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Anuradha Himatsingka
KOLKATA

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The group is in talks with private parties for acquisition of hospitals in Faridabad, Delhi and Gurgaon. Four more hospitals are on the anvil and they are expected to come up over the next 15 months or so.

Of the three hospitals be-

ing looked at for buyout, the alliance hopes to finalise at least two hospitals with 275-300 beds each over the next couple of months.

Spelling out AMRI's growth strategy, Emami Group director Aditya Agarwal said: "We have initiated discussion with the private parties to expand our footprint across the country, but the deal is yet to be finalised."

He, however, refused to give any deal details citing confidentiality reasons. Industry sources, however, claim the acquisition cost could range anything be-

tween Rs 30-50 lakh per bed, depending on the infrastructure on offer.

Acquisitions apart, the Emami-Shrachi alliance hopes to leverage the AMRI brand by opening more hospitals. Investment envisaged is Rs 450 crore plus. For starters, the group is scouting around for about 2.5-acre land for a 150-bed hospital in Burdwan and another 2 acre for a 225-bed hospital in Siliguri.

Efforts are also on to set up a multi-speciality tertiary care 300-bed hospital at Bhubaneswar covering some 5 acre allotted by the

Orissa government. "The proposed project, which is expected to become operational by December 2010, can be expanded to 1,000 beds in the near future. Total outlay on the project is estimated to be Rs 150 crore," Mr Agarwal added.

The fourth hospital, which is likely to come up on Eastern Metropolitan bypass, close to the Metro Cash & Carry wholesale centre, will be primarily for women and child. Work at the Rs 150-crore 300-bed hospital is in an advanced stage and may throw open its doors to public by March 2010.