

**Government of India**  
**Ministry of Science and Technology**  
**Department of Biotechnology**

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**Monthly Cabinet Summary, July -2021**

**I. Important policy decisions taken and major achievements during the month:**

**i. Measures taken by DBT to address COVID-19**

***a. Mission COVID Suraksha:***

The Indian COVID-19 Vaccine Development Mission is being implemented by BIRAC, a Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) of DBT to accelerate Indian COVID vaccine development and augment vaccine manufacturing capacities. Support under the Mission is being provided for 5 vaccine candidates, 19 clinical trial sites, 6 facilities for immunogenicity assays and animal challenge models. Also, capacity enhancement of 03 Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs), to ramp-up Covaxin production is being supported.

Transfer of Technology from Bharat Biotech to the 03 PSUs and to Gujarat COVID Vaccine Consortium (GCVC) is underway and is being monitored on a weekly / as needed basis. Technology transfer MoU with BBIL has been signed by all grantees and GCVC; term sheets have been finalized; Facility design for Haffkine Biopharmaceuticals and Bharat Immunologicals and Biologicals Corporation Limited (BIBCOL) have been finalized. IIL is in final stages of testing and third test batch validation is underway.

Department participated in meeting with Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) and Technology transfer team at BIRAC, on 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2021, for discussion on harmonized regulatory strategy across the PSUs to transfer Covaxin bulk manufacturing technology and to seek guidance regarding facility design review, joint inspection and manufacturing license for DS manufacturers.

***b. Regional Vaccine Advisory Group (RVAG)***

Department participated in the Inaugural meeting of Regional Vaccine Advisory Group (RVAG) constituted by Asian Development Bank (ADB) co-chaired by the Secretary, DBT, held on 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2021, to advise Developing Member Countries (DMCs) on the safety and effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines and to inform ADB's financing decisions.

***c. Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium (INSCOG)***

The Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium (INSACOG) a consortium of 28 genome sequencing laboratories of DBT, DST, MoHF&W, CSIR, Ministry of Education, ICMR, and State Governments was established as an Inter-Ministerial initiative with an overall objective to expand whole genome sequencing of SARS-CoV-2 virus across the nation, aiding our understanding of how the virus spreads and evolves.

So far, the INSACOG has sequenced 58,240 SARS-CoV-2 genomes. Out of these, 46,124 samples have been analyzed and assigned Pangolin lineage classification and submitted to the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) for public health correlation.

Genome sequencing capacity has been enhanced by expanding INSACOG network from 10 laboratories to 28 laboratories. Efforts in terms of expansion of INSACOG by onboarding more laboratories have been undertaken. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are being updated by NCDC to accelerate the pace of genome sequencing in terms of the number of samples to be sequenced as well as the time for reporting and undertake sequencing of samples from hospitals and for sewerage surveillance as a public health tool to understand COVID-19 spread in a community.

#### ***d. Testing/Diagnostics***

The City /Regional clusters are being established in a Hub and Spoke model to scale-up testing of COVID-19 samples in government institutions across the country. So far 21 City /Regional clusters have been established and over 55.33 lakh samples have been tested of which 4.53 lakh samples were tested in July 2021.

To further enable testing access to rural India, the I-lab (infectious disease lab)-mobile lab for COVID testing was launched. The I-lab can perform both RT-PCR and ELISA tests. The first lab is attached to THSTI hub and has performed about 1,948 tests in July 2021, amounting to total 23,324 tests in the Faridabad region so far.

DBT-AMTZ National COMManD Consortium [COVID MedTech Manufacturing Development] is a national manufacturing facility established to address the shortage of critical medical equipment in India and move progressively towards a stage of self-sufficiency. AMTZ has been able to achieve production of 575 lakh tests of RT-PCR as on date (>10 Lakh diagnostic kits/day), 3.5 lakh Covid-ELISA tests, 11 lakh Viral Transport Media kits, 3000 IR thermometers, 2000 Pulse oximeters along with 4950 ventilators and other critical medical devices.

#### ***e. National Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (NTAGI)***

Department participated in the 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> COVID-19 Working Group Meeting & 32<sup>nd</sup> Standing Technical Sub-Committee Meeting of the National Technical Advisory Group on Immunization (NTAGI) on 03<sup>rd</sup>, 09<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> July, 2021 respectively to deliberate on issues pertaining to the current status of manufacturing of Sputnik V, by Indian CROs and regulatory issues for introduction of Sputnik Light in India; review dosing interval between two doses of COVID-19 vaccines; number of COVID-19 doses required for individuals completely recovered from confirmed COVID-19 in past; and Single arm Vaccine Efficacy Trial; COVID-19 vaccine development and manufacturing; and JE vaccine formulation.

