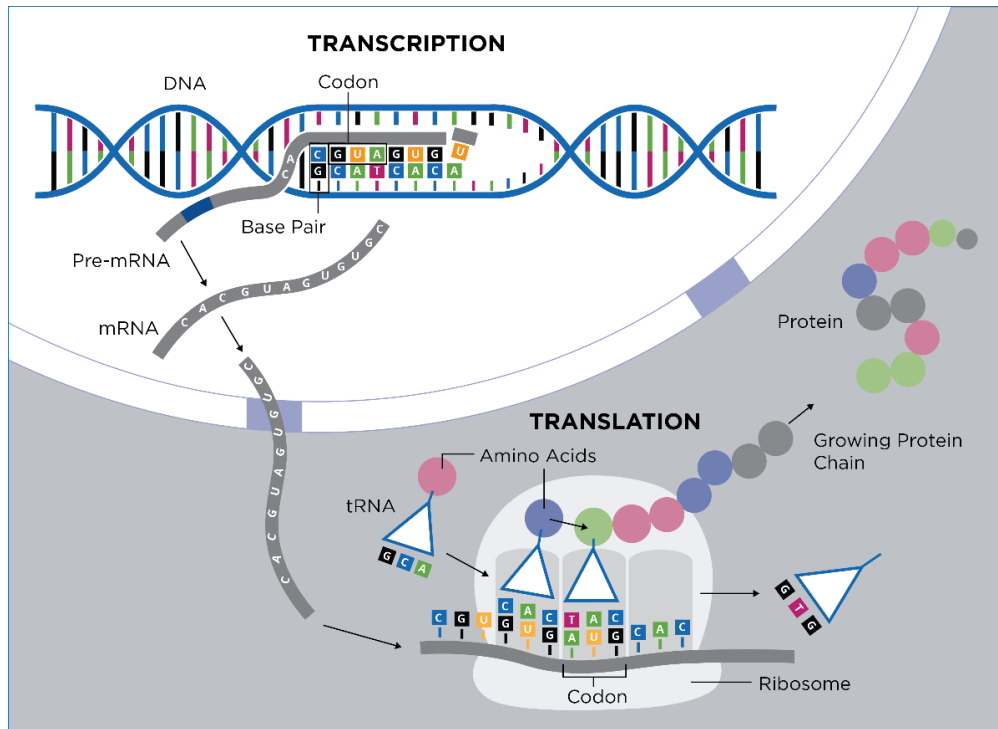


UPSC Daily Current Affairs | Prelim Bits 02-09-2024

Intranasal vaccine

Recently Indian Immunologicals Ltd (IIL) in collaboration with Griffith University has developed a live-attenuated needle-free intranasal booster vaccine targeting SARS-CoV-2.

- **Intranasal Vaccines** - These are vaccines that are administered through nasal pathways.
- **Features of Intranasal Vaccine**- The nasal route has excellent potential for vaccination due to the organized immune systems of the nasal mucosa.
 - Non-invasive, Needle-free.
 - Ease of administration - does not require trained health care workers.
 - Elimination of needle-associated risks (injuries and infections).
 - High compliance.
 - Scalable manufacturing - able to meet global demand.
- **Mucosal Immunity** - The intranasal vaccine helps prevent the virus from establishing an infection at its entry point, the nasal passages.
- An intranasal vaccine stimulates a broad immune response of neutralizing IgG, mucosal IgA, and T cell responses.
- **Localized Immunization** - Immune responses at the site of infection in the nasal mucosa helps in blocking both infection and transmission of COVID-19.
- **Immunity Period** - This localised immune response could offer protection for **up to a year with just one dose.**
- **IIL's Vaccine** - It is a live-attenuated booster vaccine that utilises codon deoptimization technology.
- **Codon deoptimization technology** - This method involves modifying the virus in such a way that it mimics a natural infection without causing harm.
- **Features** - It involves decreasing the frequency of underrepresented codon pairs (genetic determinants for amino acids) without changing the amino acid sequences.
- It is an efficient virus attenuation strategy, where the degree of attenuation can be regulated as required.
- It is extremely safe and takes less time than the conventional way of attenuating viruses which usually takes several years.



