

Update on COVID-19

Empowered Group 2 initiates action to avoid panic regarding availability of Medical Oxygen

India's Daily Production Capacity (7287 MT) and Stock (~50,000 MT) comfortably more than Daily Consumption (3842 MT) at present

States to be mapped to Oxygen sources

DPIIT, MoHFW and Union Steel Ministry jointly reviews situation in High Burden States daily

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Medical oxygen is a critical component in the treatment of COVID affected patients. An inter-ministerial Empowered Group (EG2) of officers under the chairmanship of Dr. Guruprasad Mohapatra, Secretary, Department for Promotion of Industries and Internal Trade (DPIIT) consisting of senior officers from various ministries and departments including Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MOHFW), Ministry of Textiles, Ministry of AYUSH, Ministry of MSME, etc was constituted during the COVID pandemic in March – 2020 to ensure the availability of essential medical equipment including medical oxygen to the affected states.

For the past one year, the EG2 has been continuously monitoring and facilitating the smooth supply of essential medical equipment including medical oxygen to the affected states and addressing challenges that arise from time to time. In the present context of increasing COVID cases, the EG2 has been meeting and facilitating the supply of essential medical equipment, particularly related to medical oxygen supply to the States. EG2 has been meeting and interacting frequently with the States, Oxygen manufacturers and other stakeholders to facilitate medical oxygen supply to States as per necessity.

It is pertinent to note that **there is sufficient production capacity** of around 7127 MTs for oxygen in the country, and as per need, the surplus oxygen available with the steel plants is also being utilized. The country has a daily production capacity of 7127 MT of oxygen per day. Against this, the total production has been 100 percent since past two days, as directed by EG2, since supply to medical oxygen has gone up rapidly. On 12th April 2021, the medical oxygen consumption in the country was 3842 MTs, that is 54 percent of the daily production capacity. The maximum consumption of medical oxygen in the country is by states of Maharashtra, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Delhi, followed by

Chhattisgarh, Punjab, Rajasthan.

With increasing cases, the medical oxygen consumption will need to keep pace with the requirements of the States. For this, the **current oxygen stocks** of the country, including the industrial oxygen stocks with the manufacturing plants, is more than 50,000 MTs. Along with the ramped up production of the oxygen manufacturing units and the surplus stocks available, the present availability of oxygen is sufficient. At the same time, States that are being asked to **make rational use** of medical oxygen and ensure there is no wastage of oxygen. Besides States must **set up Control Rooms** to ensure smooth supply of oxygen to the districts as per need, review requirement of cylinders, tankers etc.

The EG2 has initiated several measures to ensure supply of medical oxygen to various affected states. Some of the major measures as follows.

- **Increase oxygen production** as per production capacity of each oxygen manufacturing plant; this has resulted in 100 percent production in the oxygen manufacturing units, ramping up availability of oxygen in the country (as stated above).
- **Utilise the surplus stocks** available with Steel Plants. The stock availability from Steel plants has increased in last few days, with 14,000 MTs coming from stocks of the CPSUs Steel Plants alone, and this has helped ramp up total LMO stocks in the country.
- **Map the requirements of top states with oxygen sources**, including with sources across the state borders and those available at steel plants, for greater clarity and assurance for the states on the oxygen sourcing. Thus, Maharashtra has been able to lift surplus medical oxygen on daily basis from Steel plants like JSW in Dolvi (Maharashtra), SAIL in Bhilai (Chhattisgarh) and from JSW in Bellary (Karnataka). Similarly, Madhya Pradesh is able to supplement its oxygen supply from the Steel plant in Bhilai (Chhattisgarh).
- The challenge presently is to move oxygen from States with less necessity to States with increased necessity. Mapping of the surplus sources with States that have greater need for oxygen, such as Maharashtra, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Chhattisgarh, etc is being finalised, in consultation with the manufacturers, States and other stakeholders. This has been undertaken through coordinated planning between the Government of India and State Governments to map their requirements up to 30th April 2021 with the available sources and stocks of oxygen in the country.
- A sub- group has been formed under Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) with Ministry of Railways and transport departments of States to facilitate the movement of transport tankers for Liquid Medical Oxygen (LMO). Moving of oxygen tankers by rail is also being actively worked out.
- Some of the key decisions taken in the context of seamless movement of oxygen tankers is as follows: Orders have been given by PESO (Petroleum and Safety Organisation) for conversion of argon and nitrogen tankers for use as oxygen tankers; thereby the fleet available for transportation of tankers has been enhanced; Free movement of oxygen tankers inter-state has been facilitated through MoRTH without registration in the other states;
- Further, mapping of cylinders state wise has been done and industrial cylinders have been permitted to be used for medical oxygen after due purging;
- Placing of orders for purchase of another one lakh oxygen cylinders by MoHFW is also being undertaken;
- PSA plants sanctioned under PM-Cares are being closely reviewed for early completion of 100 percent of the plants to enhance self-generation of oxygen in hospitals especially in remote areas.
- [Daily reviews with the high burden states are being jointly done by DPIIT with MoHFW and Steel Ministry.](#) Oxygen manufacturers are also present in these meetings, as are the Steel units. This results in handholding of the States for facilitating oxygen supply, resolving any inter-State issues on supply or tanker movement, etc

Based on the detailed daily deliberations between officers of DPIIT, MOHFW, Ministry of Steel, various critically affected states, Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organisation (PESO) along with key stakeholders

including the representatives from oxygen manufacturers, All India Industrial Gas Manufacturers Association (AIIGMA) as per the directions of EG2, a detailed daily mapping of sources for supply of medical oxygen to the affected states is under preparation to ensure uninterrupted supply of medical oxygen.

During the course of discussions, it was also observed that there is a unusual rise in the demand of medical oxygen as well as steep rise in projections in the demand for medical oxygen as on 30.04.2021 in some states vis-a-vis the active COVID cases. EG2 has noted the inordinate surge in demand in such states and directed the MOHFW to examine the same for rational use of oxygen in coordination with the concerned states.

EG2 is monitoring the situation of demand and supply of medical oxygen continuously to ensure that all necessary steps are taken to support the uninterrupted supply of medical oxygen.

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