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1. Jay Shah to Become Youngest ICC Chairperson

Why in News?
Jay Shah, currently serving as the Secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), is set to become the youngest chairperson of the International Cricket Council (ICC). He will assume the position on December 1, succeeding New Zealand's Greg Barclay.

Unopposed Election
An ICC statement confirmed that Shah was the only candidate proposed by the deadline, which was set for Tuesday. With no other nominations, Shah will be elected unopposed and will take over when Barclay steps down in November.

Vision for Cricket's Future
In a media release, Shah emphasized the importance of balancing various formats of the game, promoting advanced technologies, and expanding cricket's reach to new global markets. "Our goal is to make cricket more inclusive and popular than ever before," he stated.

August club
Shah, 35, will thus join an august club of Jagmohan Dalmiya, Sharad Pawar, N. Srinivasan and Shashank Manohar in the list of Indians who have headed the game's governing body.

Shah's elevation from the post of the BCCI secretary and ICC Director to the ICC Chair was a mere formality once Barclay announced his decision last week to not seek an extension.

A Decade in Cricket Administration
Shah has been involved in cricket administration for a decade, starting as the joint-secretary of the Gujarat Cricket Association. He was elected unopposed as BCCI Secretary in October 2019 and has served as the Asian Cricket Council chairperson since 2021.

Next Steps and Succession

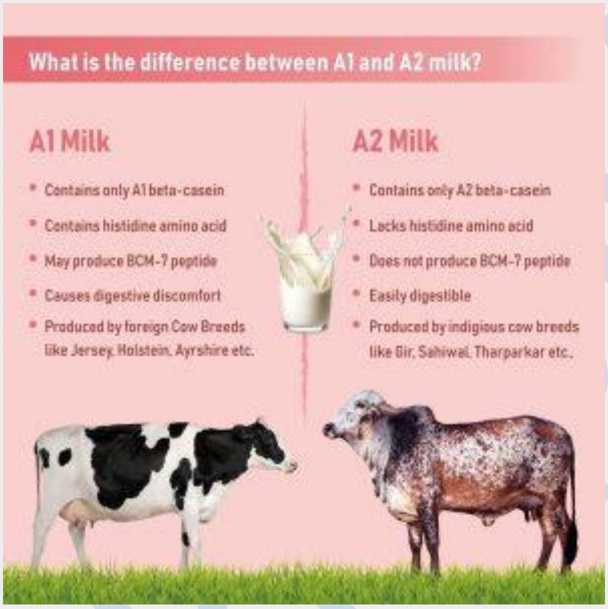
According to ICC rules, Shah will need to step down from his other positions to assume his new role. It remains to be seen who will succeed him as BCCI Secretary.

Relevance: GS Prelims; International Organisations
Source: The Hindu

2. Why FSSAI withdrew its advisory on removing A1, A2 claims on milk and milk products

Introduction
The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) on August 21 directed Food Business Operators (FBOs) to not market their milk and milk products "in the name of A1 and A2". Subsequently, it withdrew this advisory.

"This is to inform that the advisory dated August 21 (clarification regarding selling/ marketing of milk and milk products such as ghee, milk etc in the name of A1 and A2) stands withdrawn for further consultation and engagement with stakeholders," the FSSAI statement said.



Why was the advisory withdrawn?

First, what is the difference between A1 and A2 milk?
The FSSAI states that the A1 and A2 classification of milk is "essentially linked to difference in structure of protein (beta casein)."

More than 80 per cent of all proteins in cow's milk belong to a class called caseins. Among these, beta-caseins are the second largest component. A1 and A2 are basically two genetic variants of beta-caseins, differing from each other in their amino acid sequence.

A1 contains histidine, one of the nine essential amino acids which the body uses to produce histamine, the chemical that enables the body to regulate its reaction to inflammation and allergies. A2 contains proline, a non-essential amino acid which is an essential component of collagen and important for proper functioning of joints and tendons.

Milk from different cow breeds have differing quantities of A1 and A2 beta-caseins. Most milk contains both these beta-caseins, but A2 milk contains only the second one. Generally, milk and milk products which are branded as A2 tend to be charged at a premium, and considered healthier.

Is A2 milk better than regular milk?
While some studies have suggested that A2 milk is healthier, there is no consensus regarding the matter as yet.

