

# Modi rolls out 'game-changer' health scheme for 50cr people

NAYEAR AZAD  
RANCHI, SEPT. 23

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday rolled out the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY)-Ayushman Bharat, deemed as the world's largest government-funded healthcare programme covering over 50 crore beneficiaries and termed it a "game-changer initiative to serve the poor".

"PMJAY-Ayushman Bharat is the biggest government-sponsored healthcare scheme in the world. The number of beneficiaries is almost equal to the population of Canada, Mexico and the US taken together," Mr Modi said at the scheme's launch event at Ranchi's Prabhat Tara ground.

In an apparent reference to the Congress, he said the previous governments indulged in "vote-bank politics" without empowering the poor.

"We have been listening to the garibi hatao (get rid of poverty) slogan, but it was just an attempt to hoodwink the poor. If the (welfare) schemes were implemented, as promised, the poor in the country would have been better off today," the Prime Minister said.

Dedicating the scheme to the "service of the

## MEGA HEALTHCARE SCHEME



PM Narendra Modi launches Ayushman Bharat scheme in Ranchi on Sunday.

— PTI

### 50cr Indians

10cr families, of 5 members each, will be covered under Ayushman Bharat, billed as the world's largest government funded health assurance programme

### ₹5 lakh

Cover for each family annually for hospitalisation, surgeries

13,000 Empanelled hospitals across the country will offer cashless treatment, surgeries

1,300 Diseases will be covered under the scheme

14555 is the scheme's toll-free helpline no.

daridranayaran (service of the poor equivalent to worshipping God)," Mr Modi said that the policy-makers in the past never tried to empower the poor, but only paid lip service to their cause hoping to get votes.

The erstwhile govern-

ment did not realise that the poor have self-respect and dignity, Mr Modi claimed.

"I have seen and lived the life of a poor man, so I know the importance of self-respect and dignity in their lives. I am trying my best to fulfil their dreams

and protect their dignity. It is the BJP government that is focused on empowering them," he said.

"I hope and pray that the poor don't have to visit hospitals, but if they do, the Ayushman cover will be at their service. The poor of my country must get all facilities that the rich enjoy," he said.

The ambitious Ayushman Bharat scheme aims to provide annual coverage of ₹5 lakh per family, with an average size of five members, benefiting more than 50 crore people for secondary and tertiary care and hospitalisation through a network of empanelled health care providers. Aadhaar card is not mandatory for availing the benefits of the scheme that promises cashless hospitalisation, surgical procedures at 13,000 government and private hospitals.

The entitlement of each family will be decided on the basis of deprivation criteria in the Socio Economic and Caste Census 2011.

Some non-BJP ruled states have not joined the scheme. These include Telangana, Odisha, Delhi, Kerala and Punjab. Some claim they already have a similar health scheme or do not expect major

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# Modi rolls out health scheme

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benefit for their people from the scheme. Kerala questioned PMJAY scheme's feasibility and called it a "big hoax". Telangana complained that Prime Minister's photograph on the Ayushman Bharat card will result in the BJP getting undue publicity in the run-up to the parliamentary elections.

The Prime Minister said that the magnitude of the scheme can be gauged from the fact that more than 1,300 ailments are covered under it, including heart diseases, kidney and liver disorders and diabetes.

"People are calling the scheme 'Modicare' and by other names, but for me it is an opportunity to serve the poor. Even the ones living in the lowest strata of the society will benefit from the scheme," he said.

Reiterating the slogan "Sabka

saath, sabka vikas", Mr Modi said that the health cover does not discriminate on communal or caste lines.

"The programme will not differentiate between people based on religion, caste, location. Every eligible person will be able to avail its benefits," he asserted.

Under the scheme, individual letters written by Mr Modi will be given to every beneficiary and he can approach a hospital with this letter and a valid ID document. There the beneficiaries can meet Arogya Mitra who will help him generate a golden card, following which the person would be admitted to the hospital.

A toll-free number 14555 will also be operational, to respond to all questions about the scheme. The scheme's website is [mera.pmjay.gov.in](http://mera.pmjay.gov.in).

Mr Modi said that 2,500 modern hospitals would come up in tier-II and tier-III cities and that these will generate employment opportunities.

He also said that the Central government has given approval for 15 new AIIMS in the country.

"The government is working on a scheme to train one lakh new doctors in the next four to five years and build at least one AIIMS in each state," he claimed.

In a related development, Niti Aayog member V.K. Paul said in Delhi that the government is also working on a proposal to launch a "health television channel" with a view to promoting health and nutrition.

The health TV channel, which is under active consideration of the government, will supplement the ambitious healthcare scheme PMJAY, he said.