

Govt. to encourage patients to go beyond doorstep service

Those diagnosed under the *Makkalai Thedi Maruthuvam* scheme must visit healthcare facilities for regular check-up to keep diseases such as diabetes and hypertension at bay, say officials

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The Tamil Nadu government's flagship healthcare scheme *Makkalai Thedi Maruthuvam* (MTM) may be drawn up on a door-to-door screening model for early detection and treatment of non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and hypertension, but health officials have now raised a key necessity that needs to be put in place, to achieve disease control: diagnosed persons should visit the nearest Primary Health Centre (PHC) once in two months for check-up.

As per the Health Department, MTM has covered 1,00,49,180 persons under first-time services and 2,93,22,468 persons under repeat services, as of May 5.

Through MTM, which was launched in August 2021, home-based healthcare services for line-listed beneficiaries is provided. These include the delivery of drugs for hypertension and diabetes, as well as palliative care, physiotherapy services and Continuous Ambulatory Peritoneal Dialysis services.

Status report

The Tamil Nadu government's flagship healthcare scheme *Makkalai Thedi Maruthuvam* has covered lakhs of residents since its launch in August 2021.



Health push: Those diagnosed under the scheme should visit healthcare facilities for check-ups, say officials.

Number of beneficiaries for first-time services: 1,00,49,180

■ Drugs for hypertension delivered to: **39,32,126**

■ Drugs for diabetes: **27,50,893**

■ Drugs for hypertension and diabetes: **20,03,441**

■ Others (palliative care, physiotherapy and Continuous Ambulatory Peritoneal Dialysis bags): **13,62,720**

Number of beneficiaries for repeat services: 2,93,22,468

■ Drugs for hypertension: **1,15,73,534**

■ Drugs for diabetes: **83,12,182**

■ Drugs for hypertension and diabetes: **67,52,306**

■ Others (palliative care, physiotherapy and Continuous Ambulatory Peritoneal Dialysis bags) **26,84,446**

Break-up of field workers

■ Women Health Volunteers: **10,969**

■ At the institutional level, 2,892 MTM staff nurses have been deployed — one per PHC, two per government hospital and two per medical college hospital — for providing comprehensive services for non-communicable diseases at primary, secondary and tertiary healthcare level

*Source : Health Department and Policy Note, 2023-2024

Once persons are screened and identified as having diabetes and hypertension, they are given me-

dications after the confirmation of the diagnosis, by medical officers. The drug initiation is done as per

protocol, the officials said.

"MTM has reached its maximum numbers, and it is time to concentrate on the real control of diabetes and hypertension. For regular treatment, persons identified through door-step screening should visit PHCs once in two months and check if their levels (sugar levels, blood pressure) are under control. Some people are under the assumption that everything will be done at their doorstep," T.S. Selvavinayagam, Director of Public Health and Preventive Medicine, said.

Every person identified should get their blood sugar and blood pressure levels checked once in two months to see if their medications need to be changed or the dosages altered, he said.

He added that women health volunteers, who are involved in the door-to-door screening, would not be able to do this sort of testing at the doorstep of people. "The ultimate aim of the scheme is better control of non-communicable diseases. To prevent complications and achieve real control, patients need to be checked periodically at health facilities," he said.

IIT-Madras ties up with Israeli government for water security

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The Indian Institute of Technology, Madras has partnered with the Israeli government to ensure water security in the country.

The India-Israel Centre of Water Technology (CoWT) that will come up on the institute campus, will customise Israeli technologies for Indian requirements and pilot sustainable technologies in the country. IIT-M Director V. Kamakoti and Secretary in the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs Manoj Joshi signed a letter of intent in New Delhi last week.

The MoHUA will collaborate with Israel's agency for International Development Cooperation Mashav.

To help Amrut mission

The new centre will help the Ministry's Amrut mission besides pursuing joint activities to implement technological solutions through separate agreements.

Lior Asaf, water attache, Embassy of Israel, said the new state-of-the-art Israeli technology and know-how would be introduced.

Mr. Kamakoti said the collaboration will work on conservation and proper use of water.

India and Israel will work closely to enhance capacity building of Indian water professionals at all



The India-Israel Centre of Water Technology will come up on the IIT-M premises.

levels and demonstrate latest technologies besides holding exhibitions of Israeli water companies.

IIT-Madras Professor T. Pradeep said water security in India depended on implementing advanced and affordable technologies besides efficiently managing resources. "There is much to learn from Israel, a leader in the area, under the guidance of Amrut Mission," he said.

Specific projects related to integrated water resources management, urban water supply and non-revenue water, water and sewage recycling, IoT solution and online monitoring, water harvesting, smart data management and AI, were on the anvil.

