

## **Global TB Report 2023 recognizes India's efforts in decreasing TB cases**

On 8<sup>th</sup> November 2023, India was recognized by the World Health Organization (WHO) for its success in reducing the incidence of tuberculosis by 16% and mortality due to it by 18% since 2015. According to the WHO's Global TB Report 2023, India has made significant progress in improving case detection and reversing the impact of COVID-19 on the TB program. The country's treatment coverage has improved to 80% of estimated TB cases, an increase of 19% over the previous year.

India's efforts have resulted in a 16% reduction in TB incidence in 2022 compared to 2015, almost double the rate of global TB incidence decline (which is 8.7 percent). Additionally, mortality due to the disease has decreased by 18% during the same period in India. The WHO has revised TB mortality rates downward from 4.94 lakhs in 2021 to 3.31 lakhs in 2022, representing a reduction of over 34%. This revision is based on the thorough review of new evidence and in-country mathematical modelling presented by India's health ministry.

The Global TB Report 2023 highlights India's intensified case detection strategies, which have resulted in the highest-ever notification of cases in 2022, with over 24.22 lakh TB cases notified, surpassing pre-COVID levels. Key initiatives such as specialized active case-finding drives, scaling up of molecular diagnostics to block levels, decentralization of screening services through Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centres, and private sector engagement have significantly bridged the gap in missing cases. The 'Pradhan Mantri TB Mukta Bharat Abhiyan' has received an overwhelming response across the country, with over 1 lakh Ni-kshay Mitras from all walks of life coming forward to adopt over 11 lakh TB patients. Under Ni-kshay Poshan Yojana, about Rs 2,613 crore have been disbursed to over 95 lakh TB patients since its launch in 2018.





## **Ministry of Ayush collaborates with WHO on Traditional and Complementary Medicine Project Agreement**

The Indian Ministry of Ayush and the World Health Organization (WHO) have signed a Traditional and Complementary Medicine Project Collaboration Agreement in Geneva on 17th November 2023 to standardize traditional and complementary medical systems, integrate their quality and safety aspects into the National Health System, and disseminate them at the international level.

Through this cooperation, efforts will be made to connect traditional and complementary medical systems with the mainstream of the National Health System. To fulfil this objective, the Traditional Medicine Global Strategy 2025-34 will be prepared by WHO with the support of the Ministry of Ayush. Other major objectives of the agreement include efforts to strengthen the system of training and practice in the field of complementary medicine system 'Siddha', formulation of guidelines for the listing of traditional and complementary medicines, safety, and related efforts, etc. This agreement will not only support the development of the TCI Global Strategy - but it will also support the integration of evidence-based Traditional and Complementary Medicine in national health systems. India is committed to working with WHO to strengthen Traditional Medicine Systems globally and especially in supporting fellow developing countries in promoting their traditional medicine systems.

Union Ayush Minister Sarbananda Sonowal commended the global efforts, emphasizing India's rich heritage in traditional medicine. The initiative is seen as a significant step towards establishing India's global identity in healthcare services and promoting medical tourism.

## Union Health Minister's keynote address at 2<sup>nd</sup> Voice of Global South Summit 2023

In a virtual address at the 2nd Voice of Global South Summit organized on 17th November 2023, Dr Mansukh Mandaviya, Union Minister for Health & Family Welfare, highlighted India's commitment to reforming global governance structures to address contemporary challenges. Following the First Voice of Global South Summit, India identified three health priorities: preventing health emergencies, strengthening pharma sector cooperation, and promoting digital health innovations. Dr Mandaviya emphasized the significance of the One Health concept, linking human, animal, and environmental health, especially in addressing zoonotic origins of epidemics. He expressed concern about unequal access to healthcare and education during crises and stressed the need to reverse learning loss, transform education, enhance pandemic preparedness, and strengthen health systems.

His address also outlined India's initiatives, including the National One Health Mission, monitoring emerging infectious diseases, and promoting coordination across ministries. He called for collective efforts to bolster resilience across economies, societies, healthcare, education, and infrastructure, acknowledging the central role of women in sustainable development. Digital Public Infrastructure was highlighted as a promising tool for equitable access to medical resources. Dr Mandaviya affirmed India's commitment to a One Health approach, as demonstrated in the New Delhi Leaders' Declaration of the G20 Summit, addressing critical issues like Antimicrobial Resistance. He concluded by urging collaboration, trust, and growth in the Global South, emphasizing inclusive and sustainable solutions.





