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1. Science Magazine 'Vigyan Pragati' receives 'Rajbhasha Kirti Award' (Sept. 17, 2022)

CSIR's popular science magazine "Vigyan Pragati" has received the National Rajbhasha Kirti Award (First position).

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- The award was given at the **2nd All India Official Language Conference** held during 14-15 September 2022 at Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay Indoor Stadium, **Surat**.
- The Department of Official Language, Ministry of Home Affairs organized the event which was attended by about 9000 spectators.
- Director of CSIR-National Institute for Science Communication and Policy Research (CSIR-NIScPR), **Prof. Ranjana Agarwal** received this prestigious Kirti Award.
- **Article 51A (h)** of the Indian Constitution states that it is the fundamental duty of every citizen to develop scientific temper, spirit of inquiry, humanism and reform.

Magazine 'Vigyan Pragati' :

- **'Vigyan Pragati'** (a popular science magazine in Hindi) is one of India's best popular science magazines.
- It is popular among children, teachers, researchers and the public in India as well as in other countries.
- The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) started publication of this journal in **1952**.
- The aim of Vigyan Pragati is to make science and technology accessible to the common man in simple language.

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3. Varanasi nominated as first SCO cultural and tourism capital (Sept. 17, 2022)

Varanasi has been designated as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Tourism and Cultural Capital for the first time during the period 2022-2023 at the 22nd meeting of the SCO Council of Heads of State in Samarkand, Uzbekistan on 16 September.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- The nomination of Varanasi as the first SCO Tourism and Cultural Capital will promote tourism, cultural and humanitarian exchanges between India and SCO member countries.
- It also underlines India's ancient civilizational ties with the SCO member states, particularly the Central Asian republics.
- Under the framework of this flagship cultural outreach programme, several events will be organized in Varanasi during the year 2022-23, in which guests from SCO member states will be invited to participate.
- Varanasi is the **parliamentary constituency** of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

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5. Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Gramin) (Sept. 16, 2022)

The Union Ministry of Rural Development has decided to impose a penalty on the State Governments for delay in completion of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Gramin) on 15th September.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- As per a recent report, **West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, and Assam**, are the leading four States who are far behind their targets.
- The initial deadline for the scheme was **March 2022**, which was extended by two years to **March 2024** due to the coronavirus pandemic.

What will be penalties ?

- The ministry has sent a circular listing all the states.
- It said that if the construction of a house is delayed for more than a month from the stipulated date, the state government will be **fined Rs 10 per house** for the delay in the first month and **Rs 20 per house** for the month thereafter.

About Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana :

- The Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation launched the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana rural **in 2016**.
- The scheme was initiated with the objective of '**Housing for All by 2022**'.

- The scheme has 2 Components - Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (**Urban**) and Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (**Rural**).
- Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana Gramin was earlier called **Indira Awas Yojana** which was renamed in March 2016.

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7. KRITAGYA 3.0 - A National level Hackathon on crop improvement (Sept. 16, 2022)

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), under its National Agricultural Higher Education Project (NAHEP), in collaboration with the

Division of Crop Science, is organizing Hackathon 3.0 "KRITAGYA" to promote 'Accelerated Breeding for Crop Improvement'.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- The definition of KRITAGYA is as follows- **Kri** means agriculture, **Ta (TA)** means technology and **GYA** means knowledge.
- This program will provide an opportunity to students, faculties, entrepreneurs, innovators and others to showcase their innovative approaches and technology solutions to promote innovation for crop improvement.
- Participating students can collaborate with students in a group from local start-ups, institutes of technology and win up to Rs 5 lakh.
- In this competition, students, faculty and innovators, entrepreneurs from any university or technical institute across the country can apply and participate in the program.

Hackathon 1.0 & 2.0 :

- Hackathons 1.0 and 2.0 were organized to promote innovation in farm mechanization and animal science during the years 2020-21 and 2021-22.
- These events saw huge participation from across the country, 3,000 participants actively participated in Hackathon 1.0 and more than 269 teams participated in Hackathon 2.0.
- ICAR launched NAHEP in November 2017 with the help of the World Bank.
- It aims to support participating agricultural universities and ICAR in providing more relevant and high quality education to students.

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9. UN warns 345 million people at risk of starvation (Sept. 16, 2022)

The United Nations World Food Program warned on 16 September that the world is facing a global emergency, because 345 million people are marching toward starvation.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- David Beasley, executive director of the UN World Food Program, said 345 million people in **82 countries** are facing acute food insecurity.
- He said that **50 million people** in 45 countries suffer from **acute malnutrition**.
- This widespread and growing food insecurity is the result of direct and indirect effects of conflict and violence.
- Rising food, fuel and fertilizer prices have driven 70 million people near starvation since Russia invaded neighbouring Ukraine on February 24.

United Nations World Food Program :

- It is the food-assistance branch of the **United Nations**.
- It is the world's largest humanitarian organization focused on hunger and food security and the largest provider of school meals.
- It aims to fulfil the **17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)**, with a priority on achieving **SDG 2** for "**zero hunger**" by 2030.
- It was awarded the **Nobel Peace Prize in 2020** for its efforts to provide food assistance in areas of conflict.

- Founded - **1961**
- Headquartered - **Rome**

10. Nitin Gadkari lays foundation of 7 NH projects (Sept. 16, 2022)

Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari on 15 September in Gwalior inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of seven National Highway projects.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- The total length of the project is **222 km** and total cost is **Rs 1,128 crore**.
- The elevated road of both the phases on the **Swarn Rekha** in Gwalior city will be built with the state-of-the-art new technology of **Malaysia**.
- Under this project, a **6-lane Agra-Gwalior Greenfield Expressway** will be connected to **Yamuna Expressway** and a logistic park will also be set up along the **Agra-Gwalior Expressway**.
- Considering the geographical importance of Madhya Pradesh in connecting the network of highways, the implementation of these projects will facilitate movement and save fuel.

National Highways in India :

- The National highways are a network of roads owned by the **Ministry of Road Transport and Highways**.
- It is constructed and managed by the **National Highway Authority of India (NHAI)**, the **National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL)**, and the **public works departments (PWD)** of state governments.
- The **longest national highway is NH44**, which runs between Srinagar in Jammu and Kashmir and Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu, with a total length of 3,806 km (2,365 mi).
- **The shortest National Highway** is NH766EE, which spans 4.27 km (2.65 mi), from Hettikeri to Belekeri port in Karnataka.