Israel was represented by Naar Gilon, Israel's Ambassador to India. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and his Israeli counterpart Eli Cohen were present at the event.

Hypertension to be tackled at primary health centres

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

The Union Health Ministry has launched an initiative here on Wednesday, World Hypertension Day, to screen and place 75 million people with hypertension and diabetes under standard care by 2025.

The announcement was made by V.K. Paul, Member (Health), NITI Aayog, at a G-20 co-branded event, "Accelerating the Prevention and Management of Hypertension and Diabetes", organised by the Health Ministry and the World Health Organization.

Dr. Paul said that the battle against non-communicable diseases must be fought at the primary healthcare level.

He pointed out that India had developed a platform to fight the menace through the creation of more than 1.5 lakh health and wellness centres and operationalisation of telemedicine and digital health services.

NHRC issues notice over exploitation of 13 girls in U.P. school

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) on Wednesday issued notices to the Uttar Pradesh Chief Secretary and the Director-General of Police, calling for a detailed report into an incident where 13 girl students were allegedly sexually exploited by a computer instructor at a government school in Shahjahanpur.

They have been asked to submit a detailed report, including action taken against the perpetrators, and the current status of the investigation, within six weeks.

"The commission would like to know the status of the compensation paid to the victims/ families so far and whether any counselling has been provided to the girl students who are reportedly scared and hesitant to attend the school, after the incident," the NHRC said.

The NHRC took *suo motu* cognisance of media reports which stated that a computer instructor mol-

Panel has asked for detailed report, including action taken against the perpetrators in case

ested the girls aged between 12 and 16. The matter came to light when the victims shared their ordeal with their parents.

The police arrested the teacher and the authorities suspended two more teachers who, despite being aware of the incident, did not take any action. The incident has reportedly shattered the confidence of the girls. The commission observed that the contents of the media reports, if true, amounted to violation of the human rights of the minor victims.

The commission also said that the State government should ensure proper guidelines are issued to all the schools under its jurisdiction, to avoid any delay or attempts to conceal facts in any untoward incident from the police, so that perpetrators are nabbed without delay.

National Human Rights Commission

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and the State human rights commission (SHRC) were established in 1993 under the Protection of Human Rights Act (PHRA), 1993 which was later amended by the Protection of Human Rights (Amendment) Act, 2006. They are mandated to protect the rights and dignity of Indian citizens.

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composition

Chairman should be a retired Chief justice of India or a retired Supreme Court Judge. Members should consist of a serving or retired Supreme Court Judge, a serving or retired High Court Judge, and three others having knowledge or practical experience with respect to human rights out of which at least one should be a woman.

Appointment

They are appointed by the President on the recommendation of a six-member committee comprising the Prime minister, the Speaker of the Lok Sabha, the Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, the Leader of the opposition of both the houses and the central Home minister.

Term of office

The chairperson and the members hold office for a period of 3 years or until they attain the age of 70, whichever is earlier.

Functions of the commission

The Commission shall perform all or any of the following functions, namely: –

- Inquire, on its own initiative or on a petition presented to it by a victim or any person on his behalf, into a complaint of-
 - i) violation of human rights or abetment or
 - ii) negligence in the prevention of such violation, by a public servant;
- Intervene in any proceeding involving any allegation of violation of human rights pending before a court with the approval of such court;
- Visit, under intimation to the State Government, any jail or any other institution under the control of the State Government, where persons are detained or lodged for purposes of treatment, reformation, or protection to study the living condition of the inmates and make recommendations thereon;
- Review the safeguards by or under the Constitution or any law for the time being in force for the protection of human rights and recommend measures for their effective implementation;
- Review the factors, including acts of terrorism that inhibit the enjoyment of human rights and recommend appropriate remedial measures;

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- Study treaties and other international instruments on human rights and make recommendations for their effective implementation;
- Undertake and promote research in the field of human rights;
- Spread human rights literacy among various sections of society and promote awareness of the safeguards available for the protection of these rights through publications, the media, seminars, and other available means;
- Encourage the efforts of non – Governmental organizations and institutions working in the field of human rights;
- Such other functions as it may consider necessary for the promotion of human rights.

Take steps to reduce unnecessary hysterectomies, Centre tells States

Missive from the Health Ministry comes after Supreme Court judgment flagged the violation of women's right to health; order was based on a petition that said some hospitals were carrying out the procedure to claim fees via insurance

Bindu Shajan Perappadan
NEW DELHI

Worried that poor, less-educated women, particularly in rural areas, continue to be at higher risk of undergoing unnecessary and often unjustified hysterectomies, the Health Ministry has written to all stakeholders to work towards plugging “such hysterectomies performed by certain medical institutions”.

