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Addressing the 5th Foundation Day of the Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education & Research, Dr Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital (RML PGIMER), New Delhi, Mr Ghulam Nabi Azad, Union Minister of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India said that with a phenomenal increase in institutional deliveries, from about 700,000 in 2005-06 to over 10,000,000 every year for the past two years, the available infrastructure has been stretched to meet the demand. More than 25,000 additional beds have been sanctioned in 415 health facilities in 11 states across the country to meet the demand this year. Latest initiative is the Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram, which was launched on February 6, 2013 from a tribal block of Thane District in Maharashtra. This national programme is for Universal Screening of Children for Disorders, Diseases, Deficiencies and Disabilities from birth up to 18 years. The programme will cover about 270 million children across the country.

He said, "India made rapid stride in the field of medical education in the recent years. In just over three years' time, the availability of MBBS seats went up from 33,567 to 45,629 and the number of PG seats increased from 13,838 to 22,850. 72 new medical colleges, including six All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) , were established raising the number from 290 to 362. The Medical Colleges at the six new AIIMS have started functioning with admission of 50 students each in September, 2012. To strengthen Tertiary Health Care delivery in the government sector, Government of India took up 19 State Government owned medical colleges for up-gradation under the Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Surakhsha Yojana in different parts of the country. Significant achievements have been made under National Rural Health Mission (NRHM). About 43,500 new health infrastructure works have been created and nearly 1.45 lakh human resources added at various levels.

About 70,000 increase in bed capacity to provide essential and emergency services, which have all helped in bringing healthcare services to all, especially to the marginalized and vulnerable sections living in rural, remote and difficult to access areas."

Mr Azad further said, "RML PGIMER has provided quality education and training to the graduates in medical sciences to make them specialists of the future. This effort of producing specialist doctors at RML is part of national effort to augment human resources in health to give the manpower for national programmes and initiatives. The Director, Doctors and Staff of the RML Hospital have played a leading role and responded effectively to the H1N1 outbreaks whenever they have occurred. We have tackled the situation by increasing the number of labs for testing from 2 to 46 at present. In August, 2010, the WHO declared that H1N1 had moved into post-pandemic phase, but also observed that there would be sporadic outbreaks in some countries, including India. It is a matter of great satisfaction that at that time DG WHO showcased India along with New Zealand as a model for other countries in terms of vigilance, quick detection and treatment and recommended vaccination in the immediate post-pandemic period. We have since had outbreaks during August 2010 to October 2010 and May 2011 to July 2011 and January 2012. We have now adequate preparation with regard to surveillance, testing and treatment of H1N1."