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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 14-09-2024

NATIONAL NEWS

AB PM-JAY Benefits Extended To Senior Citizens of 70 Years and Above

In a significant step towards enhancing healthcare access for the elderly, the Union Cabinet has approved the expansion of the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) to cover all senior citizens aged 70 years or above.

This move is set to benefit approximately 45 million families, encompassing around 60 million senior citizens, providing them with free health insurance coverage of ₹5 lakh on a family basis.

All senior citizens aged 70 years and above, regardless of their socio-economic status, will now be eligible for the benefits of AB-PMJAY.

This initiative will be implemented with a budgetary outlay of ₹3,437 crore.

The scheme provides cashless and paperless health insurance cover of ₹5 lakh per annum per family on a floater basis in empanelled hospitals across India.

As of now, over 352 million citizens have been covered under AB-PMJAY, receiving free hospitalization insurance.

Eligible senior citizens will receive a new, distinct card under AB-PMJAY to ensure seamless access to healthcare services.

enior citizens aged 70 years and above, already part of families covered under AB-PMJAY, will receive an additional top-up cover of up to ₹5 lakh per year, specifically for themselves.

Cabinet Approves Rs 14,335-Crore Scheme to Boost Electric Mobility in India

The Indian government has taken a significant step to promote green mobility with the approval of a new Rs 14,335-crore incentive scheme for the electric vehicle (EV) sector.

The scheme aims to enhance electric mobility by subsidising electric two-wheelers, three-wheelers, ambulances, trucks, buses, and charging infrastructure.

The new PM E-DRIVE scheme replaces the previous FAME (Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Hybrid and Electric Vehicles) scheme.

Rs 10,900 crore has been allocated for the PM E-DRIVE scheme, which will be in effect for two

years.

The scheme includes Rs 3,679 crore in subsidies for electric two-wheelers, three-wheelers, e-ambulances, e-trucks, and other emerging electric vehicles (EVs).

The scheme will support approximately 24.8 lakh electric two-wheelers and 3.16 lakh electric three-wheelers.

The Cabinet also approved the 'PM-eBus Sewa-Payment Security Mechanism' scheme to support the procurement and operation of e-buses by public transport authorities.

Union Cabinet Approves "Mission Mausam"

The Union Cabinet, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved"Mission Mausam" with a significant budget of Rs 2,000 crore over the next two years.

This ambitious initiative aims to strengthen India’s capabilities in predicting and responding to extreme weather events and the impacts of climate change.

It is to enhance India's ability to predict and manage extreme weather events, including monsoon variability, cyclones, and other climate impacts.

It will also improve weather and climate information across different temporal and spatial scales.

India Meteorological Department (IMD), Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) and National Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasting (NCMRWF) are the lead institutions.

Madhya Pradesh Government Approves Transfer of State Cooperative Dairy Operations

The Madhya Pradesh government has approved the transfer of operations of the State Cooperative Dairy Federation and affiliated milk unions to the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) for the next five years.

The decision was made during a meeting chaired by Chief Minister Mohan Yadav in Bhopal.

The MOU between NDDB and the state government is expected to help milk farmers in around 11,000 villages in MP by providing better prices for their produce, thereby boosting their economic prosperity.

NDDB has previously taken over operations of other state cooperatives, such as Mahananda Cooperative Dairy in Maharashtra and Sreeja Cooperative Dairy in Uttar Pradesh.

The state produces approximately 5.5 crore litres of milk daily and has a per capita milk availability better than the national average.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Mexico Becomes the 1st Country to Approve Popular Election of Judges

Mexico became the first country to allow voters to elect judges at all levels.

The reform was driven by outgoing President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, who criticised the judiciary for favouring political and economic elites.

The reform was passed with 86 votes in favour and 41 against, surpassing the two-thirds majority required to amend the constitution.

The reform affects judges at all levels, including local, high-level, and Supreme Court judges.

Around 1,600 judges are expected to stand for election in 2025 or 2027.

Court employees and law students protested against the reform, arguing concerns about the potential impact on the judiciary.

