

## 22 more AIIMS to come up across country: Nadda

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Union Health Minister J P Nadda on Saturday said 22 new AIIMS are coming up across the country and admitted that there was a shortage of skilled human resource in the health sector.

He also said ensuring the highest standards of medical education was a top priority for the government.

"Twenty-two new AIIMS are coming up across the country under the Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana to reduce regional imbalance in the healthcare and tertiary fields," Nadda said while addressing the first convocation of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Bhubaneswar.

Admitting that there was a shortage of skilled human resources in the health sector at all levels, the health minister said the Centre has planned for a rapid expansion of medical education.

Nadda said as medical education forms the apex of the healthcare pyramid, it is the quality of graduating doctors and specialists that will determine the quality of services in the country for generations to come.

Many initiatives such as increasing the retirement age of doctors to 65 years, setting up of more medical and nursing schools, multi-skilling of doctors to overcome the shortage of specialists, have been taken by the Centre to improve medical education, he said.

To ensure better standards of medical education, the Centre has undertaken suitable amendments in the Graduate Medical Education Regulations and the Post Graduate Medical Education Regulations for making common counselling for admission in medical colleges mandatory, Nadda said.

Since 2014-15, post-graduate seats have been increased by over 8,500 and under-graduate seats by over 16,000, Nadda said, adding that 70 existing medical colleges are being upgraded by setting up super speciality blocks.

"We are expanding the network of our medical colleges in a big way by upgrading 58 district hospitals to medical colleges."

"Twenty-four new medical colleges have been announced in this year's budget. Twenty state cancer institutes and 50 tertiary cancer care centres are also being set up," he said.

The health minister said the AIIMS will soon introduce campus recruitment in order to retain students passing out of the institutes. He said AIIMS pass-outs are acquainted with the culture of the institute. The attempt is aimed at retaining the best brains of AIIMS in the institute, Nadda said.