

# 'India has potential to be a world leader in med sector'

**C**hairman of Apollo Group, Dr Prathap C Reddy, who was on a visit to Ayodhya, has announced that an emergency medical centre will be set up in Ayodhya to provide free healthcare facilities to devotees visiting Ram temple. In conversation with Shailvee Sharda, Dr Reddy spoke about various issues, including the challenges and achievements in the medical sector. Excerpts:

## What does visit to Ayodhya mean to you?

■ An act of faith... which is a very important existential element. It acts as a source of inner strength that is needed to excel. I think all of us have some religiousness in ourselves. I have been reciting Sundar Kand for the last 40 years. And I read verses from the Ramayana every morning and evening... In the crux, I can see life which is common to all forms of life.

## Medical science has changed phenomenally over the past 50 years. Does that amaze you?

■ From making conjectural treatment plans to drawing precision medicine regimes, we have come a long way. Technology has improved outcomes by improving efficiency in monitoring. We can not just eye for perfection but also achieve it.

## Mushrooming of private hospitals has led to quality issues. Do you agree?

■ I do not agree with this observation in en-

tirety. Both sides will have to work together for a solution. While doctors must realise that the recovery of a patient is the greatest satisfaction and wealth, and over time it also becomes our strength. Patients and attendants must understand the quality cannot come free.

## Workforce shortages continue to mar govt medical colleges. Your take?

■ Acceptance of the problem is the first step to finding a solution and I think the govt is already doing that. The focus is now developing the health care workforce who are not only needed in India but also in many countries of the world where over 16.8 million doctors, nurses, paramedics, and support staff are needed by the end of 2030. Technology can also help in bridging the gap.

## What do you make out of Covid-19 pandemic period?

■ Whatever wrongs the pandemic did, the plus side is that it has established the importance of health. Those with non-communicable diseases suffered more than others. The lesson on prevention of NCDs is the biggest message. The story of the pandemic will never be complete without thanking and lauding the medical workforce all over the world who staked their own life to save that of others.

## How do you see post-pandemic complications and deaths among the young?

■ Some kind of genetic alteration has taken place but that is a subject of deeper study. Heart attacks, lungs, liver issues need to be evaluated and compared on counts like severity of complications so that prevention may be checked.

## Covid-19 has also brought integrative medicine on the centre stage. Your take?

■ I have already submitted a couple of proposals to the Prime Minister in this regard as India has the potential to become world leader. The goal is surely achievable with four Cs – clinical excellence, care, compassion, and cost-benefit. The thought has been embraced in PM's campaign 'Heal in India' and 'Heal by India'.

## India will eventually grey. Any tips for people and govts?

■ It is important to have a purpose in life. One must do whatever they can to give people health and happiness. Because even wealth cannot make healthy and happy homes. Investing in health by individuals and govts is crucial and the focus should be quality.



## How do you see the PM Ayushman Bharat Yojana?

■ In the private sector, one can put his foot down and say we want the best care but for govt the responsibilities are too many. Ayushman has created shared responsibility and made 'preparing for crisis' a norm.

## You are older than free India. What is your take on Viksit Bharat?

■ India may be younger, but Bharat is surely very old and has a long history. If we see it from the time of Ram, there was good rule and happy people, but then the invasions happened of whom the British left behind a lasting impact. What they took off was not just wealth, it was the purpose of good living that was destroyed. But the last ten years have seen a revival of the spirit and the involvement of the people in this transition is satisfying. Leaders can do nothing if people do not wake up. In the areas of health, India has already become a world leader. I started a private hospital because there were none at that time. Today, Indians are running the best hospitals in the world.

