

India emerges Asia Pacific's most AI-ready healthcare mkt

Consumers are increasingly taking a proactive role in managing health while expecting more convenience, responsiveness and coordination from system

BENEFITS OF AI ADOPTION

- Indians are increasingly taking charge of their wellbeing
- Gen Z's are driving digital health adoption
- AI-enabled care is gaining ground
- Reducing administrative burden and workload



INDIA has emerged as one of Asia Pacific region's most AI-ready healthcare markets, with 78 per cent of consumers using GenAI to better understand diagnoses and treatment options, according to a report by Bain & Company. Healthcare systems in Asia-Pacific are facing growing strain as rising patient expectations collide with a stretched clinical workforce, accelerating the shift toward

new care models and AI-enabled support, said the report titled '2026 Asia-Pacific Front Line of Healthcare Report'. Consumers across Asia-Pacific are increasingly taking a proactive role in managing their health while expecting more convenience, responsiveness and coordination from the healthcare system, it said. As per the report, 84 per cent of consumers expect greater convenience from the healthcare system, while 71 per cent expect doctors to be more responsive through channels such as phone, WhatsApp or email. Three out of five consumers now

These expectations are even more pronounced in India. Nearly 88 per cent expect more convenient healthcare experiences, 79 per cent expect phone and messaging accessibility from doctors, and 93 per cent want a single point of coordination across their healthcare journey

also schedule regular check-ups and screenings, compared to 47 per cent in 2023.

"These expectations are even more pronounced in India. Nearly nine in ten (i.e. 88 per cent consumers) expect more convenient healthcare experiences, 79 per cent expect phone and messaging accessibility from doctors, and 93 per cent want a single point of coordination across their healthcare journey," it added. When it comes to GenAI and digital health adoption, the report said, "India is emerging as one of the region's most AI-receptive healthcare markets: 78 per cent of consumers use GenAI to better understand diagnoses and treatment options, while 73 per cent use it to prepare for appointments, and 72 per cent leverage it to navigate the healthcare system." Gen Z's are driving digital health adoption, with 66 per cent of Gen Z respondents using online pharmacies and demonstrating higher engagement with AI-enabled healthcare tools and services, it added.

Smart warehousing system to be launched for foodgrain storage

The System is an integrated technology-led solution to strengthen warehouse management practices and enhance efficiency across foodgrain storage operations

NEW DELHI



THE government is set to launch the Smart Warehousing System for foodgrain storage, reflecting its continued emphasis on strengthening India's food security architecture through modern, technology-enabled and efficient public storage infrastructure, it was announced on Wednesday.

The Department of Food and Public Distribution (DFPD) will launch the Smart Warehousing System on June 18 at Bharat Mandapam here, in the presence of Union Minister of Consumer Affairs Pralhad Joshi.

The Smart Warehousing System is being introduced as an integrated technology-led solution to strengthen warehouse management practices and enhance efficiency across foodgrain storage operations.

The initiative is expected to contribute towards creation of a modern warehousing ecosystem capable of supporting efficient foodgrain management and strengthening long-term food security

outcomes. The initiative aligns with the Government's vision under Digital India, IndiaAI Mission, PM GatiShakti and Atmanirbhar Bharat, said the Ministry of Consumer Affairs.

During the programme, the Department will facilitate the Best Performing Warehouses of Central Warehousing Corporation (CWC) and Food Corporation of India (FCI) identified under the Depot Darpan assessment framework.

The system will incorporate advanced technologies including Artificial Intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT), automation and analytics to improve warehouse operations and strengthen governance mechanisms.

According to an official statement, the proposed system will support automation of gate and weighbridge operations, digital access management, intelligent monitoring of warehouse conditions, enhanced inventory visibility and real-time operational oversight through integrated dashboards.

