

## GOM reviews current status, and actions for management of COVID-19

### Dr. Harsh Vardhan highlights critical importance of social distancing, home quarantine protocols & supporting Doctors/Medical staff combating COVID-19

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A high level meeting of the Group of Ministers (GoM) on COVID-19 was held at Nirman Bhawan, here today under the chairpersonship of Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister of Health & Family Welfare. Sh. Hardeep S. Puri, Minister of Civil Aviation, Dr. S. Jaishankar, Minister of External Affairs, Sh. Nityananda Rai, Minister of State for Home, Shri Mansukh Mandaviya, Minister of State for Shipping, & Chemical and Fertilizers and Sh. Ashwini Kumar Choubey, Minister of State, Health & Family Welfare were present, along with Sh. Bipin Rawat, Chief of Defence Staff.

Ms. Preeti Sudan, Secretary, (HFW), Sh Harsh Vardhan Shringla, Foreign Secretary, Dr. Balram Bhargava, Secretary DHR & Director General ICMR, Sh. Ravi Capoor, Secretary (Textiles), Sh. Sanjeeva Kumar, Spl. Secretary (Health), Sh. Sanjay Bandopadhyay, Addl. Secretary (Shipping), Shri Dammu Ravi, Additional Secretary Ministry of External Affairs, Sh. Anil Malik, Addl. Secy (MHA), Dr. Rajiv Garg, DGHS and Sh. Lav Agarwal, JS (MoHFW) along with other officials from Army, ITBP, Pharma, DGCA and Textiles were also present.,

The Group of Ministers (GoM) had detailed deliberation on prevention and management of COVID-19 in the meeting. The GOM also discussed the actions taken so far, current status of social distancing measures as a preventive strategy and the stringent actions to contain the spread of COVID-19 by the States so far. The GOM discussed about strengthening capacity of states, which need to 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. GoM was also informed that Gujarat, Assam, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Goa, Karnataka, MP and J&K are setting up hospitals dedicated for the management of COVID-19. A total of 118 laboratories have been included in the ICMR network of COVID19 testing. Group of Ministers (GoM) was also apprised that Cabinet Secretary has also written letters and conducted Video Conference with Chief Secretaries, Health Secretaries and DGs of Police and instructed them to enforce implementation of lockdown measures.

Highlighting the critical importance of social distancing as an effective strategy for prevention of COVID-19 and limiting the spread of the disease, Dr. Harsh Vardhan reiterated his appeal to all those who have are in home and facility quarantine about observing it according to the protocol laid down by the Health Ministry, and which is also available at the Ministry website. "As announced by Hon'ble Prime Minister yesterday, the country has been put under lockdown. As part of this lockdown, we need to ensure that within our homes too we practice social distancing", said Dr. Harsh Vardhan. He further added that around 64,000 persons have arrived from other countries to India since 21<sup>st</sup> March, 2020 out of which 8,000 have been put in various quarantine facilities and 56,000 are in home isolation. "We are fighting an infectious disease. In order to

protect ourselves and others, it is highly important that we follow all the protocols, guidelines and directions issued by the Government, failing which may lead to legal actions u/s 188 of IPC.

Dr. Harsh Vardhan also reiterated his appeal to everyone to not ostracise doctors and other medical staff who are on the forefront of this health emergency and serving to save us from COVID-19. We should also avoid spreading rumours or un-authenticated information, he added.

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