

HEALTHCARE ROUNDUP FOR JULY 2023



NATIONAL DOCTOR'S DAY: TIMES OF INDIA MEDITHON

This year on National Doctors Day 2023, TOI Medithon organized a virtual conclave called “National Doctors’ Day: A Tribute to the Torchbearers of our Health” on July 1st. The event brought together doctors from different specialities and policymakers to discuss challenges faced by healthcare professionals. The day-long webinar included panel discussions on topics like physician burnout, telemedicine, violence against doctors, doctor-patient relationships in the age of the internet and more. The initiative aimed to educate people about critical health conditions and celebrate our health heroes.

The conclave also discussed how the digital era presents us with the challenge of dealing with an overwhelming amount of unverified and conflicting information on the internet. This has led to negative awareness among the public, affecting the doctor-patient relationship. In the panel discussion on “Doctor-Patient Relationship in the Age of Internet and Misinformation,” distinguished clinical experts, including Dr. Ashok Seth, Dr. Sanjeev Bagai, Dr. HS Chhabra, and Dr. Girish Tyagi, highlighted the importance of relying on reliable sources of information, empowering patients to make informed decisions, and promoting effective communication between patients and healthcare providers.



LOK SABHA PASSES JAN VISHWAS BILL



Image source : thehindubusinessline

The Lok Sabha on 27th July, 2023 passed the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill during the monsoon session of the Parliament. The bill aims to decriminalize 183 provisions in 42 legislations, including colonial-era laws, to make doing business easier. It is part of the government's efforts to promote ease of doing business and has already repealed 1,486 laws. The bill proposes a 10% increase in fines and penalties levied after every three years of enactment. The government also plans to repeal more laws, including 11 colonial-era laws. The Repealing and Amending Bill corrects errors in existing laws and seeks to repeal outdated laws, such as the Land Acquisition (Mines) Act, 1885, and the Telegraph Wires (Unlawful Possession) Act, 1950. The amendment aims to make the statute books more efficient by removing irrelevant laws.

15TH CONFERENCE OF CENTRAL COUNCIL OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE - SWASTHYA CHINTAN SHIVIR

The 15th Conference of the Central Council of Health and Family Welfare, "Swasthya Chintan Shivir," was held in July 2023 under the chairmanship of Dr Mansukh Mandaviya, Union Minister of Health & Family Welfare and Chemicals & Fertilizers, Government of India. The conference aimed to share insights, best practices, experiences, and suggestions from different states to enhance healthcare policies and schemes for the welfare of beneficiaries.

During the conference's sessions, Dr Mansukh Mandaviya emphasized the need to prepare a vision document as a roadmap for the next 25 years to provide the best healthcare to the citizens. He encouraged participants to implement the learnings from the conference, particularly focusing on providing the nation with Ayushman Bharat cards and health account IDs, eliminating TB, leprosy, kala-azar, and malaria, and addressing the issue of sex-ratio imbalance.

The event highlighted that the Centre and states should work together in mission mode to tackle the sex-ratio imbalance issue, including seeking suggestions for amending the PCPNDT Act, 1994, for better implementation at the ground level.



PM MODI LAUNCHES THE DISTRIBUTION OF 1.6 CRORE AYUSHMAN CARDS IN UP

During his visit to Uttar Pradesh, Prime Minister Narendra Modi initiated the distribution of 1.6 crore Ayushman cards on July 7. The Prime Minister personally launched the distribution drive of PVC cards in Varanasi and later in Raipur, where he interacted with beneficiaries. The Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) offers annual health coverage of Rs 5 lakh per family, and every beneficiary receives an Ayushman Bharat card. This card functions as a “prepaid card,” allowing beneficiaries to access the entire allocated sum of Rs 5 lakh per family per year for free treatment in empanelled public and private hospitals. There are approximately 28,500 hospitals, including 12,500 private ones, where beneficiaries can avail themselves of medical services under this scheme.

Across India, a total of 23.9 crore Ayushman cards have been distributed out of a target beneficiary base of 60 crore. This is not the first time that Prime Minister Modi has initiated a card distribution campaign. On June 23, he launched a distribution drive for 40 lakh cards in Jammu and Kashmir and 1 crore cards in Madhya Pradesh. Previously, Gujarat received 50 lakh cards and Assam received 1.1 crore cards after their respective launches by Prime Minister Modi. According to government data, Madhya Pradesh leads in card distribution with 4 crore cards distributed, followed by Uttar Pradesh with 3 crores, Chhattisgarh with 2 crores, and then Gujarat and Assam.



PHARMEXCIL ORGANISES 9TH EDITION OF THE INTERNATIONAL PHARMACEUTICAL EXHIBITION (IPHEX 2023)



The Pharmaceuticals Export Promotion Council of India, Pharmexcil, organized the 9th edition of the International Pharmaceutical Exhibition (IPHEX 2023) at the HITEX Exhibition Center in Hyderabad, India, from 5th to 7th July 2023. The primary objective of this event was to enhance bilateral and trade relations while facilitating market access for pharmaceutical products. The conference focused on discussing trade in pharmaceuticals, involving representatives from G-20 countries, and providing business visitors with opportunities for one-on-one meetings throughout the three-day event.

IPHEX, an initiative by the Ministry of Commerce, aims to establish India as the leading global provider of pharmaceuticals and showcase the entire range of the pharmaceuticals and healthcare sector to the international community. Over time, the exhibition has become an essential component of the annual business plans of exhibitors and business visitors from around the world.