## **Union Health Ministry unveils Draft Pharmacy Commission Bill**

The Union Health Ministry on 20th November 2023 released the draft National Pharmacy Commission Bill, 2023, to improve access to quality and affordable pharmacy education, ensure the availability of adequate and high-quality pharmacy professionals across the country, promote equitable and universal healthcare, and make the services of pharmacy professionals accessible to all citizens. This bill proposes the repeal of the Pharmacy Act of 1948 and the establishment of a national commission in place of the Pharmacy Council of India.

The draft bill calls for regular and transparent assessments of pharmacy institutions, the maintenance of pharmacy registers for India, and the enforcement of high ethical standards in all aspects of pharmacy services. It also encourages pharmacy professionals to incorporate the latest pharmacy research into their practice and contribute to research efforts. The bill proposes flexibility to adapt to changing needs and seeks to establish an effective grievance redressal mechanism. According to the draft, the Pharmacy Ethics and Registration Board will maintain a National Pharmacy Register containing detailed information on pharmacy professionals to ensure transparency.



## Healthcare initiatives launched by Haryana Government

On 1st November 2023, Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar launched two healthcare initiatives to mark Haryana's formation day. These initiatives aim to enhance the healthcare and well-being of the people.

The first initiative is the expanded 'Ayushman Bharat-Chirayu Haryana Yojana'. This scheme now covers families with an annual income of up to Rs 3 lakh, an increase from the earlier limit of Rs 1.8 lakh. This extension encompasses an additional 38,000 families. The second is a cashless health facility under the 'Ayushman Bharat-Chirayu Haryana' scheme for government employees, pensioners, and accredited journalists. This facility will offer cashless treatment for 1,340 diseases across 569 empanelled hospitals in Haryana.

The Haryana CM inaugurated both the schemes at a meeting where he also distributed Ayushman/Chirayu scheme cards to eligible families. The state government had earlier this year introduced 'the Chirayu Haryana Yojana' to further extend the Ayushman Bharat scheme's reach and inclusivity.





## Health walk initiative launched in Madurai and Trichy, Tamil Nadu

On 4th November 2023, the health walk scheme was launched in Madurai, Trichy, and Thanjavur. The scheme is aimed at encouraging city residents to lead healthier lives and reduce the risk of non-communicable diseases. In Madurai, the 8.5-km health walk track starts at the Racecourse Road sports complex entrance and passes through notable landmarks, including the Madurai Rifle Club, Madurai North Zonal Office, DRO Colony, Natham New Main Road, Iyer Bungalow, Bharathi Ula Road, Tallakulam police station, and ends at the sports complex.

In Trichy, the 8-km health walk starts from the Science Park in Thennur and passes through Anna Nagar Link Road, the district court roundabout, Kamala Niketan School, and the Kushumayee Amman temple before returning to the Science Park. In Thanjavur, the 8-km health walk starts from Sathya Stadium on Medical College Road and ends at the Convention Center near the new bus terminus.

All three cities have provided adequate facilities, such as parking for vehicles, existing amenities like toilets and drinking water tanks, and stone benches along the walking track, to enhance the walking experience. Signage boards marking the distance covered from the starting point have also been installed to help participants track their progress. The health walk scheme is a welcome initiative that will help to promote healthy living in Madurai, Trichy, and Thanjavur.

## New WHO Guideline to address Acute Malnutrition in children under 5

The World Health Organization (WHO) has taken a significant step in the global fight against acute malnutrition in children under five by launching a new guideline on the prevention and management of waste and nutritional edema. Despite global commitments to eliminate malnutrition by 2030, an estimated 45 million children under five were affected by acute malnutrition in 2022. The new guideline addresses this persistent issue, focusing on evidence-based recommendations and good practice statements. It emphasizes a child-centered approach, highlighting the interdependence of care for mothers and infants. Key recommendations include the importance of breastfeeding, access to nutrient-dense home diets for prevention and management, and the role of community health workers in providing evidence-based care.

The WHO Director-General, Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, stresses the guideline's comprehensive approach, calling for the integration of nutrition services into health systems and their strengthening. This is the first WHO guideline addressing both prevention and management of acute malnutrition. The recommendations underscore the critical role of investing in both aspects to effectively reduce the prevalence and negative impacts of acute malnutrition globally. WHO is collaborating with UNICEF and other agencies on the Global Action Plan (GAP) for child wasting, developing operational guidance to assist policymakers, program managers, and health workers in implementing the guideline. Regional workshops and stakeholder involvement activities are underway to adapt global guidance to specific contexts for meaningful impact.



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