



Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

Dr. Harsh Vardhan reviews COVID situation and public health measures with Chief Ministers, Health Ministers and senior State officials of 7 States

“Prime Minister’s Jan-Andolan advocating COVID Appropriate Behaviour sums up the best available strategy to contain COVID”

“Need for heightened caution during the Festive and Winter seasons to not squander the gains made so far”

“COVID Appropriate Behaviour is the most potent Social Vaccine”

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Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare today interacted with Chief Ministers, State Health Ministers and Principal Secretaries/ Additional Chief Secretaries of 7 States through video conferencing. These States included Maharashtra, Uttarakhand, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura Meghalaya and Goa.

Sh. T. S. Rawat, Chief Minister (Uttarakhand) who also oversees the State’s Health Ministry, Sh. N. Biren Singh, Chief Minister (Manipur), Sh. Rajesh Tope, Health Minister (Maharashtra), Dr. R. Lalhangliana, Health Minister (Mizoram), Sh. Vishwajit Pratapsingh Rane, Health Minister (Goa), Sh. Ratan Lal Nath, Minister of School Education, Higher Education, Law and Parliamentary Affairs (Tripura) participated virtually.

Dr Harsh Vardhan has recently held a review meeting with Andhra Pradesh, Assam, West Bengal, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Telangana, Punjab, Haryana and Kerala. He has also reviewed the COVID preparedness with States/ UTs of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Chhattisgarh and Delhi.





Highlighting the State specific areas of concern that would require focussed attention, Dr. Harsh Vardhan noted that although the active cases have come down in Maharashtra, it continues to have a large Active Caseload, with a high Fatality Rate (2.6%) which increases to 3.5% in and around Mumbai. CFR in Uttarakhand is higher than the national average at 1.64%; Active cases are on the rise in the recent days in Manipur. Higher Positivity in the State is indicative of hidden transmission, he stated. 40% of total deaths are recorded in just the last one month in Goa which is a cause of worry. With 70% of cases concentrated in Aizawl, Mizoram is seeing a further rise in active cases; Tripura and Meghalaya are witnessing higher deaths (~37%) in the active age groups (45-60 years) which are preventable.

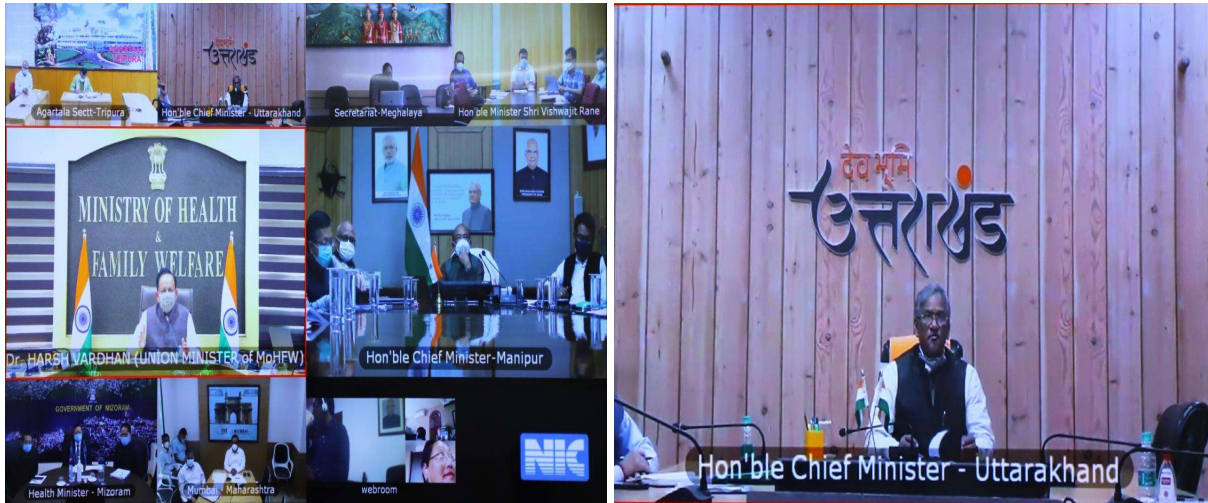
Dr Harsh Vardhan deeply appreciated the relentless and dedicated services of the several COVID warriors and the frontline workers who have handled the situation on the ground with grit and determination without showing signs of fatigue. He further stated that as on date, there were only 4.09% of active cases on Oxygen Support, 2.73% of active cases in ICU and a minute 0.45% of active cases on Ventilator Support. He however impressed upon the need to be vigilant in the coming winter and the long festive season which could threaten the gains made against COVID-19.

To stop the chain of transmission, he stressed upon the importance of *Jan-Andolan* initiated by Prime Minister Sh. Narendra Modi ji. “Prime Minister’s latest address, only 10 minutes short, advocating COVID Appropriate Behaviour, aptly sums up the best available strategy to contain COVID.” Elaborating on steps taken by the government to promote Jan Andolan among the masses, he added that “COVID Appropriate Behaviour is the most potent *Social Vaccine*.”

Dr Harsh Vardhan advised the States to focus on higher testing especially in districts with higher positivity; mandatory testing of symptomatic negatives by RAT; focus on high risk groups and vulnerable populations for SARI/ILI surveillance which can give indication of infection; increase the contact tracing of close contacts of positive cases; proper follow up and monitoring of those in home isolation, especially the vulnerable groups. He also highlighted the importance of widespread IEC campaigns so that people in home isolation can reach hospitals in time for effective clinical management, and efforts to be made to reduce deaths in the first 24/48/72 hours which was high in many States/districts. He also indicated towards the need for higher testing in areas such as Bazaar, market places, work places, places of gatherings.



The Chief Ministers and State Health Ministers shared a brief snapshot of the actions taken for containment, surveillance and treatment of the COVID positive cases along with best practices of their States. Sh. Rawat, CM, Uttarakhand stated that they have mounted a comprehensive multimedia IEC campaign for encouraging COVID appropriate behaviour. Challans have been given to 1.4 lakh for faulting on Social Distancing, and 4.5 lakh on mask negligence. In the later case, the defaulters were given 4 masks each to promote mask wearing behaviour. Sh. Rajesh Tope informed about the 'My Family My Responsibility' campaign in the state of Maharashtra where house to house surveys and monitoring of home isolation cases and SARI/ILI patients were undertaken. Of the 5.7 lakh surveyed, 51,000 COVID19 positive cases were identified.



Sh. Rajesh Bhushan, Union Health Secretary advised the States to focus on three areas that include the need to suppress and break the chain of transmission; keeping mortality less than 1%; and the need for prolonged behaviour change. To ensure these, he advised for quick and aggressive testing, targeted testing at market-places, workplaces, religious congregations which have the potential to become super-spreader events; followed by quick tracing; all close contacts to be traced in the first 72 hours; at least 10 persons to be traced for every positive person; increase the proportion of tests through RTPCR against RAT; and to mandatorily test symptomatic negatives from RAT tests by RTPCR. For ensuring the second point, he advised quick hospitalization, ensuring adequate infrastructure in hospitals, focus on avoidable deaths in the first 24/48/72 hours; focus on vulnerable population groups; and review hospital wide fatality figures. To ensure adherence of COVID appropriate behaviour, he advised strong campaigns involving MPs, MLAs and local influencers.





Smt. Arti Ahuja, Addl. Secretary (Health), Sh. Lav Agarwal, Jt. Secretary (Health), Dr S K Singh, Director (NCDC) and other senior officials of the Ministry were present in the meeting.

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