



COP28 Focus on Health Draws \$777 Million to Fight Tropical Disease

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At the COP28 climate summit, the United Arab Emirates and various charities pledged \$777 million to combat neglected tropical diseases exacerbated by climate change. Climate-related health risks were a focal point at the summit, with pledges including \$100 million each from the UAE and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The World Bank initiated a program to explore support measures for public health in developing nations facing heightened climate-related health threats.

On another note, the Govt. of India plans to introduce an Amendment Bill in Parliament to enhance the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India, granting it more powers for ensuring food quality compliance. The amendments aim to strengthen FSSAI's functionality. Also, the government is also working on a mechanism to provide treatment support for rare disease patients facing high drug prices. Negotiations with pharmaceutical companies like Sanofi, Sarepta Therapeutics, and Roche are ongoing.

In an important move, a recent report suggests that companies are eyeing emerging markets like India, where awareness of junk food harm is low. India has seen a 90% increase in ultra-processed food consumption since 2011. India, since at least 2017, has been considering tighter regulations to curb junk food consumption. Kerala imposed a tax in 2016 but it was nullified 11 months later.

In an interesting move, FSSAI has issued stricter norms for sweet shop owners have been asked to follow the norms issued regarding production and sales of sweets and savouries ahead of festival season.

In this thirteenth volume of Occasional News Wrap, various dimensions of health regulation issues have been captured, which appeared by way of op-eds, articles, news etc. during the month of November and December, 2023.

S.N.	Article/Op-ed	Key Takeaway
1.	<p>Government to Soon Bring Amendment Bill in Parliament to Revamp FSSAI: Health Secretary</p> <p><i>PTI/The Telegraph</i> Nov. 1, 2023</p>	<p>The Indian government plans to introduce an Amendment Bill in Parliament to enhance the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India, granting it more powers for ensuring food quality compliance. The amendments aim to strengthen FSSAI's functionality.</p>
2.	<p>FSSAI Reports 15 Out of 20 States with Low Food Safety Standards</p> <p><i>Slurp</i> Nov. 3, 2023 By Devi Poojari</p>	<p>The Food Safety Index 2022 by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India reveals a significant decline in scores for 15 out of 20 major states compared to 2019. States like Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Bihar showed lower scores, with Maharashtra dropping from 74 in 2019 to 45 in 2022.</p>
3.	<p>No Appetite for Food Safety</p> <p><i>Business Standard</i> <i>Mumbai</i> Nov. 5, 2023</p>	<p>Much of the food Indians eat may be more detrimental to their health than they know. This was the key finding of the 2022-23 State Food Safety Index (SFSI), prepared by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI). It showed a general decline in state food-safety scores over the past five years.</p>
4.	<p>Draft National Policy for Distribution of Sanitary Napkins Ready</p> <p><i>Business Standard</i> Nov 6, 2023 ANI</p>	<p>The Centre informed the Supreme Court that a Draft National Policy for the distribution of sanitary napkins for school girls has been formulated and the policy is being circulated to get opinions from stakeholders.</p>
5.	<p>Government Plans to Offer Support for Treatment of Rare Diseases</p> <p><i>ET Healthworld</i> Nov 8, 2023 Teena Thacker</p>	<p>The government is working on a mechanism to provide treatment support for Rare Disease patients facing high drug prices. Negotiations with pharmaceutical companies like Sanofi, Sarepta Therapeutics, and Roche are ongoing. Sarepta has agreed to offer free therapy for 14 children with Duchenne muscular dystrophy for the next three months.</p>

