STATE PCS CA CONSOLIDATION

WEST BENGAL

AUGUST 2025

Content

Bone Marrow Transplant Included Under Swasthya Sathi Health Scheme

Why in News?

The **West Bengal government** has included **bone marrow transplant (BMT)** under its **universal health coverage scheme 'Swasthya Sathi'**, raising hopes for wider accessibility to this life-saving procedure, particularly for patients with blood disorders like thalassaemia.

Key Points

- **Bone Marrow Transplant (BMT)** is a medical procedure used to replace damaged or diseased bone marrow with healthy stem cells.
  - The healthy stem cells may come from the patient (**autologous**) or a donor (**allogeneic**).
  - BMT helps restore the body's ability to produce **healthy blood cells** and improve immunity.

Swasthya Sathi Health Scheme

- Swasthya Sathi is a flagship health insurance scheme launched by the **West Bengal government on 30th December 2016,** providing cashless, paperless health coverage of up to ₹5 lakh per family per year for secondary and tertiary care.
- It covers **all family members, i**ncluding parents of both spouses and dependent physically challenged individuals, with no cap on family size. The entire premium is borne by the state, with no cost to beneficiaries.
- The scheme uses smart cards, real-time e-health records, and an IT-enabled platform for enrollment, hospital empanelment, pre-authorisation, and claim settlement.

Thalassemia

- It is a **genetic blood disorder** in which the body produces **abnormal or insufficient hemoglobin, leading to the destruction of red blood cells** and causing anemia. It is inherited from parents and can be mild or severe.

- Severe cases may require regular blood transfusions and bone marrow transplant is considered a potential curative treatment, especially if done at an early age.

West Bengal's 'Amader Para Amader Samadhan' Initiative

Why in News?

The West Bengal state government launched the **'Amader Para Amader Samadhan' programme (APAS),** a transformative initiative designed to take the administration directly to the people.

Key Points

- **About: Amader Samadhan campaign (APAS)** is a unique flagship initiative aimed at institutionalising participatory governance and re-imagining **grassroots service delivery** through citizens-engagement and empowerment.
  - Its core goal is to **resolve grievances on the spot,** ensuring that citizens have access to immediate assistance and a direct connection with government officials.
- **Scope and Timeline:** The program, running from 2nd August to 3rd November 2025, has received an overwhelming response, with over 4.5 lakh registrations across 1,200 camps statewide since its launch.
  - Over 27,000 camps will be set up to cover all 80,000+ polling booths in West Bengal, **offering essential services** like road and drainage repair, school maintenance, and garbage management.
- **Funding and Scale:** The government has allocated ₹8,000 crore, with ₹10 lakh dedicated for each booth to address **hyper-local infrastructural needs** (such as roads, water, street lighting, school repairs).
- **Community-centric Model:**
  - Each camp typically covers three booths, but the **structure is flexible:** rural/remote areas might have one camp per booth, while urban sectors may cluster more booths together.

- Neutral community representatives, like prominent non-political locals like retired teachers, government employees, or <u>Self Help Group(SHGs)</u> members, are chosen to help identify and prioritize each area's needs. A government facilitator also participates.
- **Transparency & Digital Records:** All grievances and solutions are **digitally managed.** Citizens can submit problems directly, and local authorities are instructed to collect and digitally log issues for follow-up.
  - Details for each camp (date, location) are published online; citizens can check their local schedule via a portal.
- **Inclusion of Self-Help Groups and Government Services:** The camps also feature products from SHGs, offering a platform for local artisans and small businesses to display their goods.
  - This inclusion ties into the broader mission of **economic empowerment** and **community development.**

Beautification of Surinam and Mayer Ghat

What is News?

In a significant move towards enhancing Kolkata's riverfront, **Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port, Kolkata (SMP, Kolkata)** has partnered **with Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers Ltd. (GRSE)** for the beautification of **Surinam Ghat** and the **development of Mayer Ghat**.

- This initiative forms part of the **port's broader Swachhata initiatives**, with the aim to revive these iconic ghats, strengthening their cultural and historical significance.