The initiative builds upon the Department's broader reform agenda focused on digital transformation and modernisation across the foodgrain supply chain. In recent years, multiple initiatives have been undertaken to improve transparency, operational efficiency and service delivery across procurement, storage and distribution systems.

APITCO pacts with MSM Unify for skill development initiative

BIZZ BUZZ BUREAU HYDERABAD

MSM Unify, an education and workforce platform of MSM Global Education Private Limited, has been empanelled by APITCO Limited as a training provider and consulting firm. The two years agreement, authorises MSM Global Education to perform assignments across skill development, capacity building, professional training, and educational consultancy in partnership with APITCO. The empanelment positions MSM Unify to participate in India's government-led skilling ecosystem.

Sanjay Lall, Founder, MSM Unify, said: "India's skilling challenge is not a government problem alone. Closing a gap of this scale requires organisations with real delivery capability to operate inside the government framework and execute on the ground. APITCO has the institutional mandate and government relationships." Srinivas Rao, Chief Consultant, APITCO, said: "The APITCO channel extends its mandate to domestic workforce outcomes, creating a new B2G revenue stream aligned with India's public investment priorities in human capital development under the Skill India Mission and the National Education Policy 2020."

DigiLocker adds family IDs of several states totalling over 37 cr citizens

Move is aimed at simplifying access to government services and welfare schemes while reducing dependence on physical paperwork

NEW DELHI



INDIA's flagship digital document wallet, DigiLocker, has onboarded Family ID credentials from Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, enabling more than 37 crore citizens across the four states to digitally access, store and share key household identity documents, the Ministry of Electronics & IT said on Wednesday. The move is aimed at simplifying access to government services and welfare schemes while reducing dependence on physical paperwork.

The integration allows citizens to fetch their existing Family IDs directly into their DigiLocker accounts and use them whenever required for verification or availing government services.

In addition, DigiLocker is connected as a requestor to

the respective state Family ID systems, enabling eligible residents to enrol for new Family IDs digitally and provide consent from within the platform.

According to MeitY, citizens can access the documents by signing into the DigiLocker app or website, searching for the relevant state Family ID service, entering the required details and giving consent. The document is then fetched and stored instantly in the user's

DigiLocker account.

In Rajasthan, around 7.5 crore residents can now access their Jan Aadhaar, a key household identity credential used to avail benefits under welfare programmes such as the Chiranjeevi health insurance scheme, the Public Distribution System (PDS), scholarships and other government initiatives linked to the Jan Aadhaar ecosystem.

Maharashtra's Maharashtra (Family ID), now available to around 14 crore residents through DigiLocker, serves as a foundational household identifier used to deliver government schemes and services.

The integration is expected to strengthen paperless governance and improve citizen access to public services.

Similarly, around 9.5 crore residents of Madhya Pradesh can now access their MP Samagra (Family ID) digitally.

Women's health and digital inclusion see sharp rise in India

NEW DELHI

NATIONAL Family Health Survey (NFHS) 6 results released by the Health Ministry in May showed significant gains in women's maternal healthcare access, reproductive health and financial and digital inclusion, a report said on Wednesday.

The report from SBI Research noted material progress over a period of 3 years in terms of child stunting, vaccination, improved health delivery across women and fertility transition.

However, it outlined the need to spend more on holistic healthcare for children as certain child nutritional indicators lagged.

The frequency of NFHS surveys (first initiated in 1992-93) used to happen at highly irregular intervals of roughly 7 years, which was even extended to 10 years.

Subsequently, the gap has been reduced to a fixed 3-year interval under the current government to have a bet-



ter tracking of indicators. The survey found that while stunting among children has declined sharply, wasting and underweight rates have shown modest improvement.

States with higher medical & health expenditure as a share of gross state domestic product tend to record larger reductions in underweight and stunting.

The report highlighted a major health transition as the share of women who are overweight or obese rose from 12.6 per cent in 2005-2006 to 30.7 per cent in 2023-2024, signalling growing non communicable disease risks such as obesity, diabetes and hypertension.

