

# Sassoon gets booster for improved neo-natal care

File photo

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**Pune:** A 59-bed intensive care unit has come up at the state-run Sassoon General Hospital and is expected to treat 3,000-5,000 critically ill newborns a year free of cost.

The facility, developed on a public-private-partnership basis at Rs 11 crore, comes at a time when life-saving units in public hospitals are either resource-strapped or are overburdened. A day's stay at a neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) in any private hospital currently costs between Rs 15,000 and Rs 25,000.

"Our earlier NICU had 36 beds. It has been renovated with expanded bed strength and state-of-the-art facilities on an 8,000 sq ft area on hospital's third floor. The facili-

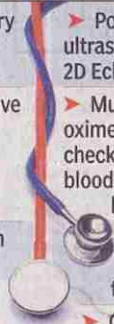
ty will become functional this month," said Ajay Chandanwale, a senior spine surgeon and dean of B J Medical College attached to Sassoon hospital.

"The focus will be on providing high-quality and free healthcare to patients from the poor and middle class segments. Besides, we have an in-house human milk bank and it provides free-of-cost service," said senior paediatrician Sandhya Khadse, head of the paediatric department at Sassoon hospital.

The hospital registers around 9,000 deliveries a year and 30% of the newborns, who have low-birth weight, are pre-term or have some other medical conditions, need NICU support. Of the 40 deliveries in the hospital daily, six-to-

## FACILITIES IN STORE

- High frequency oscillatory ventilation (variety of mechanical ventilation)
- Bubble CPAP (non-invasive ventilation strategy for newborns with infant respiratory distress syndrome)
- Total parenteral nutrition (feeding intravenously)
- Detecting eye and hearing abnormalities
- Portable bed-side ultrasonography, cardiac 2D Echo test
- Multipara monitor/pulse oximeter monitor (to keep a check on vitals as well as blood oxygen saturation limits)
- Kangaroo mother care bay (for women to nurse babies)
- Central airconditioning

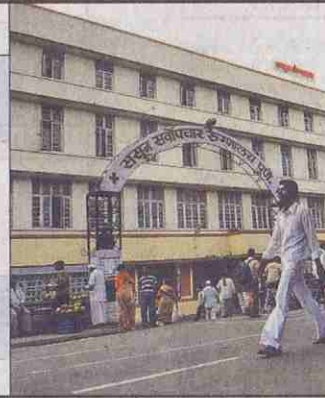


eight newborns need treatment at NICU.

"The new set-up will attract lot of referrals from hospitals from adjoining districts. The number of critically ill newborns to benefit from the facility may go up to about

8,000 a year," said paediatrician Rajesh Kulkarni.

Various corporate houses, trusts and foundations had joined hands with the state government to develop the facility. Finolex's Mukul Madhav Foundation has provided equi-



ipment, furniture and 25% of the civil infrastructure, along with air-conditioner, at a collective cost of Rs 4.16 crore. Shreemanth Dagdusheth Halwai Ganapati Trust has taken care of civil infrastructure at Rs 3 crore.

Besides, Cummins, Persistent Foundation, Suzlon and Syska have collectively provided financial support for the medical gas pipeline system. The government, on its part, has provided equipment, electrical and civil work worth Rs 2 crore.

The total number of NICU beds in Pune at the public hospitals are insufficient to cater to all the newborns in need. The Pune Municipal Corporation has a network of 17 hospitals, 16 of which are primarily maternity homes and collectively take care of around 8,000 deliveries a year.

Only two of these hospitals have neonatal intensive care units with a total bed-strength of 10. The state-run Aundh civil hospital has 16 beds at its unit.