References

1. [Indian Express | Newly-developed needle-free Covid vaccine](#)
2. [The Hindu | Indian Immunologicals Ltd Intranasal Vaccine](#)

Digital Bus initiative

The Digital Bus initiative has so far empowered young adults in remote areas with over three lakh beneficiaries.

- **Digital Bus** - These are mobile classrooms that bring IT courses, assessment, and certification, as well as access to the world of information and knowledge, to students in remote areas.
- It is a joint venture between the National Digital India Mission and the NIIT Foundation.
- **Digital India** - It was launched in 2015 for connecting rural areas with high-speed Internet networks and improving digital literacy.
- **NIIT Foundation** - It is an Education NGO registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860 to provide skilling and education to underserved communities.
- **Launched** - 2017
- **Objective**
 - Reducing the Digital divide for those living in remote areas
 - Providing Linkages to Government programs and initiatives
 - Enhancing interest-levels in learning
 - Introducing the multidisciplinary approach to education
 - Encouraging collaborative learning
 - Developing interpersonal skills
 - Providing awareness on technology amongst rural community

- Providing equal opportunities for rural youth
- **Components of the program**
 - Provide Digital Literacy at the Village Doorstep
 - IT Education
 - Entrepreneurship Development Program
 - Common
 - public utility services
 - Video conferencing consultation
 - Dissemination of Government policies
- **Features of the Bus**
 - Solar-powered
 - 5G-enabled with computers and Internet
 - Camera/video capabilities
 - Preinstalled e-courses.
- **Types of Courses**
 - Using e-mail, the Internet, and applications like MS Office.
 - Financial Literacy
 - Cyber Security
- **Career programme** - It offers a career programme to help the beneficiary look for a job in the nearest city or town.

References

1. [The Hindu | Digital Bus Initiative](#)
2. [NIIT Foundation | Digital Bus](#)

Munich Agreement

On this day 85 years ago in September 1, 1939, German troops marched into Poland, triggering the beginning of World War II.

- **Munich Agreement-** It is a settlement reached by Great Britain, France, and Italy with Germany that permitted German annexation of the Sudetenland, in western Czechoslovakia to ensure peace in Europe.
- **Signed** - September 29-30, 1938.
- **Sudetenland** - It is the region in the vicinity of the Sudeten Mountain ranges which had a predominately German population and was incorporated into Czechoslovakia in 1918-19.



- **Sudeten Annexation** - Czechoslovakia, though not officially party to the Agreement, was forced to agree to the deal under pressure from Great Britain and France.
- Following the Munich Agreement, German troops occupied these areas between October 1 and October 10, 1938.
- The annexation was part of Hitler's plan to create a "Greater Germany."
- **Outbreak of WWII** - Six months after the agreement, Hitler violated it by invading the rest of Czechoslovakia on outbreak of World War II
- **WWII Outbreak** - On September 1, 1939 German troops marched into Poland, triggering the beginning of World War II.
- Great Britain and France, which had assured help to Poland, declared war on Germany and its allies on September 3.

Reference

[Indian Express | Munich Agreement](#)

India Post Payment bank

Recently The India Post Payments Bank celebrated its 7th Foundation Day.

- **India Post Payments Bank (IPPB)**- It is a **public sector payments bank** with 100% equity owned by Government of India.

[Payment banks](#) are a new type of financial institution that was introduced in 2014 to provide basic banking services to people who are currently unbanked or underbanked.

- **Established** - September, 2018

- **Nodal ministry-** Department of Posts, Ministry of Communications
- **Objective-** To provide every household in India an **access to efficient banking services** and enable them financially secured and empowered.
- **Services provided** - IPPB offers various Personal and Merchant banking products and services.

