



## Delegation of Indian Doctors Arrives in Moscow



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On June 24, with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus' and His Holiness Catholicos Baselios Marthoma Mathews III of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, a delegation of doctors from the St. Gregory's Hospital and International Research Oncology Center in Parumala (Kerala, India), under the auspices of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, arrived in Russia to hold talks on cooperation with the Central Clinical Hospital of St. Alexii, Metropolitan of Moscow, and to exchange experiences in hospital ministry. This was reported by the website of St. Alexii Hospital.

The Indian delegation included: Priest Paul M. Cherian, Director of St. Gregory's Hospital in Parumala; Priest Ashwin Fernandes, Executive Director of the Department of External Church Relations of the Malankara Church; Dr. George Koshy, Chief Cardiologist; Dr. Sreekumar Mahadevan Pillai, Chief Neurosurgeon; Dr. Mathew Varghese, Chief Traumatologist and Orthopedist; Dr. Mathew Jose, Chief Oncologist; Dr. Sreenath Swaminathan, Rheumatologist; Dr. George Benedict John, Head of the Department of Biomedical Engineering.

Representing the Russian Orthodox Church at the events were Hieromonk Stefan (Igumnov), Secretary for Inter-Christian Relations of the Department for External Church Relations (DECR), and Hieromonk Mark (Akhmathanov), an employee of the DECR Secretariat for Inter-Christian Relations.

On June 25, the Indian delegation visited the Central Clinical Hospital of St. Alexii. Previously, in 2019, the church hospital had already hosted a delegation from the Malankara Church led by its Primate. Then, in March 2024, a working trip to Kerala, India, was made by representatives of St. Alexii Hospital and the social institutions of the Russian Orthodox Church. During that visit, the first joint multidisciplinary conference was held.

"We realized back then that we have much in common: St. Alexii Hospital and St. Gregory's Hospital are both modern multidisciplinary medical institutions, and at the same time they are both church-affiliated," said Alexei Zarov, Chief Physician of St. Alexii Hospital. "We gave our friends and colleagues a thorough tour of the hospital, followed by an interesting and substantive professional dialogue. Now our cooperation will continue in various forms, with individual internships planned in both Russia and India."

The clinical multidisciplinary conference with the participation of the university clinic was a key moment of the visit to St. Alexii Hospital. Doctors of various specializations shared their experiences.

Hieromonk Stefan (Igumnov) welcomed the conference participants on behalf of the DECR of the Moscow Patriarchate and noted the importance of cooperation projects in the field of hospital and social ministry for the development of bilateral inter-church relations.

Father Paul M. Cherian, Director of St. Gregory's Hospital in Parumala, emphasized: "Our cooperation with the hospital began in Kerala, in our Parumala Hospital. Today, the second conference was held, during which we heard substantive reports from leading specialists. The presentations allowed us to gain a comprehensive understanding of the extensive activities carried out by St. Alexii Hospital."

Alexei Zarov noted the productive work being carried out with the blessing of the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Malankara Church between the church medical institutions of Russia and India.

"Serving God and people are inseparably linked, which is why Christian Churches place great importance on ministry in the social sphere. The Church primarily cares for the salvation of human souls, but helping to heal the body is equally important. Christianity views a person in harmony: spirit-soul-body – all must be healthy and moving towards God," noted Father Ashwin Fernandes, Executive Director of the Department of External Church Relations of the Malankara Church. "The initiators of cooperation in the medical field were the Primate of our Churches. It is carried out directly by our church hospitals with the support of the Departments for External Church Relations. I want to note that we are only at the beginning of a path that promises abundant fruits of professional cooperation."

Alexei Zarov gave the guests a tour of the hospital. The Indian doctors visited the operating room, the intensive care unit, the department of X-ray surgical methods of diagnosis and treatment, the hospital chapel, and the palliative care department.

On the same day, the Malankara Church delegation visited the St. Dimitry School of Sisters of Mercy, where they learned about its activities and met with the administration and students.

As part of their visit to Russia, the Indian delegation will also visit the Synodal Department for Church Charity and Social Ministry, social institutions in Moscow, the Martha and Mary Convent of Mercy, the Intercession Convent, and the Holy Trinity Lavra of St. Sergius. In Pereslavl-Zalessky, they will learn about the activities of the branch of St. Alexii Hospital named after St. Luke and hold a working meeting. An important part of the visit will be a visit to the Yaroslavl State Medical University, where they will

meet with the rector and Indian students. At YSMU, the Indian doctors will participate in a scientific-medical conference dedicated to bioethics.

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Cooperation between church hospitals was initiated in 2019 as a result of negotiations between His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus' and His Holiness Catholicos Baselios Marthoma Paulose II within the framework of the Working Group on the Coordination of Interaction between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church.

In September 2019, St. Alexii Hospital was personally visited by His Holiness Catholicos Baselios Marthoma Paulose II.

From March 12 to 18, 2024, a delegation from St. Alexii Hospital and other social institutions of the Moscow Patriarchate visited India to establish cooperation with the medical institutions of the Malankara Church. During the visit, they visited St. Gregory's Hospital in Parumala, where the first joint multidisciplinary conference was held, and scientific discussions had taken place with the leadership and doctors of the main departments of the Malankara hospital: cardiology, oncology, neurosurgery, gastroenterology, endocrinology, traumatology, orthopedics, urology, nephrology, and general medical practice. A bilateral consultation on interdisciplinary interaction of doctors in the treatment and diagnosis of cancer was held, during which advanced methods used in colorectal cancer surgery were discussed.

The delegation visited the St. Gregory's College of Nursing and the Malankara Church's clinic and medical research center in Kolenchery, where they met with the administration and students, and learned about medical practice, academic and research programs. Russian doctors also participated in a conference on the occasion of World Kidney Day, held by the Nephrology and Kidney Transplant Center in Parumala.

From June 24 to 29, 2024, a delegation of doctors from St. Gregory's Hospital in Parumala is visiting Russia for further discussions on hospital cooperation between the two Churches.

The Central Clinical Hospital of St. Alexii is a medical institution of the Russian Orthodox Church, a multidisciplinary medical facility with 290 beds. Founded in 1903, the hospital treats people from all regions of Russia regardless of their religious affiliation. Branches are open in Shuya, Ivanovo Region, Zhukovsky, Moscow Region, and Pereslavl-Zalessky, Yaroslavl Region. A licensed training center for the training of junior nurses in patient care is in operation. Since March 2022, St. Alexii Hospital has been providing comprehensive medical and social assistance to those affected by the special military operation.

St. Gregory's Hospital and International Research Oncology Center in Parumala is the main hospital of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church. It holds a leading position in the healthcare sector of Kerala. High-quality medical care is achieved through the involvement of a large number of qualified specialists, the implementation of the best treatment methods and protocols, the use of innovative technologies, and the latest equipment manufactured in India. The hospital offers a wide range of medical services. India, as a whole, is one of the leading countries in providing high-quality medical care.