



Research Unit
Press Information Bureau
Government of India

Towards a Cancer-Free India

Commitment to Prevention, Treatment & Innovation

(Ministry of Health and Family Welfare)

13th February, 2025

“In Cancer Care, collaboration is essential for cure. An integrated approach encompassing prevention, screening, diagnosis, and treatment is essential to reduce the burden of cancer.”

- **Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi**

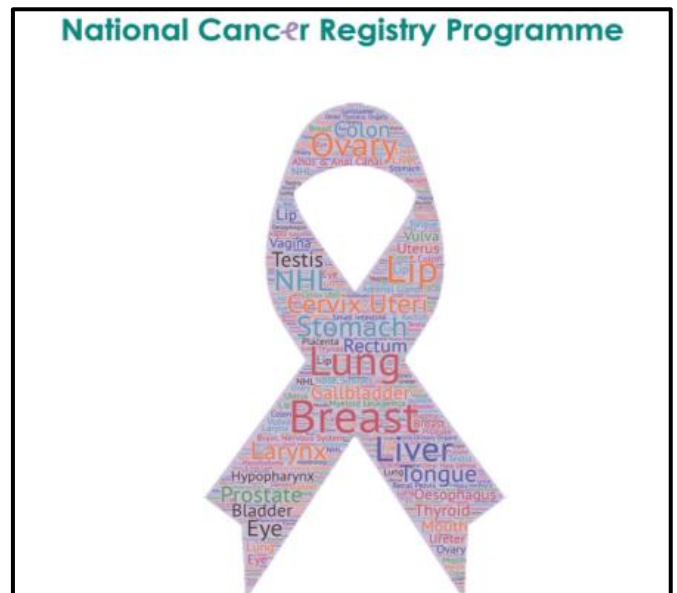
Introduction

Cancer is one of the leading causes of death worldwide. In 2022, about **20 million new cancer cases** were reported, and **9.7 million people** died from the disease globally. Cancer also remains a critical public health challenge in India, with cases projected to rise significantly. In **India**, around **100 out of every 1 lakh people** are diagnosed with cancer. According to the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)**, the estimated number of incidences of cancer cases was more than **14 lakhs** in **2023** in India.

The **National Cancer Registry Programme (NCRP)** under ICMR has been tracking cancer incidence, burden, and trends since 1982, playing a vital role in **gathering and analyzing data**, enabling **evidence-based policy decisions**. The **National Institute of Cancer Prevention & Research (NICPR)** is the nodal agency research and screening guidelines under NPCDCS.

The **Government of India** has introduced **robust policies, strategic interventions, and financial assistance schemes** to **enhance prevention, early detection, treatment, and patient care** nationwide.

This article outlines cancer prevalence, government efforts, financial aid, research, and budget commitments to strengthen cancer care in India.