The Department participated in ACT-Accelerator Facilitation Council Vaccine Manufacturing Working Group meeting with COVAX Manufacturing Taskforce, held on 21st July 2021 to discuss Free flow of goods; provide update on the WTO-WHO vaccine manufacturers event. The Department also participated in the BRICS virtual meeting on “Immunization & COVID-19 Vaccine” held on 23<sup>rd</sup> July to deliberate on issues pertaining to Virtual Vaccine R&D Centre for BRIC Countries; and IT enabled vaccine delivery platforms.

## **ii. Biotech-PRIDE (Promotion of Research and Innovation through Data Exchange) Guidelines**

Dr. Jitendra Singh, Hon’ble Minister of State (IC) of the Ministry of Science & Technology released the “Biotech-PRIDE Guidelines” and launched a ‘Web-Portal for submission of Biological Data to Indian Biological Data Centre (IBDC)’- the National Repository on 30th July, 2021 at Prithvi Bhavan, Ministry of Earth Sciences, New Delhi.

Department of Biotechnology has formulated “Biotech-PRIDE (Promotion of Research and Innovation through Data Exchange) Guidelines” through extensive Expert Consultation and Inter-ministerial consultation to facilitate and enable sharing and exchange of high-throughput, high-volume biological data, knowledge and information generated within the country for promotion of research and innovation. These Guidelines do not deal with generation of biological data per se but is an enabling mechanism to share and exchange information and knowledge generated as per the existing laws, rules, regulations and guidelines of the country. The ‘Biotech-PRIDE guidelines’ have been approved by the then Union Minister for Science and Technology, Health & Family Welfare and Earth Sciences.

## **iii. BioSafety**

The Department conducted 210<sup>th</sup> and 211<sup>th</sup> meetings of Review Committee of Genetic Manipulation (RCGM) on 19.07.2021 and 22.07.2021. During the meetings, 41 applications were considered in the 210<sup>th</sup> RCGM meeting, while 16 applications were

considered in the 211<sup>th</sup>RCGM meeting. These applications include Import/ Export/ Transfer/ Receive, information items and Pre-clinical toxicity studies for Biopharma, and Import/ Export/ Transfer/ Receive for Agriculture. After deliberation on each application, appropriate decision was taken by the RCGM. During the month 16 Institutional Biosafety Committees were also constituted on IBKP portal.

**iv. Societal outreach of DBT**

**a. Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav, India @75**

The Department has been actively celebrating the "Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav" through various events being organized in various parts of the country on the basis of Jan Bhagidari. During the month, the department organized several events for "Showcasing Potential, Journey and Impact of Biotechnology on the society".

- 31 science Setu/Open day events were organized to facilitate the engagement and interaction between researchers and college students and inspire critical scientific thinking and scientific curiosity.
- The BioNEST incubators supported by the PSU of the department (BIRAC) also organized 4 public outreach webinars under the themes like resolving malnutrition, value added food products, impact of Biotech on Society, healthcare, etc. in Mumbai, Piravam, Chennai, and Bangalore, .
- One of the Autonomous Institute of DBT also organized 4 webinars on life and work of eminent Indian Scientists Dr. K.S. Krishnan, Dr. Saikrishnan Kayarats, Dr. G.N. Ramachandran, and Dr. Sagar Sengupta to celebrate the glory of Indian Science.
- The Biotech KISAN Hubs of the department led 6 awareness and guidance events called KISAN Melas on topics such as empowerment of women through cooperatives, scientific animal husbandry, compost production, scientific aquaculture practices, processing and value addition, and production technology of *Malbhog* Banana. These farmer centric events were conducted in rural Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Assam, and West Bengal.

**v. International Cooperation**

- Indo-Australian Biotechnology Fund: Call for Collaborative Research Projects (Round 14) was opened for submission of joint proposal from 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2021. Priority areas are Biomaterials (including bioplastics), Digital health and telemedicine, Infection prevention and control, and COVID-19 long-term health impacts.
- Indo-Finnish Joint call - funding for Researcher Mobility has been announced. The call opens for submission of applications from 11<sup>th</sup> August, 2021 to 23<sup>rd</sup> September, 2021.
- Indo Dutch round table Meetings under WAH Agenda: - Department of Biotechnology in close partnership with Department of Science and Technology and

Ministry of Information and Technology, had organized Indo Dutch Bilateral Roundtable Meetings on Health and Agriculture, respectively on 7<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> July, 2021 to discuss bilateral R & D priorities.

