



Healthcare affordability a key priority for the Government; duty cuts and GST reductions benefitting citizens: Union Minister of Commerce & Industry Shri Piyush Goyal

Healthcare is the foundation of a thriving society; doctors and medical professionals have a pivotal role in achieving Viksit Bharat: Shri Goyal

India poised to become the world's leading destination for affordable, high-quality healthcare and medical value tourism: Shri Goyal

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Union Minister of Commerce & Industry, Shri Piyush Goyal, while addressing the 22nd CII Annual Health Summit in New Delhi today, pointed out that India's healthcare sector has benefitted from the Government's continued focus on affordability—such as reducing GST on health and life insurance from 18 per cent to 0 per cent, and lowering duties on medical devices, cancer care drugs and several essential medicines to make treatments more accessible and affordable for citizens.

Shri Goyal said that the Government is open to exploring further reductions in duties or cesses on essential medicines and medical products to ensure that more medicines are available at affordable prices. The Minister said that the Government would be happy to receive specific inputs from the industry on medicines and products that could benefit from further reduction in duties. He assured the industry that this is a listening government, receptive to feedback, suggestions and ideas, and committed to working collaboratively with stakeholders to strengthen both domestic healthcare delivery and medical value travel.

Shri Goyal added that all such collective efforts—by the Government, medical professionals, and the healthcare industry—will cumulatively help in serving the people of India better and in positioning the country as a preferred global destination for medical treatment and wellness.

The Minister also spoke about the success of Jan Aushadhi Kendras, which have crossed the 10,000 mark, providing affordable generic medicines and sanitary products at nominal prices. He said such interventions have greatly improved healthcare access for rural and economically weaker citizens, ensuring affordability at the grassroots level.

Shri Goyal emphasised that India's healthcare model must remain inclusive and equitable, saying that "we cannot have a chalk and cheese system where local citizens are deprived of quality healthcare while focusing only on international medical tourism." He stressed that a strong domestic healthcare foundation is essential for India to emerge as a preferred global hub for medical value travel.

During his address, Shri Goyal highlighted that "good health is the foundation of a thriving society," echoing the vision of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. He stated that as India moves towards becoming Viksit Bharat by 2047, the role of doctors and the entire medical ecosystem will be crucial in shaping a healthy and productive nation.

Shri Goyal said that India's medical fraternity has consistently demonstrated leadership, commitment, and excellence, and there is no better team to make India a global benchmark for quality healthcare. He added that India's healthcare sector has witnessed remarkable growth over the past decade—both in capacity and quality.

The Minister informed that when the present Government came to power in 2014, India had only 7 All India Institutes of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) and 387 medical colleges. In the last ten years, this number has increased to 23 AIIMS and 706 medical colleges, reflecting the Government's commitment to expanding access to medical education and healthcare infrastructure. He noted that this expansion will help meet India's growing demand for doctors while continuing to contribute a pool of world-class medical professionals to the global workforce.

Shri Goyal mentioned that as announced by the Prime Minister from the ramparts of the Red Fort last year, the Government is working to significantly increase the number of medical seats by 2029 to strengthen India's medical education ecosystem and ensure smarter utilisation of infrastructure.

He noted that through initiatives such as Ayushman Bharat, nearly 700 million people are eligible for free healthcare. He said that the Prime Minister's compassionate leadership is reflected in the decision to extend free healthcare to all senior citizens above 70 years of age, irrespective of income. Shri Goyal recalled the Prime Minister's vision that every elderly citizen deserves dignity and security, especially at a time when traditional family care systems are changing.

The Minister welcomed suggestions regarding Visa-on-Arrival and E-Visa facilities for medical tourists, adding that India is already extending such facilities to many countries. Shri Goyal noted that India's ageing population in comparison to global demographics, and the long waiting periods for medical procedures abroad, offer a unique opportunity for India to emerge as a trusted global healthcare destination. He encouraged the CII to prepare an action agenda outlining steps to improve infrastructure, patient accommodation, and the overall experience of medical tourists.

He suggested that hospitals could consider allowing up to 10 per cent of foreign patients, while contributing a portion of the revenue towards the Ayushman Bharat programme or CSR activities benefitting underprivileged sections. Such a balanced model, he said, would ensure both inclusivity and growth.

Highlighting India's competitive advantage, Shri Goyal said that India offers world-class medical care at one-third or even one-fourth the cost of treatment in several developed countries. He noted that India's young population, skilled doctors, technicians, nurses, and caregivers are highly sought after globally and form the backbone of India's healthcare strength.

He urged leading healthcare institutions to expand training programmes for nurses and caregivers to meet both domestic and international demand. He also expressed openness to exploring policies that could enable NRI doctors to contribute to India's healthcare ecosystem, subject to consultation with professional bodies such as the Indian Medical Association (IMA).

Concluding his address, Shri Goyal said that India's healthcare advantage lies in its perfect blend of modern medicine, traditional wellness, and compassionate care. He suggested that 'Heal in India' should also integrate Yoga, Ayurveda, meditation, and spiritual tourism to present India as a holistic wellness destination.

"India has the clinical prowess, the wellness heritage, the talent, and the culture of hospitality — the right combination to make India the number one wellness destination in the world," Shri Goyal added.

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