NATIONAL POLICY ON BIO-FUELS

National Policy on bio fuel got approval from Union Cabinet. National bio fuel coordination and bio fuel steering committee will be set up which will facilitate optimal development and utilization of indigenous bio mass feeds stock for production of bio fuels. Policy will include bio diesel production from non edible oil seeds in waste/ degraded/marginal lands. Minimum support price for non edible oil seeds and minimum purchase price for purchase of bio ethanol and bio diesel will be announced with periodic revision. National bio fuel fund will be considered if required.

DELHI TO GET 136 NEW MOBILE HEALTH UNITS (MHUS)

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) plans to engage a private trust – Keshav Dharmarth Trust to deploy 136 Mobile Health Units (MHUs) in various parts of the capital, especially areas with a large number of slum dwellers. It would provide 136 mobile health units comprising 24 mobile health ambulances, 105 mobile health clinics and seven mobile health hospitals. Apart from medical facilities to MCD school children, the MHUs will provide two & a half hours of service daily on all working days.

HEALTH – PLUS- LIFE COMBO INSURANCE IN TWO MONTHS

Encouraged by IRDA guidelines for “Health and life combi” products, insurance companies are planning to launch a product combining a life insurance policy with one that covering the medical expenses. Apollo DKV Health Insurance will introduce such a product in two months and may later add features such as OPD, hospital cash, maternity and dental benefits depending on the distribution channel & needs of the customer.

MEDICAL DEGREE IN 3 ½ YEARS FOR RURAL DOCTORS

Health Ministry and MCI is planning a shorter medical degree for rural students who would exclusively serve the rural population. It will be of 3 ½ years. Under the scheme, under graduate “Bachelor of Rural Medicine and Surgery (BRMS)” degree would be acquired in two phases and at two different levels - community health facility (1 ¼ years duration) and sub divisional hospitals (secondary level hospitals) for a further duration of two years. The BRMS degree would be offered by institutes in rural areas with an annual strength of 50 students.
CSIR TEAM MAPS INDIA’S FIRST HUMAN GENOME

India has successfully mapped the human genome that will help develop effective drug development in the country. A team of scientists of the CSIR declared success in decoding the genome sequencing of an Indian citizen in about 9 weeks thus providing opportunities for low cost healthcare and predictive medicine for the masses. India is now a part of a select group of countries, including the US, UK, Canada, Korea and China that have demonstrated capability for genome sequencing.

GLOBAL FUND APPROVES USD 279 MILLION GRANTS FOR INDIA TO FIGHT HIV/AIDS

The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria has approved USD 279 million in new grants for India, taking total funds for the world’s second-most populous country to more than USD 1.1 billion. India is the fund’s second-highest recipient for money to fight HIV behind Ethiopia. It has the world’s third-highest incidence of HIV/AIDS, with around 2.5 million infections, after Nigeria and South Africa.

HIV INFECTION IN BABIES A PROBLEM

According to NACO figures, in 2008, 21,000 women tested positive for HIV of which only little above 50% got Nevirapine. 2009, World aids Day on December 1, the NACO is making efforts to spread awareness about the prevention of parents to child transmission (PPTCT) programme, under which HIV positive pregnant women during labour & their babies are given a dose within 72 hours of birth. Main obstacles to PPTCT are poor institutional delivery rate, fear of stigma & discrimination, poor participation of private healthcare providers.

NDMC PLANS TREE AMBULANCE TO CARE FOR CITY’S GREEN COVER

NDMC (New Delhi Municipal Corporation) plans to launch a tree ambulance service as part of a plant protection cell that will be set up before the 2010 Commonwealth Games. In the beginning, NDMC will start with 2-3 ambulances having 6-7 trained gardeners & will carry insecticides, water tanks & strengthening materials. General pruning of trees, apart from treatment for termite attack & hollow barks due to fungal infection will be carried out.

RECENT RESEARCHES

HIGH LEVEL OF GROUNDWATER CONTAMINATION IN BHOPAL: CSE

A survey conducted by New Delhi Based Centre for Science & Environment (CSE) has found that even after 25 years of Bhopal Gas tragedy, the groundwater up to 3km from the site of the Union Carbide factory where the gas leak took place show high level of toxic elements much higher than the prescribed safe limits. People living in this gas affected areas are still consuming this contaminated water acting as a slow poison. All samples collected by CSE found large quantities of mercury, chlorinated benzene compounds and organo chlorine. NGO’s claim that this poisonous waste spread through water and soil making the Bhopal gas tragedy a continuing disaster for human life.
ENTIRE GENE MAPS REVEALED FOR LUNG & SKIN CANCERS

In a breakthrough revelation, the entire genetic code of the two deadly cancers – lung & skin cancer have been mapped using the technology of massively parallel sequencing. According to study by international scientists and Britain’s Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute in Cambridge, lung tumors & Melanoma carried 23,000 & 33,000 mutations respectively. For smokers, every 15 cigarettes smoked leads to a mutation. This discovery has paved the way for earlier detection, better understanding of causes, developing new breeds of drugs & personalized treatment.

CLIMATE CHANGE WILL HIT 175 MILLION KIDS EVERY YEAR

The report - “Feeling the Heat: Child Survival in a Changing Climate” by child rights NGO “Save the children” has said that 175 million children will be affected every year by frequent natural disasters caused due to climate change. Droughts & floods will trigger mass migrations, leading to increased child trafficking & child labour.

PHASE 1 OF HIV VACCINE CLINICAL TRIALS IN INDIA REACH FINAL STAGES

Clinical trial for phase 1 of the HIV/AIDS vaccines being developed in India which combines a DNA & vector-based vaccine have entered the final stage in December 09 with 32 candidates enrolled. The trials are being handled by scientists from Tuberculosis Research Center, Chennai and National AIDS Research Institute (NARI), Pune.

The Synapse team, IIHMR New Delhi wishes you a Happy & Prosperous New Year

This gives us immense pleasure to complete a year of our monthly e-health news bulletin “THE SYNAPSE e-health news”. This initiative, which we took in disseminating the information and theintel developmentsin the health sector, has completed a year under your guidance. To celebrate this we are releasing our first “Anniversary Issue” (printed version) in February 2010 along with our monthly health e-newsletter.

Synapse Team
(Batch 2008-2010)