

**Opening Remarks by H.E. Mr. Sibi George, Ambassador of India to Japan on  
Medical Tourism in India  
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Good afternoon,

Today we are gathered here to discuss a very interesting, cross-sectoral subject that underscores India's growing stature as a global leader in healthcare—Medical Tourism in India. This is an important driver of India's economic growth, and it's a clear reflection of India's medical expertise, state-of-the-art facilities, and the cost-effectiveness that draws patients from around the world.

India has emerged as one of the top destinations for medical tourism, with over 7,00,000 (PIB, July 2024) international patients visiting annually. This surge in demand is driven by several key factors such as world-class health care infrastructure, highly skilled professionals in the medical field, affordable treatment, among the top reasons.

You may be aware that:

- India boasts of around 40 hospitals accredited by the Joint Commission International (JCI), ensuring that health care facilities meet the highest international standards. Cities like Delhi, Chennai, Bengaluru, and Mumbai are now recognized globally for their world-class medical facilities.
- Indian doctors, many of whom have trained at leading institutions abroad, offer top-tier expertise in a variety of specialties—cardiac, orthopedic,

cosmetic surgery, and more. A commitment to excellence and patient-centered care is a major reason why international patients continue to choose India.

- India offers treatments at a fraction of the cost seen in Western countries. For example, a heart bypass surgery in India costs around \$4,000, compared to \$30,000 in the United States. This affordability is one of the key factors that make India an attractive medical destination.

### **India's appeal as a medical tourism destination spans the globe.**

Medical tourists from the U.S. travel to India drawn by the affordable and high-quality health care options available here. Patients from Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Oman make up a significant portion of India's medical tourism inflow, seeking treatments for orthopedics, fertility, and cancer care. Patients from UK visit India primarily for joint replacements, dental care, and obesity surgeries. India is increasingly becoming the health care hub for African nations like Nigeria, Kenya, and South Africa, who seek treatments in oncology, orthopedics, and dialysis. Patients from Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Afghanistan seek specialized treatments in India, which offers more affordable options for complex procedures.

India's medical tourism sector caters to a wide range of medical needs, some of the most sought-after treatments being cardiac care, orthopedic surgery, cosmetic and reconstructive surgery; and Ayurveda and Wellness. India's ancient systems of healing, including Ayurveda and Yoga, have gained immense popularity among international patients seeking alternative and holistic wellness treatments.

### **Government Initiatives to Promote Medical Tourism**

- The Government of India has recognized the immense potential of medical tourism and has introduced several initiatives to enhance its growth such as the simplified Medical Visa (M-Visa), which makes it easier for foreign patients and medical tourists to come to India for treatment.
- The National Medical and Wellness Tourism Board, which works on creating policies, providing guidelines, and promoting India's healthcare sector internationally, has been established to focus on the promotion of India as a top destination for medical and wellness tourism.
- The Ministry of Tourism has incorporated medical tourism into its Incredible India campaign. It participates in international health fairs and collaborates

with health care providers to promote India as a premier health care destination. The government also works closely with international travel agencies to offer packaged services that include both treatment and tourism.

- To ensure international standards of care, the Indian government has encouraged hospitals to seek accreditation from international bodies like Joint Commission International (JCI) and National Accreditation Board for Hospitals & Healthcare Providers (NABH). This guarantees that patients receive the highest quality care when they choose India.

While India is gaining recognition as a medical tourism hub, there remains a need to raise awareness globally about the quality and affordability of Indian healthcare. India's medical tourism sector is thriving, driven by world-class healthcare facilities, skilled professionals, and cost-effective treatments. Initiatives from the M-Visa to international marketing campaigns are positioning India as a global leader in this sector.

Our session today focusses on medical tourism and various initiatives in the Ayurveda and Wellness sector. We have a lineup of esteemed speakers and industry experts who will share their knowledge on the subject.

Thank you once again for being here. Let's make this seminar a productive, enlightening, and inspiring experience for all.

Thank you !

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