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Prime Minister's Office



English rendering of PM's address at the laying of foundation stone of multiple projects in AIIA

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My colleagues in the Union cabinet present at this event, Shri Jagat Prakash Nadda ji, Mansukh Mandaviya ji, Prataprao Jadhav ji, Smt. Anupriya Patel ji, and Shobha Karandlaje ji, my fellow MP from this region, Shri Ramveer Singh Bidhuri ji, the Honorable governors connected virtually from various states, Honorable chief ministers, MPs, MLAs, all other respected representatives, doctors, practitioners of Ayurveda and AYUSH and health professionals associated with health institutions from different parts of the country... brothers and sisters involved in the health system, all doctors and staff of the All India Institute of Ayurveda, ladies and gentlemen!

Today, the entire nation is celebrating Dhanteras and the birth anniversary of Lord Dhanvantari. I extend my best wishes to all of you on Dhanteras and Dhanvantari Jayanti. On this day, a large number of people across the country buy something new for their homes. I particularly wish good fortune to our business community. I also extend early wishes for Diwali to all of you. Many of us have seen many Diwalis, but even if we have seen several, this Diwali is historic. You might feel that our hair has turned white after seeing so many Diwalis, and you might wonder where Modi ji has brought this historic Diwali from. An opportunity like this has arisen after 500 years... when thousands of lamps will be lit in the temple of Ram Lalla at his birthplace in Ayodhya, creating a wonderful festival. This will be a Diwali when our Ram has returned home once again. And this time, this war is not ending after   years, but after 500  years.



Friends,

The celebration of fortune and health on Dhanteras is not just a coincidence. It symbolizes the philosophy of life in Indian culture. Our sages have said — अरोग्यम् परमम् भाग्यम्! meaning, health is the greatest fortune, the greatest wealth. It is often said — health is wealth. This ancient thought is now prevailing globally as Ayurveda Day. It is a matter of joy for all of us that today Ayurveda Day is being celebrated in more than 150 countries. This is proof of the increasing global attraction towards Ayurveda! And it demonstrates how a new Bharat can contribute significantly to the world with its ancient experiences.

Friends,

In the past 10 years, the country has added a new chapter in the field of health by integrating the knowledge of Ayurveda with modern medicine. The All India Institute of Ayurveda has become a major centre for this. Seven years ago, on this very day, I had the honour of dedicating the first phase of this institute. Today, on the Lord Dhanvantari jayanti, I am privileged to inaugurate its second phase. Here, we will witness the fusion of ancient practices like Panchakarma with modern technology. Advanced research will also take place in the fields of Ayurveda and medical science. I congratulate all the citizens of the country for this.

Friends,

The healthier the citizens of a country, the faster the pace of its progress. Keeping this in mind, the central government has prioritized the health of its citizens by defining five pillars of health policy. The first is preventive healthcare, i.e., prevention before illness occurs... the second is timely disease diagnosis... the third is free and affordable treatment, affordable medicines... the fourth is good treatment in smaller towns, addressing the shortage of doctors... and the fifth is the expansion of technology in health services. Bharat now views the health sector from the perspective of holistic healthcare. Today, this program showcases a strong glimpse of all these five pillars. Here, projects worth approximately 13,000 crore rupees have been either inaugurated or their foundation stones laid. Under the Ayurswasthya Yojana, four centres of excellence... expansion of health services through drones... helicopter services at AIIMS Rishikesh... new infrastructure at AIIMS Delhi and AIIMS Bilaspur... expansion of services in five other AIIMS... the establishment of medical colleges... the foundation stone for nursing colleges... numerous initiatives related to the transformation of health services in the country have been undertaken today. I am pleased that many of these hospitals have been built for the treatment of our labour brothers and sisters. These hospitals will serve as centres for our working class. Today, the pharma units that have been inaugurated will produce advanced medicines, high-quality stents, and implants within the country. These units will further boost the growth of Bharat's pharma sector.

Friends,

Most of us come from backgrounds where illness feels like a thunderbolt striking the entire family. When someone in a poor household falls seriously ill, it affects every member of the family. There was a time when families had to sell their homes, land, and jewellery to pay for treatment. Just hearing about the costs of treating serious illnesses would make a poor person's soul tremble.



Elderly mothers would wonder whether to spend on their treatment or on their grandchildren's education, while elderly fathers would contemplate whether to spend on their health or manage household expenses. Consequently, the elders in poor families often saw only one way forward: to endure the suffering silently, bear the pain, and wait quietly for death. The helplessness of not being able to afford treatment due to lack of money crushed the poor.

