



DAILY NEWS BULLETIN

LEADING HEALTH, POPULATION AND FAMILY WELFARE STORIES OF THE DAY
Thursday 20190718

New medical regulator - MCI

End of road for MCI, Cabinet clears new medical regulator (The Tribune: 20190718)

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/nation/end-of-road-for-mci-cabinet-clears-new-medical-regulator/803661.html>

India today paved the way for sweeping reforms in medical education sector with the Union Cabinet passing a Bill to replace the 63-year-old Medical Council of India with a new regulator called the National Medical Commission (NMC).

The NMC Bill, 2019, scraps the Indian Medical Council Act, 1956, under which the MCI was set up. The efforts for the transition have been underway since 2016 when the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health presented a damning report on the MCI concluding that the council had failed in fulfilling all its mandates and needed to be replaced.

Calling the MCI corrupt, the committee had said the MCI system wherein the regulated (medical colleges) elected the regulator (MCI members) was deeply flawed and must end. The NMC is proposed as a 29-member body — 20 to come through selection/nomination and nine through election.

The new commission will have four autonomous boards to regulate medical education — Undergraduate Medical Education Board, Postgraduate Medical Education Board, Medical Assessment and Rating Board and Ethics and Medical Registration Board.

While the UG and PG Boards will lay down the standards for education, the Rating Board will grant permissions for new colleges. The Bill ends the existing tradition of annual renewal permission for new medical colleges.

“Medical colleges have to conform to standards the NMC will lay down. Once they conform and are permitted to operate, there would be no need for annual renewals. That system will end,” said a government source, adding that the Rating Board will develop national ranking system for medical college to help students choose better.

The hallmark of the new Bill is reduced burden of entrance tests on students and uniform national standards of medical education.

The Bill proposes to treat the final year MBBS exam as the licensiate exam for MBBS passouts across India and also as PG entrance test and screening test for foreign medical graduates who return to India for practise here. This final year MBBS exam will be called the National Exit Test.

At present, NEET-PG is held for PG entrance and FMG test is separately held annually. “Once the NMC Bill rolls out, NEET-PG and FMG tests will not be needed. National Exit Test will serve as PG entrance test even for entry to institutes of national importance like AIIMS, PGI Chandigarh and JIPMER Puducherry. It will also be the licensiate exam for MBBS pass outs.

“At present, different medical colleges have different MBBS exam patters which means we are never sure of the quality of the medical graduate passing out of MBBS. The NMC proposal is to ensure a uniform national pattern for final year MBBS exam so that all medical graduates who get the licence to practise conform to uniform national standards and quality,” a Health Ministry source said.

The NMC Bill also proposes — for the first time — a cap on fees in 50 per cent of the MBBS and PG seats in private medical colleges and deemed universities and a heavy penalty for quackery.

Sweeping reforms in store

March 2016 Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health presents a report calling MCI corrupt, recommends its replacement

Aug PM appoints special panel, which presents report on draft National Medical Commission Bill to replace IMC Act

July 7, 2017 GoM led by Arun Jaitley clears Bill

Dec 15 Cabinet approves NMC Bill for first time

Dec 29 JP Nadda introduces NMC Bill in LS

Jan 1, 2018 Consideration of NMC Bill in LS deferred as IMA protests provisions to let AYUSH practitioners dispense medicine after a bridge course, hold exit test after MBBS course to license passouts; Bill sent to parliamentary panel

March 20 Parliamentary panel rejects govt proposals for separate licensing exit tests for MBBS passouts and bridge course for AYUSH practitioners

July 17, 2019 Central Government approves new draft NMC Bill dropping all controversial clauses



Pollution

Gurugram, Panipat critically polluted (The Tribune: 20190718)

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/haryana/gurugram-panipat-critically-polluted/803714.html>

Gurugram is on the ninth position and Panipat at the 11th spot among the top 100 polluted industrial clusters across the country. File photo

The industrial clusters at Gurugram and Panipat are critically polluted. Gurugram is on the ninth position and Panipat at the 11th spot among the top 100 polluted industrial clusters across the country.

This was revealed in a survey conducted by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) in 2018. The CPCB has produced its report before the National Green Tribunal (NGT) during the hearing of a case.

Following the reports, the NGT has ordered the shutting down all polluting industries within three months in 'critically polluted areas' (CPAs) and 'severely polluted areas' (SPAs) across the country.

A Bench headed by NGT Chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel directed the CPCB to assess the quantum of compensation to be recovered from polluting units for the past five years in coordination with the respective state pollution control boards (SPCBs).

