Justice of India** from 25 March 1997 to 18 January 1998.
- He was appointed **Chief Justice of Madhya Pradesh High Court** on 14 June 1986.
- He was transferred to the Rajasthan High Court as its **Chief Justice** on 1 September 1986.
- He was appointed Acting Governor of **Rajasthan twice**.
- In 2013, the Justice JS Verma committee recommended sweeping changes to the laws relating to **sexual harassment at the workplace**.
- The panel was formed in 2012 after the December 16 **Nirbhaya gangrape**, which submitted its report in 2013.