ICMR Organizes ICMR-SHINE Initiative

In August 2025, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), in collaboration with the Department of Health Research (DHR), organized the nationwide ICMR-SHINE (Science & Health Innovation for the Nextgen Explorers) outreach program. The event was held on August 7th and 8th across all ICMR institutes and DHR-Model Rural Health Research Units, drawing more than 13,000 students from 300+ schools.

Program details

- **Objective:** To foster scientific curiosity among young learners and highlight the vital role of research in public health.

- **Activities:**
  - Guided laboratory tours
  - Research exhibitions and poster walks
  - Live demonstrations of scientific work
  - Interactive sessions with ICMR scientists

- **Mascot:** A friendly guide named Dr. Curio was introduced to help students navigate the activities.

- **Films:** Four short films were screened to showcase ICMR's work on Covaxin, the iDRONE initiative, TB elimination efforts, and pandemic preparedness (Vishanu Yudh Abhyas).

- **Scale:** The initiative was a nationwide event with over 13,000 students participating.

- **Inspiration:** The program coincided with the 104th birth anniversary of Dr. Vulimiri Ramalingaswami, a former Director General of ICMR, to provide an inspiring backdrop for the occasion.

Explanation of Exam Oriented Key Terms

01

Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) is India's apex body for biomedical research, under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, established in 1911 as the Indian Research Fund Association and renamed in 1949. It has 26 research institutes and six regional centers, focusing on various health areas including infectious diseases, non-communicable diseases, and occupational health.

Institutional framework

- **Apex Body:** ICMR is India's apex body for the formulation, coordination, and promotion of biomedical research.

- **Ministry:** It operates under the Department of Health Research, which is part of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India.

- **Funding:** It is fully funded by the Government of India.

- **Status:** It is an autonomous body, but it is not a statutory or regulatory body created by an Act of Parliament.

- **Headquarters:** New Delhi.

Historical background

- **Established:** It was established in 1911 as the Indian Research Fund Association (IRFA).

- **Renamed:** After India's independence, the IRFA was renamed the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) in 1949, expanding its scope and functions significantly.

Key functions and objectives

- **Research Promotion:** Coordinates and promotes biomedical research across the country, both intramurally (within ICMR institutes) and extramurally (by providing grants to other institutions).

- **Policy Formulation:** Provides evidence-based inputs and guidelines for the formulation of national health policies and programs.

- **Capacity Building:** Enhances the skills and expertise of medical and health professionals through fellowships, training, and workshops.

- **Data Generation:** Generates data on the clinical, epidemiological, and pathological features of various diseases in the Indian population.

- **Ethical Guidelines:** Sets and enforces ethical guidelines for biomedical and health research involving human participants in India.

- **Translational Research:** Focuses on translating medical innovations into usable products and processes for the public health system.

Important initiatives and achievements

- **Clinical Trials Registry-India (CTRI):** ICMR hosts this online public registry for clinical trials. Registration was made mandatory by the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) in 2009.

- **COVID-19 Response:** Played a crucial role during the COVID-19 pandemic by developing diagnostic tools (RT-PCR and ELISA) and collaborating on the development of the indigenous vaccine, Covaxin.

- **Malaria Elimination Research Alliance (MERA):** Launched in 2019 to fast-track malaria elimination efforts.

- **First in the World Challenge:** A recent initiative (launched in 2024) to foster groundbreaking, "first of its kind" innovations in the health sector.

- **Disease Surveillance:** The only Indian agency with a specific focus on viral disease surveillance.

- **Eradication Efforts:** Contributed significantly to the eradication of diseases like smallpox and guinea worm in India.

- **Indigenous Vaccine Development:** Developed "JENVAC," a vaccine against Japanese encephalitis, in 2013.

- **IRIS Initiative:** Proposed the "Impact of Research and Innovation Scale (IRIS)" to measure the impact of research projects beyond traditional metrics.
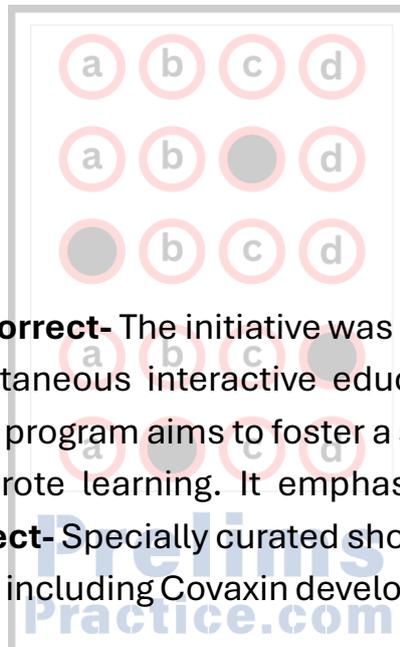
Practice Questions:

1. **Regarding the outreach and purpose of the ICMR-SHINE initiative, consider the following statements:**

   I. For the first time, all ICMR institutes simultaneously hosted interactive educational activities for students nationwide

   II. The initiative's activities are based on the principle of promoting rote learning among students

   III. Short films on Covaxin development and the i-DRONE initiative were shown to students to highlight ICMR's contributions

   Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

   a) I only
   b) I and III only
   c) II only
   d) I, II and III

Answer: b

Explanation: Statement I is correct- The initiative was a first-of-its-kind effort where all ICMR institutes hosted simultaneous interactive educational activities across India. **Statement II is incorrect-** The program aims to foster a scientific temper and encourage curiosity, moving away from rote learning. It emphasizes dynamic, problem-solving science. **Statement III is correct-** Specially curated short films were shown to students, covering ICMR's key initiatives, including Covaxin development and the i-DRONE project.

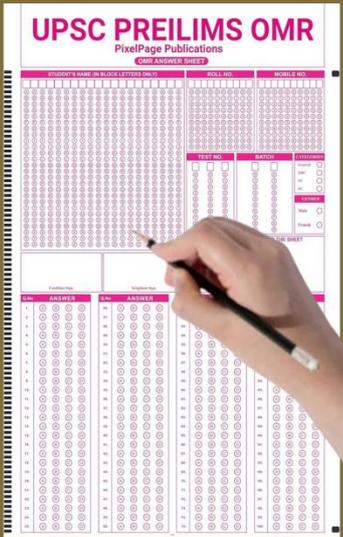## For More Practice Questions, visit:

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