It also directed that no further industrial activities or expansion should be allowed with regard to 'red' and 'orange' category units till the areas are brought within the prescribed parameters or till the carrying capacity of the area is assessed.

The NGT has directed to recover compensation at the rate of Rs1 crore from large-scale industries, Rs50 lakh from medium-scale industries and Rs25 lakh from small-scale industries taking into account the cost of restoration and cost of damage to public health and environment and the deterrence element.

The NGT, however, clarified that the industries under white and green category would not be affected by this order.

As per the data of Haryana State Pollution Control Board, 350 industrial units are in red category; 220 in orange category and 25 industries are in green category at Panipat.

The CPCB carried out the physical study of the industrial clusters in the country with reference to the Comprehensive Environmental Pollution Index which includes weightage on the nature of pollutants, ambient pollutant concentrations, receptors (number of people affected) and additional high-risk element across the country.

Dengue, chikungunya

Monsoon-ready: Govt releases Rs 109 cr to check dengue, chikungunya spread (The Tribune: 20190718)

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/delhi/monsoon-ready-govt-releases-rs-109-cr-to-check-dengue-chikungunya-spread/803913.html>

The Urban Development Department on the directions of the Delhi Government today released Rs 109 crore to three municipal corporation so that the civic bodies are prepared to deal with vector-borne diseases such as dengue, chikungunya and malaria in the ongoing monsoon.

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal directed the department that it should be ensured that funds don't be an excuse for lack of preparation for the prevention of diseases in the Capital.

A government statement said the funds were released following the directions of the Chief Minister to the Urban Development Department.

The North Municipal Corporation Department got Rs 57.15 crore, East Municipal Corporation Department Rs 28.4 crore and the South Municipal Corporation Department received Rs 23.57 crore.

Kejriwal said, "The Delhi Government is fully committed for the prevention of vector-borne diseases and will not allow funds to become a hindrance in ensuring that the residents of Delhi do not suffer due to any excuse in taking steps for the prevention of these diseases, which cause a panic in society."

Kejriwal directed the department to tell the BJP-led three municipal corporations — south, north and east — that there should be no excuse in dealing with dengue and chikungunya in their area.

The Chief Minister directed the department to take all necessary steps to ensure proper utilisation of funds so that preventive steps, like house-to-house visits of corporation department staff to check spread of mosquitoes, were carried out.

Kejriwal directed the civic bodies that maintenance of public health is their mandatory function as defined in the Delhi Municipal Corporations Act.

The government under the education head also released an amount of Rs 12.5 crore to the North Municipal Corporation Department, Rs 22.5 crore to East Municipal Corporation Department and Rs 11.75 crore to the South Municipal Corporation Department, for primary education to the civic bodies.

Govt braces for mosquito season

The Delhi Government is fully committed for the prevention of vector-borne diseases and will not allow funds to become a hindrance in ensuring that the residents of the Capital do not suffer due to any excuse in the prevention of spread of these diseases. Maintenance of public health in the region is our main goal. — Arvind Kejriwal, Delhi Chief Minister

New kind of cell that helps heal the heart

Scientists find a new kind of cell that helps heal the heart (The Tribune: 20190718)

Researchers have discovered a previously unidentified cell population which could lead to new treatments for patients with injured hearts.

The cell, described in the journal *Immunity*, was discovered in the pericardial fluid found in the sac around the heart of a mouse with heart injury.

The researchers from the University of Calgary in Canada found that a specific cell, a Gata6+ pericardial cavity macrophage, helps heal an injured heart in mice.

The same cells were also found within the human pericardium of people with injured hearts, confirming that the repair cells offer the promise of a new therapy for patients with heart disease.

"Our discovery of a new cell that can help heal injured heart muscle will open the door to new therapies and hope for the millions of people who suffer from heart disease," said Paul Fedak, a professor at the University of Calgary.

"The possibilities for further discovery and innovative new therapies are exciting and important," said Fedak.

Heart doctors had never before explored the possibility that cells just outside the heart could participate in healing and repair of hearts after injury, researchers said.

Unlike other organs, the heart has a very limited capacity to repair itself which is why heart disease is the number one cause of death in North America, they said.

"We always knew that the heart sits inside a sac filled with a strange fluid," said Fedak.

