

**ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA,
SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND
ON THE OCCASION OF PRESENTATION OF NATIONAL
FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE AWARDS FOR NURSING
PERSONNEL**

New Delhi, December 5, 2019

1. I am delighted to greet you all today on the occasion of the National Florence Nightingale Awards ceremony. The Government of India instituted these awards in 1973. They are named after Florence Nightingale, the founder of modern nursing, and the very icon of selfless care.
2. I congratulate the 36 nursing professionals who are being conferred with the National Florence Nightingale Awards for their meritorious services. I offer my felicitations to the entire nursing fraternity for their sincere dedication and services to fellow citizens. I also wish to acknowledge the sacrifice of Late Mrs. Lini Puthuserry who is today being honoured posthumously for her unsurpassed dedication while taking care of patients during the Nipah virus outbreak in Kerala.
3. Nurses play a vital role in delivering quality and cost effective health care, addressing multiple health challenges and responding to health needs of individuals, families and communities. The world is more and more in need of care and compassion, and nurses indeed are a symbol of seva, shushrusha, karuna. For patients and their families, nurses are the face of health care services. Your contribution is immense and I am glad to know that the World Health Organisation has announced 2020 as the Year of the Nurse and Mid-wife. Incidentally, 2020 will also mark the 200th birth anniversary of Florence Nightingale.
4. Our nurses serving in community health centres and hospitals, have played an important role in successful implementation of national health programmes like eradication of polio, malaria

and HIV/AIDS. I am happy to note that this year's awardees have made commendable contribution in these areas.

5. The Government of India launched the Ayushman Bharat initiative to provide quality and comprehensive primary health care to people of all walks of life. More than 64 lakh beneficiaries have been admitted for treatment under this programme and more than 20 thousand hospitals have been empanelled. I hope that those States which are yet to adopt and implement the Ayushman Bharat programme shall also do so at the earliest. This is a monumental health care programme, in whose success the nursing community shall play a key role. Your service and kindness towards the patients represent the healing touch which carries a ray of hope so important for those who are ailing.
6. There is a considerable increase in the demand for specialized, competent and highly skilled nurses. There is also a rising demand of human resource for third and fourth level care, which requires quality training institutes. To achieve this, the Government has taken several initiatives for further development of pre-services and in-service training, education and upgradation of nursing services.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

7. We have an increasing number of elderly people who deserve and require proper geriatric care. Earlier this week, the King and Queen of Sweden had visited Rashtrapati Bhavan. The Queen does a lot of work on issues concerning health and welfare of elderly people. We discussed how elderly people across the world need care and support as they experience ageing-related issues. They may also suffer from ailments such as dementia. In India, families take care of our elders in their old age. However, with changing lifestyles the demand for professional care-givers to take care of the elderly is on the rise. These care-givers, who need not be trained nurses, would certainly benefit from basic training in geriatric care. Our

nursing training institutions can consider developing short training programs for such care-givers too.

8. Due to your sense of service and devotion to duty, all of you from the nursing fraternity, whether in government or private sectors, have earned tremendous respect and admiration. This admiration is also evident beyond our national borders. While serving overseas, you have brought credit to our nation as well as contributed significantly through your remittances. Through your disciplined attitude and high level of professionalism, you have earned tremendous goodwill in all parts of the world.
9. As we honour the outstanding nursing professionals of the country, I wish you all success. The country is grateful for your selfless services and dedication. I trust that the awardees will truly inspire the entire nursing community to rededicate themselves to quality healthcare.

Thank you,
Jai Hind!