6.	<p>FSSAI Issues Stricter Norms for Sweets, Bakery Product & Oil Reuse</p> <p><i>KNN India Nov 9, 2023</i></p>	<p>Sweet shop owners have been asked to follow the norms issued regarding production and sales of Sweets and Savouries ahead of Diwali festival. The food safety department has issued guidelines for shop owner selling confectioneries. In a statement, designated food safety officer of the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) in Madurai, V Jayaramapandian, said that many people are buying and consuming sweets and savouries of all kinds for festive season.</p>
7	<p>India's Junk Food Bill Comes in</p> <p><i>Business Standard Nov 10, 2023 Ashli Varghese</i></p>	<p>A recent report suggests that companies are eyeing emerging markets like India, where awareness of junk food harm is low. India has seen a 90% increase in ultra-processed food consumption since 2011. India, since at least 2017, has been considering Tighter Regulations to curb junk food consumption. Kerala imposed a tax in 2016 but it was nullified 11 months later.</p>
8.	<p>FSSAI Withdraws Order to Declare 'Best Before Date' on Loose Sweets</p> <p><i>Business Standard, Nov. 12, 2023 Sanjeeb Mukherjee</i></p>	<p>The FSSAI said that the original order was issued in parity with the declaration required for packaged food products under the erstwhile Food Safety Standards (Packaging and Labelling) Regulations of 2011. It said now, considering that the Food Safety Standards (Packaging and Labelling) Regulations 2011 have been superseded by the Food Safety and Standards (Labelling and Display) Regulations 2020, the said directive has been reviewed and it is observed that the same requires further deliberations by the concerned scientific panel regarding the declaration of date marking on Non-Packaged or Loose Food Products.</p>
9.	<p>Health Ministry releases draft National Pharmacy Commission Bill</p> <p><i>ET HealthWorld/PTI Nov. 20, 2023</i></p>	<p>The proposed National Pharmacy Commission Bill aims to provide for a pharmacy education system that improves access to quality and affordable pharmacy or pharmaceutical education, ensures availability of adequate and high-quality pharmacy professionals in all parts of the country, promotes equitable and universal healthcare, and makes services of pharmacy professionals accessible to all citizens.</p>
10.	<p>Union Health Ministry, FSSAI 'Fail to Respond' to NHRC Directive on Packaged Food</p> <p><i>Counterview, November 29, 2023</i></p>	<p>The National Human Rights Commission has expressed deep concern over the adverse health effects caused by packaged foods high in salt, sugar, and saturated fats. Recognizing it as a violation of the Right to Life and Right to Health of Indian citizens, the quasi-judicial body called for a response from the FSSAI regarding its selection of front-of-pack labels aimed at providing consumers with information to make healthier choices.</p>

11.	<p>Photo ID Necessary to Buy Acid Online: Consumer Protection Body</p> <p><i>Mint</i> Nov. 29, 2023 Dhirendra Kumar</p>	<p>The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) in India has mandated e-commerce platforms to require buyers to upload a government-issued Photo ID to Purchase Acid, ensuring individuals are above 18 years old. The move aims to address safety concerns and prevent the unregulated sale of corrosive acids online.</p>
12.	<p>India Readies Global Norms for its Traditional Medicines</p> <p><i>Livemint</i> Nov. 29, 2023 Subhash Narayan</p>	<p>India is developing International Standards for its traditional system of medicines, aiming to gain global recognition and market access to 150 countries, Secretary, Ministry of Ayush said this.</p>
13.	<p>COP28 Focus on Health Draws \$777 Million to Fight Tropical Disease</p> <p><i>Reuters,</i> Dec. 5, 2023 Gloria Dickie, Elizabeth Piper and Alexander Cornwell</p>	<p>At the COP28 climate summit, the United Arab Emirates and various charities pledged \$777 million to combat neglected tropical diseases exacerbated by climate change. Climate-related health risks were a focal point at the summit, with pledges including \$100 million each from the UAE and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The World Bank initiated a program to explore support measures for public health in developing nations facing heightened climate-related health threats. The COP28 Declaration, signed by over 120 countries, did not address fossil fuels, prompting criticism.</p>
14.	<p>India Among 8 Nations Seeking 5-Year Patent Waiver for Covid Diagnostics</p> <p><i>ET Bureau</i> Dec. 6, 2023 Kirtika Suneja</p>	<p>In a submission to the World Trade Organization, they said that diagnostics and therapeutics are 'Essential Tools' for a comprehensive approach to fight the pandemic, that it is not over". India, Pakistan and South Africa, along with five others, have pushed for a five-year global patent waiver for Covid-19 diagnostics and therapeutics.</p>
15.	<p>India to Extend its Global Presence on Pharmaceutical Market with BRICS Plus Membership</p> <p><i>ET Bureau,</i> Dec. 6, 2023 Dipanjay Roy Chaudhury</p>	<p>The VIII International Conference "Antimonopoly Policy: Science, Practice, Education" held on November 30th – Dec 1st at the Skolkovo Innovation Center in Moscow was the last meeting of the BRICS Countries before turning into BRICS plus next. The conference focused on the implementation of the constitutional principles of protection of competition both in legislation and in enforcement practices on Pharmaceutical Market.</p>

16.	<p>Scientists Identify Effective Nutrition Labels for India's Diverse Population</p> <p><i>Deccan Herald/PTI Dec. 8, 2023</i></p>	<p>Researchers commissioned by the WHO have designed new FoPLs for India to encourage healthier food choices. With rising processed and unhealthy food consumption in India, the study, including 1,270 adults, evaluated five FoPLs and found the two-color Multiple Traffic Lights label to be the most effective.</p>
17.	<p>Govt. Mulls Regulator for Healthcare Sector to Facilitate Insurance for All</p> <p><i>ET Bureau Dec. 21, 2023 Dheeraj Tiwari</i></p>	<p>According to a recent report by the National Insurance Agency, over 400 million individuals, or about a third of the population, lack Health Insurance due to lower penetration, coverage inadequacy and rising healthcare costs. The government is exploring setting up a health sector regulator that will also facilitate affordable health insurance coverage for all citizens..</p>