

Union Health Minister J P Nadda to launch combined health coverage scheme in Odisha

On 11th April 2025, Union Health Minister and BJP President J.P. Nadda announced the government's decision to launch the combined health coverage scheme—Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PMJAY) and Odisha state's Gopabandhu Jan Arogya Yojana (GJAY)—during his presence at a major public event in Cuttack. The implementation of the combined scheme will fulfill a key BJP manifesto promise, according to state BJP president Manmohan Samal. When the scheme will roll out, around 3.46 crore beneficiaries from 1.03 crore families in Odisha will receive the AB PMJAY-GJAY health card, providing health insurance coverage of 5 lakh per family across 29,000 hospitals in India. Additionally, the health minister will also introduce the Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana, which will offer free healthcare to senior citizens over 70. Women beneficiaries under both schemes will be given an additional ₹5 lakh coverage. The government has planned to organise events across 13 locations to mark the launch.





Punjab deploys advanced mobile diagnostic van to eliminate TB

On 15th April 2025, in a significant move towards eliminating tuberculosis (TB) from Punjab, Health Minister Dr. Balbir Singh flagged off an advanced diagnostic van equipped with a handheld X-ray machine and a fluorescent microscope from the Directorate of Health and Family Welfare. The initiative aimed to enhance early detection of TB, particularly in underserved areas. As part of a corporate social responsibility (CSR) collaboration, Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) donated two handheld X-ray machines and two fluorescent microscopes to the Punjab health department, in partnership with the People-to-People Health Foundation.

Dr. Singh expressed his gratitude to IOCL and emphasized that the donated equipment would boost diagnostic capabilities in Sangrur and Malerkotla districts. He highlighted the urgency of early detection, citing a 2020-21 survey that revealed a prevalence-notification ratio of 2.8:1 in Punjab, indicating a substantial gap in case identification. The survey also found that over 40% of TB cases were asymptomatic and were identified through X-ray screenings, underlining the critical role of radiological tools in diagnosis.

Key health officials, including MD of the National Health Mission Ghanshyam Thori and state TB officer Dr. Rajesh Bhaskar, were present at the event. The initiative marked a proactive step in strengthening Punjab's TB control and elimination efforts.



Indian diagnostics sector set to grow 14%, organised companies rise further, says Report

India's diagnostics industry was projected to grow at a robust compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of 14% over the next five years, according to a recent report by PhillipCapital released on 19th April 2025. This growth was expected to be driven by multiple factors, including increased healthcare spending, an ageing population, higher income levels, rising awareness of preventive testing, greater availability of advanced diagnostics, broader health insurance coverage, and government initiatives aimed at strengthening healthcare infrastructure.

The report noted that while the entire sector was on a positive trajectory, organised diagnostic players were poised to outpace the broader industry due to their advanced and efficient service offerings. These organised companies were seen as key beneficiaries of the ongoing consolidation within the highly fragmented Indian diagnostics market.

At the time of the report, organised diagnostic chains held just 15% of the market share, with hospital-based labs accounting for 37% and standalone, unorganised labs dominating 48% of the market. This fragmentation presented a significant opportunity for organised players to expand their footprint through acquisitions and consolidation.

Additionally, the report highlighted that India's diagnostics sector remained under-penetrated compared to global benchmarks. Despite having the largest population, India lagged behind countries like Brazil and Saudi Arabia in per capita test volumes, indicating substantial untapped demand in the market.



Himachal Pradesh approves ₹193 Cr to boost healthcare infrastructure

On 19th April 2025, the Himachal Pradesh government allocated ₹193.75 crore to establish two Critical Care Blocks (CCBs) and five District Integrated Public Health Laboratories (DIPHLs) across the state, as part of its effort to boost healthcare infrastructure and enhance access to affordable, quality healthcare. In a recent cabinet meeting, the state approved the construction of two 50-bedded CCBs—one at the Primary Health Centre Swahan (Regional Hospital Bilaspur) and another at Civil Hospital Rohru in Shimla district.

