

DAILY PT POINTERS

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The Hindu-Economy(GSIII)-Page 8

Will seek extension for air connectivity scheme, says Minister

Jagriti Chandra
NEW DELHI

The Union government will seek an extension for the regional air connectivity scheme (RCS) beyond the initial 10-year period it was announced for at the time of its launch in 2016, Civil Aviation Minister Rammohan Naidu informed Parliament on Friday.

The Minister was addressing members of Lok Sabha following a discussion on the new Bharatiya Vayuyan Vidheyak Bill, 2024, which was passed by the Lower House. The Bill replaces the Aircraft Act, 1934 and seeks to remove ambiguities arising out of multiple amendments over the past nine decades.

The Minister informed Parliament that under the RCS scheme, subsidy support was provided to airlines for routes bagged by them after a bidding process for a period of three years. However, "now a specific situation has arisen and airlines are backing away from that route after three years. We will



Rammohan Naidu

address this issue," he said.

Mr. Naidu said that the government will tweak the RCS norms so that after one year, the routes can be rebid. It was not clear from the Minister's speech whether he implied one year after the award of the route or one year after the closing down of the route.

The Hindu reported on July 30 that of the 479 routes that had been launched since the start of the scheme, nearly 50% or 225 had ceased flight operations. Of the total, as many as 97 routes shut down after completing the three-year subsidy period as airlines could not sustain operations on their own. Many underused airstrips revived under the scheme had also fallen into disuse.

- Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) has launched Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS) - UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik) on 21.10.2016 to enhance regional air connectivity from unserved and underserved airports in the country and make air travel affordable to the masses. UDAN is a market driven scheme.
- Interested airlines, based on their assessment of demand on particular routes, submit their proposals at the time of bidding under UDAN.
- With a view to attract airlines to operate flights to underserved and unserved airports, support is provided in the form of Viability Gap Funding (VGF) and also other concessions by the airport operators, Central Government and State Governments

The Hindu-Governance/Economy(GSIII)-Page-8

New Bill to give statutory powers to Railway Board

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Friday introduced the Railways (Amendment) Bill, 2024 in the Lok Sabha, which seeks to grant statutory powers to the Railway Board and enhance the functioning and independence of the body.

The Railways was separated from the Public Works Department and the Railway Board Act was enacted in 1905, he said. "A contemporary railway law, the Railways Act, was enacted in 1989 by repealing the Indian Railways Act, 1890. However, the Railway Board continued to function through an executive decision without any statutory sanction."

"The current Bill proposes to simplify the legal framework by incorporating the proposals of the Indian Railway Board Act, 1905 in the Railways Act, 1989. This will reduce the need to refer to two laws," Mr. Vaishnaw said in the Statement of Objects and Reasons of the Bill.

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The Hindu –Welfare Schemes (GSII)-Page 8

Centre paves way for 8 new railway lines, PMAY-U 2.0

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet on Friday approved eight new railway projects at an estimated cost of ₹24,657 crore to provide connectivity, facilitate ease of travelling, minimise logistics costs, reduce oil imports and lower carbon dioxide emissions.

Expected to be completed by 2030-31, the projects cover 14 districts in the seven States of Odisha, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Bihar, Telangana and West Bengal, which will increase the existing network of the railways by 900 km.

The Cabinet also approved the Pradhan Mantri

Awas Yojana-Urban (PMAY-U) 2.0 under which financial assistance will be provided to one crore urban poor and middle-class families to construct, purchase or rent a house at affordable cost. A total government subsidy of ₹2.30 lakh crore will be provided under the scheme which will have a total investment of ₹10 lakh crore, an official statement said.

Under PMAY-U, 1.18 crore houses have been sanctioned while more than 85.5 lakh houses have already been constructed.

Boost for agriculture

The Cabinet gave its nod for the Clean Plant Programme (CPP), an initiative

proposed by the Ministry of Agriculture to provide virus-free, high-quality planting material to farmers. The Centre said the move would lead to increased crop yield and improved income opportunities for farmers. The scheme entails an investment of ₹1,765.67 crore.

“The programme will prioritise affordable access to clean plant material for all farmers, regardless of their landholding size or socioeconomic status. The programme will actively engage women farmers in its planning and implementation, ensuring their access to resources, training and decision-making opportunities,” a government release said.

