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Ramadoss promises National School Health Programme in three months

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AN ambitious National School Health Programme (NSHP) would be launched within two or three months focusing on prevention of a number of diseases among children across the country.

Disclosing this, Union Health Minister Anbumani Ramadoss said that over two lakh school teachers across the country have been imparted training on various aspects of healthcare, and they have already helped screen the health of over 2.5 crore students in the past one year or more. "Our focus is on looking at



eyesight, heart, skin and dental care of school children, and once a considerable level of awareness is generated among school children about these areas, the overall health scenario of the nation would automatically go up," Ramadoss, who was speaking at a seminar on disability organized by 'Dristidaan', a Guwa-

hati-based NGO, for the visually impaired on Tuesday said.

The Union Health Minister said that of the 2.5 crore school children already screened, over 11 lakh have been found to have refraction problems, while over three lakh were provided with glasses for correction of their eyesight. "A large percentage of children are also anaemic," he added.

Speaking about integrating the National Programme for Control of Blindness (NPCB) with the school health programme, Ramadoss said that a goal has already been set to reduce prevalence of blindness from the existing 1.4 per cent to 0.3 per

cent by 2020. "As per the latest survey conducted in 2006-07, prevalence of blindness has already come down to one per cent," he said.

Ramadoss said that besides addressing age-related problems like cataract, glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy, the Government was equally concerned about visual impairment and blindness in children and young adults. "Restoring vision to a visually disabled child would mean a gain of 50 to 60 productive years to his or her life," he said, adding that the Government was keen to sharing responsibilities of paediatric ophthalmology and eye-banking with the private sector.