"Now we know that this pericardial fluid is rich with healing cells. These cells may hold the secret to repair and regeneration of new heart muscle," he said. — PTI

This low-cost filter removes arsenic, iron from water

This low-cost filter removes arsenic, iron from water (The Tribune: 20190718)

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/health/this-low-cost-filter-removes-arsenic-iron-from-water/803480.html>

Researchers have developed a simple and cost-effective filtration system that may help reduce the health burden caused by arsenic and iron contaminated groundwater.

Arsiron Nilogon, developed by a team led by Robin Kumar Dutta from Tezpur University in Assam, filters out 99.9 per cent of the arsenic contamination from the groundwater to make it suitable for drinking.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), arsenic is a natural component of the Earth's crust and is widely distributed throughout the environment -- in air, water and land.

However, it is highly toxic in its inorganic form, researchers said.

Long term exposure to inorganic arsenic, mainly by drinking contaminated water, eating food grown or even prepared with this water, can cause skin lesions and cancer, they said.

Several Indian states, including, Assam, West Bengal, UP and Bihar, are highly affected by the groundwater arsenic contamination.

Dutta, a faculty in the Department of Chemical Science of Tezpur University, said the filtration system is highly cost-effective and simple to operate.

"In Arsiron Nilogon, we simply create a condition in a bucket or drum of water, which exists in the aquifer giving us arsenic-free water to remove arsenic by successive additions of three common chemicals," Dutta told PTI.

He said the chemicals used in the filtration process are cooking soda for pH conditioning, potassium permanganate for supplying oxygen and ferric chloride for providing solid iron oxide adsorbents of arsenic.

The unit can be custom-made at home at a very low cost. The doses used for twenty litres are 2 grammes of cooking soda, six drops of 5 per cent potassium permanganate and two millilitres of 25 per cent ferric chloride for removing arsenic in absence of dissolved iron.

More potassium permanganate has to be added until a purple colour remains in the water in presence of dissolved iron.

After dosing, in 1-2 hours, solid iron oxides settle down along with arsenic which can be filtered out using a sand-gravel or any other filter.

The residue thus gets settled leaving only clean water for use, researchers said.

The method can remove arsenic even to below 2 ppb (parts per billion) level while the WHO has set 10 ppb as the standard level.

Dutta also said the filtration process removes other toxic metal ions like manganese, lead, nickel, chromium, copper, etc, very well along with arsenic and iron.

"A household filter can be made using two plastic buckets and some other easily available materials at a cost of about 350 rupees while the recurring cost is about one paisa per litre," Dutta said, adding he felt motivated to develop the filtration system after he lost some of his dear ones due to the problem.

With the aim to encourage people adopt the technology, the team is also training volunteers on how to install and maintain a filter using the technique. PTI

Brain Reading Threads (the Asian Age: 20190718)

<http://onlinepaper.asianage.com/article/detailpage.aspx?id=13401878>

Musk's Neuralink plans brain reading threads

■ New tech could allow doctors to implant devices in paralysed humans, which let them operate computer

Neuralink, Tesla fame Elon Musk's secretive company, said it has developed new flexible "threads," which are less likely to damage the brain than the materials currently used in brain-machine interfaces.

The company has been working on to develop brain-machine interfaces for quite sometime. The goal is to eventually begin implanting devices in paralysed humans, allowing them to control phones or computers.

These threads also create the possibility of transferring a higher volume of data, according to a white paper credited to Elon Musk and Neuralink.

The abstract notes that the system could include "as many as 3,072 electrodes per array distributed across 96 threads."

The threads are 4 to 6 µm in width, which makes them considerably thinner than a human hair. In addition to developing the

threads, Neuralink's other big advance is a machine that automatically embeds them.

Musk gave a big presentation of Neuralink's research on Tuesday night, though he said that it wasn't simply for hype. "The main reason for doing this presentation is recruiting," Musk said, asking people to go apply to work there.

Max Hodak, president of Neuralink, also came on stage and admitted that he wasn't originally sure "this technology was a good idea," but that Musk convinced him it would be possible.

In the future, scientists from Neuralink hope to use a laser beam to get through the skull, rather than drilling holes, they said in interviews with The New York Times. Early experiments will be done with neuroscientists at Stanford University, according to that report.

"We hope to have this in a

■ The threads will create better interface between brain and machines to help paralysed humans.

■ They will also create the possibility of transferring a higher volume of data to brain.

■ The threads are 4 to 6 µm in width, which makes them considerably thinner than a human hair.

"A monkey has been able to control a computer with its brain."

— ELON MUSK



human patient by the end of next year," Musk said.

During a Q&A at the end of the presentation, Musk revealed results that the rest of the team hadn't realised he would: "A monkey has been able to control a computer with its brain."

