

**ADDRESS BY THE HON'BLE PRESIDENT OF INDIA
SMT. DROUPADI MURMU
ON THE OCCASION OF INAUGURATION OF KLE CANCER HOSPITAL**

Belagavi, January 3, 2025

I find this occasion to be very important as it is related to taking care of cancer patients, a very noble cause indeed. I congratulate everyone associated with the setting up of this cancer hospital which provides comprehensive cancer care services under one roof. I am told that the state-of-the-art technologies used in this hospital will ensure swift and precise treatment for cancer with minimal side effects. I am confident that with a wide range of specialties, this cancer hospital will make an important contribution in delivering high-quality cancer treatment to those in need.

According to a global study, cancer is a leading cause of death in the world. In 2022, there were an estimated 20 million new cancer cases and 9.7 million deaths worldwide. In India, the incidence of cancer is about 100 patients for every one lakh people. As per a study done by ICMR, cancer incidence in India is estimated to increase by about 13 percent in 2025 as compared to 2020. The setting up of state-of-the-art cancer hospital in Belagavi is a significant step in the direction of delivering specialized cancer treatment and palliative care to the people.

When someone is diagnosed with cancer, this itself has a devastating effect on the patients and their family members. In addition to the treatment, what they need is a ray of hope, a gentle touch, and a dose of empathy. It is the duty of healthcare professionals to provide comprehensive care that addresses the physical and psychological needs of the cancer patients. Every word of sympathy and compassion that a doctor utters has the power to change the life of his patient for better. It has the power to rekindle in a patient, the desire to live. Every doctor, more so a doctor taking care of a cancer patient should strive to become a kind-hearted healthcare professional, after talking to whom, the patients not only become well informed about the treatment but also feel reassured. This can lead to

better health outcomes, enhanced patient satisfaction and an overall positive experience for them.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Government of India has undertaken several initiatives to improve healthcare access and affordability, such as the Ayushman Bharat Jan Arogya Yojana. This national health insurance scheme with a wide coverage and huge impact has made a remarkable contribution in improving the quality of life of millions of people. According to a globally respected medical journal, there has been a significant improvement in timely initiation of cancer treatment because of Ayushman Bharat Jan Arogya Yojana. The duration between diagnosis of cancer and beginning of treatment has been reduced compared to the period before launch of this scheme. This is mainly for low-income groups. Now the scope of this scheme has been expanded to include all senior citizens aged 70 and above. This will help the senior citizens get affordable healthcare services for several diseases including cancer.

Another important thing to remember is the need to spread more and more awareness regarding the causes, diagnosis and treatment of cancer. We come across many such cases where either due to ignorance of the patient and family or due to financial constraints, the diagnosis and treatment of diseases are delayed. In case of cancer, this can prove fatal. I urge you all to remember that the fight against diseases such as cancer is a collective effort. Let us all work together to create a healthcare system that is patient-centric and equitable, along with being world-class.

I will mention an important aspect of healthcare where families and society have to play a greater role. We have seen that in some families, the health of boys is given more importance than that of girls. This different treatment is also seen later with respect to men and women. Many a time, the women of a family do not get timely diagnosis and treatment for their health issues. This may be due to the traditional mindset where addressing their health issues doesn't figure as the priority of the family including the women themselves. Any such delay, especially in case of cancer can be critical. I urge

every household to encourage women to share their problems. Every member of the family and society as a whole needs to take the health of women more seriously and contribute pro-actively in taking care of them and facilitating appropriate timely treatment for them.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The KLE society has been working for over a century to provide quality education, health and agriculture related services to the people. I am happy to know that more than 50 percent of the KLE institutions are located in semi-urban and rural areas.

To the students and young medical professionals present here, I would like to say that as future healthcare leaders, you have the power to shape the future of healthcare services in India. Remember that your profession is not just a job, but a calling to serve the humanity. You should strive to be compassionate and innovative while serving the nation with utmost sincerity.

I extend my best wishes to all of you for a bright future and a fulfilling life. May you be able to save precious lives!

Thank you,
Jai Hind!
Jai Bharat!