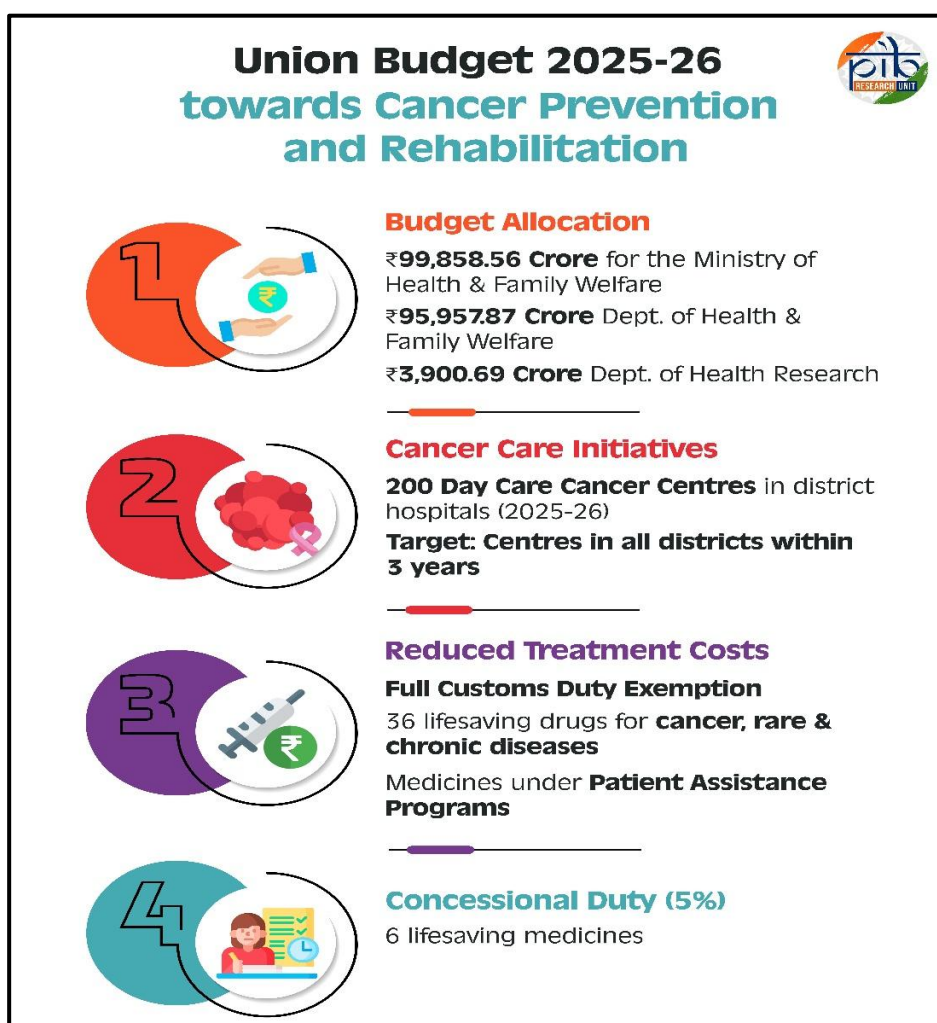


Union Budget 2025-26: Prioritizing Cancer Care

The **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** has been allocated a total of **Rs.99,858.56 crore**, with **Rs. 95,957.87 crore** designated for the **Department of Health and Family Welfare** and **Rs. 3,900.69 crore** for the **Department of Health Research**.

The **Union Budget 2025-26** underscores the Government of India's dedication to enhancing cancer care through several key initiatives:

- **Day Care Cancer Centres**: The government plans to establish **Day Care Cancer Centres in all district hospitals** over the next **three years**, with **200 centres slated for 2025-26**.
- **Customs Duty Exemptions**:
 - To alleviate treatment costs, **36 lifesaving drugs and medicines for treating cancer, rare diseases and chronic diseases** fully exempted from **Basic Customs Duty (BCD)**
 - Six lifesaving medicines to attract concessional customs duty of 5%
 - Furthermore, specified drugs and medicines under Patient Assistance Programmes run by pharmaceutical companies fully exempted from BCD.



Holistic Cancer Control: A Policy-Driven Approach

1. National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases and Stroke (NPCDCS) - The NPCDCS is a flagship initiative under the National Health Mission (NHM) focuses on controlling **non-communicable diseases (NCDs)**, including cancer. Three most common types of cancers (oral cancer, breast cancer and cervical cancer) are an integral part of NPCDCS. It is aimed at **strengthening cancer control efforts, focusing on health promotion, early detection, and treatment infrastructure for**

cancer.

Components

- **Cancer screening:** For oral, breast, and cervical cancers at the community level.
- **Early detection & awareness:** Through health workers and digital platforms.
- **Strengthening infrastructure:** Establishment of **tertiary cancer centers (TCCs)** and **state cancer institutes (SCIs)**.

Under this program, the government has established

- **770** District NCD Clinics
- **233** Cardiac Care Units
- **372** District Day Care Centres
- **6,410** Community Health Centre NCD Clinics

These facilities provide **accessible and affordable** cancer screenings, particularly for oral, breast, and cervical cancers.

2. Strengthening of Tertiary Care for Cancer Scheme

It enhances specialized cancer care facilities with aims to decentralize cancer treatment, making services more accessible across states.

Tertiary Cancer Care Network Strengthening

- India has significantly expanded its **cancer treatment ecosystem**, with the establishment of:
 - 19** State Cancer Institutes (SCIs)
 - 20** Tertiary Care Cancer Centres (TCCCs)

The **National Cancer Institute (NCI) in Jhajjar**, Haryana, and the second campus of **Chittaranjan National Cancer Institute (CNCI) in Kolkata** are playing a pivotal role in providing cutting-edge cancer treatment and research opportunities.

3. Ayushman Bharat Yojana – Launched in 2018, Ayushman Bharat is a landmark health initiative designed to provide universal health coverage, particularly for rural and vulnerable populations. The scheme plays an important role in ensuring timely treatment of cancer patients within 30 days. The scheme covers chemotherapy, radiotherapy, and surgical oncology for cancer treatment for economically vulnerable families. Till 2024, over **90% of registered cancer patients** have commenced treatment under this scheme, reducing **out-of-pocket expenses and ensuring financial protection** for millions.