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The Hindu –Health(GSII)-Page 10

India to roll out new treatment regimen for drug-resistant TB

Patients with MDR-TB and XDR-TB to be treated with BPaL, which will bring down treatment time to around six months from the earlier duration of 18 to 24 months; training to begin this month

Bindu Shajan Perappadan
NEW DELHI

India is getting ready to roll out the BPaL (bedaquiline, pretomanid, and linezolid) regimen for all multidrug resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB) and extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis (XDR-TB) patients. The training for this new exercise is scheduled to begin this month.

This is a significant move in the country's battle against M/XDR-TB, with the new drug regimen indicating good results in countries such as Pakistan, South Africa, and Ukraine.

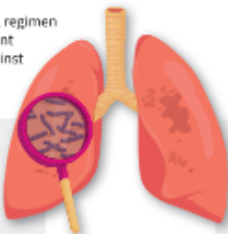
Announcing this on social media on Friday, Soumya Swaminathan, principal adviser, National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme, said, "India is getting ready to roll out BPaL regimen for all M/XDR-TB patients - training to begin this month. This should improve treatment outcomes & help thousands of patients. Scaling up NAAT coverage will be an essential element of the strategy."

A nucleic acid amplification test, or NAAT, for tuberculosis (TB) is a molecu-

New era for TB treatment

The upcoming BPaL regimen promises a significant shift in the fight against drug-resistant tuberculosis

1 BPaL is a new all-oral combination of drugs consisting of bedaquiline (B), pretomanid (Pa) and linezolid (L)



2 It brings down treatment time to around six months from the earlier duration of 18 to 24 months

3 It has been found to be cheaper for both health systems and patients

4 The new drug regimen has indicated good results in countries like Pakistan, South Africa, and Ukraine

5 The older regimen includes nearly 14 different anti-TB drugs. With BPaL, it may come down to just three

lar test used to detect the DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) of Mycobacterium tuberculosis complex (MTBC) in a sputum or other respiratory sample.

Welcoming the announcement, Leena Menghaney, South Asia head of humanitarian organisation Médecins Sans Frontières, said: "After the availability of generic bedaquiline cost to TB programmes has fallen - BPaLM price is \$426 (\$130 bedaquiline, \$238 pretomanid, \$31 linezolid and \$27 moxifloxacin). This is a momentous day for people with drug-resistant tuberculosis, because India will finally replace many of the longer, arduous, and less effective treatments by of-

fering better, safer, and shorter BPaLM treatment that is much more likely to cure this deadly disease."

A senior Health Ministry official explained that after the introduction of the new anti-TB drug pretomanid, which is prescribed as part of the BPaL regimen, medical practitioners and researchers noted that the combination drastically cut short the TB treatment duration by half.

From a treatment duration range of 18 to 24 months, BPaL brings down treatment time to around six months. Furthermore, the older all-oral drug regimen included nearly 14 different anti-TB drugs for a patient to take every day. With BPaL, it is likely to

come down to just three tablets daily.

In a paper titled "Savings from the introduction of BPaL and BPaLM regimens at the country level" published last month, the authors noted that in 2022, the World Health Organization recommended the six-month regimens BPaL (bedaquiline + pretomanid + linezolid) and BPaLM (BPaL + moxifloxacin) as treatment options for most forms of drug-resistant TB.

The study found that through the BPaL and BPaLM regimens, drug-resistant TB treatment has become more effective, shorter, less burdensome for patients, and cheaper for both health systems and patients.

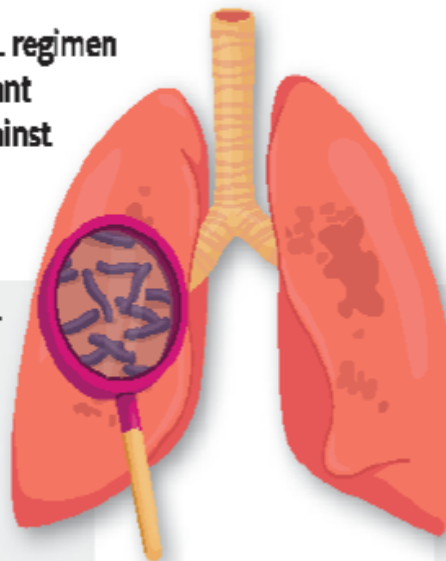
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The Hindu—Economy—Page 11

Bill proposing 4 nominees to a bank account tabled in LS

Proposals include transfer of unclaimed dividends, shares, and interest to the Investor Education and Protection Fund and allowing individuals to claim transfers and refunds from the fund

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

A Bill proposing changes to banking laws, including giving an account holder the option of naming up to four nominees, has been tabled in the Lok Sabha.