Key Points

- **GRSE will undertake the beautification of Surinam Ghat** and development work at **Mayer Ghat** under their **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives**.
  - Both ghats hold immense cultural value for the city and will undergo transformations aimed at enhancing public infrastructure while preserving their rich history.

- **Surinam Ghat** is historically poignant, as it was the **departure point for over 34,000 indentured laborers** (mainly from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh) who sailed **to Suriname** between **1873 and 1916.**
  - The first ship, **Lalla Rookh, departed in 1873,** carrying 410 passengers.
- **Mayer Ghat**, located near Bagbazar, has spiritual significance, being **frequented by Ma Sarada during her visits to Udbodhan Patrika**.
  - Both ghats have been integral to Kolkata's maritime legacy, dating back to the 1500s when European traders frequented the Hooghly River.

Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port, Kolkata (SMP Kolkata)

- **SMP Kolkata is one of India's 13 government-designated major ports**, administered under the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways.
- **It is India's only riverine major port**, located on the **Hooghly River** in Kolkata, West Bengal.
- It is the oldest operational port in India (established in 1870 as the Kolkata Port)).

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

- **CSR refers to a company's responsibility** towards **society and the environment.**
  - It is a **self-regulating model** that ensures businesses remain accountable for their impact on economic, social, and environmental well-being.
  - By adopting CSR, companies become more aware of their broader role in sustainable development.
- **India is the first country to make CSR spending mandatory** under **Section 135 of the <u>Companies Act, 2013</u>**.
- CSR rules apply to companies that, in the preceding financial year, have a **net worth exceeding Rs 500 crore, or a turnover over Rs 1,000 crore**, or a **net profit above Rs 5 crore**.
  - Such companies must spend at least 2% of their average net profit of the last 3 financial years (or available years if newly incorporated) on CSR activities.

'Binamrata' Initiative

Why in News?

On 4th August 2025, the **Department of Posts (**West Bengal Circle) in partnership with the **Philatelic Congress of India** and **Rotary International,** supported the heartwarming letter-writing **initiative 'Binamrata'.**

Key Points

- **About:** The **'Binamrata' initiative** aimed to **revive the art of handwritten letters**, focusing on personal expressions of gratitude.
  - ✦ This unique project **invited students of Classes IX and X** to **pen handwritten letters** to their parents or teachers, expressing their heartfelt gratitude, reviving the nearly forgotten charm of personal correspondence.
  - ✦ **More than 5,000 students from 63 schools across** the state participated in the event, showcasing **deep emotional connect** and creativity through their letters.
- **Other Initiatives:** In its continued efforts to promote the art of letter writing in the age of social media, the Department also organizes other annual competitions such as **Dhai Akhar Letter Writing Contest** and the **UPU International Letter Writing Competition** for Young People.

Philatelic Congress of India (PCI)
💡 The Philatelic Congress of India **(PCI) is the National Philatelic Federation of Philatelists and Philatelic Societies in India.**
💡 It was formed in **Calcutta (Kolkata) on 29th December 1975** during the National Philatelic Exhibition INPEX-1975.
💡 PCI was established as a National Federation in consultation and association of the Department of Post (DOP).

Rotary International

- 💡 Rotary is a **global network of more than 1.2 million neighbo**rs, friends, leaders, and problem-solvers who see a world where people unite and take action to create lasting change – across the globe, in our communities, and in ourselves.

Shramashree Scheme for Migrant Workers

Why in News?

West Bengal **Chief Minister** Mamata Banerjee announced the introduction of the **Shramashree scheme** to provide monthly cash incentives to migrant workers who return to the State after facing harassment in other States.