I could not bear to see my poor brothers and sisters in this helplessness. Thus, the Ayushman Bharat scheme was born out of a complete dedication to my fellow countrymen from that empathy, from that pain, and from that suffering. The government decided to cover the hospitalization costs for the poor, up to 5 lakh rupees for treatment. Today, I am satisfied that nearly four crore poor people in the country have benefited from the Ayushman scheme. These four crore poor people were hospitalized, some of them multiple times for different illnesses, received treatment without spending a single rupee. If the Ayushman scheme had not existed, these poor people would have had to pay around 1.25 lakh crore rupees from their own pockets. I often meet beneficiaries of the Ayushman scheme in different states of the country, listen to their joys and sorrows, hear their experiences, and the tears of joy that well up in their eyes while talking are nothing less than a blessing for everyone associated with the Ayushman scheme, every doctor, and every paramedical staff. There can be no greater blessing than this.

You can trust me; a scheme that rescues people from such crises has never been created before. Today, I take great satisfaction in the fact that the Ayushman scheme is expanding. Every elderly person in the country is looking at this program. During the elections, I guaranteed that all elderly persons above 70 years of age would be included in the Ayushman scheme in my third term ... Today, on the Dhanvantari Jayanti, this guarantee is being fulfilled. Now, every elderly person over 70 years of age in the country will receive free treatment in hospitals. These elderly individuals will be given the Ayushman Vaya Vandana card. The government's effort is to ensure that every elderly person above 70 years of age receives the Ayushman Vaya Vandana card as soon as possible. This is a scheme with no income restrictions—whether poor, middle-class, or affluent, everyone can benefit from it. Any citizen of this country who wishes to take advantage of this scheme can do so if they are over 70 years old.

Every elderly person should be free from worries and lead a healthy life with dignity. This scheme will prove to be a milestone in achieving that. With the Ayushman Vaya Vandana card, the household expenses will also decrease, and their worries will lessen. I congratulate all citizens for this scheme, and I pay my respects to all elderly persons over 70 years of age from here. However, I also seek forgiveness from the elderly in Delhi and West Bengal over 70 years of age because I will not be able to serve you. I apologize for not being able to assist you. I will get to know of your suffering, I will be informed, but I will not be able to help you, and the reason is that the governments in Delhi and West Bengal are not associating themselves with this Ayushman scheme, due to their political interests. This attitude of inflicting suffering on the sick in their own states is not acceptable from a humanitarian perspective. Therefore, I apologize to the elderly of West Bengal and Delhi. I am able to serve my fellow countrymen, but the walls of political interests prevent me from serving



the elderly of Delhi and West Bengal. For me, this is not just a political issue; it pains me deeply that the elderly of Delhi, from where I am speaking, are also listening to me. I cannot express the depth of my sorrow in words.

Friends,

Whether poor or middle-class, reducing the cost of treatment for everyone has been our government's priority. Today, over 14,000 PM Jan Aushadhi Kendras across the country stand witness to how sensitively our government is working. Medicines at these centres are available at an 80 percent discount. If these Jan Aushadhi Kendras did not exist, the poor and the middle class would have spent an additional 30,000 crore rupees on medicines, which they have saved because they received medicines at an 80 percent discount from these centres.

You know we have made stents and knee implants cheaper. Had we not made these decisions, those who have undergone these operations would have had to spend an additional 80,000 crore rupees. This is a result of our efforts that they have saved 80,000 crore rupees. The free dialysis scheme has also saved millions of patients thousands of crore rupees. Our government is running the Mission Indradhanush campaign to prevent life-threatening diseases. This not only saves the lives of pregnant women and newborns but also protects them from serious illnesses. I will ensure that the poor and middle class of my country are relieved from the burden of expensive treatments, and the country is moving forward in this direction.

Friends,

You know that timely diagnosis is essential to minimize the troubles and risks caused by illness. If someone falls ill, they should have access to quick testing and prompt treatment. To facilitate this, over 200,000 Ayushman Arogya Mandirs have been opened across the country. Today, crores of people are easily getting screened for diseases like cancer, blood pressure, and diabetes at these Arogya Mandirs. This ease of testing is allowing treatment to start on time, saving people money.

Our government is also saving citizens' money by maximizing the use of technology in the health sector. Under the e-Sanjeevani scheme, 30 crore people—this is not a small number—have received online consultations from esteemed doctors. The free and accurate consultations from doctors have saved them a lot of money. Today, we have also launched the U-WIN platform. With this platform, Bharat will have its own technologically advanced interface. The success of our Co-WIN platform during the COVID-19 pandemic has been witnessed globally. The success of the UPI payment system has also become a global story. Bharat is now replicating that success in the health sector through Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI).

