

## Occasional News Wrap - #07/March, 2023



### Ministry of Ayush to Work in Tandem with Ministry of Tourism to Promote Medical Value Travel

01 March–31 March, 2023

The Ministry of Ayush signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC), the Ministry of Tourism, to work together for the promotion of Medical Value Travel in Ayurveda and other traditional systems of medicine, informed Minister of Ayush, Shri Sarbananda Sonowal in a written reply in Rajya Sabha.

In an important move, a senior government official, on the condition of anonymity, told media that various options are being examined keeping in view of the financial implications and the challenges in implementing the plan of Ayushman 2.0 that would have wide application on the lines of Ayushman Bharat.

On a different note, there have been a big concern regarding the absence of a legal framework governing this fast growing segment of the Pharma Retailing Business, which is causing confusion in the industry. Online pharmacies have been under the scanner in India for some time in the absence of a comprehensive law for this emerging space.

Stressing a need for Research and Innovation, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Mansukh Mandaviya stated that these are necessary for the sustained growth of pharmaceuticals sector.

Besides, India's work on Single-Window Portal for Drug Regulation Processes System will bring together stakeholders like manufacturers, distributors, state-run agencies to ensure quality. Seeking to revamp India's drug regulatory system, the government is working on a Unified Digital Portal that will bring together all stakeholders: regulators, manufacturers, distributors, state-run departments, and procurement agencies.

In this seventh 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 March, 2023.

S. N.	Article/Op-ed	Key Takeaway
1.	<p><b>World Needs Early Warning System for Virus: Bill Gates</b></p> <p><i>By Suroji Gupta &amp; Sunil Nair</i> TOI March 1, 2023</p>	<p>On his first tour of India since the pandemic, Bill Gates does not mince his words, when he talks about lessons from the tragedy wrought by Covid. Apart from faster diagnostics and vaccine production, he says there is a need to develop <a href="#">Early Warning Systems</a> "on an ongoing basis" to detect new viruses. In an interview to TOI, Gates spoke on a range of issues, from public health to AI. Gates said India's G20 presidency is an opportunity to showcase the success of its digital public goods so that other countries can adopt them.</p>
2.	<p><b>E-pharmacies Suffer Without Regulatory Prescriptions</b></p> <p><i>By Sohini Das</i> Business Standard March 2, 2023</p>	<p>The absence of a legal framework governing this fast growing segment of the <a href="#">Pharma Retailing Business</a> is causing confusion in the industry. Online pharmacies have been under the scanner in India for some time in the absence of a comprehensive law for this emerging space. In May and November 2019, the DCGI sent notices for action and compliance to state drug controllers quoting a Dec., 2018 Delhi High Court order that restrained e-pharmacies from selling medicines without licences.</p>
3.	<p><b>Research &amp; Innovation Necessary for Sustained Growth of Pharma: Mandaviya</b></p> <p><i>BW Healthcare</i> WORLD.com March 2, 2023</p>	<p>Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Mansukh Mandaviya stated that <a href="#">Research and Innovation</a> are necessary for the sustained growth of pharmaceuticals sector, as he chaired the first Governing Council meeting of National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (NIPERs) at National Institute of Health &amp; Family Welfare (NIHFW).</p>
4.	<p><b>Food Companies, FSSAI, Health Institutions Differ Over Front Pack Labelling Proposal</b></p> <p><i>By Ratna Bhushan &amp; Shambhavi Anand,</i> ET Bureau March 6, 2023</p>	<p>The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India's move to implement a <a href="#">Front-of-the-Pack Health Star Ratings</a> proposal has run into rough weather because of the lack of consensus among the food companies, health organisations, consumer activists and the food regulator on the issue. Officials of Indian Council of Medical Research and All India Institute of Medical Sciences are of the view that ratings will be ineffective in curbing consumption of unhealthy foods and direct warning labels would be more effective.</p>
5.	<p><b>India Submits Paper on Promoting Telemedicine Services in Response to Pandemic at WTO</b></p> <p><i>The Hindu</i> March 6, 2023</p>	<p>India has sought collaboration between WTO member countries for increased use of <a href="#">Telemedicine Services</a> to deal with future pandemics by addressing regulatory barriers and expanding its cross-border supply. Deliberation on lessons learnt and sharing of best practices and experiences by the membership can help build effective solutions for bridging the divide in digital capabilities and addressing regulatory barriers.</p>

