



# SERUM TIMES

Monthly | Volume XI | Issue III | March 2026

SERUM MEDICAL BULLETIN

## From the desk of the Editor-in-Chief

Dear Readers/Doctors,

Hope everything is going smoothly. The winter season is already over, and we are in springtime. It is a very short season to enjoy. We are anxious about the weather forecast, which predicts that the coming summer will be overly hot and rainfall may remain below average. We will discuss in the next issue how to remain safe in summer.



In the March issue of ST, we discuss the allocation of funds and policy implementation in the health sector in the Annual Budget of India. The story 1 critically discusses money allocation and its possible impact on the health sector in the coming financial year (FY) 2026-27.

The allocation for the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has been raised by nearly 10% over the revised estimate for FY26. The total revised estimate for the sector was Rs. 96853.5 lakh crore, it is raised to Rs. 1.06 lakh crore for the coming FY 27. The government has given importance to increasing care work for the elderly population. It has announced the development of biopharma, and SHAKTI (Strategy for Healthcare Advancement through Knowledge, Technology and Innovation) is an admirable step. It has given importance to strengthening the National Institutes of Pharmaceutical Education and Research. One can also see a policy thrust in mental health and non-communicable diseases. Quite a number of drugs for cancer and rare diseases are exempted from tax and basic import duty. This will result in lower drug prices. But India needs more allocation and framing better policy on health and welfare of the citizens in such a way so that the entire public health system is uplifted at required level.

The story 2 touches upon a very rising health hazard. That is an atheroma which is highly prevalent in India. It is a buildup of fatty materials, cholesterol, and calcium within the inner lining of artery walls that causes them to become thick, hard, and narrow, thereby restricting blood flow through the arteries. This may lead to a heart attack. Studies indicate that this is increasing rapidly, particularly among the younger population and in urban India. This is a leading cause of heart disease.

So, read the stories with care and hope these would help for knowing some relevant matters related to health.

Wish you an advance a very happy Bengali New Year.

Wish you healthy life.

Sanjib Acharya

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## Union Budget for FY 2026 mentions important areas, but problem is their proper implementations Story 1

The allocation for health in the Budget FY 2026 has been raised for many areas. But the allocation is falling, considering it as a share of GDP. The nominal increase in fund allocation is near 10%, but it is actually 3.5% in real terms. The addition of 10,000 medical seats, training 1.5 lakh caregivers and allied health disciplines announced in the Budget, would be of help if it happens properly.

The non-communicable diseases like diabetes, cancer, auto-immune diseases have been rising fast and threatening our lives. The plans to develop India as a medicine hub and the Budget's announcement of Biopharma SHAKTI initiatives are welcome. It would lead to making a pharmaceutical hub that can supply medicines of various types at affordable prices, even to the global markets. Proposal for new NIPER institutions and setting up a nationwide clinical trials network is very timely.

Treatment for mental health was mentioned in the last budget, and this year it has got emphasis. Up-gradation of existing institutions and adding new Allied Health Professionals will be done in both private and government hospitals. To promote medical tourism, the budget has allocated funds, and that is welcome. Additionally, basic customs duty exemption on 17 drugs for cancer and rare diseases will be of great financial relief to many patients.

But there are many real problems. The budget allocations are not according to need. Moreover, the implementations of the plans are very unprofessional. Indranil, health economist and professor, OP Jindal Global University, Sonapat, has mentioned several weaknesses of the budget allocation for the health sector in Business Line (2nd February 2026). There have been several health schemes continuing for quite some time. Some schemes like National Health Mission (NHM), Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Yojana, and schemes on

### UNION BUDGET 2026

**Healthcare sector lauds Biopharma Shakti, allied health expansion and patient access measures**



nutrition, health research, which contribute to strengthening the public system and protecting the health of most of the vulnerable sections of society, need to allocate more funds. But the funds for these schemes are lowered in real terms in the budgets.

On the contrary, some schemes can promote the commercial interests, like PMJAY, the Digital Health Mission, which are being allocated higher amounts. Notably, these schemes are not successful in spite of having higher funding allocations. The NHM is the key programme through which the union government intervenes in improving primary and secondary maternal and child health, disease control programmes, and non-communicable diseases.

On the other hand, schemes like PMJAY also involve private institutions under government-funded institutions schemes, where a large part of the Dalits, tribals, and poor persons cannot get benefits. These schemes also involve partial self-payments for treatments.