"It's not going to be suddenly Neuralink will have this neural lace and start taking over people's

brains," Musk said. "Ultimately" he wants "to achieve a symbiosis with artificial intelligence."

And that even in a "benign scenario," humans would be "left behind." Hence, he wants to create technology that allows a "merging with AI." He later added "we are a brain in a vat, and that vat is our skull," and so the goal is to read neural spikes from

that brain.

The first paralysed person to receive a brain implant that allowed him to control a computer cursor was Matthew Nagle. In 2006, Nagle, who had a spinal cord injury, played Pong using only his mind; the basic movement required took him only four days to master, he told *The New York Times*. Since then, paralysed

people with brain implants have also brought objects into focus and moved robotic arms in labs, as part of scientific research.

The system Nagle and others have used is called BrainGate and was developed initially at Brown University.

"Neuralink didn't come out of nowhere, there's a long history of academic research here," Hodak said at the presentation on Tuesday. "We're, in the greatest sense, building on the shoulders of giants." However, none of the existing technologies fit Neuralink's goal of directly reading neural spikes in a minimally invasive way.

The system presented today, if it's functional, may be a substantial advance over older technology. BrainGate relied on the Utah Array, a series of stiff needles that allows for up to 128 electrode channels. Not only is that fewer channels than

Neuralink is promising — meaning less data from the brain is being picked up — it's also stiffer than Neuralink's threads. That's a problem for long-term functionality: the brain shifts in the skull but the needles of the array don't, leading to damage. The thin polymers Neuralink is using may solve that problem.

However, Neuralink's technology is more difficult to implant than the Utah Array, precisely because it's so flexible. To combat that problem, the company has developed "a neurosurgical robot capable of inserting six threads (192 electrodes) per minute automatically," according to the white paper. In photos, it looks something like a cross between a microscope and a sewing machine. It also avoids blood vessels, which may lead to less of an inflammatory response in the brain, the paper says. — *Agencies*

Vector-borne diseases

Civic bodies get ₹109 cr. to tackle vector-borne diseases (The Hindu: 20190718)

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Delhi/civic-bodies-get-109-cr-to-tackle-vector-borne-diseases/article28530510.ece>

The Delhi government has released ₹109 crore to all the three municipal corporations of the Capital to deal with vector-borne diseases such as dengue and chikungunya during the ongoing monsoon season, it said in a statement here on Wednesday.

According to the government, the funds were released following Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's directions to this effect issued to the Urban Development Department.

House visits

Mr. Kejriwal directed the department to tell the BJP-led three municipal corporations — South, North and East — that there should be no excuse in tackling these diseases.

The Chief Minister had directed the department to take all necessary steps to ensure proper utilisation of funds so that preventive steps, like house-to-house visits of civic bodies' staff to check spread of mosquitoes, are carried out.

While the North and East Corporations have been given ₹57.15 crore and ₹28.4 crore respectively, the South Delhi Municipal Corporation got ₹23.57 crore under the health head.

At loggerheads

In the past, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government and the BJP-led municipal corporations have been at loggerheads on a range of issues, especially the issue of funds which triggered strikes by sanitation workers on many occasions.

Apart from the funds ordered to be released on Wednesday, under the education head, the Delhi government has released a total of around ₹46.75 crore to the East, North and South Corporations.

Funds granted

Of the total amount released, the North and the East Corporations will get ₹12.5 crore and ₹22.5 crore respectively, while the South body has been granted ₹11.75 crore under same head.

Support quality journalism - Subscribe to The Hindu Digital

Menstrual cups

Menstrual cups are safe, reusable and cheap: study (The Hindu: 20190718)

<https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/health/menstrual-cups-are-safe-reusable-and-cheap-study/article28525793.ece>

They collect blood rather than absorb it, and last longer

Inexpensive and reusable menstrual cups are safe and as unlikely as disposable pads or tampons to leak, according to the first major scientific review of the devices, published on Wednesday.

Some 70% of women who have tried menstrual cups said they would like to continue using them, researchers reported in *The Lancet Public Health*, a peer-reviewed medical journal.

Sanitary protection remains unavailable and unaffordable to many women around the world, the authors noted.

This means monthly bleeding keeps many girls and women out of school or work, and puts them at risk of urinary tract infections if they use inferior products or make-do substitutes.

The diary of a new menstrual cup user

In some cultures, girls or women unable to conceal bleeding may face hostility, even violence.

A safe, affordable and long-lasting alternative to pads and tampons, in other words, has the potential to change the lives of millions.