During the event, various speakers highlighted India's role as the "Pharmacy of the World". The conference featured discussions on pharmaceutical trade with representatives from G-20 countries and provided business visitors with opportunities for one-on-one meetings. Speakers emphasized India's status as a major provider of generic medicines, highlighting its manufacturing infrastructure and cost competitiveness. The event also launched a study on market access barriers and emphasized the importance of quality and compliance with regulations. The Director General of Pharmexcil, Uday Bhaskar, highlighted India's sustained growth rate during the pandemic and the need to explore new areas such as vaccines and biopharma. The event was seen as an opportunity for international collaborations and new business opportunities in the pharmaceutical industry.

G20 GLOBAL FOOD REGULATORS SUMMIT 2023

The Global Food Regulators Summit 2023 was held in Delhi for the first time as a G20 event. Organized by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare on 20th and 21st July 2023. The summit aimed to create a global platform for food regulators to enhance food safety systems and regulations across the food value chain. Representatives from over 40 countries, 30 international organizations, and 25 research institutes/ universities were present. The summit offered a valuable opportunity for attendees to engage in discussions about a unified network concerning Food Safety and Regulatory matters.

During the summit, Dr Mandaviya's speech underscored the vital link between safe food and well-being, emphasizing the importance of balanced and nutritious food as a means of preventive healthcare. He emphasized the need to tackle food safety, food grains, and food security to support sustainable global development. Dr Mandaviya also highlighted the integrated "One Health" approach, which considers the well-being of the climate, humans, animals, and plants. This approach is a key focus for the Health Working Group during the G20 India Presidency.

The two-day event showcased national stakeholders' active participation. Several groundbreaking initiatives were launched, including the Food-o-Copoeia, SaNGRAH—a comprehensive database of global food regulatory authorities, and a common digital dashboard providing comprehensive food safety information. Along with that, an exhibition was also held, featuring displays related to food safety, standards, testing capabilities, and advancements in food technologies. Esteemed organizations and food business operators showcased their expertise and contributions to the field, with a special emphasis on promoting millets under the name 'Shree Anna.' The summit's conclusion included a powerful call for united efforts to ensure universal access to safe and nourishing food for all, regardless of location.



NATHEALTH PUNJAB ROUNDTABLE: STATE HEALTH MINISTER INVITES CORPORATE HOSPITALS TO COLLABORATE WITH GOVERNMENT IN OFFERING AFFORDABLE, HIGH- QUALITY MEDICAL CARE

On July 21, 2023, at a state-level roundtable organized by NATHEALTH, a healthcare stakeholders' apex body in India, Punjab's Health and Family Welfare Minister, Dr Balbir Singh, extended an invitation to corporate hospitals to collaborate with the government in providing high-quality healthcare services at affordable prices. He stated that the collaboration would involve engaging doctors from leading healthcare providers to address the lack of specialized services in government health institutions, and the government would take responsibility for managing and funding this initiative. Dr Singh highlighted the positive impact of this collaboration on underserved districts, aligning with the Chief Minister, Bhagwant Mann's vision for improved healthcare across the state. Corporate hospitals could also contribute by training doctors and paramedic staff. Additionally, the government was taking steps to ensure primary care availability through Aam Aadmi Clinics and upgraded dispensaries, and they planned to equip subdivisional and district hospitals with advanced radiology machines for secondary care. Furthermore, all medical colleges in the state were being revamped to provide tertiary care services.

During an interactive session, the Health Minister shared the government's focus on making medical education more affordable and of higher quality, by strengthening primary, secondary, and tertiary healthcare services, along with establishing prevention-focused initiatives such as "CM di Yogshala."

The event brought together various leaders and stakeholders from the healthcare industry in Punjab, including medical councils, the Indian Medical Association (IMA), nursing federations, private providers, diagnostics, medical technology, home healthcare, and pharmaceutical companies. The gathering discussed key health priorities, state-related healthcare challenges, opportunities for public-private partnerships, and the importance of cohesive efforts to shape the state's healthcare system.



KOLKATA GOVERNMENT URGES PANCHAYATS TO ERADICATE TUBERCULOSIS BY 2025

The state government of Bengal will launch a new program called 'TB Mukta Panchayat' in March 2024 with the aim to eradicate tuberculosis from the state by 2025. This initiative involves collaborating with panchayats, who will provide special rations to TB patients. The plan is to empower the panchayat system to address TB-related challenges and take necessary actions to resolve them.

Under the programme, all panchayats are required to offer additional nutritional and social support to TB patients, as well as provide employment opportunities through the MNREG scheme. The Department of Health Services (DHS) has communicated with district officials to roll out the initiative and asked for cooperation with district TB officers. Block-level officials have been instructed to conduct preparatory activities, such as convergence meetings, training, and assessments, with the aim to complete all field activities by December 2023.

The proposal is to make 'TB Mukta Panchayat' an agenda item for the fourth Saturday in the gram panchayat convergence meetings, involving healthcare workers and panchayat members. Training on TB awareness will be provided to panchayat members. They will also be educated about the non-contagious nature of some TB cases, as the disease can affect various body parts, not just the lungs. The survey for 'TB Mukta Panchayat' will commence in January 2024, and the results are expected to be available by March 2024.



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