Key Features of Shramashree Scheme

- **About:** The scheme is designed to support **around 22 lakh Bengali-speaking migrant workers** who are registered with **Bengal's migrant workers' portal.**
- **Financial Assistance:** Migrants returning to Bengal will receive a one-time grant of **₹5,000** to help cover their **travel expenses**.
  - ✦ A **₹5,000** monthly financial assistance will be provided for up to **one year** or until the migrant secures employment.
- **Additional Support:**
  - ✦ **Free Ration**: Beneficiaries will be granted **Khadya Sathi ration cards** for food security.
  - ✦ **Healthcare**: Migrants will be provided with **Swasthya Sathi health insurance** cards for free healthcare.
  - ✦ **Education**: Migrants' children will be enrolled in **state schools** to ensure their education continues without interruption.
  - ✦ **Accommodation**: For those without housing, **community kitchens and accommodation** will be provided.
  - ✦ **Skill Development**: Under the **Utkarsha Bangla scheme,** returning migrants will receive **skills training** to enhance employability.
    - 🖉 They will also be given **job cards** under the **Karmashree scheme**.
- **Registration:** Migrants will be able to register through the **Shramashree portal**. Each registered worker will receive a **Shramashree card**, granting them access to the benefits.
  - ✦ The process will be monitored by **Bengal's Chief Secretary** and officials from the **Labour Department**.

- **Other Measures:** A **Migrant Workers' Welfare Board** has been set up for **migrant workers** to reach out for help and assistance.
  - ✦ The **Amader Para Amader Samadhan** camps will provide relevant information and guidance to returning workers.

Surge in Saltwater Crocodile Population in the Sundarbans

Why in News?

The 2024-25 population assessment and habitat ecology report on saltwater crocodiles (*Crocodylus porosus)* in the Sundarbans, released by the State Forest Department at the **Sajnekhali Wildlife Sanctuary**, highlights a modest increase in their population, signaling positive trends in the region's wildlife conservation efforts.

Key Points

- **Population Assessment:** The population of saltwater crocodiles in the Sundarbans has increased, with the latest report indicating a range between **220 to 242** crocodiles, up from **204 to 234** in **2023-24**.
  - ✦ A total of **213 crocodiles** were sighted during the exercise, a rise from the **168** seen in **2023-24**.
- **Environmental and Habitat Insights:** Crocodiles in the Sundarbans are typically found in creeks with widths ranging from **10-130 metres**, preferring a salinity range of **10-23 parts per thousand (ppt)** and temperatures between **20°C-30°C** during the winter months.
- **Positive Trends in Hatchlings:** The report notes an **increase in hatchling sightings**, a rare and encouraging sign for crocodile conservation in the region, suggesting a healthy reproductive trend.

Key Facts Related to Salt-water Crocodiles

- **About:** It is the **largest of all crocodilians,** and the largest reptile in the world.
  - ✦ **Female saltwater crocodiles are smaller in size** than their male counterparts, normally reaching a maximum length of 2.5 to 3 m.

- ✦ They **tolerate salinity** and are found mostly in coastal waters or near rivers. They are also found in freshwater near rivers and swamps.
- **Distribution:** Tropical to warm temperate latitudes in the eastern Indian and western Pacific oceans.
- **Habitat:** Mangrove forests and other coastal habitats
  - ✦ The **Sundarbans** (the largest mangrove forest), **Bhitarkanika** (India's second-largest mangrove forest), and the **Andaman and Nicobar Islands** are among the **three major strongholds of saltwater crocodiles.**
- **Prey:** Juvenile saltwater crocodiles eat **small insects**, amphibians, and fish, while **adults prey on crabs, turtles, birds, and mammals**.
  - ✦ They **ambush prey by hiding in water,** killing it with a snap of their jaws, and dragging it underwater to consume.
- **Conservation Status:**
  - ✦ IUCN Red list : **Least Concern**
  - ✦ WPA, 1972: **Schedule I**
  - ✦ CITES : **Appendix I/II**

Sundarbans

- **Location:** The **largest mangrove forest** in the world, located in the **delta of the Ganges, Brahmaputra, and Meghna rivers,** on the Bay of Bengal.
  - ✦ It is **located 40% in India**, with the rest in Bangladesh.
- **Ecosystem: Ecotone between land and sea** (tropical and subtropical regions).
  - ✦ Rich mix of habitats: freshwater swamps, intertidal mangroves, saline forests, and open water.
- **Global Recognition:**
  - ✦ **UNESCO World Heritage Site: 1987 (India),** 1997 (Bangladesh).
  - ✦ Sundarban Wetland (India) recognized as a **Ramsar site** (Jan 2019).
  - ✦ **Project Tiger:** Royal Bengal tigers are top predators, maintaining ecosystem balance.

Key Points

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