

One to infection

6,55,000 Malaria Patients Succumbed

NRI docs get nod to practice, teach in India

Non-Resident Indian (NRI) doctors are a step closer to be able to practice or teach medicine in India. The Cabinet on Tuesday cleared the National Council of Human Resources in Health (NCHRH) Bill that allows doctors who hold the Overseas Citizens of India (OCI) status to work in India. They can also join medical college as faculty. The move has been initiated primarily to reduce the country's acute doctor shortage. India has one doctor for 1,953 people, or a density of 0.5 doctors per 1,000. The Planning Commission says the country is short of six lakh doctors, 10 lakh nurses and two lakh dental surgeons. Union health secretary P K Pradhan said, "We expect the Bill to come up in Parliament next week since it got cleared by the Cabinet on Tuesday. It will then go to the standing committee." The Bill also brings in penal provisions against authorities running private medical

colleges who fudge figures like bed strength, number of faculty or infrastructure to get registration. At present, the only punishment they face is the institute's de-recognition. The Bill now stipulates that errant authorities face three years of imprisonment and a fine of Rs 25 lakh. "False patients and faculty members are brought in hordes in buses on the morning of the inspection by event managers for those who run the colleges to show the inspection team that they have the required faculty, manpower and infrastructure to run a medical college," an official said. According to the Bill, an overarching body will have under it the Medical Council of India (MCI), Pharmacy Council of India (PCI), Nursing Council of India (NCI), Dental Council of India (DCI) and the proposed Central Councils for Paramedical and Allied Medical Sciences Education. TNN