

Headlines at a Glance - 16th September 2020

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Insurance scheme extended for health workers involved in combating COVID-19

The Rs 50-lakh insurance cover to frontline health workers fighting COVID-19 has been extended for six months and till date, 61 claims have been processed and payments made, the Union Health Ministry said. As many as 156 claims are under examination by the New India Assurance (NIA) Company Limited, and in 67 cases claims forms are yet to be submitted by the states, it said. The 'Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Package Insurance Scheme for Health Workers Fighting COVID-19' was announced on March 30 for 90 days. It was extended further for a period of 90 days i.e. up to September 25. The scheme has now been extended for another 180 days i.e. six months," the health ministry said in a statement. This central scheme provides an insurance cover of 50 lakh to healthcare providers, including community health workers, who may have to be in direct contact and care of COVID-19 patients and therefore at risk of being infected. It also includes accidental loss of life on account of contracting COVID-19, the ministry said.

SOURCE: *The Hindu*

Gujarat, Sibdi sign MoU to help 3.5 mn MSMEs amid Covid-19

outbreak

The Gujarat government on Tuesday signed an MoU with the Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) to increase self-reliance and provide capacity building and market support to the state's 35 lakh micro-small-medium enterprises (MSMEs). State Additional Chief Secretary of Industries and Mines MK Das and SIDBI Deputy Managing Director Vasantharao Satya Venkata Rao signed the MoU in the presence of Chief Minister Vijay Rupani in Gandhinagar, a release said.

The aim is to "accelerate technology transfer and innovation in state MSMEs through training and capacity building programmes," it said. SIDBI will help the small scale industries in the state to come out of the current COVID-19 situation effectively, and also evaluate feasibility of infrastructure projects and common facility centres for MSME clusters in the state, the release added. SIDBI will handhold the MSME units to create digital platforms to keep pace with world trends, it said.

SOURCE: *Business Standard*

DGCI nod to resume clinical trial of Oxford COVID-19 vaccine candidate

The Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) gave permission to Pune Serum Institute of India (SII) to resume its phase two and three clinical trials of the Oxford Covid-19 vaccine candidate in the country. DCGI VG Somani, in a letter to SII, has said that the institute's reply has been "carefully examined" as also the recommendations of the DSMB in India and in the UK. The DCGI has also asked SII to submit the details of the medication used as per protocol for the management of the adverse events. The Pune-based firm has also submitted a summary of safety follow up of seven days post first vaccination, stating that no serious adverse events were experienced by any of the subjects till the date of the reporting, and the reported adverse events were stated to be mild, resolved on their own and did not have any sequelae. The DCGI had on September 11 directed Serum Institute of India to suspend any new recruitment in the phase two and three clinical trial of the Oxford COVID-19 vaccine candidate till further orders in the backdrop of pharma giant AstraZeneca pausing the clinical trials in other countries because of "an unexplained illness" in a participant in the study.

SOURCE: *Livemint*

Govt aims to enhance digital economy's contribution to 20% of GDP in 5 years

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (Meity) is working to enhance the contribution of the digital economy to 20 percent of GDP in the next five years, a senior official said on Tuesday. "We have the vision to take the digital part of the economy from

currently 7-8 percent of GDP to over 20 per cent in the next 5 years,” Meity Additional Secretary Rajendra Kumar said while addressing a FICCI event on artificial intelligence (AI). Kumar added that AI and other emerging technologies will play a key role in achieving the target, and involvement of all stakeholders is needed, the statement said. MYGov, National e-Governance Division and Digital India Corporation CEO Abhishek Singh said AI and emerging technologies have the potential to not just propel the economy but also create more jobs. He said the government is working to create cloud-based infrastructure for collaborative platforms which can be used by AI entrepreneurs and start-ups for developing new solutions.

SOURCE: *Business Standard*

India, US sign statement of intent for dialogue on defence technology cooperation

India and the United States on Tuesday signed a statement of intent to strengthen the bilateral dialogue on defence technology co-operation. The statement was signed by Raj Kumar, Secretary, Defence Production, Ministry of Defence, and Ellen Lord, US Under Secretary of Defence for Acquisition and Sustainment, during the 10th Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI) Group Meeting that was held virtually on Tuesday. Kumar and Lord co-chaired the meeting, during which the groups reported to the co-chairs on ongoing activities and collaborative opportunities, including a number of near-term projects targeted for completion on priority. As evidence of their commitment to demonstrating the success of DTTI, the co-chairs signed a statement of intent (SOI) that declared to strengthen our dialogue on defence technology cooperation by pursuing detailed planning and making measurable progress on several specific DTTI projects, the Pentagon said in a release. The aim of the DTTI Group is to bring sustained leadership focus to the bilateral defence trade relationship and create opportunities for co-production and co-development of defense equipment. Four joint working groups focused on land, naval, air and aircraft carrier technologies have been established under DTTI to promote mutually-agreed projects within their domains.

SOURCE: *The Indian Express*