India's total fertility rate remained at 2.0 in both NFHS 5 and NFHS 6, while contraceptive prevalence rose from 66.7 per cent to 69.1 per cent.

Reinforcing body clock rhythms may help brain recover from stroke

System moves cerebrospinal fluid along blood vessels and through brain tissue, delivering nutrients and helping remove waste products and inflammatory signals

NEW DELHI



IMPROVING sleep by reinforcing the body's natural daily rhythms could help the brain recover after a stroke, potentially providing a new strategy to enhance the brain's waste clearance and outcomes, according to a new study.

The findings, published in the Journal of Clinical Investigation, show that interventions designed to reinforce the body's natural circadian rhythms, such as timed light exposure, melatonin or a body clock-targeting drug, improved recovery in mouse models of stroke.

Researchers from the University of Rochester Medical Center also found improvements in the glymphatic system -- the brain's waste-clearing network -- and reduced levels of inflammatory molecules that can linger in

the brain after a stroke. The system moves cerebrospinal fluid along blood vessels and through brain tissue, delivering nutrients and helping remove waste products and inflammatory signals.

"The discussion of stroke recovery really starts with the idea that stroke is not just a vascular event, but also a disorder of timing," lead author Lauren Hablitz, a neuroscientist at the University of Rochester Medical Center, said.

Strokes are considered

to follow predictable time-of-day patterns, with their likelihood of occurring being higher in the morning. They can also be often more severe near the end of the sleep period.

At the same time, many stroke patients experience disrupted sleep-wake cycles after their injury, and those disruptions are associated with poorer recovery, depression, and lower quality of life, the researchers said.

"That led us to ask a simple question. If timing is broken after a stroke, can we improve recovery by reinforcing the biological clock?" Hablitz said.

The researchers added that previous studies show an impaired glymphatic function after stroke, potentially limiting the brain's ability to clear harmful molecules that accumulate during recovery.



THE POLITICA

Nothing political about it

JON GAMBRELL, SAM METZ & SAMY MAGDY

Deal to end war needs Israel to be out of Lebanon: Iran

Negotiations to end war have been plagued by such disagreements before, leading to prolonged but uneasy ceasefire that has thwarted permanent end to hostilities

IRAN's top diplomat said Tuesday that the tentative deal to end the war with the United States would require Israel to withdraw from Lebanon -- a condition Israel has already rejected and that could sink the agreement, leading to the resumption of all-out war.

The deal, which is between the US and Iran, has not been made public, and officials have sometimes offered contradictory interpretations of what is in it. While Israel is not party to the agreement, it is part of the war: It joined the US in launching strikes on Iran on February 28, and has since fought the Iran-backed Hezbollah militant group in Lebanon and seized large swaths of that country.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said Israel's continued occupation of southern Lebanon would violate the deal. "Without the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the territories they occupied during this war, the war has not fully come to an end," Araghchi said.

A US official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss outlines of the agreement, has said the deal did not call for an Israeli withdrawal. And Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Monday that Israel would remain in Lebanon "as long as necessary."

The negotiations to end the war have been plagued by such disagreements before, leading to a prolonged but uneasy ceasefire that has failed to develop into a permanent end to hostilities and has left the Strait of Hormuz, a crucial waterway for the world's energy supplies, effectively shut.

In other developments, Switzerland's foreign ministry said the signing ceremony for the deal will take place Friday at the Burgenstock resort near the city of Luzern. Ministry officials said Tuesday that the location was proposed by Pakistani and Qatari mediators, along with the US and Iran.

Lebanon tests the durability of the deal

Pakistan, a key mediator, has said the deal called for an end to military operations, including in Lebanon, as Iran long insisted. But Araghchi's call for an Israeli withdrawal adds a new wrinkle.

It puts Israel into a dilemma as it tries to degrade Hezbollah's military capabilities without undermining an agreement championed by its most important ally, the United States.

