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AIIMS footfall spikes 20% after city bus service

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PATNA: The average daily patient footfall at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS-Patna) has increased by 20% ever since the state government improved public transport system by introducing city bus service between Gandhi Maidan and the premier health facility here on May 19.

The AIIMS, established in 2012, now almost matches up to the OPD (outdoor patient department) footfall of the Patna Medical College Hospital (PMCH), the fifth oldest hospital in India, established in 1925.

For instance, the footfall at AIIMS OPD on May 21 was 2474 as compared to 2612 at the PMCH. The next day, 2135 patients registered at the AIIMS as compared to 2325 at the PMCH.

The growth was 15%-20% when compared to the patient footfall on corresponding days of the previous week (May 14 and 15), while that of the PMCH was almost static.

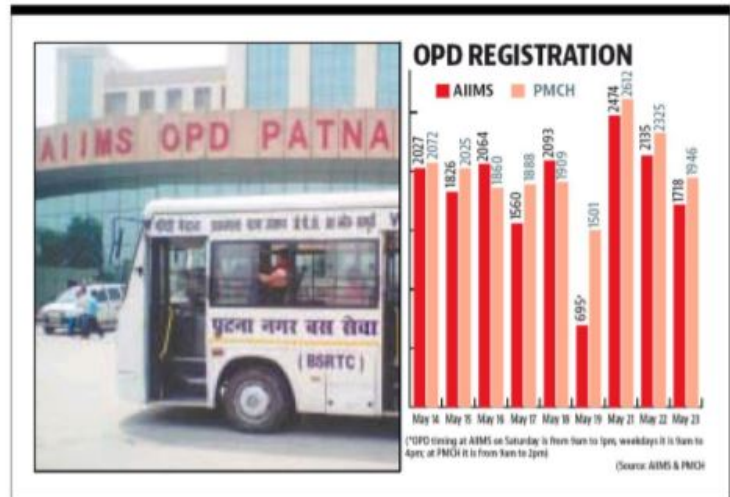
Prior to the launch of city bus service, people had to rely on private shared autorickshaw, which

was tedious, cumbersome, time consuming and more expensive.

A bus trip from Kargil Chowk at Gandhi Maidan to the AIIMS at Phuarisharif, with 12 scheduled halts, would cost one Rs 15 as against Rs 30 to Rs 40 by autorickshaw, having to change at least twice, with no guaranteed journey time and halts between the two destinations. The Bihar State Road Transport Corporation (BSRTC) buses ply every 15 minutes.

"Our buses on the AIIMS route have generated a huge public response. Around 4000 people travelled on them the first day (May 19), 5000 on day two, 6000 on day three and then 7000. Our average daily earning from the bus service has gone up from Rs 30,000 to Rs 70,000," said transport secretary Sanjay Kumar Agarwal.

"We are trying to utilise the fleet of 100 mini buses we got during the Prakashotsav to celebrate Guru Gobind Singh's 350th birth anniversary last year. For public convenience, we intend to gradually extend our bus service to cover all trunk routes of the state



capital," added Agarwal.

To cater to increased patient load, the AIIMS would add a few more counters for patient registration (now six) and billing (four), said AIIMS medical superintendent Dr CM Singh.

"Though our OPD timing is from 9am to 4pm on weekdays and till 1pm on Saturday, our doctors put in extra hours to extend consultation to all patients who register with us till 12.30pm (weekdays) and 10.30am (Saturday), respectively," he added.

"The institute has a robust system and dedicated personnel to cater to patients. We are happy to serve more number of people," said AIIMS director Dr Prabhat Kumar Singh.