

Headlines at a Glance - 28th July 2020

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PM launches three ICMR labs to boost testing capacity by 30k

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday launched three state-of-the-art high throughput Indian Council of Medical Research labs in Mumbai, Kolkata, and Noida to further ramp up the country's daily Covid-19 testing capacity by 10,000. Speaking on the occasion, he said over 500,000 tests were being conducted in the country daily, and efforts were underway to increase the capacity to a million in the coming weeks. The tests are being conducted using both real-time reverse transcription-polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) and antigen-based testing. According to government data, at least 25% of the daily testing is antigen-based. It is quicker, cheaper, and easier to perform than the RT-PCR testing, which remains the gold standard for diagnosing Covid-19, experts say. Modi said more tests will assist early detection and treatment, and thereby help fight the virus spread. "These labs will not be limited to testing for Covid-19, but in future, will also be able to test for other diseases such as hepatitis B and C, HIV, dengue, tuberculosis among others," said Modi while launching the labs.

SOURCE: *Hindustan Times*

Govt launches weather forecast app 'Mausam' with access to radar images

The Ministry of Earth Sciences today launched a mobile application 'Mausam' for India Meteorological Department (IMD) in order to enable users to track weather updates among other features, to enhance forecast as well as warning services of the government. Launching the app on

IMD's Foundation Day Celebrations today, the ministry also mentioned that the application is now available on both Google Play Store and Apple's App Store for download. Apart from weather forecasts, users can access radar images and be proactively warned of impending weather events. Data on current temperature, humidity, wind speed and direction for 200 cities updated 8 times a day. Information on Sunrise and sunset and moonrise and moonset are also provided.

SOURCE: *Livemint*

Aspirational districts: Chhattisgarh's Bijapur tops NITI's delta ranking

Bijapur district in Chhattisgarh has topped the list of aspirational districts ranked by government think-tank Niti Aayog for the February-June 2020 period. Ri-Bhoi (Meghalaya) and Bahraich (Uttar Pradesh) have been placed at the second and third positions respectively, Niti Aayog said in a tweet. Nawada (Bihar) has been ranked fourth and Moga (Punjab) is at the fifth place. The delta rankings took into account incremental progress made by over 112 aspirational districts across six developmental areas during February-June this year. Health and nutrition, education, agriculture and water resources, financial inclusion, skill development and basic infrastructure were the development areas that were taken into consideration for the ranking. The aspirational districts programme, launched in January 2018, aims to transform districts that have shown relatively lesser progress in key social areas and have emerged as pockets of under-development.

SOURCE: *Business Standard*

India and Indonesia resolve to expand defence ties

India and Indonesia on Monday vowed to expand security cooperation in a range of areas including defence industries and technology sharing, as the two maritime neighbours aimed at injecting a new momentum to their strategic partnership. The possible areas of further expansion of defence and military ties were discussed during talks between Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and his Indonesian counterpart General Prabowo Subianto, officials said. Reflecting the importance Indonesia attaches to its strategic ties with India, Subianto arrived here on Sunday for the talks, notwithstanding the coronavirus pandemic. Sources said the issue of possible export of BrahMos cruise missile to Indonesia by India and ways to further deepen maritime security cooperation figured prominently in the talks.

SOURCE: *The Hindu*

Govt announces guidelines to set up parks for bulk drugs and med devices

The government has announced guidelines for the development of bulk drug and medical device parks in a bid to promote indigenous manufacturing of these products. DV Sadananda Gowda, Union Minister for Chemicals and Fertilisers, launched the schemes and guidelines of Department of Pharmaceuticals.

Mansukh Laxmanbhai Mandaviya, MoS(i/c) for Shipping and MoS for Chemicals & Fertilisers; Amitabh Kant, CEO Niti Ayog and Dr P D Waghela, Secretary, Department of Pharmaceuticals were also present at the launch. Speaking on the occasion, Gowda said that this is in line with the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and his clarion call for making India 'atma nirbhar' in the pharma sector. For this, the Government of India has approved four schemes, two each for bulk drugs and medical devices parks. He exhorted the industry and the States to come forward and participate in these schemes.

SOURCE: *Economic Times*