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Global participation in National Cancer Grid meeting fulfils Hon'ble PM's promise in 21st ASEAN-India Summit last month

The National Cancer Grid (NCG) in India held its annual meeting between 6th and 8th November 2024 at the Tata Memorial Hospital in Mumbai. The NCG is a collaborative network of over 360 cancer centres, research institutes, patient groups and professional societies in India and 15 other countries. Funded by the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE), Government of India, NCG member organizations treat over 850,000 new patients with cancer annually, which is 60% of all patients with cancer in India.

The annual meeting was attended by 300+ cancer professionals, researchers, policymakers, voluntary organizations and patient advocates. A notable feature of the meeting was the participation of 27 international leaders from 14 countries. This was consequent to implementation of the 10-point agenda announced by the Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi at the 21st ASEAN-India Summit, held in Vientiane, Lao PDR on 10 October 2024. The National Cancer Grid, in collaboration with the Indian Mission to ASEAN in Jakarta and the Ministry of External Affairs, Govt. of India, invited ASEAN Member States to participate in the meeting.

In a first, 18 cancer specialists and policy makers from 8 ASEAN Member States and one representative from Health Division of the ASEAN Secretariat participated in the meeting. This is the first out of five such annual collaborations approved by ASEAN and India, supported under the ASEAN-India Fund.

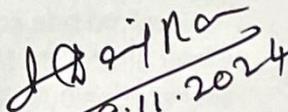
The event is aimed to present an opportunity to all ASEAN Member States to get familiar with the various National Cancer Grid activities and get first-hand experience of cancer control under the project. The meeting had a diverse agenda highlighting several NCG initiatives and brainstorming sessions focusing on future initiatives. This initiative will further strengthen the ASEAN-India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and provide a

major push to ASEAN-India cooperation in the health sector and enhance outreach of cancer control activities in the region.

In addition, 5 senior cancer physicians and policy makers from 3 BIMSTEC countries also participated in the meeting, supported by the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. Following a series of deliberations between the ASEAN and BIMSTEC representatives and the NCG leadership, several collaborative initiatives were discussed including participation in Virtual Tumor Boards, capacity building for workforce development, assistance with cancer registries, and twinning of cancer centres.

Dr Ajit Kumar Mohanty, Secretary, Department of Atomic Energy, and Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission of India strongly supports the DAE commitment to advancing cancer control not just in India, but also globally. Participation of cancer leaders and health ministry officials from the ASEAN and BIMSTEC countries is an important step towards cooperation and collaboration in cancer across these countries.

Based on requests from several developing and underdeveloped countries, the NCG "Vishwam", the global component of the NCG was launched during the General Conference of the 2019 IAEA meeting in Vienna. The NCG Global Cancer Network partners with several cancer control organizations across the world, working towards reducing the burden of cancer globally.


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