

Dear Reader

Novel Coronavirus continues to be the biggest challenge for us. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has escalated risk assessment of Covid-19 to “very high.” With this, we also saw our stock exchanges sliding record low since 2008. The industry has estimated that Coronavirus may hit global GDP by more than USD 250 billion. Our major concern is supply-side constraints. The Indian Government has ordered all customs authorities at ports, airports & inland container depots to operate 24x7 to ensure that cargo is cleared expeditiously and it claims that there are no supply constraints due to the coronavirus outbreak. The move can address any congestion, or delay or surge on account of the prevailing conditions or cessation thereof. It is expected that the facility will be in operation till the end of May 2020 by which time, disruptions in the supply chain is expected to have settled.

On our part, NATHEALTH had expressed its views on the recent outbreak of novel coronavirus is a stark reminder that increasingly, global economies and supply chains are integrated and therefore have the vulnerability to cascading shocks. Our views and recommendations were highlighted by Mint this week. And the newspaper quoted NATHEALTH Secretary General Mr Siddhartha Bhattacharya saying “The very high-risk assessment by WHO for spread and impact of coronavirus at global level highlights that healthcare as a sector can have cascading effect on economies of nations and there is a need to reduce disparities of healthcare delivery standards not only within countries but also across countries.”

"Any shock to the health system triggered by a virus has the potential to fill up hospital beds, overwhelm the crowded public health infrastructure, drain healthcare medical workforce capacity and increase out of the pocket expenditure," said Mr Bhattacharya.

NATHEALTH continues to strengthen its thought leadership position and that took us this week to Bengaluru for the two-day The Economic Times Healthcare Business Summit on February 27-28. NATHEALTH, as knowledge Partner of the Summit, emphasized on excellence in delivering value-based healthcare. The Panel discussion on Arogya Bharat was moderated by our Secretary General Mr Siddhartha Bhattacharya and panellists included Dr Shushil Shah, Metropolis Hospital, Dr Sudarshan Ballal, Manipal Hospitals, Dr Chandy Abraham from ITC, and Mr Shamit Manchanda, The Indian Institute of Architects. Dr Ballal said that value-based health is a road to achieve excellence and it means achieving the best healthcare for the resources invested. The Summit witnessed participation of top NATHEALTH leaders. The final session on Supply Side Enablers was moderated Dr Vivek Dessai, Hosmac India. Healthcare leaders Mr Suhel Bidani, BMGF, Ms Ruma Banerjee, Neotia Healthcare, and Mr Sojwal Vora, Manipal Hospitals provided valuable insight on the issue.

On the policy front, the government is monitoring and reviewing the situation on coronavirus threat periodically at the top level. Periodic reviews prepare the country to deal with the threat effectively.

Check out the newsletter to know what is happening in other segments of the healthcare sector. Follow us on Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook for real time updates.

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NATHEALTH Leadership Series

[Coronavirus: Crucial India be Extra vigilant public health experts say](#)

It has become crucial that India be extra-vigilant about the spread of COVID-19, commonly referred to as the novel coronavirus, after the World Health Organization (WHO) on Friday raised the global risk assessment of the outbreak to "very high."

[Early recognition and immediate isolation can help us to combat Coronavirus : Dr N K Jairam](#)

In an article in ET Healthword, Dr Nanda Kumar Jairam Chairman, CEO and GMD at Columbia Asia hospitals and NATHEALTH Leader said India, being a densely populated country, would have to make extra efforts and all healthcare stakeholders need to come together for combating the greatest threat by a novel virus.

[Combatting Coronavirus](#)

Dr. Navin Dang, Founder & Director - Dr. Dangs Lab & NATHEALTH Leader talks about in an article in Biospectrum and says with positive cases having been detected in several provinces of mainland china, Japan, Thailand, USA and other countries, with a few cases in India, the risk of COVID-19 spreading in the country is a fear that most of us have at this stage.

[How diagnostic labs are failing patients in India in terms of poor standards](#)

The issue over diagnostic labs of questionable quality, which have mushroomed in every nook and cranny of our urban landscape, is so grave that even NATHEALTH-Healthcare Federation of India, an industry body, highlighted it recently through a report titled, 'An Assessment of India's Laboratory Diagnostic Industry'.

Healthcare Policy Updates

[The health of children and pregnant women continues to be the top most priority of the Government: Dr. Harsh Vardhan](#)

Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister of Health & Family Welfare inaugurated a special community outreach programme on Intensified Mission Indradhanush (IMI 2.0) at Shastri Park, Delhi today, through a video message. The three-day event is being organised by Song & Drama Division of Bureau of Outreach & Communication (BOC), under Ministry of Information & Broadcasting.

Measures taken regarding H1N1 infection of Judges of Hon. Supreme Court

Five judges of Hon. Supreme Court of India have been affected from Swine Flu which is caused by H1N1 virus. In order to curb the situation in the apex court, following preventive measures were immediately undertaken by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India: The First Aid Post (FAP) of CGHS was strengthened at the Supreme Court premises.

Update on Novel Coronavirus (COVID 19): New Travel Advisory

In view of the evolving situation related to COVID-19 being reported from other countries, besides the travel advisories already issued by Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India, following additional directions are issued: Indians are advised to refrain from non-essential travel to Republic of Korea, Iran and Italy.

Health Secretary reviews action taken and preparedness with the concerned States/UTs on COVID-19 through video conference

Ms. Preeti Sudan, Secretary (HFW) chaired a video conference with Health Secretaries from States/UTs along with senior officials of National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) and Airport Public Health Officers (APHOs) to review their preparedness for prevention and management of COVID-19, here today. Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan is reviewing the status, actions taken and preparedness of States/UTs every day.

