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Meghalaya Health Secretary suggests mission approach to tackle cancer crisis

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FICCI Roundtable: Roadmap for making cancer care affordable and accessible in India



Dr Mazel Ampareen Lyngdoh, Minister of Health & Family Welfare, Government of Meghalaya highlighted the grave incidence of cancer in the country, especially in the North-Eastern region.

Addressing the 'FICCI Roundtable for North-Eastern region', held under the aegis of Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India, on the 'Roadmap for Making Cancer Care Affordable and Accessible in India', Dr Lyngdoh said, "Our vision is a cancer-free future generation, where everyone has access to accurate tests and affordable cancer treatment."

Dr Lyngdoh shared that the Chief Minister of Meghalaya has worked towards ensuring that fundamental interventions for cancer treatment are available to the citizens. "Cancer surveillance is our top priority. By leveraging technological advancements, we can save countless lives. This roundtable will help us in formulating a policy that is achievable. Let's unite to forge partnerships amongst all stakeholders to battle against cancer," she emphasised.

Sampath Kumar, Principal Secretary, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Govt of Meghalaya emphasised on the need for a mission approach for tackling the cancer crisis. He highlighted that a lack of awareness and certain cultural practices contribute to the state's cancer burden. To address this, he said, "Government of Meghalaya launched the Cancer Mission, a screening-based programme focused on early detection and prevention and already screened individuals over 30 years of age in Khasi District." He also emphasised on the role of AYUSH techniques in preventing relapses and managing stress.

FICCI, recognising the critical nature of the cancer crisis in India, established a multi-stakeholder Task Force in 2022 to focus on developing strategic solutions to address the growing cancer burden. Raj Gore, Chair, FICCI Task Force on Cancer Care and CEO, Healthcare Global Enterprises Limited (HCG) said, "The Northeast region of India faces unique healthcare challenges, particularly in cancer care. Despite being a relatively small region, it has some of the highest cancer incidence rates in the country. This is primarily due to high tobacco consumption, inadequate healthcare infrastructure, and delayed diagnosis. Tobacco usage is a major contributor to cancer, accounting for 57% of all cancers in men and 28% in women. To address this, there is a need for comprehensive prevention strategies, early detection initiatives, and improved access to treatment."

FICCI is organising Regional Roundtables on Cancer Care under the aegis of the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Govt of India, for further awareness as well as garnering further suggestions from stakeholders across the country. Four roundtables have been held in Gandhinagar, Bengaluru, Bhuvaneswar and Jaipur. The Roundtable in Shillong was organised in partnership with AstraZeneca, HCG Hospitals, Varian and Indian Medical Parliamentarians' Forum (IMPF).