Medical Value Travel

Why in news?

India hosted 'One Earth One Health - Advantage Health Care-India 2023' summit at New Delhi to promote Medical value travel in India.

What is 'One Earth One Health - Advantage Healthcare India 2023' program?

- The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in association with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry has co-branded the 6th edition of One Earth One Health - Advantage Healthcare India 2023 with India's G20 Presidency.
- The event will emphasize the importance of global collaborations and partnerships for building resilient global health architecture.
- It is a two-day event is to showcase India as the ***new hub of Medical Value Travel*** and its emergence as a major hub for world-class healthcare, wellness services and medical tourism.
- It also aims to highlight India's significance in medical potential and create and explore opportunities for healthcare collaborations between the participating countries.

What is medical tourism?

- Medical tourism also known as medical value travel (MVT) is the practice of travelling ***across international borders*** seeking medical services, mainly elective or complex surgeries.
- Stakeholders in medical tourism include airlines, hospitals, wellness centers and hotels among others.
- Currently, the most sought-after destination for medical value travel is ***Canada***.

NITI Aayog estimates that the Indian economy could earn an additional USD 9 billion by 2026 from MVT and wellness tourism.

Why is India a preferred MVT destination?

- **Trained and experienced doctors** - The doctors in India are more experienced compared to rest of the world.
- **Well trained nurses** - According to Ministry of Tourism website, India has 1000 recognized nurses-training centers with 10,000 nurses graduating annually.
- **India's traditional medical** - Such as ayurveda, yoga & naturopathy and other traditional systems of medicine are considered best for the treatment of various ailments, promoting wellness tourism.

- **Low cost of treatment** - The treatment in India is very low compared with the other countries.
- The cancer treatments are ***65-90% cheaper rates*** when compared to US, Europe, Australia or even Singapore.
- 200 types of medical services - India offers over 200 types of medical services ranging from fertility treatments to skincare.
- **Others** - ***Cost-effective healthcare services***, quality diagnostic equipment and trained doctors, with many of them fluent in English.

India ranked tenth globally for medical tourism with a score of 69.80 on Medical Tourism Index 2020-2021 (MTI).

What are the initiatives to promote MVT?

- **National Strategy and Roadmap for Medical and Wellness Tourism** - Was rolled out by union government in January 2022 to provide health services to the world at large.
- **Heal in India campaign** - Launched by union government to market the nation as a wellness and medical tourism destination.
- 37 hospitals including 30 private hospitals across 17 cities have been identified to cater to MVT.
- **E-visas** - India has launched e-visas for MVT travelers from 156 nations.
- **Online MVT portal** - The union government plans to launch a one-stop online MVT portal.
- The portal will include mapping of all medical facilitators including government and private hospitals, booking of services, payments and post-operative services.

What are the challenges to MVT sector?

- Lacks government regulations and monitoring.
- Lacks a separate body to head MVT and coordinate between various stakeholders.
- No standard prices for treatments across India.
- The lack of a price range leaves tourists susceptible to cheating.
- No medical insurance portability for MVT travelers.
- Lack of awareness about National Accreditation Board for Hospitals and Healthcare Providers, India’s national medical accreditation.

Quick facts

National Accreditation Board for Hospitals and Healthcare Providers (NABH)

• NABH is a constituent board of ***Quality Council of India***.
• NABH set up to establish and operate accreditation program for healthcare organizations.
• NABH is being supported by all stakeholders including industry, consumers, government, have full functional autonomy in its operation.
• NABH is an Institutional Member of the International Society for Quality in Health Care (lSQua).

References

1. The Hindu | India Status Of MVT
2. The Hindu | Advantage Healthcare India 2023 Features

