New Initiatives to Improve the Public Distribution System (PDS)

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The Union Food and Public Distribution Ministry recently launched several digital initiatives aimed at modernising warehousing operations, improving supply chain efficiency, and enhancing transparency across the Public Distribution System (PDS).

About Anna Sahayata Holistic AI Solution (ASHA)

It is an AI-based platform that allows Public Distribution System (PDS) beneficiaries to share their feedback on ration distribution through AI-enabled calls in their preferred language

It was introduced by the Department of Food and Public Distribution.

The platform runs at a cost of ?5 lakh.

ASHA reaches 20 lakh beneficiaries monthly across India, developed in partnership with the Wadhwani Foundation and backed by the India AI mission via Bhashini's multilingual AI infrastructure.

Through ASHA, beneficiaries can report whether they received their full entitlement, the quality of foodgrains, and any difficulty faced at Fair Price Shops.

The system uses multilingual translation, sentiment analysis, automated grievance categorisation, and real-time dashboards for administrators

About Bhandaran 360

It is the Central Warehousing Corporation's new Enterprise Resource Planning platform.

Implemented ahead of schedule, the system integrates 41 modules covering HR, finance, marketing, warehouse management, contract management, project monitoring, and other core functions.

It is also linked with 35 external systems, including ICEGATE, port systems, FCI, NAFED, NCCF, and WDRA, enabling seamless digital connectivity across the food storage and movement ecosystem.

The New System Introduces:

1Single Sign-On and role-based access to improve security and reduce manual dependency.

2End-to-end data encryption and audit trails.

3Real-time dashboards showing operations from warehouse level to corporate level.

4Automated workflows with Chatbots and RPA to improve turnaround time.

5Predictive analytics for faster decision-making

6The upgraded platform also adds several new features such as a lead and marketing management module, integrated HRMS, project planning, SAP FICO, smart material management, biometric and geo-tagged attendance, a mobile app for measurement books, and strengthened contract monitoring.

About Smart EXIM Warehouse System

It was introduced by the Central Warehousing Corporation for container freight stations and general warehouses.

This system uses AI, IoT, FASTag, OCR/ANPR, GNSS, and other technologies to automate key processes.

Major Components:

Gate Automation System integrated with port and rail systems for auto-fetching vehicle and container details, FASTag-based entry, and automatic record generation

Yard Management with Digital Twin, providing real-time tracking of containers and equipment and optimizing movement inside the yard

Smart Inventory Management, which counts and tracks cargo in real time and auto-updates records with ERP-WMS integration.

About ANNA DARPAN

It was introduced by the Food Corporation of India (FCI).

It is a new microservices-based platform that replaces the existing Depot Online System.

It connects key activities such as procurement, storage, movement, sales, quality checks, labour management and contract monitoring under one integrated system.

It serves as a single unified source of truth for both FCI and the Department of Food and Public Distribution.

Key Features:

A mobile-first design for anytime access.

Smooth integration with internal and external systems for uniform data.

Real-time dashboards across mandis, depots, railheads, and offices.

A single, reliable information flow for faster decisions and improved transparency.

The platform is expected to significantly improve the efficiency of India's food supply chain