DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 20-09-2024

NATIONAL NEWS

Central Government Approves Bio-RIDE Scheme of the DBT

The central government has approved the launch of the 'Biotechnology Research Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development (Bio-RIDE)' scheme of the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Union Ministry of Science and Technology.

The two existing schemes of the DBT have been merged, and a new component, Biomanufacturing and Biofoundry, has been added to the Bio-RIDE scheme.

The newly approved Bio-RIDE will continue from 2021-22 to 2025-26 during the 15th Finance Commission period.

The proposed outlay for the scheme is Rs.9197 crore for 2021-2025-26.

The newly approved Bio-RIDE merges the two previous DBT schemes and includes one new component.

The components of the scheme are Biotechnology Research and Development, Industrial and Entrepreneurship Development and Biomanufacturing and Biofoundry

Biomanufacturing and Biofoundry are the newly introduced components of the Bio-RIDE scheme.

Biomanufacturing refers to using biological systems (living organisms, animal/ plant cells, tissues, enzymes, etc.) to manufacture commercially important biomolecules for use in food, pharmaceuticals, agriculture, energy, etc. It is an interdisciplinary field that involves microbiology, biochemistry, and chemical engineering.

In a Bio-Foundry, all biomanufacturing processes are highly automated, which helps accelerate the design-build–test–learning workflow to deliver products quickly and efficiently.

Union Cabinet Approves National Centre of Excellence (NCoE) for AVGC-XR in Mumbai

The Union Cabinet has approved the establishment of the National Centre of Excellence (NCoE) for Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming, Comics, and Extended Reality (AVGC-XR) in Mumbai.

This project aims to promote India's AVGC sector and position the country as a global content hub.

The centre will be formed as a Section 8 Company under the Companies Act, 2013.

The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) will partner with the Government of India for this initiative.

The NCoE aims to boost the media and entertainment industry in India, attracting foreign investment and enhancing India's soft power globally.

The initiative follows the creation of an AVGC Task Force, announced in the 2022-23 budget, and will support the rapidly growing sectors of consumer behaviour, the creator economy, and disruptive technologies.

Zanskar Hosts 9th Edition of Ladakh Zanskar Festival 2024

The 9th Ladakh Zanskar Festival 2024 began with remarkable grandeur in the picturesque village of Sani, signifying a landmark event for the region.

The festival was inaugurated by Lieutenant Governor Brigadier (Dr) BD Mishra.

This year's Zanskar Festival is especially significant as it marks the first celebration since Zanskar was officially declared a district.

The two-day festival showcases a wide array of cultural performances, reflecting the diverse traditions of the region.

Highlights include performances by the Purgi tribes from Kargil, the Shina community of Drass, the Dard-Aryans from Aryan Valley, and the Changpa nomads from Changthang.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

New Delhi Hosts the 3rd World Food India 2024

The 3rd edition of World Food India 2024 is being held in New Delhi from 19-22 September 2024. The event is organised by the government of India to promote domestic and foreign investment in the country's food processing sector and to highlight the country's rich food culture to the world.

Along with the 3rd World Food India 2024 the 2nd edition of the Global Food Regulators Summit hosted is also being held.

The Food Safety and Standard Authority of India (FSSAI) is organising the Global Food Regulators Summit on 20-21 September 2024 in New Delhi.

New Delhi hosted the first World Food India in 2017 and the 2nd edition in 2023.

The World Food India is organised by the Union Ministry of Food Processing Industries.

Uttar Pradesh, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, and Gujarat are the partner states in the 3rd edition of World Food.

Japan is the partner country for World Food India 2024, and Vietnam and Iran are the focus countries.

Participants from 90 countries,18 Union Ministries, 26 States and Union Territories, and other statutory bodies related to the country's food sector are participating in World Food India 2024.

The theme of the 3rd World Food India 2024 is Processing for prosperity.

Nepal Joins International Solar Alliance as Its 101st Full Member

Nepal became the 101st country to join the International Solar Alliance (ISA) as a full member.