“Despite the fact that 1.9 billion women globally are of menstruating age — spending on average 65 days a year dealing with menstrual blood flow — few good quality studies exist

that compare sanitary products,” said Penelope Phillips-Howard, a professor at the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine.

The new research — a review of 43 earlier studies gathering data on 3,300 women — is the first to evaluate menstrual cups.

Made from medical grade silicone, rubber or latex, the cups collect blood rather than absorb it, as pads and tampons do. They last from four to 12 hours.

There are two types: a so-called vaginal cup which is generally bell-shaped, and a cervical cup, which is placed around the cervix high in the vagina much like a diaphragm for contraception.

In four of the studies reviewed, the cups were found to be as effective or better at collecting blood than sanitary pads or tampons.

The research showed no increased risk of infection. There were, however, five reported cases of toxic shock syndrome (TSS), a potentially life-threatening condition caused by bacteria getting into the body via foreign objects.

Since the overall number of menstrual cup users is unknown, researchers could not determine how this compared with tampons, known to boost the risk for TSS.

The cup is reusable and can last for up to ten years, making it cheaper in the long run than disposable alternatives. In some places, however, the cups can be expensive, costing as much as \$40 apiece.

“For consumers purchasing menstrual products, the results highlight cups as a safe and cost-effective option,” Julie Hennegan from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health said in a comment, also in *The Lancet Public Health*.

Yet, even in rich countries, only a fifth of women on average knew about the new devices, three of the studies found.

Nearly 200 brands are available in 99 countries, but cups were only mentioned in a third of websites with educational information and advice on puberty in 27 countries.

Support quality journalism - Subscribe to The Hindu Digital

Mosquito-killing drug

Mosquito-killing drug offers new tool for fighting malaria (The Hindu: 20190718)

A mosquito-killing drug tested in Burkina Faso reduced malaria cases by a fifth among children and could be an important new tool in the global fight against the disease, researchers said.

The drug, ivermectin, is already widely used to treat parasitic infections but had not previously been tested for its effects on malaria incidence, said Brian Foy, author of a study published this week in British medical journal The Lancet.

When people take ivermectin it makes their blood lethal to the mosquitoes that bite them, thereby reducing the likelihood that others will be bitten and infected, the study showed.

Foy said it could potentially be used in combination with other malaria control methods to protect more people.

“This adds another important tool to the malaria control toolbox that we really need, because malaria gains have been stalling,” Foy told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

After several years of steady declines, annual cases of the mosquito-borne disease have levelled off, according to the U.N. health agency’s 2018 malaria report.

Malaria infects over 200 million people a year and killed 435,000 in 2017, mostly in Africa.

The drug trial involved 2,700 people, including 590 children, from eight villages in Burkina Faso.

In villages without the drug there was an average of 2.5 malaria cases per child during peak mosquito season, but in villages that received the drug it dropped to two cases per child.

The number of children who did not catch malaria at all more than doubled in the group that received the drug, Foy said.

Scientists say the fight against malaria has stalled in part because mosquitoes have become resistant to the kind of insecticide commonly used on bed nets.

Other control methods being tested include a vaccine and genetic modifications to block mosquito reproduction.

“With both drug and insecticide resistance looming it is widely accepted that new approaches for malaria are urgently needed,” said Chris Drakeley, a professor of infection and immunity at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

The trial was small and there could be logistical challenges to scaling up since it required multiple rounds of mass drug administration, he said, but the results are promising.

“This study is the first of its kind to demonstrate effect at community level, highlighting a potential new avenue for malaria control,” said Drakeley.

Support quality journalism - Subscribe to The Hindu Digital

Medicines Prices

To offset supply shortages, NPPA may hike prices of some medicines (The Indian Express: 20190718)

<https://indianexpress.com/article/business/to-offset-supply-shortages-nppa-may-hike-prices-of-some-medicines-5835000/>

The move comes in response to representations by pharmaceutical companies to relax price ceilings of several medicines, they added. However, it is not clear at this stage how much the prices may go up and the proposal might also be sent to other government bodies like NITI Aayog for deliberation, The Indian Express has learnt.

Why drug companies and doctors are battling over the use of faecal transplants

Draft Pharmaceutical Policy 2017: 'Recognising drug quality concerns in India signals paradigm shift'

Govt may prescribe subsidy pill for pharma firms to upgrade plants

drug prices, drugs in india, shortage of drugs, prices of drugs, Health ministry, National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority, JP Nadda, Indian express

MRPs of formulations like antibiotics metronidazole and benzylpenicillin and BCG vaccine for tuberculosis could increase. (Illustration: C R Sasikumar)

The drug pricing regulator is mulling a proposal to increase prices of certain medicines under price control to offset potential shortages due to increasing prices of key ingredients used to make them, The Indian Express has learnt.

