

September 25 deadline for Modicare

Deen Dayal's Birthday Picked For Rollout Of Universal Health Scheme

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

PM Narendra Modi on Wednesday announced September 25 as the deadline for rolling out the world's largest health scheme — Ayushman Bharat National Health Protection Scheme — entailing an estimated 50 crore people in over 10 crore families with an annual health cover of Rs 5 lakh per family.

The universal health scheme assumes significance as it will provide free treatment for all critical diseases that require hospitalisation, which is often out of reach of the poor because of spiralling costs.

“On the 25th of September, the birth anniversary of Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya, the Pradhanmantri Jan Arogya Abhiyan will be launched throughout the country. No poor person will have to face difficulty in dealing with diseases. Nor would he have to borrow from a moneylender and pay interest,” Modi announced in his I-Day address.

Highlighting the massive



Piyal Bhattacharjee

PM Narendra Modi meets schoolchildren after his I-Day address at the Red Fort in New Delhi

scale of the scheme, Modi said the number of beneficiaries will be almost equal to the combined population of the US, Canada and Mexico. In fact, the number is nearly same as the population of the entire Europe, he said.

Cautious of any slips, given its massive scale, the scheme will be operated through a transparent technology-driven system and will be foolproof. This technology will be tested across the country over the next 4-6 weeks, he said.

The National Health Agency responsible for implementing the scheme is working with around 12 states where NHPS will be launched in its first leg. This includes states like Chhattisgarh, Assam, MP, Bengal, Nagaland,

Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat and most Union territories.

Modi also promised to extend the benefits of the scheme to people from middle class in future, emphasising on the efforts of his government to make treatment for serious diseases accessible to the common man.

The scheme, which will operate through partnership with insurance firms, hospitals and states, is also expected to create large number of jobs - estimated at around 2 lakh over the next five years. “And it will also open new avenues of employment for the youth in the health sector. New hospitals will be built in tier-2 and tier-3 cities. They will require medical staff in large numbers. A lot of employment opportunities will also be generated,” the PM said.

So far the Centre has signed memorandum of understanding (MoU) with 26 states. The government will roll out the scheme in different phases and plans to cover all the states by October 2.