



Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission: Making Healthcare Accessible, the Digital Way

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Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasised the role of the scientific community in developing ways of dealing with emerging diseases and the need for encouraging research in developing new vaccines, while addressing the 108th Indian Science Congress (ISC) held at Nagpur via video conferencing.

In another interesting move, in order to mitigate its 45% shortage of specialist doctors, the Uttarakhand government has started a scheme, where the doctor can quote his/her price for service and the government would pay for it. As against its requirement of 1265 experts at various hospitals and health centres, Uttarakhand has only 565 at the moment. This deficit is more visible in hill districts of the state.

On another side. Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal has pitched for increasing efforts at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) for getting patent waivers for diagnostics and therapeutics used to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic. In June last year, members of the WTO agreed to grant a temporary patent waiver for the manufacturing of COVID-19 vaccines for five years.

Regarding Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission, India leveraged information and communications technologies (ICTs) during the pandemic. Digital health solutions played a crucial role in bridging the gap in healthcare delivery as systems moved online to accommodate contactless care. Some examples of DPGs developed during the pandemic include the Covid Vaccine Intelligence Network (CoWIN) and the Aarogya Setu application.

With regard to India's vision of a healthier globe emanates from the philosophy of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* that translates into One Earth, One Family, One Future. So, as part of India's G20 presidency, policymakers from member countries and experts from the medical fraternity shall unfold the foundation and framework of a Global Health Architecture (GHA) at a series of Health Working Group meetings, starting this month.

In this fifth 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 January, 2023.

	Article/Op-ed	Key Takeaway
1.	<p>PM Modi urges scientific community to develop new vaccines for emerging diseases</p> <p><i>By Pune Bureau The Hindu businessline January 3, 2023</i></p>	<p>Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasised the role of the scientific community in developing ways of dealing with emerging diseases and the need for encouraging research in developing new vaccines. The Prime Minister addressed the 108th Indian Science Congress (ISC) held at Nagpur via video conferencing. Modi talked about integrated disease surveillance for the timely detection of diseases. For this, he stressed the need for coordinated efforts of all the ministries. Similarly, LiFE i.e Lifestyle for Environment movement may greatly be helped by the scientists, he said.</p>
2.	<p>FDA allows abortion medicines to be sold at pharmacies in US</p> <p><i>By BW Online Bureau BW Healthcare world.com January 4, 2023</i></p>	<p>The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) will allow retail pharmacies to offer abortion pills in USA for the first time, the agency said even as more states seek to ban medication abortion. The regulatory change will potentially expand abortion access as President Biden's administration wrestles with how best to protect abortion rights.</p>
4.	<p>'You quote; we pay': Uttarakhand govt. plans scheme to attract specialist doctors</p> <p><i>By Shivani Azad Healthworld.Com The Economic Times January 4, 2023</i></p>	<p>To mitigate its 45% shortage of specialist doctors, the Uttarakhand government has started a scheme, where the doctor can quote his/her price for service and the government would pay for it. As against its requirement of 1265 experts at various hospitals and health centres, Uttarakhand has only 565 at the moment. This deficit is more visible in hill districts of the state.</p>
5.	<p>Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission: Making healthcare accessible, the digital way</p> <p><i>By R. S. Sharma Indian Express January 5, 2023</i></p>	<p>India has demonstrated its digital prowess by building digital public goods (DPG) — the digital identity system Aadhaar, the DPGs built on top of Aadhaar and the Unified Payments Interface. While Aadhaar has become central to India's public service delivery architecture, UPI has transformed how payments are made. Our digital public infrastructure has reached the last mile, enabled by 1.2 billion wireless connections and 800 million internet users.</p>
6.	<p>More essential drugs come under price regulation</p> <p><i>By Priyanka Sharma Mint January 9, 2023</i></p>	<p>The National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) has fixed the ceiling price of 93 essential formulations including pain killers and drugs used to treat cancer, rheumatoid arthritis, heart disease, bacterial infections, pneumonia, tuberculosis, thyroid, epilepsy, and urinary tract infections. The move will make drugs cheaper, and manufacturers failing to comply will have to deposit the overcharged amount with the government.</p>

