Ministry of Electronics & IT

India hosts the second Regional Open Digital Health Summit (RODHS) 2025

The Summit will explore the role of DPI, open standards and technologies in shaping the future of Digital Health in South-east Asia

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The Regional Open Digital Health Summit 2025 (RODHS 2025) got underway in New Delhi on 19 November, bringing together senior government officials, international development organisations, and health technology innovators from across the South-east Asia Region.

Organised by the National e-Governance Division (NeGD) under the Ministry of Electronics & IT, National Health Authority (NHA), World Health Organization South-East Asia Regional Office and UNICEF, the three-day summit will see participation of leaders from India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Nepal, the Maldives, and others to explore how Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI), open standards, and technologies like Generative AI can boost Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and regional health systems.

The inaugural session set a powerful tone, with speakers emphasising collaboration, equity, and interoperability as the pillars of sustainable digital health transformation.

“Collaboration is not just desirable, it is urgent. A joint governance model between the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Ministry of Electronics & IT is necessary for developing the National Digital Public Infrastructure. This collaboration is necessary to ensure that national systems like Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM), CoWIN, Aadhaar, and UPI remain secure and interoperable,” said Shri Rajnish Kumar, COO, NeGD, emphasising the urgency of breaking down institutional silos.

“This summit will empower technical skills across the region, enabling participants to deploy interoperable digital health platforms. Trust, consistency, and interoperability are the bedrock for adoption and scalability,” emphasised Mr. Manoj Jhalani, Director, UHC/Health Systems, WHO SEARO, emphasising the summit's focus on strengthening regional technical capacity.

Mr. Arjan de Wagt, Deputy Representative, UNICEF India, highlighted, “While advancing digital health, it is important to not just look at technology, but also to focus on communities, health worker, the family and the child. Technology will help us deliver health care for every child, including the most vulnerable.” “Digital health offers a major opportunity to strengthen resilience and deliver better health care — if done thoughtfully and equitably,” he added.

“India’s Digital Public Infrastructure—Aadhaar, UPI, CoWIN, ABDM—demonstrates how scalable digital public goods benefit society. In collaboration with NeGD, we built a secure health data infrastructure across providers and regions,” said Dr. Sunil Kumar Barnwal, CEO, National Health Authority.

"Health outcomes rely on more than just healthcare; they also depend on factors like education, sanitation, nutrition, water safety, and social protection. Therefore, integrating digital platforms among ministries is crucial. The National Digital Health Blueprint 2019 and National Health Policy 2017 lay the groundwork for UHC through technical standards and interoperability," said Smt. Punya Salila Srivastava, Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

The Plenary Session on "How open standards, Full-Stack and Digital Public Infrastructures accelerate digital transformation” with Shri Nand Kumarum, CEO, NeGD, Shri Kiran Gopal Vaska, Joint Secretary & Mission Director – ABDM, NHA, Ms. Meridith Dyson, Regional Health Specialist, HSS, UNICEF, and Dr. Karthik Adapa, Regional Advisor, Digital Health, WHO-SEARO, showed consensus on shifting from pilot projects to large-scale, inclusive digital health systems. Speakers stressed that open standards, full-stack frameworks, and Digital Public Infrastructure are vital for equitable scaling.

India's CoWIN and ABDM were highlighted as India’s strong leadership in building DPI-based health solutions, while UNICEF emphasised on child rights and data protection. Participants agreed that the future of digital health in the Global South depends on open, standards-based, child-focused systems supported by DPI.

Session 2 on “Foundational Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) and their role in health ecosystems” explored how core DPIs—digital identity, payments, data exchange, and registries—serve as the foundation of resilient digital health systems. Experts from World Economic Forum, UIDAI, NPCI, ONDC, and NeGD, alongside representatives from Thailand, Maldives, and Nepal, concluded that success should be judged not only by digital adoption but also by improved health outcomes, cost savings, and empowered citizens.

In Session 3 “FHIR Fundamentals and Adoption Insights from Member States”, experts from HL7 India, CDAC Pune, Swasth Alliance, Bangladesh's DGHS, and Sri Lanka's Ministry of Health discussed FHIR as the global standard for health data exchange. However, sustainable use needs governance reform, ecosystem collaboration, workforce development, and ongoing investment. The session highlighted that interoperability requires collaborative efforts, with regional cooperation key to accelerating FHIR in South-East Asia.

Session 4 “Health Sector DPI – Use Cases & Regional Perspectives”, highlighted perspectives from India, Sri Lanka, and Thailand on how countries with diverse health systems are developing Digital Public Infrastructure for health. Despite different contexts and levels of digital maturity, all focused on interoperability, privacy, governance, and data-driven innovation.

In Session 5 “Emerging Practices in Digital Health Interoperability - GenAI for Global Health”, experts from India, Nepal, Thailand, and international organisations discussed how Generative AI can address data fragmentation and promote equitable care. They agreed that interoperability is key to unlocking AI's potential in public health. The strategy includes building scalable health data infrastructure, adopting interoperability frameworks, ensuring equitable, patient-centric delivery, and breaking down siloed programs.

In Session 6 “Demonstration with GenAI for Health - Use cases”, leaders from Ekacare, Google, NiramAI Health Analytix, Sunoh.AI (eClinicalWorks), and IIT Delhi showcased Generative AI innovations that are transforming healthcare, diagnostics, and data systems. Through live demos and expert talks, it showcased how GenAI innovations—such as automated clinical documentation, AI diagnostics, multilingual patient engagement, and edge computing—are boosting the efficiency, accuracy, and inclusiveness of health systems. Innovators presented scalable use-cases such as Sunoh AI’s clinical scribe, Eka Care’s Health AI ecosystem, NiramAI’s thermal imaging device for early breast cancer detection, Google’s MedGemma AI model, and IIT Delhi’s diagnostic platform.

The first day of the Regional Open Digital Health Summit 2025 spotlighted South-East Asia’s commitment to digital health transformation Leaders, experts and innovators set a collaborative tone, highlighting the need for open standards, interoperability, and digital equity in health systems to advance Universal Health Coverage. The summit further underscored the need for building resilient and inclusive health systems through scalable digital infrastructure and generative AI.

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