## Atheroma is the leading cause of heart disease and deaths

Story 2

Atheroma or Atheromatous plaque is highly prevalent in India. Atheroma is a buildup of fatty materials, cholesterol, calcium, and cellular waste within the inner lining of the arterial wall. This causes the artery wall to become thick, hard, and narrow, and hence, reduces blood flow. At one stage, it may lead to serious cardiovascular diseases. Even heart attacks or strokes may happen to a patient if plaque ruptures.

**Why does it happen?**

Atheroma forms because of chronic damage to the artery lining. How does it damage?

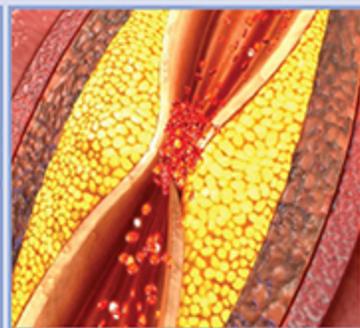
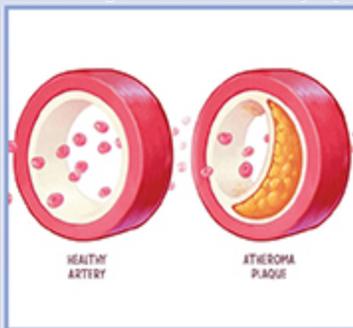
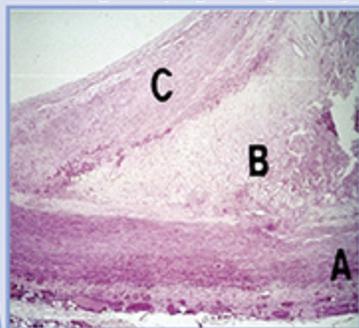
This is due to one, high cholesterol and triglycerides, two, high blood pressure, three, tobacco use or smoking, four, diabetes or insulin resistance, four, obesity and sedentary lifestyle, and five chronic inflammations.

**How does it develop?**

At the beginning endothelium or inner artery lining allows LDL cholesterol to enter, and then it accumulates gradually. Then, immune cells rush to the site and ingest cholesterol. This turns into foam cells that form a fatty streak. In that situation, smooth muscle cells migrate to the area to form a fibrous cap over the fatty core. This creates a mature plaque. At this stage, plaque may become unstable, and that may rupture and trigger blood clot. This may lead to serious vascular events.

**Symptoms and precaution**

Atheroma symptoms generally do not appear until arteries are over 70% blocked, which reduces the blood flow to vital organs. Moreover, symptoms vary site to site. One can see that chest pain or angina is for the heart, leg cramping during activity is for the legs, and stroke-like symptoms are for the brain. Heart, chest



pain, shortness of breath, palpitations, dizziness, and fatigue are present. For legs, which is a peripheral artery disease, there may arise pain, aching, or cramping in the calves, thighs, or hips while walking or climbing stairs. For Brain, sudden numbness or weakness in limbs, slurred speech, facial drooping, and vision loss, etc., are common symptoms. It may happen in the kidney and abdomen. For the kidneys, high blood pressure or kidney failures are seen, and for the abdomen, stomach pain after eating.

**Treatment of Atheroma**

The main focus would be on replacing fatty substances in the blood and managing lifestyle. It means reducing cholesterol, managing blood pressure, eating a proper diet, regular exercise, and no tobacco use, particularly smoking. Health experts consider this disease mainly a lifestyle disease. Among medication treatments to lower LDL cholesterol and stabilize plaque, using antiplatelet and ACE inhibitors are common methods. There are other procedures and systems for surgery, like angioplasty and stent placement, endarterectomy, and Coronary Artery Bypass Grafting (CABG) to treat atherosclerosis.



## CSR Activities & Events of SERUM throughout February, 2026



Feb 4: Birthday Celebration of Dr. Prabhat Bhattacharya



Feb 8: Sri Sanjib Acharya at Blood Donation & Thalassemia Awareness Camp



Feb 8: Thalassemia Screening Camp at Ayodhya Sporting Club, Chanditala



Feb 10: Free Health Check-up Camp conducted at Gariahat More



Feb 12: Sri Sanjib Acharya at Health Check-up & Blood Donation Camp



Feb 14: Sri Sanjib Acharya at Blood Donation Camp organised by Hitaishi Society



Feb 18: Thalassemia Screening Camp in association with the Rotary Club of Calcutta North East



Feb 18: FREE Health Check-up Camp at Nazrul Tirtha Metro Station, Newtown



Feb 23: Thalassemia Carrier Test for 40 students at Ramakrishna Ananda Ashram, Naktala



An initiative of **SERUM Analysis Centre (P) Ltd.**

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