

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

Timely availability of solutions is the key : GoM

Dr. Harsh Vardhan emphasizes on delivering immediate solutions for meeting healthcare challenges regarding COVID-19; focuses on maintaining quality and standards in manufacturing

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The 12th meeting of 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 Dr. Vinod K. Paul, Member (Health), NITI Aayog and Sh. Bipin Rawat, Chief of Defence Staff.

The Group of Ministers (GoM) had detailed deliberation on containment and management of COVID-19. The GoM also discussed the actions taken so far, current status of social distancing measures as a preventive strategy and the stringent actions taken by the Centre as well as the States to contain the spread of COVID-19. GoM was informed that all districts have been asked to prepare and strengthen their contingency plans to combat COVID-19. Several other measures about strengthening capacity of states including devoting adequate resources for creating dedicated COVID-19 hospitals, equipping the medical institutes with PPEs, ventilators and other essential equipment etc., were also discussed in detail. States have been asked to identify COVID-19 centres/hospitals according to already laid guidelines.

GoM was apprised that as of now the death rate is around 3% while recovery rate is around 12%, which is comparatively better than most of the countries and may be taken as a positive effect of the Lockdown in the country along with the cluster management & containment strategy. GoM also reviewed the testing strategy and availability of testing kits across the country along with the strategy for hotspots and cluster management. GoM was informed that 170 districts are being put in Red Zone (Hotspots) with 123 districts with large outbreaks and 47 districts with clusters. There are 207 non-hotspot districts with clusters and 353 districts which are placed in green zone as they are non-infected. If no case is reported in last 14 days then the red zone district will be placed under orange zone and further no case is reported in next 14 days then that district will come under Green zone.

GoM was apprised regarding the adequacy and availability of PPEs, masks, ventilators, drugs and other essential equipment against the requirement. GoM was informed that domestic manufactures have been

identified for production of PPEs and orders have been placed. In addition, order for ventilators has been placed. GoM was briefed about the number of public and private labs presently testing for COVID-19 along with the number of tests that are being conducted every day through this network of labs.

Department of Science & Technology (DST), Department of Bio-Technology (DBT) and Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR) gave a detailed presentation to the GoM on diagnosis, drugs and vaccine development for COVID-19 and also informed that they are working together to find the solutions and support for the management of COVID-19 along with ICMR and Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. The Union Health Minister had recently held a review with DG CSIR, Dr. Shekhar C. Mande and the other CSIR lab. directors through video conference of the steps undertaken by CSIR and its constituent 38 labs. towards developing technological solutions to manage COVID-19 outbreak in the country. GoM opined that timely availability of solutions is the key.

Chairperson of the GoM and the Union Health Minister, Dr. Harsh Vardhan directed that there should not be any dilution of quality and standards in manufacturing of PPEs, masks, ventilators and other equipments. He also suggested that stringent punishment may be placed for the manufacturers in case of any deviation from the quality standards/protocols while manufacturing the PPEs, masks and Ventilators.

Dr Harsh Vardhan reiterated that detailed advisories and guidelines for who should use which type of mask and who should use PPE have been posted on the Ministry website, and awareness regarding this is also being created through IEC campaigns. He also added that social distancing and isolation are the most effective social vaccines against COVID-19 and appealed to everyone to follow protocol of personal hygiene and respiratory protocols during the lockdown period.

Ms. Preeti Sudan, Secretary, (HFW), Sh. Ravi Capoor, Secretary (Textiles), Sh Pradeep Singh Kharola, Secretary (Civil Aviation), Sh. P. D. Vaghela, Secretary (Pharmaceuticals), Dr. Renu Swarup, Secretary, Bio-Technology, Prof. Ashutosh Sharma, Secretary, Science & Technology, Dr. Shekhar C. Mande, Director General, CSIR and Secretary DSIR, Sh. Sanjeeva Kumar, Spl. Secretary (Health), Sh. Anil Malik, Addl. Secy (MHA), Sh. Anand Swaroop, DG, ITBP, Dr. Rajiv Garg, DGHS, Dr Raman R Gangakhedkar, Head of Epidemiology and Communicable Diseases, ICMR and Sh. Lav Agarwal, JS (MoHFW) along with other officials from Army, ITBP, Pharma, DGCA and Textiles were also present.

In case of any queries on COVID-19, please call at Ministry of Health & Family Welfare helpline no. : +91-11-23978046 or 1075 (Toll-free). List of helpline numbers of States/UTs on COVID-19 is also available at <https://www.mohfw.gov.in/pdf/coronavirushelplinenumber.pdf> .

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