The reform was approved in an upper chamber dominated by the ruling Morena party and its allies.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Bharat Biotech and Alopexx Inc. to Co-Develop and Commercialize Anti-Microbial Vaccine AV0328

Hyderabad-based vaccine maker Bharat Biotech and clinical-stage U.S. biotechnology firm Alopexx Inc. will collaborate to co-develop and commercialise anti-microbial vaccine AV0328 in India and other low-income and lower-middle-income countries.

AV0328 is a proprietary broad-spectrum anti-microbial vaccine candidate from Alopexx.

It is designed to target poly N-acetyl glucosamine (PNAG), which is present on the surface of a variety of bacterial, fungal, and parasitic pathogens.

Alopexx will receive one-time upfront and milestone payments as well as royalties on future sales in the licensed territories.

Pre-clinical studies targeting PNAG showed effectiveness in preventing and treating infections caused by over 15 different pathogens.

A phase I, first-in-human trial of AV0328 has been completed.

The trial showed that the vaccine is well-tolerated with no serious adverse events and induced antibodies capable of killing a broad range of PNAG-expressing pathogens.

The vaccine has shown promise as a broad-spectrum antimicrobial solution due to its effectiveness against a wide range of pathogens.

Indian Scientists Create 'Brain on a Chip' Technology

Indian scientists at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) have developed a groundbreaking “brain on a chip” technology.

This technology can store and process data in 16,500 states within a molecular film.

The research paper detailing this technology was published in the journal Nature.

The technology represents a significant leap from traditional binary computing to neuromorphic computing, which is brain-inspired and analog.

This neuromorphic platform could enable complex AI tasks, such as training Large Language Models (LLMs), to be performed on personal devices like laptops and smartphones.

Indian Immunologicals Limited and Central Institute of Brackishwater Aquaculture

Indian Immunologicals Limited (IIL) and the Central Institute of Brackishwater Aquaculture (CIBA) have partnered to develop a commercial vaccine targeting Viral Nervous Necrosis (VNN) in finfish.

VNN is a disease that causes high mortality rates in young fish and can be transmitted from adults to offspring.

There are currently no commercially available fish vaccines in India.

Infections in fish are managed with anti-infectives and other conventional measures, which have varying degrees of success.

Aquaculture in India faces economic losses due to infections caused by bacterial, viral, fungal, and other agents.

BANKING

Bank of Baroda Approves Resolution Plan for Supertech's Dehradun Project

Bank of Baroda, one of the lenders in Supertech Group has approved and sanctioned the resolution plan for company’s Dehradun project paving way for delivery of over 600 homebuyers.

Supertech submitted a project-wise resolution plan to the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT), and this is the first project to receive lender approval.

The bank has consented to the inclusion of a co-developer in the Dehradun project.

Kotak Investment Advisors Ltd (KIAL) is investing ₹450 crore into Supertech's stalled Noida project, providing significant financial support.

The 'Supernova' project in Noida, which is 50% complete, includes the tallest residential tower in NCR.

It has a potential revenue of over ₹7,000 crore.

The revival of Supernova is expected to help Supertech resume other delayed projects.

Supertech needs to deliver over 15,000 homes and has liabilities of approximately ₹8,000 crore, with project receivables exceeding ₹14,000 crore

DEFENCE

VL-SRSAM Missile Successfully Test-Fired By DRDO and Indian Navy

The Indian Navy, in partnership with the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), has successfully tested the Vertical Launch Short Range Surface to Air Missile (VL-SRSAM).

The test was carried out on 12 September 2024 at the Integrated Test Range (ITR) in Chandipur island off the coast of Odisha.

During the test, the missile equipped with an advanced radio frequency seeker was launched from a land-based vertical launcher, which successfully intercepted a high-speed aerial target flying at a low altitude.

DRDO is developing the VL-SRAM, which will be manufactured by the central government-owned Bharat Dynamic Limited.

The VL-SRSAM is a short-range surface-to-air ballistic missile that can be launched from an Indian Naval warship.

The missile is an all-weather, next-generation, quick-reaction missile that will provide defence against supersonic sea-skimming targets like aircraft, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), and missiles.

VL-SRSAM is 3,931 mm long, 178 mm in diameter, and 170 kg in weight.

The strike range of the missile is up to 50 km.