Harnessing India's Tech Strength

For Prelims: Initiatives for Start-ups

For Mains: Startups in India and challenges in achieving the true potential of start-ups, Steps taken to promote Start-ups

Why in News?

Recently, an agreement has been **signed between** [CSIR (Council of Scientific and Industrial Research)](#) **and iCreate** to harness the **country's technological strength.**

What is iCreate?

- iCreate is **an autonomous centre of excellence of the Gujarat government** and is India's largest institution for transforming start-ups based on tech innovation into businesses.

What is CSIR?

- CSIR is known for its **cutting-edge Research & Development and Industrial knowledge base** in diverse S&T areas.
- It is a **contemporary R&D organization**.
- CSIR has a **dynamic network of 37 national laboratories**, 39 outreach centres, one Innovation Complex, and three units with a pan-India presence.
    - CSIR has a patent portfolio of 8366 Indian patents and 7806 foreign patents.
- CSIR **covers a wide spectrum of science and technology** – from oceanography, geophysics, chemicals, drugs, genomics, biotechnology and nanotechnology to mining, aeronautics, instrumentation, environmental engineering and information technology.
- It **provides significant technological intervention in many areas concerning societal efforts.**
    - **Societal efforts include** environment, health, drinking water, food, housing, energy, farm and non-farm sectors.
- Further, CSIR's role in Science & Technology human resource development is noteworthy.

What are the Highlights of MoU?

- Under the MoU, **CSIR and iCreate intend to establish a collaborative support system for promising tech** [start-ups](#) by making combined resources available for entrepreneurs and innovators in the country.
- The partnership **will also catalyse scientific innovation** and the marketability of high-tech start-ups.
    - **Fintech, neobanks, and** [e-commerce](#) **players make the most of the digital**

environment and their enterprise can leverage it to the fullest as well and ride the digital boom.
- Further, iCreate will **help set up new incubators at identified CSIR labs.**
  - Such start-ups will access CSIR's equipment, facilities, and scientific manpower.
- CSIR will **provide intellectual property support** and explore methods of financially supporting innovative start-ups from India to boost emerging entrepreneurs.
- iCreate will also **leverage its deep industry connections and market linkages** to identify real needs that can be addressed through scientific innovation by CSIR scientists.
  - It will thus **lead to faster commercialisation of the innovations** coming out of CSIR.

What is the State of Start-ups in India?

- **About:**
  - Today, **India is the third largest start-up ecosystem globally** (by number of start-ups) with more than 15,000 start-ups established in 2020, up from 5000 in 2010.
  - The underlying enablers of this startup ecosystem include smartphone and internet penetration, **cloud computing**, **application programming interfaces (APIs)**, and a national payments stack in place.
  - Additionally, amid the **Covid-19 pandemic**, India has witnessed more number of Unicorn startups (startups having valuation of over USD1 billion) in just 2021 than it did in the period 2011-20.
  - However, still there are many challenges (Building and Scaling an Indian Startup, Diversity and the Digital Divide, Complex Regulatory Environment) that act as a hindrance in realizing the true potential of startups in India.
- **Other Related Initiatives:**
  - **Ranking of States on Support to Startup Ecosystems:** It is an **evolved evaluation tool aimed to strengthen** the support of States and UTs to holistically build their startup ecosystems.
  - **SCO Startup Forum:** The first-ever **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)** Startup Forum was launched in October 2020 to develop and improve startup ecosystems collectively.
  - **Prarambh:** The 'Prarambh' Summit **aims to provide a platform to the startups** and young minds from around the world to come up with new ideas, innovation and invention.
  - **Startup India Seed Fund Scheme:** It **aims to provide financial assistance** to startups for proof of concept, prototype development, product trials, market entry, and commercialization.
  - **Fisheries Startup Grand Challenge:** The Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying In association with Startup India, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry inaugurated the Fisheries Startup Grand Challenge.

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