



Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

## Dr. Harsh Vardhan reviews Public Health Response to COVID-19 and Progress of Vaccination with 8 States/UT

“Vaccination our Big Weapon in the Fight against COVID19”

“Vaccine supply being ramped up through all round efforts”

### Critical Bottlenecks in vaccine Procurement and Administration Discussed

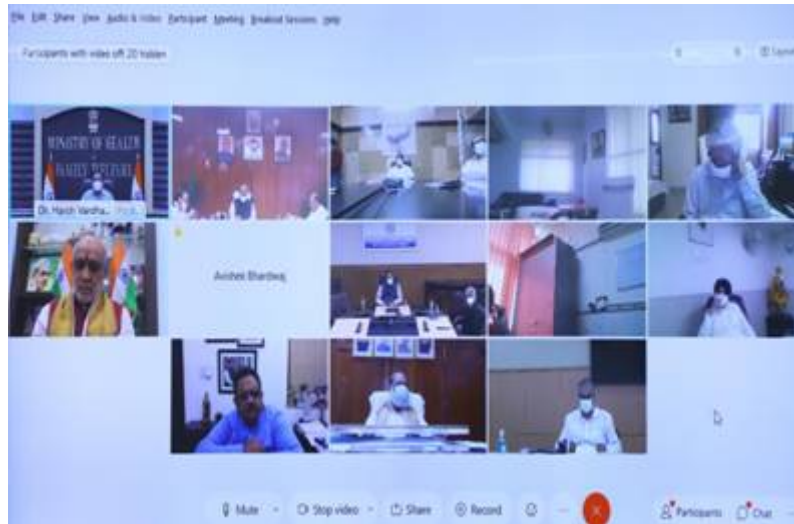
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Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare today interacted with State Health Ministers and Principal Secretaries/ Additional Chief Secretaries of 8 states in the presence of Shri Ashwini Kumar Choubey, Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare. These states/UT are depicting a high growth rate in the number of daily cases, higher mortality, very high and growing positivity rate.



These included the UT of Jammu and Kashmir and the States of Uttarakhand, Haryana, Punjab, Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha and Telangana. Shri Tirath Singh Rawat, Chief Minister, Uttarakhand, Shri Anil Vij, Health Minister (Haryana), Shri Balbir Singh Sidhu, Health Minister (Punjab), Shri Naba Kishore Das, Health Minister (Odisha), Shri Banna Gupta, Health Minister (Jharkhand), Shri Mangal Pandey, Health Minister (Bihar) were present virtually.





The Union Health Minister highlighted the trajectory of COVID in these states/UT and brought attention to the consequent stress on the medical infrastructure. He applauded the dedication and patience shown by state administrations in their fight against the pandemic and in simultaneously ensuring the welfare of the people. He said, “Although in the last 24 hours, 3.48 lakh new cases were registered, a net decline of 11,122 cases is recorded in the active caseload. This is the second consecutive day of decline in the active cases.” He stressed on the continued need to follow COVID Appropriate Behaviour along with renewed and stringent focus on containment measures for addressing the present surge. He noted that the stringent adherence to implementation of micro-containment zones has also helped.

Underscoring the critical importance of vaccination drive, the Minister observed, “Vaccination is our Big Weapon in the Fight against COVID19”. He added that India is the fastest country globally to reach the landmark of 17 cr doses in 114 days. He thanked all the states and UTs for their contribution in achieving this feat. He also pointed out that of this, while 13.66 crore people have been administered the first dose, the second dose has been administered to only to 3.86 crore. Hence it is very important that we first focus more on second dose vaccinations. States should not lose sight of those who are to get the second dose of COVID vaccine: 70% at minimum ought to be allocated to meet the requirement of second dose, while 30% ought to be reserved for the first dose.” Dr Harsh Vardhan also urged states to ensure that the healthcare workers and frontline workers are fully vaccinated, as they form the vulnerable categories.

The Union Health Minister added that under the Liberalised Pricing & Accelerated National COVID-19 Vaccination Strategy, along with free vaccination under GOI channel and states can use the non-GOI channel to have a holistic vaccination coverage of their population. Every month 50% of the vaccine doses of every manufacturer would be available for direct procurement by the State Govts & Private Hospitals while Government of India would continue to procure its share of 50% of the vaccines and would continue to make it available to the State Govts totally free of cost as was being done earlier.

Dr Harsh Vardhan also pointed out that various measures are being taken by the Union Government to ramp up vaccine production in the country. Vaccines for COVID-19, which have been developed & are being manufactured in foreign countries and which have been granted emergency approval for restricted use by USFDA, EMA, UK MHRA, PMDA Japan or which are listed in WHO(Emergency



Use Listing) may be granted emergency use approval in India. The production capacity of the vaccine manufacturers is also being ramped up. While it will touch 8 cr doses by May 2021, it will touch 9 cr in June 2021.

Dr Sujeet K. Singh, Director NCDC presented a granular analysis of the COVID trajectory in the States. He pointed out that the apparent shift of COVID-19 towards lower age groups is driven by the fact that higher age groups have been vaccinated in considerable proportion by now. He suggested the ramp up of testing and vaccination in peri-urban areas as the spread is now going to peri-urban and rural places. He further added that irrespective of the COVID variants, measures for preparedness and protection remain the same. He urged the states for augmentation of medical infrastructure for testing and vaccination to mount a sturdy response to the Pandemic.

There was comprehensive and detailed discussion on various aspects of COVID management including ramping up of hospital infrastructure; increased testing; stringent restrictive measures for breaking the chain of transmission; and stress on COVID Appropriate Behaviour among the masses. Critical bottlenecks in vaccine procurement and administration were discussed.



Ms Vandana Gurnani, AS&MD (NHM), Ms. Arti Ahuja, AS (Health), MoHFW, Dr. Sujeet K. Singh, Director, NCDC were present in the meeting along with Principal Secretary (Health), Additional Chief Secretary (Health) and State Surveillance Officer of the concerned states/UTs.

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HFV/VC with 8 states/12thMay 2021/4

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