

## Oxygen-generating plants to be set up at big hospitals

### UP Govt Takes Action After Gorakhpur, Farrukhabad Deaths

**U**ttar Pradesh health minister Siddharth Nath Singh has said that the state government is planning to set up plants for generating oxygen through air at hospitals with 100 to 300 beds. In an exclusive interview with Priyangi Agarwal, Singh also said the government will not open any CHC/PHC across UP this year and will focus on improving the existing services by allotting more funds. Edited excerpts:

**In the wake of Gorakhpur and Farrukhabad incidents, what steps has the government taken to ensure uninterrupted supply of oxygen in hospitals?**

We are improving the current system. We are also planning to constitute plants for generating oxygen through air at hospitals with 100 to 300 beds.

**How does the government plan to deal with the scourge of JE deaths in Gorakhpur?**

There are two things - Japanese Encephalitis (JE) and Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES). For JE, the vaccination is available and our government created a history in August by vaccinating 93



Health minister Siddharth Nath Singh was in Bareilly to participate in an event of a private medical college

lakh children in the state. There is no vaccination available for AES across the world. The only prevention is when the children have high fever, they should be immediately treated and that's exactly we have done. We have strengthened the Paediatric Intensive Care Units (PICUs). After providing a week-long training to paramedical and doctors, we appointed them in Gorakhpur and Basti. Hence, there has been drop of 8% in admission of AES cases at BRD College. We will strengthen the PHCs in 38 districts of UP, where JE and AES

cases are reported.

**108 ambulances across UP including Bareilly, Agra and Saharanpur, have been refusing to take patients to hospitals citing unavailability of diesel.**

Such cases were reported as the previous government had not made the payments for fuel, but we have cleared all the payments. You haven't heard of such cases in past some weeks.

**One was again reported from Bareilly this week.**

It hasn't come to my know-

edge. We will take note of it.

As health centres in rural areas, including CHCs and PHCs, lack infrastructure and manpower, the patients have been forced to visit already overburdened district hospitals. At times, patients die on their way to district hospitals.

We are not going to open any new PHC or CHC this year. Our priority is to improve the condition of existing PHCs and CHCs by providing doctors and enhancing the facilities with the releases of more funds.

**District hospitals in the state have been facing shortage of nearly 50% doctors, including specialists.**

When I took the charge as health minister, there was vacancy of 7,800 doctors in the state. As we have increased retirement age of doctors, the state got 1,000 doctors. Besides, we have appointed 2,065 doctors after conducting interviews. We have instructed BAMS and Ayush doctors to treat patients at PHCs and CHCs. Besides, I met Asia-Pacific head of World Bank on Friday to improve the state of 175 district hospitals of UP.