Department of Posts Issues Commemorative Postage Stamps to Promote Breast Cancer Awareness, with Support from Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

Union Health Secretary and DG Postal Services Jointly Release the Commemorative Stamps; Call for Greater Public Awareness and Regular Screening

Union Health Secretary Highlights: 86.97 Crores Individuals Screened for Oral, Breast and Cervical Cancers, with 5.50 lakh currently undergoing treatment

“Women’s Health Is the Foundation of Healthy Families and a Healthy Nation”: Smt. Punya Salila Srivastava

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The Department of Posts today issued commemorative postage stamps on breast cancer awareness to mark International Breast Cancer Awareness Month. The initiative, conceptualised and undertaken by the Department of Posts, seeks to leverage the extensive postal network to disseminate messages on breast cancer awareness, early detection and preventive healthcare. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare provided technical inputs, reference materials and background information to support the development of the health-related content of the commemorative stamps and postcards.

During the Event, Smt. Punya Salila Srivastava, Union Health Secretary, along with DG Postal Services, Smt. Manisha Sinha released the two commemorative postage stamps and a set of picture postcards dedicated to breast cancer awareness.



Speaking on the occasion, Smt. Srivastava emphasised the foundational role of women's health in building healthy families and, therefore, a healthy nation. Underscoring the importance of prioritising women's health and preventive care, she highlighted the Swasth Nari, Sashakt Parivar Abhiyaan, conducted from September 17 to October 2 last year, which placed a special focus on women's health through screening and awareness initiatives.

Further in her address, she reiterated the Government's commitment to addressing the growing burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in the country. In this regard, Smt. Srivastava highlighted the Ministry's efforts under the **National Programme for Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases (NP-NCD)**, which integrates screening for oral, breast and cervical cancers into primary healthcare services across more than 1.8 lakh Ayushman Arogya Mandirs. She also underscored the role of the NP-NCD portal and ABHA IDs under the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission in ensuring accessible health records and continuity of care across healthcare facilities.

Under the National Programme for Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases (NP-NCD), a total of 86.97 crore screenings have been conducted for oral, breast and cervical cancers across the country. This includes 49.02 crore screenings for oral cancer, 22.90 crore for breast cancer and 14.05 crore for cervical cancer. Of these, 5.50 lakh individuals are currently undergoing treatment, including 2.70 lakh oral cancer patients, 1.43 lakh breast cancer patients and 1.37 lakh cervical cancer patients. She appreciated the Department of Posts for organising the commemorative event during the same period this year, noting that it would help carry forward the campaign's message and strengthen public awareness about breast cancer.



The Union Health Secretary noted that India reported more than two lakh new breast cancer cases in 2024, with an estimated one in every 29 women at risk of developing the disease. She underscored the critical role of early detection in improving treatment outcomes, and highlighted that delayed diagnosis remains a concern despite growing awareness and the availability of screening facilities. She urged women to prioritise preventive healthcare through regular screening and self-examination, and encouraged the public to make greater use of available government healthcare services and digital health platforms to facilitate timely detection and treatment.

Director General Postal Services, Smt. Manisha Sinha, highlighted the significance of the postal network in carrying important public messages to the last mile. She noted that commemorative stamps serve as enduring instruments of public awareness and reflect the country's priorities. She emphasised that the extensive reach of postal services would help take the message of breast cancer awareness to communities across the country, encouraging timely screening and fostering support for women affected by the disease. She also acknowledged the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare for providing technical inputs, reference materials and background information for the initiative, which helped in developing the health-related content of the commemorative stamps and postcards.



The programme concluded with an address by Additional Director General Dr. Pushp Lata, who highlighted that breast cancer is the most common cancer among women in India, accounting for more than 30% of all new cancer cases diagnosed among women. Emphasising the importance of early detection, she noted that timely diagnosis significantly improves treatment outcomes and quality of life, adding that nearly one-third of breast cancer cases are preventable and another one-third can be cured if detected early. She outlined the continuum of cancer care, from screening and referral at the primary healthcare level to diagnostic confirmation and treatment at district hospitals, State Cancer Institutes and Tertiary Cancer Care Centres. She also highlighted the establishment of Daycare Cancer Centres to improve access to chemotherapy closer to patients' homes. She called for regular screening, timely treatment and a need to address fear, stigma and barriers to healthcare access to improve health outcomes for women.



The day's events brought together the collaborative efforts of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the Department of Posts in taking the message of breast cancer awareness to the public. The release of the commemorative stamps aims to strengthen awareness about breast cancer, lays particular emphasis on self-examination and early detection, and encourages regular screening. The initiative underscores the significance of timely diagnosis and preventive healthcare in improving outcomes for women combating the disease.

About Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Observed annually from October 1 to 31, Breast Cancer Awareness Month is an international health campaign aimed at promoting early detection, education, and garnering support for those affected by the disease.

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