



Providing health for all

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Providing health for all-Japan and India are exchanging ideas and expertise in many projects to promote universal health coverage

- According to the World Health Organisation, Universal Health Coverage (UHC) means “ensuring that everyone, everywhere can access essential quality health services without facing financial hardship”.
- Japan has been leading the international efforts towards UHC, including its inclusion in the sustainable development goals and G20 agenda under our chairmanship next year, because health is one of our fundamental rights.
- India has taken the vital first step towards UHC through Ayushman Bharat.
- This challenge is reminiscent of the path that Japan took more than half a century ago.
- Japan created national health insurance coverage in 1961, when it was yet to take off economically.
- The implementation of UHC could only have been possible through an early and vast national investment, and through a comprehensive government effort, with the Ministries of Health, Finance and Education, as well as local governments, working together.
- Moreover, UHC in Japan has ensured social equity by functioning as a mechanism for redistribution of incomes.
- Even in the remotest of places in Japan, needless to worry about healthcare.
- The peace of mind which UHC ensures to the Japanese is an indispensable ingredient of our overall well-being.
- Japan has previously worked with India to eradicate polio in India.
- When Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Japan at the end of October, India and Japan signed a new Memorandum of Cooperation on healthcare to pursue the synergies between Ayushman Bharat and Japan’s Asia Health and Wellbeing Initiative.
- But India has taken the first bold step, and Japan will march along with

India on this path, sharing its lessons, as a friend.

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