These CCBs were planned to include advanced medical facilities such as emergency services, ICUs, HDUs, isolation wards, dialysis units, operation theatres, labour rooms, and point-of-care laboratories. While they were intended to function as regular hospital units, the facilities were also designed to be physically isolated during health emergencies like COVID-19 to ensure infection control. Each block was estimated to cost 16.63 crore for construction, with an additional ₹27.12 crore allocated for equipment.

Additionally, the cabinet approved the setting up of DIPHLs at Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru Government Medical College, Chamba, and District Hospital Hamirpur, associated with Dr. Radhakrishnan Government Medical College, Hamirpur. These laboratories were aimed at strengthening diagnostic capabilities through consolidated facilities for pathology, haematology, cytology, biochemistry, and microbiology, thereby improving outbreak response and operational efficiency.

PM Narendra Modi urges to reduce oil intake for healthy liver on World Liver Day

On World Liver Day, 19th April 2025, Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasised the importance of adopting healthier lifestyle choices to build a fitter and healthier India. He had lauded the Union Health Ministry's initiative to promote mindful eating habits under the theme "Food is Medicine." In a post on social media platform X, PM Modi had urged citizens to make small yet impactful changes, such as reducing their edible oil intake to improve overall health and combat the rising issue of obesity.

Responding to Union Health Minister JP Nadda's appeal, the Prime Minister reinforced the message of treating food as medicine and encouraged people to raise awareness about obesity and its long-term societal impact. Mr. Nadda had called on individuals to pledge a 10 per cent reduction in edible oil consumption and to prioritize healthier dietary habits. He had noted that small changes in food choices could lead to significant improvements in public health outcomes.

Both leaders underlined the significance of preventive health measures and the role of diet in managing lifestyle-related conditions, particularly liver health. Their statements aligned with the broader national push to instill a culture of wellness and proactive healthcare through simple, sustainable steps at the individual level.





Delhi to launch 70 upgraded health clinics by May under new plan

On 19th April 2025, the Delhi government announced plans to launch 70 Ayushman Arogya Mandirs (AAYs) across the national capital, with one centre in each assembly constituency starting in May. These centres would be developed by upgrading existing Primary Health Centres (PHCs), dispensaries, and Mohalla clinics. The initiative was part of a broader strategy to strengthen primary healthcare infrastructure in the city in a sustainable and long-term manner.

In about 10 to 15 constituencies, the implementation process had reached its final stages, with suitable locations being identified. The AAYs were set to be launched under the Pradhan Mantri Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PM-ABHIM) following the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the central government. Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta had earlier announced the initiative, which received central funding of ₹2,400 crore and aimed to create a total of 1,139 AAYs.

These centres were expected to offer outpatient services, maternal and child healthcare, vaccination, screening for non-communicable diseases, and Ayurvedic treatments. Additionally, over 1.75 lakh families had been enrolled under the Ayushman Bharat health insurance scheme since its implementation on 5th April, following the BJP's return to power in Delhi after 26 years.

Delhi to begin distributing health cards to seniors from 28th April 2025

On 22nd April 2025, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta announced that the distribution of Ayushman health cards for senior citizens aged 70 and above would begin on 28th April 2025 at Thyagaraj Stadium under the "Vaya Vandana Yojana." The scheme aimed to provide priority healthcare access to elderly citizens across Delhi, regardless of their socio-economic status. During a high-level meeting at the Delhi Secretariat, Gupta reviewed preparations for the scheme's rollout and the establishment of Ayushman Arogya Mandirs. She directed district magistrates to identify suitable sites for these centers, which would offer consultations, primary treatment, and preventive services. A total of 1,139 Ayushman Arogya Mandirs were planned for Delhi, with 15 centers in each assembly constituency.

Gupta emphasized that the scheme was not only a government initiative but also an expression of gratitude to the elderly. She assured that registered senior citizens would receive free healthcare services, with their health records digitized through unique health cards. The registration for health cards began on April 28 at district offices and designated locations. Gupta highlighted the importance of the scheme for senior citizens, given their increased healthcare needs, and pledged that the Delhi government would ensure they receive priority care. So far, 169,000 Ayushman cards have been generated for distribution.





