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Electronic Platform to Fight COVID-19

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Why in News

- Recently, **India has decided to set up an electronic platform** to help member countries of the **South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)** fight the **COVID-19** pandemic.
- The decision has been conveyed during a **virtual conference of health professionals of eight countries in the region.**

Key Points

- The virtual conferencing of the health workers of the SAARC Nation was part of **the two proposals made by Indian Prime Minister during the recently held virtual meeting of SAARC.**
 - The **other proposal was to set up SAARC COVID-19 Emergency Fund.**
- The e-Platform will enable the SAARC nations to **share and exchange information, knowledge, expertise and best practices** for jointly combating the Coronavirus epidemic.
 - **Objectives** of the e-Platform
 - Training of emergency personnel
 - Disease surveillance
 - Joint research
 - Currently the platform is in the construction stage.
 - Meanwhile India suggested to set up a Whatsapp or email group to help facilitate exchange of information among the SAARC countries till the platform became fully operational
- During the conference all the **countries highlighted their specific vulnerabilities, capacities, the best practices, gaps in resources and logistics**, private sector participation as well as levels of preparedness.
- **Community engagement and participation** was identified as an important element in any anti-Covid19 strategy.

- **Fight Corona IDEathon**

- Recently, a **2-day online IDEathon** has been organized to search for accessible and affordable technological solutions that can contain the rapid spread of infection, ease the mounting pressure and ensure a quick return to normalcy.
- The initiative was **jointly organised by MHRD Innovation Cell, AICTE, MEITY Startup Hub, InnovatioCuris and other institutions of global and national prominence.**
- **The focus area of the IDEathon was**
 - designing reusable/washable masks
 - system to disinfect currency notes/coins
 - a non-invasive diagnostic kit
 - Storage Kits to collect test samples from homes

Technology Diplomacy by India in SAARC Region

- India launched the **GSAT-9, also dubbed the South Asia Satellite**, aiming to provide space-enabled services to other South Asian countries.
- India has offered member countries of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) to join its advanced navigational satellite programme—GPS-Aided Geo Augmented Navigation (GAGAN).
- Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS) has potential to be useful for the SAARC countries which are dependent on foreign systems.

SOURCE : THE HINDU