This means maximum retail prices (MRPs) of formulations like antibiotics metronidazole and benzylpenicillin, BCG vaccine for tuberculosis, leprosy medication dapsone and malaria drug chloroquine could increase, according to senior government officials aware of the development.

The move comes in response to representations by pharmaceutical companies to relax price ceilings of several medicines, they added. However, it is not clear at this stage how much the prices may go up and the proposal might also be sent to other government bodies like NITI Aayog for deliberation, The Indian Express has learnt.

While minutes of a meeting held by pricing regulator National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) in late June mention that an upward price revision is being considered for 19 formulations, a senior official said the regulator has since curbed its list to 12.

NPPA's minutes do not expand on which formulations it is considering. Queries sent to NPPA chairperson Shubhra Singh about this development remained unanswered by press time Wednesday.

"Many of these are essential, life-saving drugs that already had low prices, but price caps may be causing some companies to stop production," the official cited above said.

Some of these molecules may be "disappearing" from the market as a result, said the official, adding that a move to increase their ceiling price is to make sure they remain in supply. If firms stop selling these drugs due to losses, it could also lead to stronger versions of such medicines

being used, adding to a growing problem of drug resistance in the country, according to the official.

Formulations like metronidazole, BCG vaccine, dapsone and chloroquine have figured in the National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM) since 2003, while benzylpenicillin, previously deleted from the NLEM in 2011, was re-added to the list in November 2015.

Karnataka floor test: MLAs have made false allegations in SC, says CM

Ayodhya dispute: Mediation to continue till July 31, SC hearing likely from August 2

Once a drug is included in the NLEM, the Department of Pharmaceuticals (DoP) notifies it for price control, after which NPPA caps its ceiling prices. These ceiling prices are increased or decreased to account for changes in annual wholesale price index (WPI).

NPPA wrote to some government departments, including DoP earlier this year, seeking amendments to India's drug pricing regulations — Drug Price Control Orders — to allow for upward price revisions, another senior official said.

“There were representations made from certain companies on the impact of increasing costs of APIs, and many formulations for which NPPA has received requests (for upward price revisions),” said the official. APIs, or active pharmaceutical ingredients, are key ingredients used to give a drug its therapeutic effect. NPPA can use extraordinary powers under paragraph 19 of the order to fix new prices, if it feels such upward revisions are required ‘in public interest’,” the official added.

With India still dependent on China for over 60 per cent of its API requirements, higher API costs for price-controlled medicines eat into profits and sometimes make production of these drugs unviable here, according to an executive of a large drug maker.

MORE EXPLAINED

Taking stock of monsoon rain

“Suppliers of key ingredients do not want to negotiate the prices they charge companies, because they are not affected by price control,” the executive told The Indian Express on condition of anonymity. In such an environment, firms will begin to exit market over a period of time, the executive said. In cases where a firm has to continue supplying the drug because it is the only manufacturer or it has majority market share, it could still lead to supply shortages, as per the executive. “The company will continue to suffer and the volumes will go down, which means patients might not get access to these drugs going forward,” the person said.

“Despite tight control of NPPA norms to maintain supplies of such drugs, there have still been some instances of shortages,” the executive said.

Water-borne diseases

Water-borne diseases see uptick in city after rains (Hindustan Times: 20190718)

<http://paper.hindustantimes.com/epaper/viewer.aspx>

With Delhi monsoon finally setting in, doctors across the city have started noting an increase in gastro-intestinal infections like diarrhoea, jaundice, and typhoid, and sporadic cases of dengue and malaria.

“The number started increasing from last week; there has been around a 30% increase in the number of patients with gastrointestinal diseases in my clinic. I also have a patients with suspected dengue. This usually happens every monsoon,” said Dr Srikant Sharma, senior consulting physician at Moolchand Hospital.

And, the numbers are likely to go up in the coming weeks.

“The rains have just begun. But, there could be an increase in the number of mosquito-borne diseases like dengue, chikungunya, and malaria as monsoon progresses and mosquito breeding increases,” said Dr Suranjit Chatterjee, senior consultant of internal medicine at Indraprastha Apollo hospitals.

To prevent gastro-intestinal infections, doctors suggest following good hand-hygiene, drinking only boiled or properly filtered water, and avoid eating cut fruits or drinking juices from street-side vendors.