Centre clears 10 new ESIC medical colleges to expand coverage

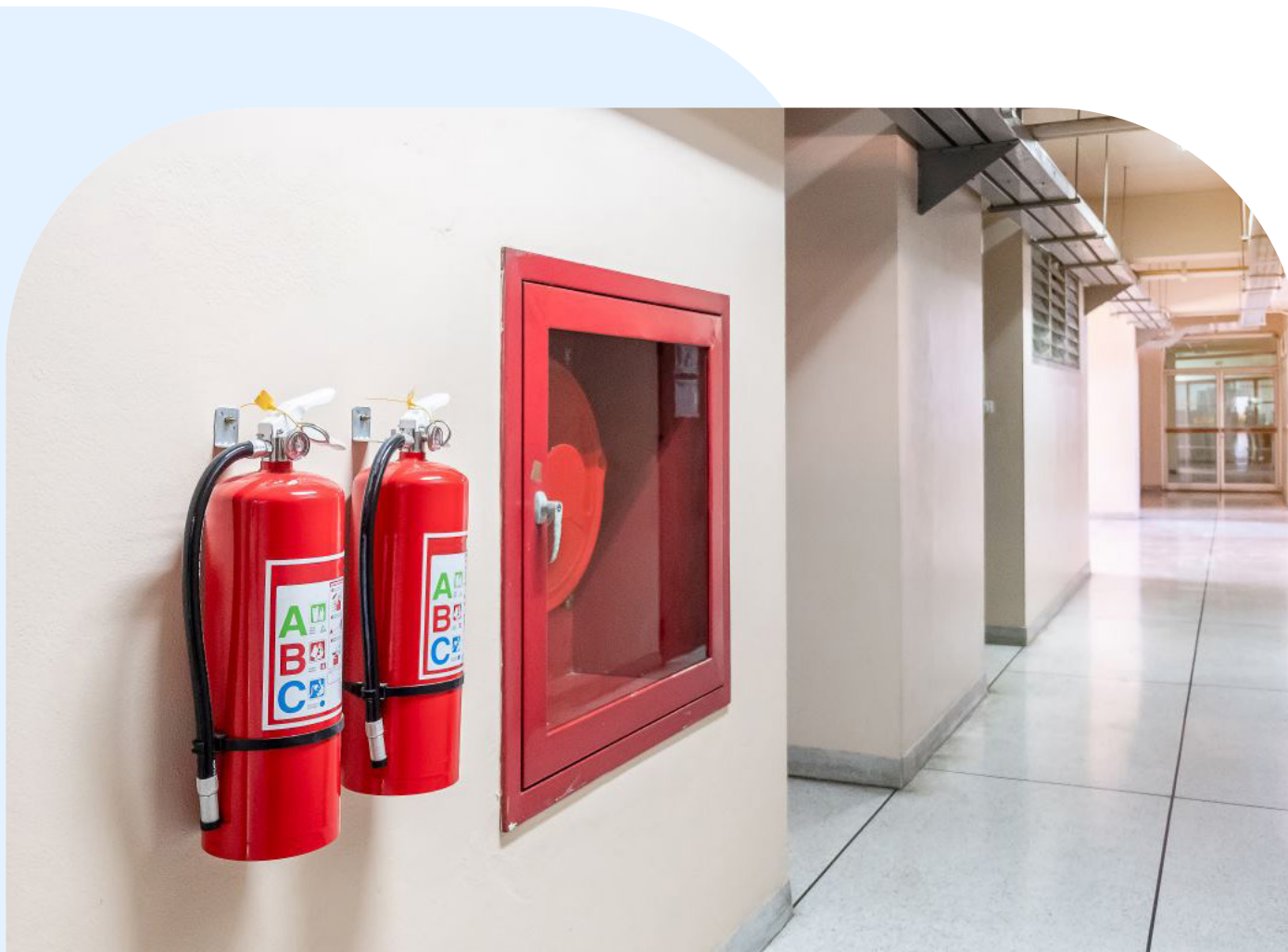
On 22nd April 2025, Union Minister of Labour and Employment, Mansukh Mandaviya, announced that the Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) given in-principle approval for the establishment of 10 new ESIC medical colleges across India. The decision was made during the 194th meeting of the ESI Corporation and aimed to improve access to quality healthcare and medical education. The new medical colleges approved in locations including Andheri (Maharashtra), Basaidarapur (Delhi), Guwahati (Assam), Indore (Madhya Pradesh), Jaipur (Rajasthan), Ludhiana (Punjab), Naroda-Bapunagar (Gujarat), Noida and Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh), and Ranchi (Jharkhand). Mandaviya emphasized that this move would strengthen ESIC infrastructure and meet the increasing demand for medical education seats in government institutions.

