

Union Govt. releases Rs. 890.32 cr as II installment of COVID-19 Financial Package to States/UTs

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Government of India has released Rs. 890.32 cr as the second installment of the COVID-19 Emergency Response and Health System Preparedness Package to 22 States/UTs. These include Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland and Sikkim. The amount of the financial assistance is based on the COVID-19 case load in these States/UTs.

As part of the 'Whole of Government' approach where the Centre is leading the COVID-19 response and management, and supporting the States/UTs through technical and financial resources, the COVID-19 Emergency Response and Health System Preparedness Package was announced by the Prime Minister. In his address to the nation on 24th March 2020, he said that "*The Central Government has provisioned 15 thousand crore rupees for treating Coronavirus patients and strengthening the medical infrastructure of the country. This will allow for rapidly ramping up the number of Corona testing facilities, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), isolation Beds, ICU beds, ventilators and other essential equipment. Simultaneously, training of medical and paramedical manpower will also be undertaken. I have requested the State Governments to ensure that only healthcare is treated as their first and topmost priority now.*"

The financial aid as part of the second installment will be used for strengthening of public health facilities infrastructure for testing including procurement and installation of RT-PCR machines, RNA extraction kits, TRUNAT & CBNAAT machines and BSL-II cabinets etc.; strengthening of public health facilities infrastructure for treatment and development of ICU beds; installation of oxygen generators, cryogenic oxygen tanks and medical gas pipelines in public health facilities and procurement of bed side oxygen concentrators etc.; and engagement, training and capacity building of necessary Human Resources and incentives to healthcare workforce and volunteers, including ASHAs, on COVID duties. Wherever necessary, volunteers registered on the COVID Warriors portal may also be engaged for COVID duties.

The first installment of Rs. 3000 cr was released in April 2020 to all States/UTs to aid and enable them to ramp up testing facilities, augment hospital infrastructure, conduct surveillance activities along with procurement of essential equipment, drugs and other supplies.

As part of this package, States/UTs have been strengthened with 5,80,342 isolation beds, 1,36,068 oxygen supported beds and 31,255 ICU beds. Also, 86,88,357 testing kits and 79,88,366 Vial Transport Media (VTM) have been procured by them. As many as 96,557 human resource has been added in the States/UTs and incentive has been given to 6,65,799 HR. The package has aided provision of mobility support to 11,821 staff.

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