Nepal handed over its Instrument of Ratification to the ISA in New Delhi.

ISA supports its member countries in enhancing solar deployment to improve energy access, ensure energy security, and transition toward low-carbon growth.

The ISA is a collaborative initiative between India and France, conceptualized during the COP21 in Paris, 2015, to combat climate change by implementing solar energy solutions.

After a 2020 amendment to its Framework Agreement, all UN member states are eligible to join the ISA.

The Hague Becomes World's First City to Prohibit Ads

The Hague became the first city in the world to ban advertisements promoting fossil fuel products and carbon-intensive services including cruise ships and air travel.

The Dutch city’s local council passed legislation early Friday that takes effect on 1, 2025.

The decision follows a call from United Nations Chief Antonio Guterres for governments to abolish such ads, similar to actions against tobacco that began in the 1960s.

The Hague is a city on the North Sea coast of the western Netherlands.

Algeria Granted Membership in BRICS New Development Bank

Algeria has been granted authorization to join the BRICS New Development Bank (NDB), a multilateral development bank.

The NDB was established in 2015 by the BRICS countries-Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa to support infrastructure and sustainable development projects in BRICS and other developing countries.

In 2021, the NDB expanded its membership to include Bangladesh, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, and Uruguay.

Algeria, as Africa's leading natural gas exporter, is expected to benefit from NDB membership through new opportunities to bolster and sustain its economic growth in the medium to long term.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Government Approves ISRO’s Interplanertary Mission to Venus ,VOM

The central government has approved the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)’s interplanetary Venus Orbiter Mission (VOM) to study the Venus planet.

The Venus Orbiter Mission, also known as the Sukrayaan mission, was approved in a meeting of the Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 18 September 2024.

This is ISRO's second interplanetary mission after the Mars Orbiter Mission or Mangalyaan, which was launched on November 5, 2013.

India will become the fifth country to send a spacecraft to Venus after the Soviet Union, the United States, the European Union, and Japan.

The total approved budget for the Venus Orbiter Mission or the Sukrayaan mission is Rs.1236 crore, of which Rs. 824.00 crore will be spent on developing the spacecraft.

The mission is expected to be launched in March 2028, when the Earth and Venus will be aligned so that the spacecraft will use minimum fuel to enter Venus's orbit.

The primary science objectives of the Venus Orbiter Mission or the Sukrayaan mission are to map Venus’ surface and subsurface while studying the planet’s atmospheric chemistry and interaction with the solar wind.

BANKING

BoB Launches GenAI-Powered Virtual Relationship Manager for Conversational Banking

Bank of Baroda (BoB) has introduced ‘Aditi’, a GenAI-powered virtual relationship manager, to enhance the digital customer service experience.

Aditi offers conversational banking through digital avatars with human-like interfaces.

Available on BoB’s web portal, Aditi supports audio, video, and chat-based assistance, providing 24x7 banking services with multilingual support.

BoB also launched a GenAI-enabled knowledge management platform called ‘GyanSahay.AI’ for its employees.

The platform provides employees with instant and accurate answers, helping them handle customer

queries more efficiently.

It is trained in the bank's product policies and processes, aiming to enhance customer satisfaction and service delivery.

The GenAI-enabled platform aims to empower BoB's customer-facing workforce by providing the right information on products, policies, and processes, improving service delivery.

BoB plans to recruit specialised and skilled resources to drive the large-scale adoption of artificial intelligence technologies in its banking operations and services.

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

New Director General of Narcotics Control Bureau

Anurag Garg has been appointed as the new Director General (DG) of the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), effective from the date of assumption of charge until May 23, 2026, or until further orders.

Garg is a 1993 batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer from the Himachal Pradesh cadre and is currently serving as Additional DG in the Border Security Force (BSF).

The NCB head position was temporarily filled by CRPF DG Anish Dayal Singh following the retirement of the previous DG, S N Pradhan, in August.