

24x7 monitoring for state hospitals soon

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Calcutta: State-run hospitals, including medical colleges, will be monitored round the clock from an integrated control room at the headquarters of the state health department, Swasthya Bhavan, with a focus on improving patient care and eliminating touts from hospitals, chief minister Suvendu Adhikari said during a surprise visit on Thursday.

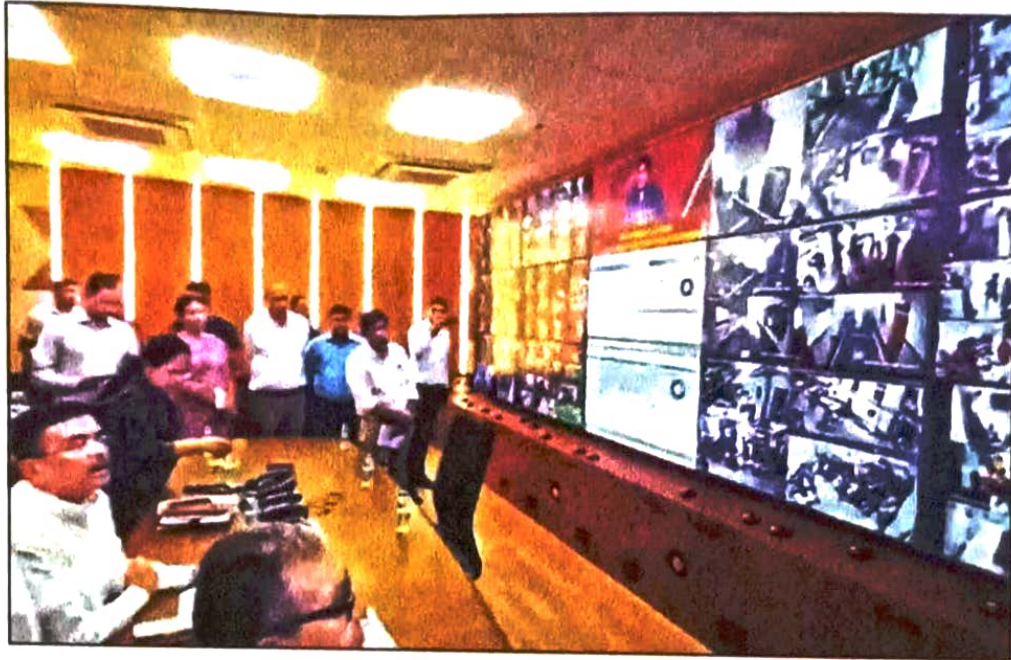
"Monitoring is required to ensure that the environment and services of a hospital are in place," Suvendu said.

He inspected the integrated control room. Health minister Sharadwat Mukherjee, minister of state for health Sumana Sarkar and health secretary Narayan Swaroop Nigam were also present.

"The monitoring facility is not fully ready. It will take time. Now, around 15-16 state hospitals and two district hospitals have been brought under surveillance. I have directed them to bring all hospitals up to the sub-divisional level under monitoring within a month," Suvendu said.

He said health guidelines restricted live feeds from inside patient wards. But cleanliness and any delays in emergency departments could be monitored.

"The bigger idea behind monitoring is to do away with brokers from hospitals. The



Suvendu Adhikari inspects hospital live feeds at the Swasthya Bhavan control room on Thursday

system will ensure that a tout spotted today is not seen the next day," he said.

"A patient will not turn up for blood tests or ultrasonography on two consecutive days. But if a tout is standing in the queue on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, he will be identified."

Suvendu also said health workers at state-run hospitals should have separate colour-coded laminated identity cards to distinguish different categories of staff.

"There have been incidents when someone meant to carry a trolley has ended up giving an injection or a security personnel has put in stitches. To identify workers and segregate them, I have suggested introducing colour-coded identity cards at different

levels," he said.

He said hospitals should be free of touts and patients should receive better services.

"The government of India has named the public health initiative Ayushman (Arogya) Mandir. Our efforts to serve at health centres will revolve around cleanliness, purity and a desire to serve that we get to see at temples," Suvendu said.

Health minister Mukherjee later said: "We will issue different colour-coded badges for health workers at different levels, beginning with doctors and including nurses and others. Patients and their families will be provided with colour bands. This will help identify anyone who is either an outsider or a tout."

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Hospital monitoring

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Health department sources said the integrated control room at Swasthya Bhavan currently covers 15 state-run hospitals, including medical colleges and hospitals across Calcutta. It receives live feeds from locations such as emergency departments, outpatient departments, corridors, store-rooms, entry points and exits.

"The chief minister has suggested bringing hospital kitchens and parking lots under surveillance. We will do that. We have started with tertiary hospitals and aim to bring all state-run hospitals at the sub-divisional level under central surveillance by month-end," a senior health department official said.

Separate teams have been formed to monitor live feeds from hospitals round the

clock, sources said.

"If an emergency patient does not get a bed at a particular hospital, the control room will help the patient get one elsewhere," sources said. The monitoring mechanism will also help address complaints of poor patient care, infrastructure shortages and strengthen the grievance redressal system.

Suvendu said SSKM Hospital's bed count had been increased by 100, but there was still a shortage of around 300 beds.

"The shortfall means some patients who may need an operation tomorrow are being given dates 10 days later. This is due to a shortage of capacity. We plan to increase the bed count at SSKM by another 250 by Puja. The ICU capacity also needs to be increased from the existing 112 to 200," he said.