Friends,

In the 6-7 decades since independence, the work that has not been done in the health sector has been accomplished in the last 10 years. In the past decade, a record number of new AIIMS and medical colleges have been opened in the country. Today, in this very program, several hospitals have been inaugurated in Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and other states. New medical colleges have been inaugurated in Narsapur and Bommasandra in Karnataka, Pithampur in Madhya Pradesh, Atchutapuram in Andhra Pradesh, and Faridabad in Haryana. The construction of



a new ESIC hospital has also started in Meerut, UP. A hospital has also been inaugurated in Indore. The increasing number of hospitals indicates that the number of medical seats is also rising rapidly. I want no poor child, who dreams of becoming a doctor, to see that dream shattered. I believe that the government's success lies in ensuring that no young person's dream is crushed. Dreams have their own power and can sometimes become a source of inspiration. I want no middle-class child to have to go abroad for medical studies due to financial constraints. That is why, there has been a campaign to increase medical seats in Bharat for the past 10 years. In the last decade, nearly 100,000 new MBBS and MD seats have been added. This year, I announced from the Red Fort that we will add another 75,000 new seats in the medical field in the next five years. Just imagine how much access to doctors will increase in villages.

Friends,

Today, there are over 750,000 registered AYUSH practitioners in our country. We need to increase this number further. Work is ongoing in this regard. The world now sees Bharat as a major centre for medical and wellness tourism. People from all over the world come to Bharat for yoga, Panchakarma, and meditation. This number will grow rapidly in the coming times. Our youth and our AYUSH practitioners need to be prepared for this. Preventive cardiology, Ayurvedic orthopedics, Ayurvedic sports medicine, and Ayurvedic rehabilitation centres—there are numerous fields where there are immense opportunities for AYUSH practitioners, not just in Bharat but also in different countries. Our youth will not only advance through these opportunities but will also serve humanity in a significant way.

Friends,

In the 21st century, science has made unprecedented advancements in the field of medicine. Diseases that were once considered incurable now have treatments available. The world is valuing wellness along with treatment. When it comes to wellness and health, Bharat has thousands of years of experience. Now is the time to validate our ancient knowledge through the lens of modern science. That's why I continuously emphasize evidence-based Ayurveda. Ayurveda possesses profound knowledge of personalized treatment protocols; however, concrete work from a modern scientific perspective has not yet been done in this area. I am pleased to announce that the country is launching a significant campaign in this direction. This campaign is the 'Prakrti Pareekshan Abhiyaan' (Nature Testing Campaign)! Because we see that when a patient recovers due to Ayurveda, the results are visible, but the evidence is not available. We need both results and evidence to show the world that we have the herbs for global health. Under this campaign, we can design an ideal lifestyle for every individual based on the principles of Ayurveda. We can conduct risk analysis for individuals before diseases strike. I believe that positive progress in this direction can completely redefine our health sector. We can provide the world with a new perspective on healthcare.

Friends,

Another significant reason for the success of modern medical science is lab validation of every principle. Our traditional healthcare system also needs to meet this criterion. Look at ashwagandha, turmeric, black pepper—how many herbs we have used for various treatments for generations. Now,



high-impact studies are proving their utility. As a result, the demand for herbs like ashwagandha is rapidly increasing worldwide. By the end of this decade, the market for ashwagandha extract is expected to reach around 2.5 billion dollars. You can imagine how much we can enhance the valuation of these herbs through lab validation! We can create a vast market!

Therefore, friends,

The impact of AYUSH's success is not limited to the health sector. It is creating new opportunities in Bharat while also supporting global well-being efforts. Within ten years, AYUSH has become one of the fastest-growing sectors in the country. In 2014, the manufacturing sector related to AYUSH was valued at 3 billion dollars; today, it has grown to approximately 24 billion dollars. This means an 8-fold growth in ten years. That is why today the youth of the country are launching new AYUSH start-ups. Over 900 AYUSH start-ups are currently operating in the country on traditional products, technology-driven new products and new services. Today, Bharat is exporting AYUSH products worth billions of dollars to 150 countries. This directly benefits our farmers. The herbs and superfoods that were once limited to local markets are now reaching the global market.

Friends,

To maximize the benefits of this changing landscape for farmers, the government is also promoting herb production. Under the Namami Gange project, natural farming and herb production along the banks of the Ganges are being encouraged.

Friends,

The essence of our national character and social fabric is captured in the phrase: “सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः, सर्वे सन्तु निरामयः” May all be happy; may all be free from illness. In the past ten years, we have connected this sentiment to the country's policies by following the mantra of ‘Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas.’ In the coming 25 years, our efforts in the health sector will lay a strong foundation for a ‘Viksit Bharat’ (Developed India). I am confident that with the blessings of Lord Dhanvantari, we will surely fulfill the dream of a ‘Viksit Bharat’ along with a ‘Niramay Bharat’ (Healthy India).

And friends,

When I talk about results and evidence, we are about to put significant efforts into preserving our country's vast manuscript heritage related to Ayurveda. Such manuscripts are scattered across many locations. Now the country is set to work in mission mode to preserve this heritage. All this treasure of knowledge may be inscribed on stones, written on copper plates, or found in handwritten manuscripts. We aim to collect all of this and, in this era of artificial intelligence, link it with technology to extract new insights from that knowledge. We are embarking on a significant effort in that direction.

Friends,

On this occasion, I once again pay my respects to all the esteemed elders above 70 years in the country, and I congratulate you all.

Thank you!



MJPS/ VJ /VK

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