A 2012 paper titled suggests a link between the consumption of A1 beta-caseins and various health problems such as type-1 diabetes, coronary heart disease, and autism. It says that those who consumed primarily A2 milk seemed to be less susceptible to these conditions. (Monika Sodhi et al, "Milk proteins and human health: A1/A2 milk hypothesis", Indian Journal Endocrinology and Metabolism).

However, currently, most findings are "based primarily on in vitro and animal studies, and limited clinical trials with poor designs". (Jhony Alberto Gonzales-Malca et al, "Worldwide research on the health effects of bovine milk containing A1 and A2 β-casein", Food Science). "More solid scientific evidence is needed to reach a consensus on the role of A1 or A2 bovine milk on health," Gonzales-Malca and others write.

What was the basis for FSSAI's August 21 advisory?
FSSAI's advisory was not to do with the paucity of scientific evidence regarding the A1, A2 classification. It was to do with current FSSAI standards not recognising the A1, A2 differentiation.

"Standards of milk as specified in Food Safety and Standards (Food Product Standards and Food Additives) Regulations, 2011 do not mention/recognize any differentiation of milk on the basis of A1 and A2 types," FSSAI's advisory said.

All food business operators, including e-commerce sites, were thus directed to remove all claims related to A1 and A2 proteins from their product labels.

Its withdrawal came in the context of growing criticism of FSSAI's decision, even in government circles. In a letter to the Prime Minister, Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) governing council member Venugopal Badaravada requested that the advisory be withdrawn and a high-level committee instead be constituted to further discussion on the matter.

"The decision… goes against the global trend seen in countries like the USA, Australia, New Zealand, and Brazil, where A1 and A2 milk are marketed separately due to potential differences in digestion between the two types of beta-casein," he wrote. This letter is said to have influenced FSSAI's eventual u-turn.

Relevance: GS Prelims; Science & Technology
Source: Indian Express

3. 10 years of Jan Dhan: How the scheme has had a transformative impact on financial, banking sector

Why in News?
As the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) completed 10 years, Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed the "momentous" achievement of the scheme that has been "paramount in boosting financial inclusion and giving dignity to crores of people, especially women, youth, and the marginalised communities".

The PMJDY was launched on August 28, 2014, as a national mission for financial inclusion. Over the last decade, 53.13 crore Jan Dhan accounts have been opened, with 29.56 crore women beneficiaries, more than the population of the European Union, and almost the same as the population of the United States respectively, the government said.

I-Day announcement

The PMJDY was one of the early initiatives of the Modi government. The Prime Minister announced the scheme in his first Independence Day address on August 15, 2014.

"I have come here with a pledge to launch a scheme on this festival of freedom. It will be called Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana," Modi said from the ramparts of the Red Fort.

"I wish to connect the poorest citizens of the country with the facility of bank accounts through this yojana… This yojana will open the window. …An account holder under Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana will be given a debit card. An insurance of one lakh rupees will be guaranteed with that debit card for each poor family…," he said.

Features of the Jan Dhan Yojana

The scheme was launched on August 28. Banks organised 77,892 camps around the country, and opened about 1.8 crore accounts. Guinness World Records recognised the achievement: "The most bank accounts opened in 1 week as part of a financial inclusion campaign is 18,096,130 and was achieved by Department of Financial Services, Government of India from 23 to 29 August 2014."

The launch of PMJDY provided an unprecedented boost to the government's campaign for financial inclusion, at a scale never seen before. Earlier governments too, had taken initiatives for financial inclusion — for instance, the previous UPA government began a scheme of no-frills bank accounts for people who did not have an account — but they had failed to gain traction.

* The foremost objective of the PMJDY was to open a Basic Savings Bank Account for unbanked individuals. There was no requirement to maintain any minimum balance in PMJDY accounts, and these accounts earned interest on deposits like regular accounts.