Israel invaded southern Lebanon after Hezbollah fired missiles across the border during the first week of the war. Since then, it has expanded its military footprint to levels unseen in decades and struck targets deep inside Beirut.

Though Hezbollah has been weakened, it retains the ability to

strike Israel, leaving open questions about the effectiveness of Israel's campaign.

As of Tuesday evening, Netanyahu had not seen the memorandum of understanding between the US and Iran, said a person familiar with the situation, who requested anonymity to discuss closed-door details. Netanyahu's office did not immediately respond to request for comment from The Associated Press.

The extent of Israel's strikes have at times opened a public fracture between its leaders and US President Donald Trump, who told reporters Tuesday that he was "not happy with the way Israel has handled themselves with Lebanon and with Hezbollah."

"It just goes on forever," he said of Israel's strategy. Israeli strikes in Lebanon have killed nearly 4,000 people, including hundreds of civilians, and displaced more than 1 million. "Israel's fighting Hezbollah too long, and too many people are being killed," he said.

Trump said he's open to sending the emerging agreement to the US Congress for review.

Speaking on the sidelines of the Group of Seven summit in the French Alps, Trump said, "I like the idea, send it to Congress please." He added, "I mean who wouldn't approve it."

Republicans in Capitol Hill say they want Trump to provide more information about the



agreement, with some expressing scepticism that the deal can deter Iran from pursuing a nuclear weapon.

Israel and the Lebanese government have entered into their own US-mediated direct negotiations, of which Hezbollah was not a part.

Those talks have yielded several announced ceasefires that were never implemented on the ground. Lebanese officials initially tried to keep Lebanon separate from the US-Iran negotiations, not wanting to be seen as beholden to Iran, but they have since welcomed the announcement that the deal to end the US-Iran war would include a ceasefire in Lebanon.

Araghchi's latest comments appear to match the understanding of two regional officials with direct knowledge of the interim deal. The officials, speaking to AP on condition of anonymity to

of the American naval blockade of Iranian ports, according to a senior US official who spoke to reporters Monday on condition of anonymity to discuss outlines of the agreement.

Pakistani officials who helped broker the agreement also described plans for the simultaneous lifting of Iran's closure of the strait and the US blockade.

The United States and Iran will then begin 60 days of negotiations over Iran's nuclear program and the potential lifting of sanctions, Pakistani officials who helped broker the interim deal said, speaking on condition of anonymity about the unpublished text.

The pact also includes the possibility of releasing Iran's frozen funds and a USD 300 billion fund to help rebuild Iran if Tehran meets certain benchmarks, senior US officials told reporters Monday. Trump later said the United States would not "invest" funds in Iran.

Regarding the timeline, regional officials who spoke to AP about the deal said the release of frozen Iranian assets would be tied to Tehran implementing the deal. Gulf Arab states also have pledged to inject billions of dollars in Iran's economy, they added, speaking on the condition of anonymity to discuss the negotiations.

Iran's nuclear programme, specifically the fate of its stockpile of highly enriched uranium,

would be subject to the 60-day clock. Iran has agreed to discuss ways to possibly "dilute or remove" it, the officials said. However, it remains unclear whether Tehran would agree to that, particularly with hard-liners opposing to giving it up.

US officials have not yet explained how they see the agreement addressing Iran's nuclear programme, including who will be in charge of verifying that Iran is in compliance and who will destroy or remove highly enriched uranium believed to be buried under nuclear sites that were badly damaged by US strikes last summer.

Still, world leaders gathering in France for the first full day of the G7 summit insisted the agreement needed to succeed, even as key questions remained unanswered.

Some had clashed with Trump over not consulting them before going to war. But the leaders of France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom issued a joint statement congratulating the United States, the Iranian government and the mediators on what they called a "diplomatic breakthrough," saying it was vital for the deal to be quickly implemented.