



Prime Minister's Office

PMO reviews corona virus response and preparedness

- Today's meeting latest in a series of reviews by PMO; with the first meeting dating back to 25th January 2020
 - Meeting re-affirmed a pro-active 'pan-government approach'; with specific areas of responsibility identified for various public authorities at the Centre, state and local levels
- Emphasis on greater participation of the private sector and the community at large, through a Jan Bhagidari approach
 - Decisions taken include expanding testing facilities and developing a GIS data-base for mapping disease hot-spots and available medical facilities.

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Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister Sh. P.K. Mishra today chaired an inter-ministerial meeting to review preparedness and response on the corona virus issue. Today's meeting was the latest in a series of stock-taking meetings at the PMO, with the first held on 25th January. Today's meeting was attended by Cabinet Secretary, Foreign Secretary, Secretaries of Ministries of Health, Civil Aviation, Information and Broadcasting, Shipping, Tourism, Chairman (Airport Authority of India), Secretary (Border Management), MHA and senior officials from Defence forces, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Niti Ayog and the Prime Minister's Office.

The pro-active measures taken so far which have contained spread of the virus in India, despite a big population and geographical proximity to the epicentre of the disease, were appreciated by all. At the same time, it was decided to further enhance the effectiveness of the steps taken by adopting a pan-government approach, in partnership with the states.

A broad spectrum of issues were reviewed. Two important changes since yesterday to further enhance our level of preparedness, namely introduction of universal screening at all international airports and sea-ports through use of thermal imagery equipment as well as mandatory filling of declaration forms of places visited by tourists and travellers returning from abroad, were noted by all concerned for operationalization. Ministry of Home Affairs was tasked to work closely with state governments, including relevant district administration officials, to ensure compliance with screening protocols at Integrated Check Posts (ICPs) on our land borders. National Informatics Centre would provide the requisite support to the Bureau of Immigration and MHA in this regard.

Decisions were also taken to rapidly implement opening of proper testing, isolation and quarantine facilities in various parts of the country, down to the district level, in partnership with the state governments. Ministries such as MHA, MoD, M/Railways and M/Labour would also seek to support and supplement the efforts of M/Health through use of their facilities and hospitals.

To disseminate information to the general public in a timely manner, including relevant advisories and 'Do's and Don't's', Ministry of Information and Broadcasting was tasked to work closely with Ministry of Health, Ministry of Human Resource Development and NDMA. For this purpose, Ministry of Health has started a system of regular daily briefings by their spokesperson, so as to ensure access to real time data for the public in a timely manner. Ministry of Health is also coordinating the activation of a GIS mapping of 'disease hotspots' and availability of medical facilities, with NDMA, relevant agencies and government departments. Ministry of Health briefed the meeting on the positive impact of a 24 hour medical help-line, operational across the country since 23rd January 2020, with ten dedicated telephone-lines, that has so far received over 6000 phone calls.

It was highlighted that participation of the communities and local bodies is essential to combat the public health challenge posed by the virus. It was decided to explore the greater involvement of private sector.

In light of the public health experts' recommendation to avoid big public gatherings, it was decided that all Government departments and ministries shall consult Ministry of Health before organising Conferences and international meetings in the country at present.

Earlier today, Hon'ble Prime Minister has tweeted that '*Experts across the world have advised to reduce mass gatherings to avoid the spread of COVID-19 Novel Coronavirus. Hence, this year I have decided not to participate in any Holi Milan programme*'.

VRRK/VJ

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