With the dedicated support of public health professionals, diseases of public health importance have been eradicated or eliminated from India: Dr. Harsh Vardhan

"Under the dynamic leadership of our Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji, we are poised to achieve Universal Health Coverage by providing holistic care through the two pillars of Ayushman Bharat i.e. Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY) to provide healthcare coverage to 50 cr citizens of the country and setting up of Health and Wellness Centres in all parts of the country. We aim to transform 150,000 PHCs and sub-centres to HWCs by 2022", said Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare.

Healthcare Industry Overview

WHO raises global virus risk to maximum level

The World Health Organisation has raised its global risk assessment of the new coronavirus to its highest level after the epidemic spread to sub-Saharan Africa and caused financial markets to plunge. WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said the risk was being raised to "very high" because of the continued increase in cases and the number of new countries affected in recent days

Centre must aid firms to fight coronavirus impact: Experts

The central government should immediately step in to help out the Indian industry-especially the pharmaceutical sector- affected by the Chinese economic clampdown caused by the 2019 novel coronavirus infection, said experts at a talk held at the Indian Merchants Chamber in Mumbai

[Rare Diseases: Health Ministry urged to create special fund, exempt medicines from tax](#)

[India currently has over 8,000 patients with rare diseases, including genetic disorders like Hunter syndrome, Gaucher disease and Fabry's disease. As the government works on a comprehensive national policy on rare diseases, the sector urged the Health Ministry to create a "special fund" and exempt the medicines and equipment required for treatment of such conditions from import duties and GST.](#)

[Diagnosics Forum](#)

[Sixth suspected corona case: Girl from Italy admitted to Indore hospital](#)

[Doctors had taken sample of her blood and mucus and sent it to laboratory in Pune for testing. The girl informed doctors that she had come to the hospital after developing cough, when she came to know that one of her friends in Italy was detected with coronavirus infection.](#)

[Coronavirus scare: Traveller from S Korea put in isolation, 170 from Iran told to stay indoors](#)

[A Mira Road resident who returned from Covid-19-affected South Korea on Saturday after a 27-day stay, was placed under quarantine at civic-run Kasturba Hospital in Kolkata on Sunday.](#)

[Coronavirus outbreak: 85 Indian students in Italian town send SOS](#)

[Panic among the students has escalated since a non-teaching faculty member of the University of Pavia's engineering department tested positive for coronavirus. Around 15 other staff members have been quarantined.](#)

[Egypt detects second case of new coronavirus: Health Ministry](#)

[The ministry said that the person, whose nationality was not announced, was taken to an isolation hospital and is currently receiving the necessary medical care.](#)

[Australia, Thailand report 1st deaths; Italy sees 40% jump in cases](#)

[China, where the outbreak began two months ago, on Sunday reported a slight uptick in new cases over the past 24 hours to 573, the first time in five days that the number exceeded.](#)

[Medtech Forum](#)

[Niti Aayog, health ministry reach consensus on Medical Devices Bill](#)

[The Economic Times reports that Government think tank Niti Aayog and the health ministry have arrived at a consensus on the Medical Devices Bill. The moves ends months of wrangling over several issues, including what will encourage domestic manufacturing.](#)

[Chandigarh: PGI to fortify life-saving equipment](#)

[According to Prof G D Puri, in-charge of the biomedical hub project at PGI, the health institution has decided to set up a centre for calibrating instruments of the institute. He says that calibration is very much required for medical equipment. The PGI is going to make some instruments for calibration to validate and check companies'](#)

claims that their equipment is better.

[MTAI members ready to brace up for any shortage of medical devices](#)

The Medical Technology Association of India (MTAI) on Wednesday said its member companies are ready to brace up for any shortages in medical devices and equipment arising out of scarcity of raw materials from China due to coronavirus outbreak.

[Coronavirus squeezes medical devices out of market](#)

Manufacturers of med devices have started pressing the panic button as they are running out of key raw materials — mainly the electronic parts for these items, imported from regions like Hangzhou and Dongguan in China. With no sign of supplies being replenished anytime soon, their assembly lines could face closure from March-end or April onwards.

[Insurance Forum](#)

[GST paid on life, health cover premiums are eligible for tax deduction benefits](#)

When you pay a premium for a life or health policy, you also have to pay goods and services tax (GST), which effectively increases the overall premium. GST is charged on different parts of the premium, depending on the type of policy you buy.

[New tax regime doesn't incentivize purchase of health insurance](#)

In a conversation with Mint, Tapan Singhel, Managing Director & CEO of Bajaj Allianz General Insurance Co. Ltd said the Insurance Regulator has ensured that people receive the benefits of a health insurance policy without worrying about the various coverage and exclusions-related intricacies. According to him, easier a policy is to understand, the better it is for a customer to make a purchase decision.

[Life insurers may sell indemnity-based health cover soon](#)

Currently, life insurance companies are only allowed to sell fixed-benefit-based health insurance policies, where fixed amount is given to the policy buyer in the event of covered medical emergency.

[Healthcare Events](#)

[India Health 2020](#)

Brought to you by the organizers of Arab Health, India Health will take place from 14-16 April 2020 at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi, India. Healthcare has become one of India's largest sectors both in terms of revenue and employment. India Health presents an opportunity to all stakeholders in search of a platform that facilitates business interaction, learning and development, and access to the right healthcare entities, authorities and associations in a fast-emerging economy.

[Conference on Healthcare in India](#)

Conference on Healthcare in India aim is to highlight the emerging trends, identify the challenges, analyze the impact of key policy and regulatory changes and identify the upcoming opportunities in the healthcare sector.

