

WB Sishu Saathi Scheme

SishuSaathi' scheme is a brain child of the Chief Minister of West Bengal with a promise to provide free treatment to children who need heart surgeries, irrespective of how rich or poor the parents are. The project is extremely close to the Chief Minister's heart.

In a major boost to child health care in West Bengal, the State Government has joined hands with three private hospitals and government hospitals to provide free paediatric cardiac surgery to 3,000 children each year under the initiative named 'SishuSaathi' or friends for children that flagged off on Aug 21, 2013.

The Bengal Government had taken the initiative to conduct medical tests under the Rashtriya Bal SwasthyaKaryakram, in state-run schools, with a logical conclusion to provide treatment. The State also decided to bear all expenses for the treatments of any student needing surgery for cardiac ailments.

The government has tied up with three private hospitals - BM Birla Heart Research Centre and RN Tagore Institute of Cardiac Sciences in Kolkata and Mission Hospital in Durgapur - for the free-surgery scheme. Seth SukhlalKarnani Memorial Hospital, B.C. Roy Memorial Hospital for Children and R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital are some of the government hospitals that have cutting-edge facilities for paediatric care.

Surgeries for ailments like congenital cataract, cleft lips and cleft palates would soon be brought under the SishuSaathi Scheme.

Salient features of this scheme include:

- a) The State Govt conducts health tests in government schools to detect heart ailments.
- b) The State Govt provides free cardiac surgery for children up to 12 years suffering from heart ailments.
- c) All children are eligible irrespective of family income .
- d) All expenses are borne by the State Government.