

Weekend child deaths push India hospital toll to 85

15 August 2017

Twenty-five children died over the weekend at a northern India government hospital that suffered oxygen shortages, taking the overall death toll to 85, authorities told AFP .

Indian media have linked 30 of these deaths last Thursday and Friday to a lack of oxygen as suppliers' bills were not paid.

Authorities have since launched an inquiry into the causes of the oxygen disruption but have denied reports that it was responsible for any deaths at the Baba Raghav Das Medical College in Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh state.

"I can confirm 12 child deaths on Saturday and 13 on Sunday," P.K Singh, the hospital's new principal, told AFP late Monday.

Singh was appointed after the unceremonious removal of his predecessor last week.

An earlier official statement confirmed 60 [child](#) deaths in five days starting last Monday.

State chief minister Yogi Adityanath, a hardline Hindu priest from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's party, has vowed to punish anyone found to have been negligent.

The region is one of India's poorest and registers hundreds of [child deaths](#) each year from Japanese Encephalitis and Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES), which is rife in parts of eastern and northern India.

"Most of the 25 who died on the weekend were suffering from AES," Singh said, vowing to "improve the patient experience" at the hospital.

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