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The Lakshmi Mittal and Family
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Dear Friends,

After a brief pause in March, we return with an April edition of the monthly newsletter by the [Lancet Citizens' Commission on Reimagining India's Health System](#). This edition explores how India is emerging as a quiet leader in global health security while also grappling with rising cardiac deaths among youth, an escalating women's mental health crisis, and critical insurance gaps for both mental health and elder care. It also examines lethal heat and its impact on even healthy populations, and how it disproportionately affects informal women workers—through income loss, health issues, and increased vulnerability. The edition spotlights urgent calls to strengthen primary care, expand vaccinations for rotavirus, and rethink reproductive and menstrual health strategies. In a special World Health Day section, it examines how climate change is rewriting India's public health future, the need for compassion in primary care, and why children, women's safety, and water safety must be central to our health discourse.

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Views & Opinions



[India: The unsung hero of global health security in a world of rising costs](#)

Escalating costs of medicines are not just a financial burden. They are also exacerbating inequities in healthcare access, particularly in developing countries, where life-saving treatments remain out of reach for many, *writes Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw.*



[Why are heart attacks rising among young people?](#)

"People always had heart attacks earlier, but many don't realise that feeling fit doesn't always mean being healthy. The only way to protect yourself is to know your numbers—blood pressure, cholesterol, kidney function, and heart health," *says Devi Shetty.*



[Strengthening primary care in India](#)

India has made progress in attaining some of its primary health goals, yet challenges remain in terms of the inadequacy of funding, inequities in the availability of physical and human infrastructure, and a fragmented, low-accountability, and quality assurance system, *write Khushboo Balani, Alok K. Singh, and Sandhya Venkateswaran.*



[Lethal heat can also kill millions of healthy people. Shade isn't a solution](#)

Extreme heat is a well-known threat to the elderly and people with health conditions. But millions of healthy people may soon face a lethal form of heat stress, no matter how fit or acclimated they are, *writes Kaighin McColl.*



[How heat affects informal women workers—loss of income, skin infections, domestic violence](#)

While media coverage often highlights life-threatening conditions like heat stroke, most heat-attributable fatalities and hospitalisations result instead from cardiovascular, respiratory, and renal injuries exacerbated by prolonged exposure, *write Robert Meade, Felipe González Casabianca, Tess Wiskel and Rajvi Joshipura.*

[Stress, stigma, and struggles: India's women battle a mental health crisis](#)



While the reasons are complex, financial dependence, workplace discrimination, family obligations, and restrictive societal norms make it difficult for women to prioritise their mental health. Many struggle silently with issues ranging from emotional distress and burnout to postpartum depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), *writes Abhijeet Kumar.*



[Sanitation and expanding rotavirus vaccination are key to combating diarrhoeal diseases in India: experts](#)

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), diarrhoeal disease is the third-leading cause of death among children aged 1–59 months, with 4,43,832 global deaths under five and an additional 50,851 deaths in children aged 5–9 years annually, *writes Athira Elssa Johnson.*



[Around 1% of claims related to mental health in group medical insurance](#)

A survey conducted in 150 organisations, encompassing sectors like technology, healthcare, and retail, revealed that less than one per cent of corporate health insurance claims are related to mental health, *writes Subrata Panda.*



[Senior healthcare crisis: Why insurance must cover more than just hospital stays](#)

India is on the brink of a demographic shift redefining its healthcare landscape. With an estimated 40 million elder citizens today-projected to rise to 350 million by 2050-the need for comprehensive senior healthcare has never been more pressing, *writes Gaurav Dubey.*

World Health Day specials

[Violence against women is more than crime – it's a public health issue](#)

This World Health Day, as we reflect on the foundations of health equity, it is vital to confront a crisis hiding in plain sight — gender-based violence (GBV). GBV is not just a social or legal issue — it is a public health emergency with devastating impacts on the well-being of millions of Indian women and girls, *writes Poonam Muttreja.*



[Why India's children must come first](#)

Keeping children at the centre of the “Health for All” policy framework has deeper implications. [...] Prioritising children’s health not only addresses their immediate needs but also strengthens long-term national health indicators. Investing in children’s well-being improves overall health, reduces mortality, and builds human capital, *writes Puja Marwaha*.



[Compassion in primary healthcare. Here’s what it looks like in India](#)

In January, the World Health Organization (WHO) published a report calling for compassion in primary healthcare systems. “Compassion — characterised by awareness, empathy and action — is identified as a transformative force for PHC, driving quality care and health system transformation,” the report reads, *writes Mahima Jain*.



[India marks progress in maternal and child health with key initiatives](#)

On the World Health Day 2025, with WHO’s theme “Healthy Beginnings, Hopeful Futures,” India continues to strengthen its healthcare systems through initiatives like Ayushman Bharat and the National Health Mission, marking significant progress in improving maternal and child health, expanding digital healthcare access, and enhancing public health infrastructure.



[From warm nights to seismic shocks: Climate change is rewriting India’s public health future](#)

This year’s World Health Day theme, *Healthy Beginnings, Hopeful Futures*, reminds us that the health of our planet is inseparable from the health of our people. Climate-related disruptions are now directly threatening maternal and child health, food security, respiratory well-being, and access to essential services, particularly for those most vulnerable, *writes Paresh Kumar*.



[Chlorination prevents waterborne illness, but it comes with a risk](#)

In India, water disinfection using chlorination is a widespread practice. However, the harmful effect of the by-products of chlorination is not much talked about, particularly with disinfection byproducts like trihalomethanes (THMs), *write Avanti Roy Basu and S K Sarkar*.



Resources

["It's Everyone's Problem": Institutionalising Multi-sectoral Action for Maternal Health in Meghalaya, India](#)

There is widespread agreement on the potential of multi-sectoral action to address the social determinants of maternal health. We conducted an implementation

research study in Meghalaya, a northeastern Indian state with a high burden of maternal mortality where the government initiated "Rescue Mission" to strengthen the health system and to address underlying determinants to improve maternal health indicators, *write S. Desai, S. Sivaram, S. Ramkumar, P. Dohtdong, A. Nanda, S. Ramesh, and S. Kumar.*



[Enhancing reproductive health among adolescent girls in India: results of an individualized RCT to study the efficacy of the go Nisha go mobile game](#)

Adolescent girls in India face significant barriers to accessing sexual and reproductive health (SRH) information and services. Digital interventions, particularly mobile-based ones, promise to deliver SRH education in a fun and engaging manner. These can be offered privately directly to the adolescent, allowing players to 'experience' the outcomes of their choices, receive tailored feedback, and the option to 'try again', *write A. Raj, L. Shankar, A. Dixit, et al.*



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