4. The Health Minister's Cancer Patient Fund (HMCPF): The Health Minister's Cancer Patient Fund under **Rashtriya Arogya Nidhi (RAN)** provides financial aid up to **₹5 lakh** for cancer treatment to patients below the poverty line. The maximum financial assistance admissible under the Scheme will be ₹15 Lakh. It covers treatment at **27 Regional Cancer Centres (RCCs)**, with **₹50 lakh revolving funds** allocated to each center. Established in **2009**, the scheme ensures accessible and affordable cancer care for underprivileged patients.

5. National Cancer Grid (NCG): The National Cancer Grid (NCG) was established in **2012** to ensure high-quality, standardized cancer care across India. Eight years later, it has grown into the world's largest cancer network with **287 members**, comprising cancer centres, research institutes, patient advocacy groups, charitable organizations and professional societies. Between the member organizations of the NCG, the network treats over 750,000 new patients with cancer annually, which is over 60% of all of India's cancer burden. The NCG also works closely with **Ayushman Bharat – PMJAY** to provide affordable, evidence-based cancer treatment and streamline costs under the scheme. It has also played a key role in shaping the **National Digital Health Mission (NDHM)** by contributing to the development of electronic patient health records.

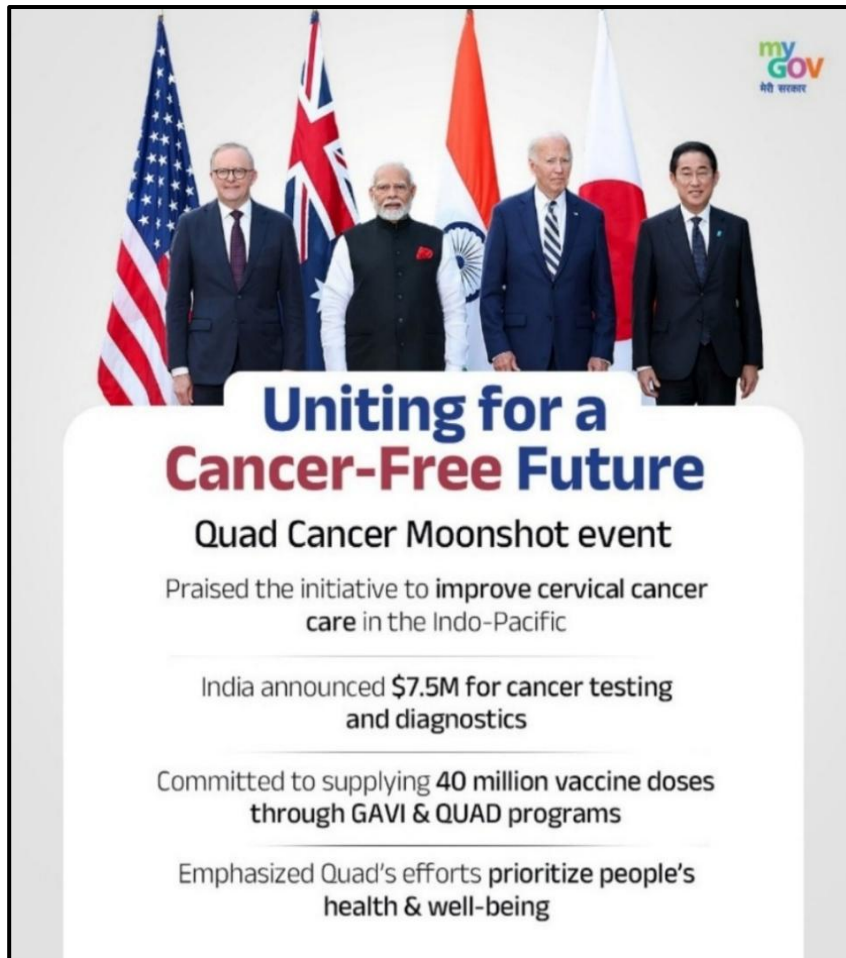
Advancing Cancer Research and Treatment

1. India's First Indigenous CAR-T Cell Therapy: NexCAR19 – A Breakthrough in Cancer Treatment

In **April 2024**, India achieved a historic milestone in cancer care with the launch of **NexCAR19**, the nation's **first indigenously developed CAR-T cell therapy**, created through a groundbreaking collaboration between IIT Bombay, Tata Memorial Centre, and ImmunoACT. This cutting-edge innovation offers a highly effective, next-generation treatment for blood cancers, bringing hope to thousands of patients. Designed to be affordable and accessible, NexCAR19 marks a critical step towards self-reliance in oncology care, reducing dependence on expensive imported therapies and strengthening India's position in advanced cancer treatment and biotechnology research.

