

PM launches health ID for every citizen

Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission will bring revolutionary change in health facilities, says Modi

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The campaign for strengthening health facilities that had been going on for the past seven years is entering a new phase today, said Prime Minister Narendra Modi while launching the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission via videoconferencing on Monday.

"Today, we are launching a mission that has the potential of bringing a revolutionary change in India's health facilities," he stated.

The Arogya Setu app helped in preventing the spread of the COVID-19 infection, he noted, and lauded CoWIN for its role in making India achieve a record administration of about 90 crore vaccine doses under the free vaccine campaign.

Referring to the use of technology in health, Mr. Modi pointed out that there had been an unprecedented expansion of telemedicine

The National Health Policy 2017 had envisaged creation of a digital health technology eco-system aiming at developing an integrated health information system that serves the needs of all stakeholders and improves efficiency, transparency and citizens' experience with linkage across public and private healthcare.

In the context of this, central government's think-tank Niti Aayog, in June 2018, floated a consultation of a digital backbone for India's health system — National Health Stack.

Niti Aayog proposed a Digital Health ID to "greatly reduce the risk of preventable medical errors and significantly increase quality of care". This, in addition to the system enabling users "to obtain a longitudinal view of their healthcare records".

This proposal was then further taken up by the Central government with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the NHA, and the Ministry of Electronics and IT preparing a strategy overview document last month for "Making India a Digital Health Nation Enabling Digital Healthcare for all".

In 2005, the UK's National Health Service (NHS) started deployment of an electronic health record systems with a goal to have all patients with a centralised electronic health record by 2010

The program was ultimately dismantled after a cost to the UK taxpayer was more than £12 billion, and is considered one of the most expensive healthcare IT failures. According to The Independent, the project had been beset by changing specifications, technical challenges and clashes with suppliers, which left it years behind schedule and way over cost.



Virtual reality: Prime Minister Narendra Modi launching the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission in New Delhi on Monday. •PTI

the country with each other.

A release issued by the Union government stressed that the mission would not only make the processes of hospitals simplified but also increase ease of living. Under this, every citizen would now get a digital health ID and their health records would be digitally protected.

Holistic health model

The Prime Minister highlighted that India was work-

tions is being established in the country and work on establishing one medical college in every three Lok Sabha constituencies is going on," he said.

Mr. Modi emphasised strengthening the health facilities in villages. He pointed to the strengthening of primary health centre networks and wellness centres. More than 80,000 such centres had already been operationalised, he added.

"A comprehensive network of All India Institutes of Medical Science (AIIMS) and other modern health institu-

Prime Minister's announcement of a national health ID for every Indian finds its roots in a 2018 Niti Aayog proposal to create a centralised mechanism to uniquely identify every participating user in the National Health Stack.

Context

The national health ID will be a repository of all health-related information of a person.

According to the National Health Authority (NHA), every patient who wishes to have their health records available digitally must start by creating this Health ID.

Each Health ID will be linked to a health data consent manager — such as National Digital Health Mission (NDHM) — which will be used to seek the patient's consent and allow for seamless flow of health information from the Personal Health Records module.

About

The Health ID is created by using a person's basic details and mobile number or Aadhaar number. This will make it unique to the person, who will have the option to link all of their health records to this ID.

Various healthcare providers — such as hospitals, laboratories, insurance companies, online pharmacies, telemedicine firms — will be expected to participate in the health ID system.

The strategy overview document points out that while option of digital Health ID will be there, in case a person does not want Health ID, then also treatment should be allowed.

NATIONAL HEALTH ID SYSTEM

Background

Global examples