

NEW REGULATORY COMMISSION MEMBERS MEET MINISTER

Health panel chief plans patient outreach

SUBHAJOY ROY

Calcutta: The West Bengal Clinical Establishment Regulatory Commission did not fully exercise the powers vested in it by law, retired judge Biswajit Basu, who was appointed its chairperson on August 5, said on Saturday.

Members of the newly reconstituted 13-member commission met state health minister Sharadwat Mukherjee at Swasthya Bhavan on Saturday.

Basu said 72 complaints were pending before the commission.

"The commission did not fully exercise the powers given to it by law. It even has the power to initiate suo motu cases," Basu said.

He said the "approach of the state government" had given him confidence that the commission would be able to "implement all provisions of the Act".

Basu said one of his priorities would be to make the commission's work better known among the public. "We have to reach out to common people. How we can do that will be decided later. People must know



Members of the new regulatory commission meet health minister Sharadwat Mukherjee at Swasthya Bhavan on Saturday. (Subhajo Roy)

they have a place to register complaints and voice grievances. They need not ransack a hospital and get involved in a heated altercation there," he said.

Speaking to Metro on Thursday, Basu had said ensuring that every action of the commission benefited patients would be his priority.

The West Bengal Clinical Establishments (Registration, Regulation and Transparency)

Act, 2017, which provided for the panel's formation, was passed by the Bengal Assembly in March 2017.

On Wednesday, a notification issued by the principal secretary of the state health department announced the reconstitution of the 13-member commission and said the new panel would take charge with immediate effect.

Moumita Godara Basu, an IAS

officer and secretary in the state health department, is the commission's vice-chairperson. State director of medical education Indrajit Saha is also a member.

The other doctor-members are gynaecologist Subhash Chandra Biswas; former director of medical education Susanta Kumar Bandyopadhyay; internal medicine specialist Narayan Banerjee; physician and rheumatologist Syamasis Bandyopadhyay; public health specialist and former director of the All India Institute of Hygiene and Public Health Madhumita Dobe; and general surgeon Sandip Ray.

Retired judge Ashim Banerjee, the commission's previous chairperson, had said on Thursday that a large number of patient complaints stemmed from a trust deficit between private hospitals and insurers.

He said the commission had received complaints ranging from disputed insurance payments and forced diagnostic tests to a lack of billing transparency and hospitals refusing to release bodies over unpaid dues.