6.	<p><b>Women's Health Issues Need Special Attentions; Make Sure Your Health Insurance Cover Addresses These</b></p> <p><i>By Prof. Abhijit K. Chattorai &amp; Maya Vimal Pandey ET/Wealth March 8, 2023</i></p>	<p>India's women live longer as compared to their male counterparts. In 2019 as per World Health Statistics -2022- the life expectancy of Indian women at birth was 72.2 as against 69.5 for males. The <a href="#">Healthy Life Expectancy</a> at birth of women was 60.4 in 2019. However, the maternal mortality rate is significantly worrying for India, i.e., 145 (per 100 000 live births) as of 2017. In a nutshell, women live substantially longer with disabilities. Gender dissimilarities are less as women excel in all spheres of life and parents-in-law emotionally and financially.</p>
7.	<p><b>India Working on Single-Window Portal for Drug Regulation Processes</b></p> <p><i>Business Standard March 8, 2023</i></p>	<p>System will bring together stakeholders like manufacturers, distributors, state-run agencies to ensure quality. Seeking to revamp India's drug regulatory system, the government is working on a <a href="#">Unified Digital Portal</a> that will bring together all stakeholders: regulators, manufacturers, distributors, state-run departments, and procurement agencies.</p>
8.	<p><b>FSSAI Asks for Quality, Safety Checks on Health Supplements</b></p> <p><i>By Priyanka Sharma Livemint March 9, 2023</i></p>	<p>The food regulator has told food commissioners of all states and UTs to carry out a special drive to check <a href="#">Nutraceuticals and Health Supplements</a> for quality and safety throughout their manufacturing and sale process. The Food Safety Standard Authority of India also directed all food commissioners to submit their action taken reports by March end.</p>
9.	<p><b>FSSAI Asks States to Deploy Testing Vans to Check Milk Quality</b></p> <p><i>Business Standard April 10, 2023</i></p>	<p>Food regulator FSSAI has asked states and union territories to <a href="#">Deploy Mobile Testing</a> vans to check quality of milk and milk products considering higher demand during Holi festival. FSSAI said in a statement that it has "directed states/UTs to deploy Food Safety on Wheels (FSW) mobile food testing vans, to check adulteration of milk and milk products considering the festive season of Holi".</p>
10.	<p><b>Government Mulls Regulation, Crackdown on E-Pharmacies Amid Concerns Over Data Privacy, Malpractices</b></p> <p><i>Economic Times/Industry March 13, 2023</i></p>	<p>The Union Health Ministry is mulling regulations and stringent action against <a href="#">e-Pharmacies</a>, including banning them completely, following concerns over data privacy, malpractices in the sector, and irrational sale of drugs, official sources said on Monday. The revised draft of the New Drugs, Medical Devices and Cosmetics Bill, 2023, which has been sent for inter-ministerial consultation, states, "The central government may regulate, restrict or prohibit the sale or distribution of any drug by online mode, by notification."</p>
11.	<p><b>Without Women, India Cannot be \$10 Trillion Economy, Says Amitabh Kant</b></p> <p><i>By CNBC-TV18 March 14, 2023</i></p>	<p>Amitabh Kant, G20 Sherpa of India, said India cannot be a \$5 or \$10 trillion economy without women being a very major player in the Indian economy. Speaking at the "<a href="#">Future Female Forward-A Women's Collective</a>" event hosted by CNBC-TV18, Kant said the latest National Family Health Survey (NFHS) shows that there are 1,022 women for 1,000 men. Most people do not know that there are more women than men in India.</p>

12.	<p><b>When Safety Overrides Women’s Health</b></p> <p><i>Verywellhealth</i></p> <p><i>March 16, 2023</i></p>	<p>Why do <a href="#">Occupational Health and Safety</a> (OHS) measures in garment and footwear factories fail their workers, most of whom are women? According to the latest research, OHS systems are mostly preoccupied with 'safety' - fire safety and machine maintenance and tend to overlook worker health, especially mental and reproductive issues. workers at greater health and safety risks.</p>
13.	<p><b>Govt. to Promote Ayush Treatment Through MVT   Hospitals' Paradigm Shift   Govt. Brings National Strategy to Spur Medical Tourism</b></p> <p><i>By BW Online Bureau</i></p> <p><i>March 22, 2023</i></p>	<p>The Ministry of Ayush signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC), the Ministry of Tourism, to work together for the promotion of <a href="#">Medical Value Travel</a> in Ayurveda and other traditional systems of medicine, informed Minister of Ayush Sarbananda Sonowal in a written reply in Rajya Sabha. Heal in India is an initiative of the government to promote the Medical Tourism in the country. Under this Initiative, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the government of India and Ministry of Ayush has been working with the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing and Services Export Promotion Council for developing a One Step Heal in India portal for the Promotion of Medical Value Travel.</p>
14.	<p><b>Ayushman 2.0 in Works for 400 Million Mid-Income Citizens</b></p> <p><i>By Yogima Seth Sharma</i></p> <p><i>ET Bureau</i></p> <p><i>March 27, 2023</i></p>	<p>A senior government official, on the condition of anonymity, told ET that various options are being examined keeping in view the financial implications and the challenges in implementing the plan that would have wide application on the lines of <a href="#">Ayushman Bharat</a>.</p>
15.	<p><b>FSSAI Accepts States' 'dahi' to 'dahi'</b></p> <p><i>By Sharat V Srivatsa</i></p> <p><i>The Hindu</i></p> <p><i>March 30, 2023</i></p>	<p>After the uproar over the insistence on the use of the word <a href="#">dahi</a> prominently as the nomenclature on the curd packet marketed by milk federations in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India withdrew the order. In fresh changes to labelling provisions, FSSAI has enabled the use of curd prominently and its nomenclature in regional languages in brackets.</p>