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Sankalp Se Siddhi

- Tribal Co-operative Marketing Federation of India (TRIFED) under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs has launched "Sankalp se Siddhi" - Village & Digital Connect Drive.
- **Aim** - To activate the Van Dhan Vikas Kendras (VDVKs) in the 100 villages in each region.
- Starting from April 1, 2021, this **100 day drive** will entail 150 teams in which 10 teams in each region from TRIFED and State Implementation Agencies/ Mentoring Agencies/ Partners will be visiting 10 villages each.
- 1500 villages in the country will be covered in the next 100 days.
- The visiting teams will identify locations and shortlist potential VDVKs for clustering as TRIFOOD, and SFURTI units as larger enterprises.
- [TRIFOOD aims to enhance the income of tribes through better utilization of and value addition to the Minor Forest Produce collected by the tribal forest gatherers.]
- They will identify suppliers from the tribal artisans and other groups to provide access them to larger markets through the Tribes India network - both physical outlets and TribesIndia.com.

Iridescence of Squids

- Like their cephalopod cousins (octopus and cuttlefish), Squids have specialised pigment-filled cells called chromatophores that expand to expose them to light, resulting in various shades of pigmentary colour.
- Reflectin proteins are responsible for the iridescence of the squids.
- [Iridescence is a lustrous rainbow like play of colour caused by differential refraction of light waves (as from an oil slick, soap bubble, or fish scales) that tends to change as the angle of view changes.]
- Sub wavelength-wide grooves are formed on squids by a cell membrane that folds into nanoscale accordion-like structures called lamellae.
- These grooves and mechanisms by which light-reflecting cells (iridocytes) in the skin, can take on every colour of the rainbow.
- The colour reflected depends on the width of the groove, which corresponds to certain light wavelengths (colours).
- The width of the grooves can be changed at will by the action of "osmotic

motor" driven by reflectin proteins, which tune the colour and also brightness of the light using the same mechanism.

Mechanism

- Reflectins are normally very strongly positively charged proteins and so they repel each other.
- Neural signal causes the reflectins to bind to negatively charged phosphate groups that neutralize their positive charge.
- Without the repulsion, they attract each other, accumulating into fewer, larger aggregations in the lamellae.
- Aggregations of the reflectins exert osmotic pressure on the lamellae causing water release from the cells.

Asian Desert Dust & Indian Summer Monsoon

- A new study explains how dust from the deserts in the West, Central and East Asia plays an important role in the Indian Summer Monsoon.
- It also explains how the Indian Summer Monsoon has a reverse effect and can increase the winds in West Asia to produce yet more dust.
- Dust swarms from the desert when lifted by strong winds can absorb solar radiation and become hot.
- This can cause heating of the atmosphere, change the air pressure, wind circulation patterns, influence moisture transport and increase precipitation and rainfall.
- Also, the hot air over the Iranian Plateau can heat the atmosphere over the plateau, strengthen the circulation over the deserts of the Arabian Peninsula and increase dust emission from the Middle East [West Asia].
- **Other examples** - Dust aerosols from deserts in West China such as the Taklamakan desert and the Gobi Desert can be transported eastward to eastern China and can influence the East Asia summer monsoon.
- In the southwest United States, there are some small deserts that influence the North African monsoon.

ACT-Accelerator

- The director-general of the World Health Organization (WHO), appointed Carl Bildt as WHO Special Envoy for the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-Accelerator).
- ACT-Accelerator is a groundbreaking global collaboration to accelerate development, production, and equitable access to COVID-19 diagnostics, treatments and vaccines.
- It was launched in 2020 at an event co-hosted by the Director-General of the

WHO, the President of France, the President of the European Commission, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

- It brings together governments, scientists, businesses, civil society, and philanthropists and global health organizations.
- Organizations - Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, CEPI, FIND, Gavi, The Global Fund, Unitaid, Wellcome, the WHO and the World Bank.
- They have joined forces to reduce mortality and severe disease, restoring full societal and economic activity globally in the near term, and facilitating high-level control of COVID-19 disease in the medium term.
- It comprises four pillars, each managed by 2 to 3 collaborating partners:
    a. Vaccines (also called "COVAX")
    b. Diagnostics
    c. Therapeutics
    d. Health Systems Connector

Unique Land Parcel Identification Number Scheme

- Department of Land Resources (Ministry of Rural development) has launched the Unique Land Parcel Identification Number (ULPIN) scheme.
- This scheme aims to issue a 14-digit identification number to every plot of land in the country.
- ULPIN is proposed to be rolled out in 10 States during FY 2020-21 and by 2021-22 (March 2022) in the entire country.
- Later, it will integrate its land records database with revenue court records and bank records, and Aadhaar numbers on a voluntary basis.
- The identification will be based on the longitude and latitude coordinates of the land parcel, and is dependent on detailed surveys and geo-referenced cadastral maps.
- This unique number would prevent land fraud, especially in the rural India, where land records are outdated and often disputed.
- This is the next step in the Digital India Land Records Modernisation Programme (DILRMP).
- ULPIN will help develop land banks and lead towards Integrated Land Information Management System (ILIMS).

Digital India Land Records Modernisation Programme

- Department of Land Resources has proposed an extension of this Central Sector scheme to 2023-24, to complete its original targets.
- Began in 2008, the DILRMP has 3 major components –
    a. Computerization of land record
    b. Survey/re-survey
    c. Computerization of Registration.

- The District has been taken as the unit of implementation, where all programme activities are to converge.
- DILRMP's next phase will include linkage of land record databases with banks.

National Generic Document Registration System

- NGDRS launched by Govt. of India is a state specific instance and it can be accessed from the link given on State Registration website.
- It represents a major shift from the existing manual registration system to online one of all transactions in sale-purchase and transfer of land.
- It is aimed at providing 'One Nation One Software' for registration of documents & properties to empower citizens.
- Stamp papers have been replaced by e-stamps which have been incorporated in coordination with Stockholding Corporation of India.

Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2021

- This report was released by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP).
- **India -** India is estimated to record an economic growth of 7% in 2021-22, over a contraction of 7.7% witnessed in the previous fiscal on account of the pandemic's impact on normal business activity.
- India entered the pandemic with already subdued GDP (Gross Domestic Product) growth and investment.
- Moreover, one of the most stringent lockdowns in the world caused the severe economic disruptions that the country experienced in 2020.
- Despite a robust reduction in new COVID-19 cases and the start of vaccine roll-out, India's 2021 economic output is expected to remain below the 2019 level.
- Challenges for India - To maintain low borrowing costs and to keep non-performing loans in check.
- **Other countries** - China's swift and effective COVID-19 response enabled it to become the only major economy to achieve a positive annual economic growth rate in 2020.
- On an average, developing Asia-Pacific economies are expected to grow 5.9% in 2021 and 5% in 2022, after having experienced an estimated contraction of 1% in 2020.
- Despite a reasonably strong rebound expected in 2021, a 'K-shaped recovery' is likely, with poorer countries and more vulnerable groups marginalised in the post-pandemic recovery and transition period.
- **Recommendations** - For a more robust and inclusive recovery, the report calls for a synchronised COVID-19 vaccination program globally.

- It highlights the opportunities to leverage regional cooperation.
- It recommends that fiscal and monetary support should be sustained, as premature tightening could increase long-term scars.
- To know about the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, click here.

Source: PIB, AIR, The Hindu, The Indian Express, Down To Earth

