

1. INSTITUTE OF EMINENCE

Context: University Grants Commission (UGC) recommends 20 institutions for Institutes of Eminence

- ▶▶ The IITs Madras and Kharagpur, Delhi University, University of Hyderabad, Amritha Vishwa Vidyapeetham and VIT are among the 20 institutions recommended for the grant of the Institute of Eminence status by the UGC

Institute of Eminence:

- ▶▶ It is the scheme has been **launched by UGC** in order to implement the commitment of the Government to empower the **Higher Educational Institutions** and to help them become **world class teaching and research institutions**.
- ▶▶ **Aim:** To develop **20 world-class Institutions** which would put India on the global education map.
- ▶▶ Those selected will be given **greater autonomy** and freedom to decide fees, course durations and governance structures.
- ▶▶ The public institutions will also receive a government grant of 1,000 crore, while the private institutions will not get any funding under the scheme.

2. RAMON MAGSAYSAY AWARD

Context: Indian journalist Ravish Kumar has been awarded the 2019 Ramon Magsaysay Award for “**harnessing journalism to give voice to the voiceless**”

About Ramon Magsaysay Award:

- ▶▶ Established in 1957, the Ramon Magsaysay Award is **Asia's highest honour**.
- ▶▶ It celebrates the memory and leadership example of the third Philippine president after whom the award is named
- ▶▶ It is given every year to **individuals or organisations** in Asia who manifest the same selfless service and transformative influence that ruled the life of the late and beloved Filipino leader.

3. Ppar-γ2 and Arid5a

Context: An international team of scientists found that two proteins, **Ppar-γ2** and **Arid5a**, triggered by cytokines from the immune system work in tandem to keep fat cells under check.

- ▶▶ **Cytokines:** These are proteins secreted by immunity cells. Although it is known that cytokines like IL-6 and TGF — beta are produced during exercising or stress to bring about an energy balance called homeostasis, the exact mechanism was unknown.
- ▶▶ The present study focused on understanding this homeostasis and found that cytokines trigger **Arid5a**, which in turn **arrests the fat cell formation**.
- ▶▶ Another protein **Ppar-γ2** is a key facilitator for generating fat cells in the body.
- ▶▶ When nutrients are taken, Ppar-γ2 is triggered in fibroblasts (healing cells), and they begin to accumulate lipids to form fat cells as a necessary mechanism to store energy and perform various activities
- ▶▶ The results suggested that Arid5a does inhibit the expression of Ppar-γ2 by inactivating the promoter activity of Ppar-γ2 gene, establishing the negative relationship between the two proteins.”

4. MEGHDOOT- MOBILE APP

Context: New mobile app launched to assist farmers; the application called **Meghdoot** would be available for 150 districts in different parts of the country

About Meghdoot:

- ▶▶ The **Ministries of Earth Sciences and Agriculture** have launched a mobile application that will provide location, and crop and livestock-specific weather-based agro advisories to farmers in local languages.
- ▶▶ The app would provide forecast relating to temperature, rainfall, humidity, and wind speed and direction, which play critical roles in agricultural operations and advisories to the farmers on how to take care of their crops and livestock.
- ▶▶ It will provide information in the form of images, maps and pictures to help the farmer to have a clearer picture of what is in store.
- ▶▶ It has been integrated with **WhatsApp and Facebook** as well to help farmers share advisories among themselves.
- ▶▶ Initially, the service would be available for 150 districts in different parts of the country
- ▶▶ The information would be updated twice a week on Tuesdays and Fridays.
- ▶▶ It has been developed by experts from the **India Meteorological Department** and **Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology** and the **Indian Council of Agricultural Research**.

- ▶▶ It can be downloaded from **Google Play Store and App Store**.
- ▶▶ The users will have to register their name and location so that they can get area specific information.

5. FALL ARMYWORM

Context: Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare launched a dedicated website to help farmers fight against the dreaded **Fall Armyworm (FAW)**.

About FAW:

- ▶▶ It is an **invasive and polyphagous** (feeding on many foods) pest. It can attack cereals and forage grasses.
- ▶▶ FAW is recorded as eating 186 plant species from 42 families.
- ▶▶ Global scientists have already warned that the FAW 'invasion' will be global and potentially put the world's food security at risk.
- ▶▶ India had to import maize in order to meet the demand of the poultry and animal feed industries after FAW destroyed the country's maize crop in 2018.
- ▶▶ This website will help support farmers in successfully curbing FAW in India through knowledge empowerment.
- ▶▶ Saffal' stands for '**Safeguarding Agriculture and Farmers against Fall Armyworm**'.
- ▶▶ It is conducting a **country-wide farmers' awareness programme on FAW** in major maize-growing states such as Karnataka, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat and Tamil Nadu.

6. SAMARTH

Context: Flipkart launches '**Samarth**' to empower Indian artisans, weavers and craftsmen.

About:

- ▶▶ Flipkart 'Samarth' has been designed to support the e-commerce journey for artisans.
- ▶▶ It will work closely with reputed **NGOs and Government Bodies**.
- ▶▶ **Aim:** To bring India's artisans, weavers, and handicrafts producers onto e-commerce.
- ▶▶ It has been designed to support the e-commerce journey for artisans from on-boarding until they reach familiarity with the process of selling online.
- ▶▶ It **helps traditionally underserved communities** access a pan-India market and engage with over 150 million customers.
- ▶▶ It will leverage increasing internet penetration in rural India to boost entrepreneurship.