2. Quad Cancer Moonshot Initiative

In Sep 2024, India, in partnership with the **US, Australia, and Japan**, has launched the **Quad Cancer Moonshot** to **eliminate cervical cancer** across the **Indo-Pacific region**. This initiative aims to **scale up screening and vaccination programs, advance cutting-edge research, and strengthen global collaboration** to ensure early detection, effective treatment, and improved survival rates.



3. Expansion of ACTREC

In **January 2025**, the **Advanced Centre for Treatment, Research, and Education in Cancer (ACTREC)**, a key arm of **Tata Memorial Centre (TMC)**, embarked on a major expansion to revolutionize cancer research, treatment, and patient care. This initiative aims to **accelerate clinical breakthroughs, enhance oncology care, and establish cutting-edge therapeutic facilities**, reinforcing India's leadership in advanced cancer treatment and innovation.

Awareness Generation

The Indian government is working to raise awareness about cancer prevention and treatment in several ways:

1. **Community Awareness** – Preventive aspect of Cancer is strengthened under Comprehensive Primary Health Care through **Ayushman Aarogya Mandir** by promotion of wellness activities and targeted communication at the community level.
2. **Media Campaigns** – Print, electronic and social media are used to increase public awareness. Healthy lifestyle is promoted through observation of **National Cancer Awareness Day and World Cancer Day**.
3. **Government Support** – The **National Programme for Non-Communicable Diseases (NP-NCD)** provides funds to states for awareness programs under the **National Health Mission (NHM)**.
4. **Healthy Eating Promotion** – The **Eat Right India** campaign by the **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)** encourages nutritious food choices.

5. **Fitness Initiatives** – The **Fit India Movement** by the **Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports** promotes physical activity, while the **Ministry of AYUSH** conducts yoga programs for better health.

These efforts aim to educate people on leading a healthy lifestyle, preventing cancer, and seeking timely medical care.

Conclusion

India has made significant strides in cancer prevention, treatment, and research through policy reforms, expanded healthcare infrastructure, and financial assistance schemes. The Union Budget 2025-26 emphasizes strengthening cancer care with initiatives like Day Care Cancer Centres and customs duty exemptions on life-saving drugs. Programs such as NPCDCS, PMJAY, and HMCPF ensure affordable treatment and early detection, while research initiatives like NexCAR19 and the National Cancer Grid are advancing oncology care. Despite progress, challenges remain in equitable access, early detection, and rising cancer cases. Greater investment in awareness, lifestyle interventions, and technology-driven solutions is crucial. With a multi-sectoral approach and sustained government efforts, India aims to build a comprehensive and inclusive cancer care system, improving patient outcomes nationwide.

References

- <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2057441>
- <https://static.pib.gov.in/WriteReadData/specificdocs/documents/2025/jan/doc202513480401.pdf>,
- [https://sansad.in/getFile/annex/265/AU907_33qphJ.pdf?source=pqars#:~:text=\(a\)%20&%20\(b\):,and%2014%2C96%2C972%20in%202023](https://sansad.in/getFile/annex/265/AU907_33qphJ.pdf?source=pqars#:~:text=(a)%20&%20(b):,and%2014%2C96%2C972%20in%202023) RAJYA SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 907
- <https://sansad.in/getFile/loksabhaquestions/annex/1711/AU2945.pdf?source=pqals> LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2945
- <https://www.indiabudget.gov.in/doc/eb/allsb.pdf>
- <https://static.pib.gov.in/WriteReadData/specificdocs/documents/2025/feb/doc202521492701.pdf>
- <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2098352>
- <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2084185>
- <https://sansad.in/getFile/loksabhaquestions/annex/1711/AU2790.pdf?source=pqals> LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2790
- <https://pib.gov.in/PressNoteDetails.aspx?NoteId=152133&ModuleId=3®=3&lang=1>
- <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1738169>
- <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=2088780>
- <https://www.myscheme.gov.in/schemes/hmcpf>
- <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1887836®=3&lang=1>
- <https://www.pib.gov.in/Pressreleaseshare.aspx?PRID=1911468>
- <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2017169>
- <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2057459>
- <https://x.com/mygovindia/status/1838519801578426432/photo/1>
- <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2098128#:~:text=ACTREC's%20expansion%20aims%20to%20enhance%20the%20fight%20against%20cancer>.

Santosh Kumar/ Sarla Meena / Vatsla Srivastava