“The infections mainly spread because people end up having contaminated food or water and can be prevented by avoiding eating from street-vendors and carrying your own boiled or filtered water while stepping out. People should not step out in the rain and avoid the temperature changes as this weakens the body’s immune system,” said Dr Sharma.

To prevent mosquito-borne illnesses, doctors suggest preventing breeding by cleaning out all containers that hold water in and around the house once a week.

“Further people should use

mosquito repellents and wear clothes with full sleeves and legs,” said Dr Sharma.

But, when is it time to go to a doctor? The experts suggest that people look out for these red flags.

“People should go to a doctor if their fever does not subside after three or four days, if the fever is more than 103 degrees, if the fever is accompanied by vomiting and diarrhoea, especially children and the old. Any headache, body and joint pain, accompanied with pain behind the eye, vomiting and nausea and bruising can also indicate dengue or chikungunya, so people should

consult a doctor,” said Dr SP Byotra, head of the department of medicine at Sir Ganga Ram hospital.

Union health minister Dr Harsh Vardhan stressed on the importance of community participation in controlling the spread of vector borne diseases while kick-starting a three-day awareness drive in Delhi on Wednesday. This will be the first time the centre, state government, and civic bodies will come together to raise awareness about diseases like malaria and dengue that plague Delhiites every monsoon.

Population explosion

Religion just one facet of the population explosion debate (Hindustan Times: 20190718)

<http://paper.hindustantimes.com/epaper/viewer.aspx>

The demand to disenfranchise couples with over two kids would affect Hindus more than Muslims

Expressing concern over a “population explosion” in India, Union minister Giriraj Singh last week suggested, for the second time, that Indians with more than two children be deprived of their right to vote. Singh stressed religious interference as one of the obstacles in controlling population growth.

A Hindustan Times analysis shows that religion does play a role in determining the number of children a couple has, and Muslims tend to have more children than other religious groups. However, if Singh’s prescription of depriving couples with more than two children of their voting rights were to be implemented, significantly more Hindus would end up losing their voting rights than Muslims. This is because religion is not the only determinant of fertility rates, Data from the fourth National Family Health Survey (NFHS), conducted in 2015-16, shows that nearly every second married Muslim woman in India has more than two living children, compared to just one in three married Hindu women. Share of women with more than two children is even lower among religious groups such as Christians, Sikhs and Jains. (See Chart 1)

However, the differences in number of children are bigger when it comes to factors other than religion. For instance, nearly 60% uneducated Indian women have more than two children, compared to just 6% women who have attained higher education.

Similarly, the share of women who have more than two children is less among younger and wealthier women. A woman’s caste, too, plays a role here – 38% women among the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe communities have more than two children, compared to 29% women from upper-caste com

To be sure, these socio-economic parameters do not determine fertility independent of religion. Muslims have a higher share of women with more than two children even within these socio-economic parameters.

For example, 21% women in the richest 20% households of India have more than two children. But religion-wise, a higher share of Muslim women have more than two children compared to Hindu women in the richest households – the difference is of 17 percentage points.

This difference on the basis of religion is seen in the age, education and class categories as well. (See Chart 3)

Does the higher number of children among Muslims suggest that they would one day overtake Hindu population in India? According to the 2011 Census, Muslims formed about 14% of the

country's population. Using population growth figures of Hindus and Muslims, Sachin Mampatta, in an article in Mint newspaper, found that growth in Muslim population was actually falling faster than that of the Hindu population. Mampatta found that if the growth rate trends seen from the latest census data sustain, four out of five Indians will still be Hindu even when the Muslim population peaks.

Who will lose the most if Singh's proposal of taking away voting rights from couples with more than two children is implemented? Muslims, poor, uneducated, old and people from certain caste and tribe groups have a larger share of people who would lose their right to vote because more of them have more than two children. In terms of religious group, Muslims would be the biggest losers, as nearly 49% of Muslim couples have more than two living children.