The action comes following the Supreme Court's direction last month, where the States and Union Territories were instructed to implement health guidelines formulated by the Centre to monitor “unnecessary” hysterectomies within three months. Hysterectomy is a surgical procedure to remove the uterus.

A public interest litigation (PIL) petition filed be-



In 2022, the Health Ministry had issued guidelines to prevent unnecessary hysterectomies. FILE PHOTO

fore the Supreme Court had said that in Bihar, Chhattisgarh, and Rajasthan, “unnecessary hysterectomies” were carried out under the Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana as well as other government schemes related to healthcare.

The petition was filed in 2013 by Narendra Gupta, a doctor and public health expert, who based the petition on his fieldwork.

It also highlighted the involvement of private hospitals in performing such hysterectomies.

Dr. Gupta said that women who should not have been subjected to hysterectomies but should have been provided alternative treatment, were told to undergo the procedure, seriously endangering their health in the process.

The petitioner also submitted that most women

who were subjected to hysterectomies of this kind belonged to the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, or Other Backward Communities. It was also noted with concern that several healthcare institutions were found to be misusing the procedure only to claim expenses under various health insurance schemes offered by the government.

Audit plan

The recent letter from Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan said, “States are requested to share the hysterectomy status and data before and after the implementation of these guidelines.”

“They are also advised to undertake compulsory audits for all hysterectomies, as is already being done for maternal mortality in all healthcare institutions – both public and private,” it added.

In 2022, the Health Ministry had issued ‘Guidelines to prevent unnecessary hysterectomies’, and asked States to comply with them.

The recent judgment also noted that the guidelines indicate that while in developed countries hysterectomies are typically conducted among premenopausal women above the age of 45, in India, community-based studies have consistently found rising hysterectomy rates among young women, ranging from 28 to 36 years of age.

“The right to health is an intrinsic element of the right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution. Life, to be enjoyed in all its diverse elements, must be based on robust conditions of health. There has been a serious violation of the fundamental rights of the women who underwent unnecessary hysterectomies,” said the judgment.

Key climate threshold likely to be breached in 5 years: UN

There is two-thirds chance of global temperatures exceeding the 1.5 degrees Celsius warming limit, warns World Meteorological Organization; 2023-2027 set to be hottest five-year period ever

Agence France-Presse
GENEVA

It is near-certain that 2023-2027 will be the warmest five-year period ever recorded, the United Nations warned on Wednesday as greenhouse gases and El Nino combine to send temperatures soaring.

There is a two-thirds chance that at least one of the next five years will see global temperatures exceed the more ambitious target set out in the Paris accords on limiting climate change, the UN's World Meteorological Organization (WMO) said.

The hottest eight years ever recorded were all between 2015 and 2022, with 2016 the warmest – but temperatures are forecast to increase further as climate change accelerates.

"There is a 98% likelihood that at least one of the next five years, and the five-year period as a whole, will be the warmest on record," the WMO said.

The 2015 Paris Agreement saw countries agree to cap global warming at



Parched living: Women carrying jerrycans of water towards a makeshift camp on the outskirts of Baidoa in Somalia. AFP

"well below" two degrees Celsius above average levels measured between 1850 and 1900 – and 1.5 degrees Celsius if possible.

The global mean temperature in 2022 was 1.15 degrees Celsius above the 1850-1900 average.

The WMO said there was a 66% chance that annual global surface temperatures will exceed 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels for at least one of the years 2023-2027, with a range of 1.1 degrees Celsius to 1.8 degrees Celsius forecasted for each of those five years.

"WMO is sounding the

alarm that we will breach the 1.5C level on a temporary basis with increasing frequency," said the agency's chief Petteri Taalas.

"A warming El Nino is expected to develop in the coming months and this will combine with human-induced climate change to push global temperatures into uncharted territory.

"This will have far-reaching repercussions for health, food security, water management and the environment. We need to be prepared."

El Nino is the large-scale warming of surface temperatures in the central

and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean. The weather phenomenon normally occurs every two to seven years.

Typically, El Nino increases global temperatures in the year after it develops – which in this cycle would be 2024.

Heat gets trapped in the atmosphere by so-called greenhouse gases, which are at a record high.

The major greenhouse gases are carbon dioxide, plus methane and nitrous oxide.

"The return to normal level might take even thousands of years because we already have such a high concentration of carbon dioxide, and we have lost the melting of glaciers and sea level game," said Mr. Taalas.

"There's no return to the climate which persisted during the last century."



Read our explainer: Is climate change affecting global health? bit.ly/climatechangehel