

Wage war against cancer, northeast Chief Ministers told

Incidence of cancer and consumption of tobacco are very high in the region, says Union Health Minister Anbumani Ramadoss

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GUWAHATI: Union Health and Family Welfare Minister Anbumani Ramadoss on Tuesday urged Chief Ministers of the northeast to wage a war against tobacco and cancer in the region.

Dr. Ramadoss told reporters here that the incidence of cancer was high in the northeast. It was a matter of great concern that use of tobacco was very high in the region. He was here to address the first convention of Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) of Assam.

The Minister said that allocation for cancer treatment and prevention had risen from Rs 280 crore during the tenth five year plan to Rs 2900 crore in the 11th. Northeast would get a substantial

amount of this allocation — about 10 per cent. The solution, however, did not lie in treatment of the disease, but in its prevention. Dr Ramadoss said.

To a question about improving health care facilities for tea garden workers in Assam, Dr Ramadoss said that under a public-private partnership initiative of the Ministry, the tea companies had been asked to hire doctors whose salaries would be paid by the Centre.

Earlier addressing the convention, Dr Ramadoss said that Assam was one of the best performing States in implementation of the National Rural Health Mission programme. Immunisation cover in the State had gone up from 17 per cent to 58 per cent and institutional delivery from

80000 to 3.3 lakh within three years. Assam was the first state to have riverine clinic and the third to give mobile phones to Auxiliary Nurse and Midwife (ANM).

Dr Ramadoss, Assam Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi and State Health Minister Himanta Biswas Sharma handed over mobile handsets to three ANMs. The State government would provide mobile handsets to 7650 ANMs, announced Dr Sharma.

There are 26235 ASHAs in the State, of whom about 12000 took part in the convention.

The Assam government signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Hyderabad-based Emergency Management and Research Institute (EMRI) for providing a comprehensive free

emergency medical, police and fire response services using a single toll free number 108 in the presence of Dr Ramadoss and Mr Gogoi.

Under the MoU, the State will receive a fleet of 280 state-of-the art ambulances equipped with GIS and GPS systems and emergency equipments to handle almost any emergency situation.

About upgrading the trauma care facilities along the country's national highways of the Golden Quadrilateral and East-West, North-South Corridor, the Minister said there would be a toll free telephone booth every 5 km, ambulance service every 50 km, a trauma care centre every 100 km, a speciality trauma care centre every 300 km and a super speciality trauma care centre every 500 km.



An Accredited Social Health Activist worker talking on her new mobile phone given to her by the Assam government on Tuesday. Looking on are Union Health and Family Welfare Minister Anbumani Ramadoss and Assam Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi. — PHOTO: RITU RAJ KONWAR