

# Health Secretary reviews preparedness of Ministries/Depts and States on Coronavirus through video conference

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Ms. Preeti Sudan, Secretary (HFW) chaired a video conference (VC) with Chief Secretaries and DG (Police) of the five states bordering Nepal (Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal and Sikkim) and Pr. Secretary (H) of other states/UTs, to review their preparedness for prevention and management of coronavirus. Shri Ajay Bhalla, Secretary (Home), Dr. Balram Bhargava, Secy (DHR), Shri G.V.V. Sarma, Member Secy (NDMA), Dr. Gangakhedkar, Scientist (ICMR), Ms. Rubina Ali, JS (M/O Civil Aviation), Shri R K Agarwal, JS (Ports), M/O Shipping also joined the VC.

Secretary (H) also informed the states/UTs that Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister of Health & Family Welfare is closely and regularly monitoring the status of preparedness. The Union Health Minister has written to Chief Ministers of the five States bordering Nepal, and to Chief Ministers of other States/UTs, requesting them to personally review preparedness measures in the matter.

In response to the confirmed case of Novel Coronavirus in Nepal, India has stepped up the vigil at the border of Nepal. Secretary (HFW) reviewed the preparedness of these bordering states in terms of orientation of health and other agencies; adherence of various prevention & management protocols; awareness regarding prevention of coronavirus among the people being screened and those transiting the border with Nepal; self-reporting by these people; isolation wards; protective gear etc. The States have informed that they have made all necessary arrangements for screening of people transiting across the border. They also informed that travel advisories, other guidelines and protocols issued by the Health Ministry have been also widely disseminated. Orientation of the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB), the medical personnel, and health officials has also been conducted. Awareness drives are being undertaken through miking, distribution of leaflets and signages at the border check posts. Secretary (H) has also advised for Special Gram Sabhas to be organised in coordination with Dept of Panchayati Raj over this week for enhancing awareness regarding the coronavirus diseases, its symptoms, preventive measures, reporting [etc.in](#) the border villages. She also advised them to coordinate with the Hotels Association for wider self-reporting by travellers from Nepal visiting religious and other tourist places in these states.

Secretary (HFW) informed that passengers are being screened at 7 airports, and risk communication and self-declaration at 12 other Airports. She advised the states to ensure that medical officers are deputed to coordinate with the airport authorities, while tertiary hospitals are also identified for these airports. She also advised the states to ensure that protocols for contact tracing, and timely collection and transportation of samples from suspected cases to NIV, Pune is followed. States need to assess requirement of personal protection equipment, masks etc., and undertake necessary procurement to ensure sufficient supply, she stated. Secretary (H) assured states of all support from the Health Ministry, including orientation of medical personnel/staff and other agencies through regular video conferencing. States have been advised to depute a nodal officer for coordinating the efforts of the different agencies within the states, and to regularly update progress to the Union Health Ministry.

Sh. Ajay Kumar Bhalla, Secretary, Home Affairs interacted with DGP of the States/UTs and guided them on key steps to be taken up in the bordering areas, in coordination with the Health Dept. The Shipping Ministry informed that necessary communication has been sent to the national port authorities. They were also directed to follow up with the Inland Waterways Authority of India, and coordinate with the maritime states. NDMA has been requested to share its guidelines and other relevant information with the state authorities.

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