

Committed to giving affordable healthcare: PM

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 7

Noting that access to medicines is a "big concern" for the poor, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said that his government is committed to ensuring affordable healthcare for every Indian.

He stressed on the need to make health a mass movement through public participation and better sanitation, asserting that the Swachhh Bharat Mission was playing a key role in creating a healthy India.

Interacting with beneficiaries of the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojna (Pmbjp) and affordable cardiac stents and knee implants through video bridge, Mr Modi said that his government is working to provide more beds, hospitals and doctors and has taken steps to bring down treatment cost for the poor.



Narendra Modi

The Prime Minister noted that illness not only creates a huge financial burden on families, especially the poor and middle class, but also affects the socio-economic sector. "It is the endeavour of the government to ensure affordable healthcare to every citizen," he said.

He noted that the government has reduced stent prices substantially, benefiting the poor and the middle class the most.

Earlier, people had to sell or mortgage property to purchase stents, Mr Modi said, adding that the cost of heart stents

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has reduced from around ₹2 lakh to ₹29,000.

Observing that the PMBJP was launched with the intention to make the poor, lower middle class and middle class get access to affordable medicines and reduce their financial burden, Mr Modi said that more than 3,600 Jan Aushadhi Kendras have been opened all over the country, where over 700 generic medicines are available at affordable price.

As people living in small villages or towns find it difficult to go to a hospital or health centre that is very far, the gov-

ernment has decided to open around 1.5 lakh health centres across the country under Ayushman Bharat, Mr Modi said.

Apart from medicines, diagnostics facilities will also be available there, he said. Mr Modi also said the sanitation coverage in the country has increased from 38 per cent to nearly 80 per cent and asserted that the Swachhh Bharat Mission is playing a central role in creating a healthy India. The Prime Minister said that more than 3.5 lakh villages in the country have declared themselves open defecation free.