

PM's vision for universal healthcare to the needy and vulnerable

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Dr Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare, today inaugurated the 'Arogya Manthan', a 2-day national workshop organised by National Health Authority (NHA) to mark the first year anniversary of Ayushman Bharat PMJAY, which was launched on 23rd September last year at Ranchi by the Hon. Prime Minister. He said that "Ayushman Bharat with its pillars of Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs) and Pradhan Mantri Jan

Arogya Yojana (PMJAY) is ably fulfilling the Hon. PM's pragmatic vision of serving the poor and needy, through affordable, quality and accessible healthcare services which are now available close to their own communities, and the assurance component which is totally cashless, and available in any part of the country.

At the event, Dr Harsh Vardhan stated that "our Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji is a visionary par excellence, and architect of this scheme, which is the largest public health scheme in the world. Under the leadership of Hon. Prime Minister, India has shown that such as large scale health scheme can not only be dreamed of but also successfully implemented". The stature of India has grown by leaps and bounds in the world under his dynamic leadership, he added. "He has been honoured by the Governments of Saudi Arabia, UAE, Bahrain, etc., and organisations such as the Gates Foundation recently for his exemplary work. The PM has become a symbol of aspirations of the world today". The visionary Prime Minister has inspired multitude of people-centric public health interventions, he added. He also stated that more than 12 crore toilets have been constructed in the country under Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan. Dr Harsh Vardhan further stated that earlier, the sanitation coverage was not even 30%, while today it is more than 95%. "It's because of the commitment of our Prime Minister that more than 5,90,000 villages in the country have been declared open defecation free," he stated. Dr Harsh Vardhan further said that more than 8 crore connections have been given to the people under the under Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) and more than 37 crore accounts have been opened under the Jan Dhan Yojana through financial inclusion of the poor people. "Now the benefits of the government scheme directly reach the bank accounts of people who deserve it the most, something that was considered almost unthinkable some years ago," the Union Health Minister said.

Highlighting a key salient feature of Ayushman Bharat PMJAY, Dr Harsh Vardhan said that it is being governed on a zero-tolerance approach towards any kind of fraud, and the anti-fraud framework rests on three key pillars of prevention, detection and deterrence. "We have de-empanelled 111 hospitals on charges of corruption and fraud. We are following the policy of Name and Shame, the de-empanelled hospitals' names have been put on the NHA website. We will not tolerate anything that will hamper the integrity of the scheme," Dr Harsh Vardhan stressed. NHA is currently building PM-JAY 2.0, the new and upgraded IT ecosystem that will be comparable to the best, anywhere in the world.

While delivering the presidential address, Dr Harsh Vardhan stated that the scheme is for more than 50 crore people and they need to have access to quality healthcare whether provided by the government or the private sector. "It is the government hospitals which provide healthcare services in the remotest areas of the country which have no private hospitals", he stated. "The idea of excluding government hospitals from the ambit of Ayushman Bharat is absolutely absurd and needs to be rejected", he emphatically stated.

Dr Harsh Vardhan suggested that hospitals that have done exemplary work shall be rewarded through a 'Name and Fame' approach, and their names to be displayed on the NHA website. He added that recently NHA has overhauled the existing health benefits packages and rationalized the cost of the packages to remove any aberrations, and to encourage wider private sector participation.

Speaking at the function, Shri Ashwini Kumar Choubey stated that Ayushman Bharat is a game changer in the health sector. He added that the scheme is ensuring accessible and equitable quality health care to the marginalized and vulnerable sections. He said that 'sarve santu niramaya' i.e. "Health for All" is the policy mandate of the Government and Ayushman Bharat will ensure realising the same through its twin pillars of Health & Wellness Centres (HWCs) and PMJAY.

Dr Harsh Vardhan released an Annual Report of the NHA and a document on 'Best Practices and Innovation'. He also presided over the exchange of MoU between NHA and Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) hospitals. He also felicitated Shri Ashit Kumar Modi, producer of Tarak Mehta ka Ulta Chasma, for highlighting PMJAY in one of its episodes.

Dr Vinod K Paul, Member (Health), NITI Aayog, Ms. Preeti Sudan, Secretary (HFW) and Shri Indu Bhushan, CEO, NHA, along with senior officials from various States, representatives from Development Partners, State Health Authorities, private hospitals, health insurance companies and the media were also present.

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