DEPOSITS	- Savings Account - Current Account
MONEY TRANSFER	- Simple & Secure - Instant - 24x7
DIRECT BENEFITS TRANSFERS	- MGNREGA - Scholarships - Social welfare benefits and other Government subsidies
THIRD PARTY PRODUCTS	- Loans - Insurance - Digital life certificates - Investments - Post Office Savings schemes
BILL & UTILITY PAYMENTS	- Mobile and DTH recharge - Electricity, water & gas bills - Donations & insurance premiums
ENTERPRISE AND MERCHANT PAYMENTS	- Postal products - Digital Payment of e-commerce delivery(CoD) - Small merchants/kirana stores/unorganized retail - Offline payments - Cash Management Services

- **Aadhaar services** - Aadhaar enrolment for children up to 5 years old and mobile number update through Child Enrolment Lite Client (CELC) service.
 - Aadhaar-enabled payment systems
- **Door Step Banking** - It provides paperless, cashless, and present less banking facilities at the doorstep, even in remote areas.
- **Postmen and Gramin Dak Sevaks-** They are functioning as mobile banks through IPPB, delivering various services at the doorstep.
- It promotes the initiative "**Aapka Bank, Aapke Dwar**" (Your Bank at Your Doorstep).
- **Fincluvation** - It is Innovation for Financial Inclusion initiative to invite Fintech Start-up community to co-create solutions for financial inclusion.
- **Significance of IPPB-** It plays an important role in financial inclusion and Digital India, especially in rural areas.
- It facilitates the delivery of various public welfare schemes of the Central and State Governments to the last mile of society.
- It provides paperless, cashless, and present less banking facilities at the doorstep, even in remote areas.

Key Achievements of India Post Payments Bank (IPPB)

- Acquired over 9.88 crore customer accounts.
- On-boarded more than 12 lakh merchants.
- Successfully disbursed over Rs.45,000 crore in Direct Benefit Transfers (DBT) to beneficiaries under various government schemes.
- Facilitated mobile number updates for Aadhaar cards for over 7.10 crore customers.
- Enabled Digital Life Certificate services for more than 20 lakh pensioners.

References

1. [PIB | India Post Payments Bank](#)
2. [Economic Times | 7th Foundation Day of IPPB](#)

Rule 170 of Drugs Act

The Supreme Court of India has stayed a notification issued by the Ministry of AYUSH that removed Rule 170 from the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945.

- **Rule 170** - It was issued in 2018 under the **Drugs and Cosmetics Act** to govern the manufacture, storage, and sale of medicines in India.
- **Advertisement regulation** - It specifically provides for controlling inappropriate advertisements of Ayurvedic, Siddha and Unani medicines.
- **Provision of the Rules**
 - **Unique Identification Number (UIN)** - It requires manufacturers to obtain approval and a UIN from the **state licensing authority** before advertising their products.
 - **Mandate**- The manufacturers must provide textual references, rationale, safety, effectiveness, and quality evidence for their products.
 - **Rejection** - The advertisements can be rejected if they lack contact details, contain vulgar content, promote sexual enhancement products, use celebrity endorsements, make misleading claims.
- **Recent changes**-The AYUSH ministry issued a notification on July, 2024, directing state licensing authorities **not to take action under Rule 170.**
- In May 2023, Ayurvedic, Siddha and Unani Drugs Technical Advisory (ASUDTAB) recommended the omission of Rule 170.

Ayurvedic, Siddha and Unani Drugs Technical Advisory Board (ASUDTAB)

- ASUDTAB is an expert body that advises on actions related to the regulation of quality control and standardization of Ayurvedic, Siddha, and Unani drugs (AYUSH Drugs).
- It was established under the provisions of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940.

Reference

[Indian Express | Rule 170 of Drugs Act](#)



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