In addition to the approved sites, 10 more locations were under consideration for future medical colleges. The ESIC also planned to expand healthcare services through Primary Health Centres (PHCs) and Community Health Centres (CHCs) in underserved areas. A major convergence with the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) was also announced, enabling 14.4 crore ESIC beneficiaries to access cashless healthcare services at PMJAY-empanelled hospitals. The ESIC scheme had expanded to cover 691 districts, providing social protection to millions of workers and their families.

States asked to strengthen fire safety systems in hospitals nationwide

On 22nd April 2025, Union Health Secretary Punya Salila Srivastava held a meeting with top health officials from states and Union Territories to discuss fire prevention strategies in healthcare facilities. The meeting focused on addressing fire safety, emergency evacuation plans, and ensuring patient safety, particularly in high-risk areas of hospitals. Srivastava emphasized the importance of fire and electrical safety in health facilities, urging the implementation of fire safety planning, capacity building, and regular mock drills on evacuation procedures. She also stressed the need to cultivate a safety culture within healthcare settings.

To ensure the safety of hospitals, the health ministry circulated a checklist for states and UTs, directing both public and private health facilities to conduct fire and electrical safety audits. The Centre had issued similar directives last year to conduct comprehensive fire safety audits and on-site inspections ahead of the summer season. A joint advisory by the health ministry and the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) highlighted the importance of fully functional firefighting systems, including alarms, detectors, extinguishers, hydrants, and lifts. An analysis published in the Journal of Failure Analysis and Prevention found that short circuits were responsible for 89% of hospital fire incidents, with flammable chemicals causing 4%. The study noted that hospital fires pose a unique danger due to patients' limited ability to respond to emergencies.



Delhi plans to boost medical tourism with a one-stop service

On 28th April 2025, the Government of Delhi unveiled a comprehensive strategy to position the national capital as a leading global destination for medical value travel. Speaking at FICCI's 5th Medical Value Travel Awards, Ashish Sood, Minister for Home, Power, Urban Development, Education & Training, Government of NCT, Delhi, outlined plans to transform Delhi into a "credible medical destination" through regulatory reforms, infrastructure development, and a single-window system to ease services for international patients. He invited industry collaboration to develop hospitals, wellness centres, AYUSH facilities, and accommodations, underscoring that medical value travel now plays a strategic role in India's economy and diplomacy.

Sudhanshu Pandey, Election Commissioner for UTs and former Commerce Ministry official, noted healthcare's inclusion among India's 12 champion sectors and highlighted diagnostics as a high-potential area for global leadership.

The awards ceremony honoured excellence across hospitals and wellness centres contributing to India's medical tourism sector. Fortis Memorial Research Institute, Gurgaon, emerged as a top winner in several categories, while Fortis Escorts Heart Institute and Apollo Hospitals were also recognised for their specialised care. Other notable winners included VPS Lakeshore Hospital, Dr Rela Institute, Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals, Aashu Dental, and Atmantan Wellness Centre. The event brought together key industry leaders and policymakers to celebrate India's growing global stature in medical value travel.



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