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1. 52nd Arab Information Minister's Council session held in Egypt (Sept. 20, 2022)

The Arab League announced the start of the 52nd round of meetings of the Council of Arab Information Ministers on 19 September, chaired by Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi in Egypt.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- The three-day meeting includes the 15th regular round of the Executive Office and the 97th regular round of the Standing Committee of Arab Media.
- **Ahmed Rashid Khattabi**, Assistant Secretary-General and Observer for Media and Communications at the Arab League, attended the meeting on behalf of the **Arab League's Secretary-General Ahmed Abul Gheit**.
- The meeting will discuss a range of issues related to continuing media support for Arab Palestine and activating the Arab Media **Strategic Goals 2022-2026**.
- Arab Media Ministers will discuss a number of organizational and structural issues.

About Arab League :

- It is a union of Arabic-speaking African and Asian countries.
- It was formed in Cairo in **1945** to promote the independence, sovereignty and interests of its member states and observers.
- It currently consists of **22 different member states and four observer states**.

2. 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**

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4. 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.

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6. 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.

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8. 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

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10. Deputy Prime Minister of Singapore, Lawrence Wong meets the Prime Minister Modi (Sept. 19, 2022)

The Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister of Singapore Lawrence Wong met the Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi on 19 September 2022. He was accompanied by Singapore's Minister for Trade and Industry Mr. Gan Kim Yong and the Indian Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

The leaders discussed ways to boost bilateral ties between India and Singapore, especially in emerging sectors like digital connectivity, green hydrogen, and Fintech.

Mr Lawrence is on his first visit to India from 17 -21 September 2022.

During his India visit he also participated in the first **India-Singapore Ministerial Roundtable (ISMR)** held on 17 September in New Delhi with Nirmala Sitharaman. The ISMR is a new mechanism between the two countries to boost economic cooperation between the two countries.

The Deputy Prime Minister Wong also visited Gujarat during his India visit.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

Singapore :

- It is a city state located in SouthEast Asia.
- It was a British colony which joined Federation of Malaysia on its formation in 1963 but later seceded to become an independent state on August 9, 1965.
- Singapore's **Changi airport** is considered as one of the best airports in the world.
- Capital: **Singapore**
- Currency: **Singapore Dollar**
- Prime Minister: **Lee Hsien Loong**