However, in absolute terms, the story is drastically different. Of about 36% Indian couples who have more than two children, Hindus constitute an overwhelming 83%, compared to just 13% Muslim couples. Even among Hindus, the share of socially deprived is significantly large. Survey data for only married partners with same religion and caste group has been used for this analysis. (See Chart 4)

Depression (Hindustan: 20190718)

http://epaper.livehindustan.com/imageview_140142_97657556_4_1_18-07-2019_i_18.pagezoomsinwindows.php

बच्चों में अवसाद बढ़ा रहा सोशल मीडिया



सह

नई दिल्ली | हिन्दुस्तान टाइम्स

आपका बड़ा होता बच्चा टीवी और सोशल मीडिया पर ज्यादा समय दे रहा है तो संभल जाइए। एक नए शोध में दावा किया गया है कि सोशल मीडिया पर ज्यादा समय देने से किशोरों के अवसादग्रस्त होने का खतरा गंभीर स्तर तक बढ़ जाता है।

यूनिवर्सिटी ऑफ मोनट्रियल के शोधकर्ताओं चार हजार बच्चों पर चार साल तक अध्ययन के बाद अपनी रिपोर्ट जारी की है। शोधकर्ताओं ने हाईस्कूल के बच्चों पर यह अध्ययन किया है। इसमें कहा गया है कि किशोर और सतन नौ घंटे रोजाना सोशल मीडिया पर समय दे रहे हैं। अध्ययन के मुताबिक



09 घंटे औसतन टीवी और सोशल मीडिया पर बिता रहे किशोर

सबसे चिंताजनक बात यह है कि किशोर जैसे-जैसे बड़े होते जाते हैं उनमें अवसाद का स्तर भी बढ़ता जाता है।

काफी पहले से मनोवैज्ञानिक यह कहते रहे हैं कि टीवी और सोशल मीडिया पर ज्यादा समय बिताने बच्चों पर नकारात्मक असर पड़ता है और उनके अवसादग्रस्त होने का खतरा बढ़

घंटों टीवी देखने वाले किशोरों को अवसाद

जो किशोर घंटों टीवी या कंप्यूटर की स्क्रीन देखते हैं उन्हें अवसाद होने की संभावना ज्यादा होती है। एक हालिया शोध में यह दावा किया गया है। शोधकर्ताओं को पता चला है कि टीवी पर ज्यादा समय बिताने वाले किशोरों में अवसाद का शिकार होने का खतरा ज्यादा होता है। पत्रिका जामा पीडियाट्रिक्स में प्रकाशित शोध में बताया गया है कि चार साल तक औसत समय से ज्यादा देर तक रोजाना टीवी और सोशल मीडिया देखने से किशोरों में अवसाद के लक्षण ज्यादा गंभीर हो सकते हैं। किशोर जितनी ज्यादा देर तक टीवी देखेंगे अवसाद उतना गंभीर होगा।

जाता है। इसे अब तक वह साबित नहीं कर सकते थे। अध्ययन में शोधकर्ताओं ने इसे साबित करके दिखा दिया है।

शोधकर्ताओं ने हाईस्कूल के चार हजार बच्चों को इसके लिए चुना। इनकी 12 से 16 साल के बीच थी। चार साल तक अध्ययन के बाद शोधकर्ताओं को चौंकाने वाले परिणाम मिले। अध्ययन के मुताबिक इन बच्चों में पिछले साल

के मुकाबले अगले साल हर बार सोशल मीडिया पर समय बिताने के समय में इजाफा हुआ। इसमें चिंताजनक बात यह सामने आई कि जब भी बच्चे पास कर अगली क्लास में जाते वह पहले से ज्यादा अवसादग्रस्त पाए गए। अध्ययन में यह बात देखने को भी मिली कि इन बच्चों में वीडियो गेम देखने की आदत धीरे-धीरे कम पड़ती गई।

गूगल ने प्ले स्टोर से 16 एंड्रॉयड एप हटाए

वॉशिंगटन। गूगल ने प्ले स्टोर से 16 एंड्रॉयड एप्लिकेशनों को हटा दिया है। गूगल ने अपील की है कि सभी एंड्रॉयड उपयोगकर्ता इन एप को तुरंत हटा लें।

गूगल ने यह कार्रवाई इसलिए की है क्योंकि 1.5 करोड़ भारतीय समेत कुल ढाई करोड़ एंड्रॉयड मोबाइलों को वायरस ने चपेट में ले लिया है। गूगल ने प्ले स्टोर से लूडो मास्टर, ब्लैकमैन गो, क्रेजी जूसर, स्काई वॉरियर, बायो ब्लास्ट, शूटिंग जेट, फोटो प्रोजेक्टर, गन हीरो, कुकिंग विच, कलर फोन फ्लैश, क्लेश ऑफ वायरस, एंग्री वायरस, रैबिट टेम्पल, स्टाररेंज, किस गेम, गर्ल क्लॉथ एक्सरे स्कैन स्टुड्यूलैटर एप को हटा दिया है।