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National Doctors' Day 2026 and the Legacy of Dr B.C. Roy

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WHY IN NEWS

India observed National Doctors' Day on July 1, 2026, honouring the birth and death anniversary of Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy, with the year's theme drawing national attention to the mental, emotional and physical well-being of doctors and their safety at the workplace.

National Doctors' Day is celebrated in India every year on July 1 to recognise the contribution of the medical fraternity to society. The date marks both the birth (July 1, 1882) and the death (July 1, 1962) of Dr B.C. Roy, one of India's most respected physicians and statesmen. The observance was formally instituted by the Government of India in 1991.

WHO WAS DR BIDHAN CHANDRA ROY?

Dr B.C. Roy was a physician, freedom fighter, educationist and administrator whose life bridged medicine and public service. He remains a symbol of the doctor as a nation-builder.

ASPECT	DETAIL
Born / Died	Ujyari Current Affairs - ujyari.com · Free Daily Current Affairs for UPSC & State PCS July 1, 1882 (Patna) to July 1, 1962 (Kolkata)
Profession	Physician; among the first to earn both MRCP and FRCS from the same institution (Royal College, London)
Political role	Second Chief Minister of West Bengal (1948 to 1962)
Highest honour	Bharat Ratna in 1961
Institutional legacy	Associated with the founding of the Indian Medical Association (IMA) and the Medical Council of India; credited with establishing key hospitals and institutions in Bengal

Roy is often called the “maker of modern West Bengal” for his role in founding townships such as Durgapur, Kalyani and Bidhannagar, and in expanding public health infrastructure.

THE 2026 THEME: WELL-BEING AND SAFETY OF DOCTORS

The widely cited theme for National Doctors’ Day 2026, “Behind the Mask: Who Heals the Healers?”, turns the spotlight on the caregivers themselves. It links two concerns: the burnout and mental-health burden carried by an overstretched medical workforce, and rising violence against healthcare personnel.

The theme reinforces the long-standing demand for a **central law to protect healthcare personnel from violence**, a debate that intensified after the R.G. Kar Medical College incident in Kolkata in 2024. At present, protection is patchy, resting largely on state Medicare Service Persons Acts and general provisions of the criminal law, with no dedicated pan-India statute.

THE REGULATORY BACKDROP

The governance of medical education and practice has changed significantly in recent years.

BODY	STATUS
Medical Council of India (MCI)	The former apex (https://ujyari.com/vocab/apex/) regulator, dissolved amid governance concerns
National Medical Commission (NMC)	Replaced the MCI in 2020 as the regulator of medical education and professional conduct, under the NMC Act, 2019
Indian Medical Association (IMA)	The largest voluntary organisation of doctors, a key voice in the safety-law demand

ANALYSIS AND WAY FORWARD

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Doctors' Day is more than a commemoration; it frames a live policy question about the health system's human backbone. India's doctor-population ratio, while improved, still stretches individual practitioners thin, especially in public hospitals and rural postings. Chronic overwork, litigation anxiety and the fear of physical assault erode both retention and the quality of care.

The way forward combines three strands. First, workforce welfare: humane duty rosters, mental-health support and safe infrastructure in casualty and emergency wards. Second, a legal shield: a considered central framework, balanced against concerns about criminalisation and federal division of the "public health" subject, which lies with the states. Third, an ethical renewal of the doctor-patient relationship, rebuilding trust so that hospitals are seen as places of healing rather than sites of confrontation.

UPSC RELEVANCE

GS Paper 2: Health governance; the National Medical Commission and reform of regulatory bodies; issues relating to development and management of the health sector; the demand for a central healthcare-worker protection law and the federal question (public health being a State subject).

GS Paper 4: Medical ethics; the doctor's duty of care, compassion and integrity; ethical dilemmas of overworked professionals; the moral case for protecting caregivers.

Prelims pointers: Doctors' Day date (July 1) and its link to Dr B.C. Roy; Bharat Ratna 1961; second CM of West Bengal; NMC replaced MCI in 2020; IMA association.

Mains question: "The well-being of doctors is a **precondition** (<https://ujivari.com/vocab/precondition/>) for a functioning health system, not a peripheral concern." Discuss in the context of the demand for a central law protecting healthcare personnel. **(15 marks, 250 words)**

FACTS CORNER

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National Doctors' Day (India): Observed on July 1 every year since 1991.

Dr B.C. Roy: Born and died on July 1 (1882 to 1962); second Chief Minister of West Bengal; awarded the Bharat Ratna in 1961.

2026 theme (widely cited): "Behind the Mask: Who Heals the Healers?", focused on doctors' well-being and safety.

National Medical Commission (NMC): Replaced the Medical Council of India in 2020 as the regulator of medical education (NMC Act, 2019).

IMA: Indian Medical Association, associated with Dr B.C. Roy, is the largest body of doctors in India.

Global note: Doctors' Day dates vary by country; India's date is uniquely tied to Dr B.C. Roy.

Sources: *Press Information Bureau* (<https://pib.gov.in>), *National Medical Commission* (<https://www.nmc.org.in>), *Indian Medical Association* (<https://www.ima-india.org>)

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