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Press Release

Health research to undergo major expansion in the country -says Union Health Minister Azad

New Delhi, Sept. 24 - 'Several innovative schemes are ready for launch by the Department of Health Research, Govt. of India for expanding the research base both in terms of infra-structure and human resource' said Ghulam Nabi Azad, Union Health Minister on the occasion of the ICMR Awards presentation ceremony held today. He said that these schemes will provide a boost to research and development in affordable health technologies and to institutions, which are at the periphery of today's competitive India that could be helped move to the central stage.

Shri Azad honoured 51 outstanding clinical as well as bio-medical scientists for their work on wide ranging subjects pertaining to communicable and non-communicable diseases, maternal & child health and various other medical and biomedical fields such as cancer, liver diseases, mental health, virology, typhoid, kala azar, leprosy, tuberculosis, filariasis, leukoderma, genetics and immunology, cardiology, tissue implants in orthopaedics and ophthalmology, neurology, haematology, geriatrics, rheumatology, diabetes and herbal drugs.

The Minister expressed confidence that the newly launched scheme to establish **Multi-disciplinary Research Units in 80 Medical Colleges** will considerably strengthen our fight against non-communicable diseases. During the current year itself these units will be established in **35 government medical colleges**, of which 21 have already been approved. He emphasized that the Govt. is establishing **a network of 160 virology laboratories in all government medical colleges** as well as national institutions, which will help our country to very effectively contain the outbreaks and develop/introduce new vaccines in an evidence based manner, the minister added.

While appreciating the launch of a new scheme to establish **Model Rural Health Research Units, initially in 15 states**, based on ICMR model established in Ghatampur (Kanpur, UP), Mr Azad expected that through this model **ICMR Institutions, State Medical Colleges and State Health Departments** will work together to have seamless transfer of modern yet affordable technology for the benefit of our rural populace.

The Minister also said that the National Cancer Registry Program that provides vital epidemiological data on cancer to frame policies of treatment and prevention will get a further boost in outreach as its network expands in future to cover new areas and high endemic pockets, particularly in the North East. Shri Azad announced that very recently the Central Government has approved funding for establishing **20 new stand-alone**

State Cancer Institutes, 23 new Tertiary Cancer Centres and strengthening of existing 27 Regional Cancer Care Centres, across the country. He urged the Department of Health and family Welfare and the Department of Health Research to take advantage of the new initiatives in the area of cancer and work together for improving patient outcomes by offering better treatment options and facilities in every part of the country.

Health and Family Welfare Minister lauded the program of ICMR to develop leads into affordable technologies. He called upon the scientists of ICMR and the scientists receiving funds from ICMR as well their partners to accelerate their work to ensure that benefits of the new knowledge generated by them reaches the people as early as possible. He also called upon therecipients of the awards to effectively join as partners and lay **special emphasis** on translation and implementation research for achieving the goal of health for all.

Shri A. H. Khan Choudhury, Union Minister of State for H & FW acclaimed the efforts of ICMR scientists in developing diagnostic tests for fertility assessment, pregnancy detection, food adulterants & contaminants, pre-natal diagnostic services for genetic disorders such as haemophilia and congenital immune-deficiencies. Mr Khan also felt that programs of ICMR that are aimed at capacity building and inspiring youth towards bio-medical research such as JRF, MD/PhD, post-doctoral fellowships, international fellowships and financial assistance to attend international conferences will go a long way in increasing human resources in research. Earlier in his Presidential address, Shri Azad observed that India is one of the largest contributor to health professionals and doctors to UK, USA and Gulf countries. The minister said that the health services of many developed countries in the world are virtually run by Indian health care providers.

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