7.	<p>Piyush Goyal calls for redoubling efforts at WTO to get patent waiver for Covid diagnostics, therapeutics</p> <p><i>moneycontrol PTI January 13, 2023</i></p>	<p>Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal has pitched for increasing efforts at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) for getting patent waivers for diagnostics and therapeutics used to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic. In June last year, members of the WTO agreed to grant a temporary patent waiver for the manufacturing of COVID-19 vaccines for five years. It was agreed to start talks on including therapeutics and diagnostics, as proposed by India and South Africa, under the purview of this waiver after six months. Goyal also said that there is a need for de-politicization of the global supply of essential medicines.</p>
8.	<p>Rajasthan becomes first State to implement blindness control policy</p> <p><i>By The Hindu Bureau The Hindu January 14, 2023</i></p>	<p>Rajasthan has become the first State to implement a policy to control blindness, with the objective of ensuring the "right to sight". A massive drive will be undertaken in the State to reduce the rate of blindness, and bring light into the lives of over 3 lakh people suffering from visual impairment. The State government's Medical & Health Department released the policy document here over the week-end. The prevalence rate of blindness, which was 1.1% in 2020, will be brought down to 0.3%, through the policy.</p>
9.	<p>Because both rich and poor countries deserve good health, India's G20 presidency is creating a fairer global health architecture, writes Union health minister</p> <p><i>By Mansukh Mandaviya Hindustan Times January 16, 2023</i></p>	<p>India's vision of a healthier globe emanates from the philosophy of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam that translates into One Earth, One Family, One Future. So, as part of India's G20 presidency, policymakers from member countries and experts from the medical fraternity shall unfold the foundation and framework of a Global Health Architecture (GHA) at a series of Health Working Group meetings, starting this month. GHA envisages equipping countries to face the next health emergency with robust healthcare systems.</p>
10.	<p>How to make healthcare affordable and accessible</p> <p><i>By Swati Piramal Business Line January 17, 2023</i></p>	<p>The New Year brings with it a sense of hope and optimism. It is also important to reflect, acknowledge the gains and the missed opportunities in 2022. Last year, the world dealt with the aftermath of Covid-19 and the spectre of the pandemic still lurks among us. Nations are also battling the economic headwinds in the light of the Russia-Ukraine war, fighting inflation and establishing socio-economic stability.</p>

11.	<p>Pharmacists to become vaccinators, 12.5 lakh to get training from May, 2023</p> <p><i>By Vaibhav Ganjapure Healthworld.com January 23, 2023</i></p>	<p>The Indian Pharmaceutical Association (IPA) has started an ambitious programme to turn pharmacist into ‘vaccinators’ by providing training. The IPA has set a target to train all 12.5 lakh registered pharmacist in India to take up the role of vaccinators by 2025, which would save atleast 25% lives incase of global crises like Covid 19.</p>
12.	<p>FSSAI asks State Food Safety Commissioners to check on products being sold as plant-based ghee</p> <p><i>By dairynews7x7@gmail.com Dairy News January 25, 2023</i></p>	<p>In its latest order, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has asked food safety commissioners to take “enforcement action” against companies that are selling plant-based ghee and butter. In its order dated January 23, it said that such products are of non-animal origin and are blends and mixtures of edible oils and hydrogenated fats, among others. It also raised concerns about products that are “deceptively sold” as “vegan ghee.” It pointed out that, as per the Vegan Foods Regulations, ghee or butter cannot be claimed to be vegan foods, and also that use of a vegan food claim or logo cannot be made without its prior approval.</p>
13.	<p>Countries, which have taken Covishield have fared well as compared to others: Poonawala</p> <p><i>By Teena Thacker The Economic Times January 30, 2023</i></p>	<p>Countries which have taken Covishield have fared much better than those which relied only on mRNA vaccines, Serum Institute of India, CEO Adar Poonawalla told ET in an interview, amid growing concerns about the adverse effects of mRNA Covid-19 vaccines. He said his company has stopped the production of Covid-19 vaccines and is no longer looking to invest in vaccines against Covid-19.</p>