- Indo US Discussion on Potential Bilateral Cooperation in Bio-energy, 21<sup>st</sup> July, 2021: The Department participated in a joint Meeting with Bioenergy Technology Office (BETO), US Department of Energy (DOE) held on 21<sup>st</sup> July, 2021. The meeting was arranged through Embassy of India in USA, and came out with discussion on bilateral opportunities to commercialize conventional and advanced transport biofuels from biomass and other renewable feedstock.
- Participated in the First meeting of “National Critical & Emerging Technology Subworking groups” on Technology Standards Development and Technology Supply Chain security held on 16<sup>th</sup> July, 2021 at The National Society of Collegiate Scholars, Washington D.C. through Video conferencing. Leaders from QUAD countries (India, Australia, Japan and USA) convene the ‘Critical and Emerging Technology Working Group (CET WG)’ to develop a statement and roadmap for cooperation to shape and promote trusted, secure, competitive and diverse technologies reflecting their shared values.
- Mission Innovation: Renewable Fuel Chemicals and Materials via an Integrated Biorefinery Approach: 27<sup>th</sup> July 2021: A virtual consultative meeting was organized to gather feedback on the Mission proposal drafted by India on Renewable Fuel Chemicals and Materials via an Integrated Biorefinery approach. The meeting's goal was to solicit input, support, and commitment from the Netherlands to create a scoping document on the Mission topic proposed as a standalone Mission under the new MI framework (MI 2.0). The meeting sought a positive support from Dutch colleagues in context of the proposed Mission: renewable Fuels Chemicals and Materials via an integrated approach.

**vi. Publications & Patents**

There have been **76** research publications and **01** patents filed/granted by the Autonomous Institutes of the Department.

**vii. SAHAJ: Usage and Revenue**

The Department of Biotechnology launched ‘**Scientific Infrastructure Access for Harnessing Academia University Research Joint** Collaboration, (**SAHAJ**)’ portal, where in DBT-Autonomous Institutes and DBT supported Infrastructure programmes provide and share its equipment and infrastructure to Research Institutes, Universities, Colleges and Start -ups / Entrepreneurs. During the month, **1273** users availed the services at DBT-AIs and a total of Rs. **5,49,93,443/-** revenue was generated.

**viii. Autonomous Institutions of the Department of Biotechnology-**

The Autonomous Institutes of the Department are leading research and development in various areas of Biotechnology while playing a critical role in building trained human capital to take forward cutting edge research in the country. More details at **Annexure I**

**ix. Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) of the Department of Biotechnology:**

The Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) of the department are actively involved in promoting innovation, translational research, industry, start-ups, entrepreneurship, and production activities in the country. More details at **Annexure II**

**II. Compliance Report on Important Matters/Issues**

(i) **Important policy matters held up on account of prolonged inter-ministerial consultations: Nil**

(ii) **Compliance of Cabinet/Cabinet Committee decisions: Nil**

No. of COS decisions pending for compliance	Proposed action plan/timelines for compliance of COS decisions	Remarks
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(iii) **No. of cases of 'sanction for prosecution' pending for more than three months: Nil**

(iv) **Particulars of cases in which there has been a departure from the Transaction of Business: Nil**

(v) **Status of implementation of e-governance:**

Total No. of active files: 13,766	Total No. of e-files generated during July, 2021: 338
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(vi) **Status of Public Grievances:**

No. of Public Grievances redressed during month:: 164	No. of Public Grievances pending at the end of the month: 17
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(vii) **Information on the specific steps taken by the Ministry/ Department for utilization of the Space, Technology based tools and application in Governance and Development: Nil**

(viii) **a. Confirmation that the incumbency details of all posts in the Ministry/Department and its organizations falling under the purview of the ACC have been updated on AVMS:** It is confirmed that the incumbency details of all the posts in the Department (in respect of both Autonomous institutes and PSUs under DBT) falling under the purview of the ACC have been updated on the portal of AVMS (copy enclosed).

**b. Status regarding compliance of the directions of ACC. A paragraph on Cases in which the ACC directions have not been compiled with distinct heading:**It is confirmed that the directions of ACC are complied with.

**c. Status of cases where recommendations from PESB have been received but the proposals are yet to be submitted to the ACC Secretariat:** 'Nil'.

**(ix) Status of Government e- Marketplace (GeM):**

Procurement of goods and services for Rs. 4,99,800/- made through GeM during the month.