

UPDATE on COVID-19

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The prevention, containment and management of COVID-19 in the country are being monitored at the highest level and various actions have been initiated in collaboration with the States. Hon'ble Prime Minister is regularly monitoring and reviewing the situation with top officials of the concerned Ministries/Departments and States/UTs. He had a Video Conference with the representatives of doctors and healthcare professionals to express his gratitude and to seek their continued involvement and support in handling this crisis. He thanked the doctors, nurses and all healthcare professionals for their relentless service to the nation in these times. He also had a Video Conference with the print media today wherein he sought their support in dissemination of correct information to general public.

In addition, the Cabinet Secretary has been holding high level meetings to review and monitor the emerging scenario and preparedness of the states/UTs for management of COVID-19 in the country. He has asked Chief Secretaries of the States to further enhance surveillance and contact tracing of positive cases in order to break the chain of transmission. He has written to the Chief Secretaries suggesting that States should focus their efforts and financial resources on preparing the healthcare infrastructure to deal with this challenge. This should be the top most priority at this stage. They should devote adequate resources for creating dedicated COVID-19 hospitals, equipping the medical institutes with PPEs, ventilators and other essential equipment etc. States have been asked to ensure that essential services and supplies remain open. These include hospitals, medical shops and establishments engaged in manufacturing of medicines, vaccines, sanitizers, masks and medical devices. States have been asked to mobilize the civil machinery under DMs to supplement surveillance and strengthen rapid response teams at the field level and to ensure that no suspect and high risk person is left during surveillance.

The Centre is monitoring the progress with respect to States having earmarked hospitals dedicated for COVID-19 cases. Gujarat, Assam, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Goa, Karnataka, MP and J&K are setting up hospitals dedicated for the management of COVID-19.

In order to enforce implementation of social distancing, almost all the States/UTs have issued orders for lockdown. More than 30 states and UTs have imposed full lockdown. States have been asked to enforce implementation of lockdown measures. It has been emphasized that partial implementation will not achieve the intended objective of preventing the spread of COVID-19. Cabinet Secretary has addressed a letter to Chief Secretaries of all States.

In addition, manufacturers have been identified domestically and procurement has been initiated to ensure that there is no shortage of PPEs, N95 masks and other protective equipment needed by doctors to carry out their duties.

In addition, 118 laboratories have been included in the ICMR network of COVID-19 testing with a capacity to test 12,000 samples per day. In the last five days, on an average 1338 samples have been tested per day. Furthermore, 22 private lab chains have registered with ICMR (till 24th March 2020) for COVID-19 testing. They have 15,500 collection centers nationwide. Also, out of 15 kit manufacturers, NIV Pune has approved three PCR based kits and 1 antibody detection kit. One of these is Indian manufacturer.

The use of hydroxy-chloroquine for prophylaxis of SARS-CoV-2 infection is recommended **ONLY** for the following:

- 1) Asymptomatic healthcare workers involved in the care of suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19;
- 2) Asymptomatic household contacts of laboratory confirmed cases.

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