Finance Ministry sources said the Bill seeks to improve governance standards, provide consistency in reporting by banks to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), ensure better protection for depositors and investors, improve audit quality in public sector

Banking on changes

The Bill ostensibly aims to improve governance and help ensure better depositor/investor protection

- One of the objectives is to boost audit quality in public sector banks
- Extending tenures of cooperative bank directors also finds place
- Bill also proposes to amend RBI Act, 1934 and SBI Act, 1955 among others



banks and provide for extending tenures of directors (other than chairperson, whole-time director) in cooperative banks.

Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary introduced the Banking Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2024, that proposes to

amend the RBI Act, 1934, the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, the State Bank of India Act, 1955, the Banking Companies (Acquisition and Transfer of Undertakings) Act, 1970, and the Banking Companies (Acquisition and Transfer of Undertakings) Act, 1980.

The Bill also seeks to transfer of unclaimed dividends, shares, and interest or redemption of bonds to the Investor Education and Protection Fund (IEPF), allowing individuals to claim transfers or refunds from the fund, thus safeguarding investors' interests.

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Indian Express-Economy(GSIII)

Govt approves ₹1,766-crore 'Clean Plant Programme' to boost horticulture sector

HARIKISHAN SHARMA
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 9

THE CABINET on Friday approved the Clean Plant Programme (CPP), with an outlay of Rs 1,766 crore, under the Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH).

Briefing on the Cabinet decisions, Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said that nine institutions will be developed as clean plant centres, along with 75 nurseries for planting materials.

An official statement read: "With a substantial investment of Rs 1,765.67 crore, this pioneering initiative is set to revolutionise the horticulture sector in India, as well as expected to set new standards for excellence and sustainability. Earlier announced during the Finance Minister's Budget speech in February 2023, the CPP represents a major leap forward in enhancing the quality and productivity of fruit crops."

Discussing the key benefits, proposed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, the statement further said that the

CPP will provide access to virus-free and high-quality planting materials, leading to improved crop yields and income opportunities for farmers. "The initiative will ensure superior produce with enhanced taste, appearance and nutritional value," it said.

It further read that the CPP will have three components – Clean Plant Centres (CPCs), certification and legal framework, and enhanced Infrastructure. "The programme will be implemented by the National Horticulture Board in association with the Indian Council of Agricultural Research."

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HEADLINES OF THE DAY



PIB-Economy/Environment(GSIII)

Cabinet

Cabinet approves Amendment in "Pradhan Mantri JI-VAN Yojana" for providing financial support to Advanced Biofuel Projects using lignocellulosic biomass and other renewable feedstock

Posted On: 09 AUG 2024 10:21PM by PIB Delhi

- To keep pace with the latest developments in the field of biofuels and to attract more investment, the Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, today approved the modified Pradhan Mantri JI-VAN Yojana.
- The modified scheme extends timeline for implementation of scheme by Five (5) year i.e. till 2028-29 and includes advanced biofuels produced from lignocellulosic feedstocks i.e. agricultural and forestry residues, industrial waste, synthesis (syn) gas, algae etc. in its scope. "Bolt on" plants & "Brownfield projects" would also now be eligible to leverage their experience and improve their viability.
- The scheme aims to provide remunerative income to farmers for their agriculture residue, address environmental pollution, create local employment opportunities, and contribute to India's energy security and self-reliance
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HEADLINES OF THE DAY

Air-History(GSI)

Kakori Train Action Centenary Festival Commenced Today In Lucknow



Uttar Pradesh government has set a target of hoisting nearly 4,50 crore tricolours from 13 to 15 August across the state under 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath announced this during inauguration of the 'Kakori Train Action' centenary festival in Lucknow today. This festival will be celebrated throughout the year.

What was the Kakori Train Action incident?

The train robbery at Kakori was the HRA's major action, in August 1925.

The Number 8 Down Train ran between Shahjahanpur and Lucknow.

It carried treasury bags meant to be deposited in the **British treasury in Lucknow**

The revolutionaries planned to rob this money, which they believed legitimately belonged to Indians anyway.

Their objective was both to fund the HRA and garner public attention for their work and mission.

On August 9, 1925, as the train was passing the Kakori station, about 15 km from Lucknow, **Rajendranath Lahiri**, a member of the HRA who was already seated inside, **pulled the chain and stopped the train.**

Subsequently, around ten revolutionaries, including **Ram Prasad Bismil and Ashfaqullah Khan**, entered the train and overpowered the guard.

They looted the **treasury bags** and escaped to Lucknow.