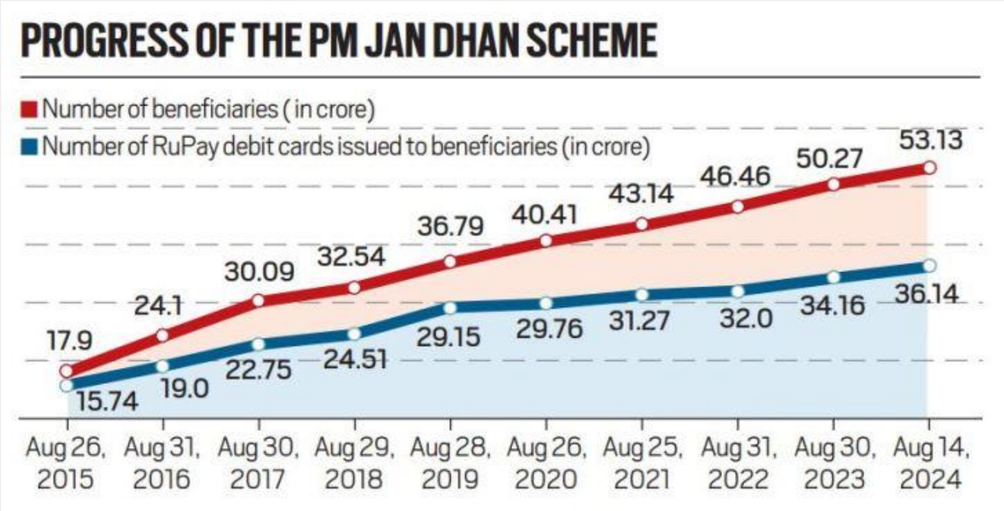
* PMJDY account-holders were given RuPay debit cards.

* An accident insurance cover of Rs 1 lakh was available with RuPay cards issued to PMJDY account holders. The cover was enhanced to Rs 2 lakh for new PMJDY accounts opened after August 28, 2018.

* Eligible PMJDY account holders can avail overdraft (OD) facility up to Rs 10,000.

* PMJDY accounts are also eligible for Direct Benefit Transfers (DBT), Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY), Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY), Atal Pension Yojana (APY), and the Micro Units Development & Refinance Agency Bank (MUDRA) scheme.
Progress of the scheme

As of August 14, 2024, the number of PMJDY accounts stands at 53.13 crore — including 35.37 crore accounts in rural and semi-urban areas, and 17.76 crore accounts in urban areas — and total deposits at Rs 2,31,235.97 crore. More than half the PMJDY accounts (29.56 crore) are in the names of women. A total 36.14 crore RuPay debit cards have been issued to PMJDY account holders.



The largest share of PMJDY accounts is with public sector banks (41.42 crore accounts until August 14), followed by Regional Rural Banks (9.89 crore accounts), private sector banks (1.64 crore), and Rural Cooperative Banks (0.19 crore).

A statewise analysis of PMJDY accounts shows the most accounts have been opened in Uttar Pradesh, the most populous state (9.45 crore), and the fewest in Lakshadweep (only 9,256 accounts). There are 15 states apart from UP with more than 1 crore PMJDY bank accounts: Bihar, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Assam, Odisha, Karnataka, Jharkhand, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Haryana.

Impact of Jan Dhan Yojana

The scheme, which is one of the components of the JAM trinity of PMJDY, Aadhaar, and mobile, has had a transformative impact on the financial and banking sectors of the economy.

* First, the opening of more than half a billion bank accounts has fuelled demand for banking services, encouraging commercial banks to expand their infrastructure in recent years.

The number of branches of scheduled commercial banks in the country has increased by 46 per cent to 1,54,983 in 2023 from 1,05,992 in 2013. Of the total 1.54 lakh branches, 35 per cent are in rural areas, 28 per cent in semi-urban areas, 18 per cent in urban areas, and 19 per cent in metropolitan areas.

The number of ATMs has increased by 30 per cent from 1,66,894 at the end of June 2014 to 2,16,914 in 2024. The number of Points of Sale (POS) has increased from 10.88 lakh to 89.67 lakh during the last 10 years.

* Second, the rollout of payment solutions such as UPI — launched two years after the PMJDY — has eased and increased banking transactions.

The Reserve Bank of India, in its Report on Currency and Finance released on June 29, 2024, noted, "India's financial inclusion initiatives received a fillip when PMJDY was launched in 2014... The digital technological revolution widened the usability of bank accounts from a traditional deposit or credit account to a payment intermediary. As per the World Bank's Findex database, 78 per cent of Indian adults (population with 15 years or more of age) had a bank account in 2021 as compared to 53 per cent in 2014."

* Third, PMJDY accounts have become the bedrock of the government's DBT architecture. While this has ensured faster delivery of benefits to the poor, the JAM trinity has played a crucial role in improving efficiency by weeding out ineligible or fake beneficiaries.

In fact, DBT and other governance reforms resulted in a gain of Rs 3.48 lakh crore in the implementation of government schemes including MG-NREGS and PM-Kisan until March 2023, according to data from the RBI's Report on Currency and Finance.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper III; Economics
Source: Indian Express