

# High level Group of Ministers reviews current status, and actions for prevention and management of Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

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On the directions of Prime Minister, a high level Group of Ministers (GOM) was constituted to review, monitor and evaluate the preparedness and measures taken regarding management of Novel Coronavirus (renamed by World Health Organization as COVID-19) in the country. While the first meeting was held on 3rd Feb, 2020 at Nirman Bhawan under the chairpersonship of Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister of Health & Family Welfare, the second meeting of the GOM was held, here today. It was chaired by Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister of Health & Family Welfare, along with Sh. Hardeep S. Puri, Minister of Civil Aviation, Dr. S Jaishankar, External Affairs Minister, Sh. Nityananda Rai, Minister of State for Home, Shri Mansukh Mandaviya, Minister of State (I/c), Ministry of Shipping, Chemicals and Fertilisers and Sh. Ashwini Kumar Choubey, Minister of State, Health & Family Welfare

A presentation of the status of the COVID-19 was made to the GOM. The members were also apprised of the current status of the three cases reported positive from Kerala. The preventive steps and measures taken for management of COVID-19 disease in India were presented, which included information about the travel advisories regarding the temporary suspension of the visa for all travellers from China.

The GOM was also informed about the two Quarantine Centres having 645 persons evacuated from Wuhan. The camps are being maintained by Armed Forces and ITBP. All inhabitants are medically examined on a daily basis. The GoM was apprised that all the evacuees have tested negative for COVID2019.

In addition, GOM was also briefed that as of today, a total of 2,315 flights have been screened covering a total of 2,49,447 passengers. Screening of passengers is ongoing in 21 airports, international seaports and border crossings particularly with Nepal. Universal screening in all flights from Japan and South Korea, besides China, Hong Kong, Singapore and Thailand have been included. Further, 15,991 people are presently under community surveillance in 34 States/UTs. Out of a total of 1,671 samples sent for testing, only 3 were found positive as reported earlier. The ICMR's National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune has been made a nodal centre for coordinating diagnostics for COVID-19. 14 Regional Labs have also been activated, standardized, and are testing the samples.

The GOM was also apprised that adequate materials like Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) and N95 masks are available and the situation is closely monitored in all the States/UTs. The preparedness and actions are being reviewed at the highest level everyday by the Union Health Minister and the Cabinet Secretary, in addition to Secretary (HFW). A 24x7 Control Room is operational (011-23978046). IEC material is prepared and widely disseminated through various channels of print, electronic and social media. Daily Press briefing by Ministry of Health & Family Welfare is being undertaken to update the public.

The meeting was attended by Ms. Preeti Sudan, Secretary (HFW), Sh. H. Vardhan Shringla, Foreign Secretary, Sh. Pradeep Singh Kharola, Secretary (Civil Aviation), Sh. Sanjeeva Kumar, Spl. Secretary (Health), Sh. Amit Yadav, DGFT, Sh. Sanjay Bandopadhyay, Addl. Secretary (Shipping), Sh. Anil Malik, Addl. Secy (MHA) and Sh. Lav Agarwal, JS (MoHFW) along with other officials from Army, ITBP, Pharma, and Textiles were present.

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