

Universal Health Organisation (UHO)

Weekly Newsletter – 04 Aug 2023



The weekly newsletters bring the updates on the science, battered and bruised during the pandemic, legal updates and impact of activism for a just society, across the world. These are small steps to promote Transparency, Empowerment and Accountability – the ethos of the UHO.

Proposed WHO Pandemic Treaty compared to Fascism

David Bell, a former scientist with the WHO, in a [paper](#) published in The American Journal of Economics and Sociology, has strongly condemned the response by the WHO to the Covid-19 pandemic. He states that increasing funding by private players to the WHO has corroded the foundation of global public health. The Covid-19 response according to him ignored the principles of epidemic management and violated human rights in promoting suppression, coercion and censorship, methods which were erstwhile condemned. He further warned that without considering the consequences a new instrument in the form of the proposed treaty is being promoted. He warns that the unscientific repressive measures implemented during the Covid-19 pandemic, will be entrenched in international law if the treaty is passed. Human rights and autonomy will go down the drain as it did during the dark days of Fascism.

Lok Sabha Passes Jan Vishwas Bill on 29 July 2023 without proper debate

The Lok Sabha on 29 July 2023, passed the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) [Bill](#). The Bill was introduced in December 2022 and referred to a Joint Parliamentary Committee for review. It essentially decriminalises 183 provisions in 42 legislations, in order to promote ease of doing business in the country.

An amendment in the Drugs and Cosmetic Act 1940, proposed in the “Jan Vishwas Bill” makes a provision for “compounding” for some offences i.e. paying a fine instead of facing imprisonment. The Bill amended Section 27 (d), of the Drugs and Cosmetic Act 1940. This allows for “compounding” of offences that can be compromised and where the complainant can agree to take back the charges.

On the face of it, it is ostensibly to make India a preferred country for pharmaceutical industry to do business. Whether this will compromise the safety and health of the people is debatable. In the race to become the pharmacy of the world, will quality suffer?

Dinesh Thakur Author of ["The Truth Pill"](#) which created quite a flutter, tweeted, “The Lok Sabha passed the Jan Vishwas Bill 2023, with little debate. This Bill fulfils a long-standing wish list of the industry that if you suffer bodily harm from substandard medicine, no one will be held punitively accountable.”

Member of Parliament, Asaduddin Owaisi, also [expressed concerns](#), “When we buy a medicine, we assume the government has verified that it will work and it won’t harm us. But the proposed amendment will now reduce punishments for medicines that are not of standard quality. It benefits big business but harms all of us. Very dangerous.”

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Director of International Institute of Population Studies (IIPS) suspended

The government [suspended](#) the Director of the International Institute of Population Sciences (IIPS), K S James, on some frivolous charges. IIPS brings out the data on the periodic [NFHS surveys](#) on population health. The government seems to prefer positive data, not bad news. The latest survey NFHS-5, had brought out inconvenient truths like, “India was nowhere near “open defecation free status” as claimed by the PM, 40% did not have clean cooking fuel, putting to question the Ujjwala Yojana, and also anaemia was on the rise affecting well over 50% of women and children.

Are we pushing our real public health problems beneath the carpet to make way for a real or imagined global threat of a pandemic and the proposed pandemic treaty? Will this be the new strategy? Ignore the genuine public health problems by suppressing their statistics and make mountains out of molehills of trivial health threats?

WHO admits excess deaths across continents, at last

The WHO is tracking global excess mortality as the pandemic evolves over time to reveal a picture of its full impact and burden on countries, health systems and individuals. According to its own [data](#), there is distinct excess mortality across all the continents, following the pandemic. The WHO does not give any convincing reasons for these excess deaths. There are few elephants in the room.

The WHO does not mention possible adverse effects of lockdowns, resulting in social, economic, psychological, psychiatric harms, and lack of routine medical care, which might have contributed to excess deaths. It also does not consider any possible adverse events of medical interventions or mass scale vaccination (iatrogenesis), which might have contributed to excess deaths.