

As against requirement of 1,671 beds as per cases today, we have more than 1.05 lakh dedicated COVID-19 beds in 601 dedicated COVID hospitals: Health Ministry

Number of dedicated COVID beds up from 42,000 on March 29 to 1.05 lakh today: Health Ministry

Government is working on urgent basis to expand testing capacity, 14 mentor institutes identified to help expand the capacity: Health Ministry

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States asked to ensure that workers of units manufacturing essential goods are provided passes in smooth manner: MHA

Posted On: 12 APR 2020 6:35PM by PIB Mumbai

New Delhi / Mumbai, April 12, 2020

The total number of COVID-19 cases in the country stands at 8,356 as on date. A total of 273 people in the country have died because of the COVID-2019 infection. In the last 24 hours, 909 new cases and 34 deaths have been reported. A total of 716 people have recovered and have been discharged and 74 people have been cured since yesterday. This was informed by the Joint Secretary, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Shri Luv Aggarwal, at the daily media briefing on the actions taken, preparedness and updates on COVID-19, held at National Media Centre, PIB New Delhi today. Though number of COVID-19 cases has increased from 979 on March 29, 2020 to

8,356 today, the number of patients requiring oxygen support or critical care is around 20%. Assuring that the Government is over-prepared in managing the situation, he said that there is no need for panic.

The Joint Secretary further informed that the Government is working on an urgent basis to expand the capacity for COVID-19 testing in Government and private medical colleges across the country. Detailed discussions in this regard have been held at the level of Health Minister and Home Minister. To expand testing capacity, the Government has identified 14 mentor institutes including institutions of international repute such as AIIMS and NIMHANS. These institutes will mentor other government and private medical colleges and help expand the capacity. He also informed that the government's efforts at present are focussed on proper clinical management of positive patients, contact tracing and fool-proof implementation of containment strategy.

Shri Aggarwal assured the public that the government is taking adequate measures to expand the capacity of Dedicated COVID Hospitals and isolation beds in the country. Giving [a presentation on the progress in setting up dedicated COVID hospitals](#), the Joint Secretary informed that proper mapping of patients to care centres is being done, so that patients are given treatment depending on the severity of the disease and are transferred to different types of care centres capable of providing more intensive care, as required. Comparing the demand and supply of hospital beds, he informed that while 196 or around 20% of positive cases on March 29 required critical care or oxygen support, around 42,000 dedicated COVID beds were available. As on date, while 1,671 beds are required, we have more than 1.05 lakh dedicated COVID-19 beds in 601 dedicated COVID hospitals, he informed. He said that the government is increasing the number of dedicated hospitals and isolation beds, and that it is prepared in dealing with the situation, even to the extent of being over-prepared. He added that adequate focus is being given also on properly orienting our health staff on various aspects of COVID-19 management, so that they don't face any problems at field level. Trainings are being organized since last two months. A Special Medical Officer is being appointed for every dedicated hospital. Availability of all required equipment is being ensured in coordination with states.

The Joint Secretary gave a snapshot of the dedicated COVID hospitals being set up at various places across the country. AIIMS, Delhi has around 250 beds, including 70 ventilator beds. Safdarjung Hospital, Delhi has around 400 beds, where an entire block has been dedicated to treatment of COVID-19, functioning like a dedicated hospital. Hospitals have similarly been set up in various other states. The Seven Hills Hospital in Mumbai has 100 beds along with ventilators, pacemakers, dialysis machine and patient monitoring devices, negative pressure rooms. 9,000 beds have been identified in military hospitals, with capability to augment this by 7,000. Ordnance Factory Board has manufactured 50 specialized water-proof tents in Arunachal Pradesh, so that we are able to serve people in far-flung areas of the country as well and provide required medical facilities to them. Citing the example of Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd., he said that our public sector units too are working in every possible way in contributing to the fight against COVID-19. Indian Railways is working on converting 20,000 coaches into isolation coaches, out of which 5,000 coaches are being converted in the first phase. Citing these measures, [the Joint Secretary assured that under the directions of the Prime Minister, the government is undertaking a massive national effort in dealing with the evolving situation of the pandemic](#), and is prepared to deal with any eventuality. He once again requested the cooperation of all citizens in this battle, especially through following social distancing norms – which he reiterated is the social vaccine in the fight against COVID-19.

Responding to a media query, the Joint Secretary later said that irrespective of lockdown or not, it is very important that we adopt a behavioural change and focus on social distancing, as it is an important component of managing the pandemic. He also said that the recent resurgence of cases in China, Japan and Korea is a cause of concern for us too; he said that we should therefore ensure that we continue to follow our containment and social distancing measures.

The Ministry of Home Affairs representative informed that:

- The Home Ministry has again clarified to states and UTs that there are no restrictions on movement of inter-state and intra-state cargo - whether the goods being transported are essential goods or not. Godowns and cold storage units too can store all types of goods. State authorities have to also ensure that workers of units manufacturing essential goods are provided passes in smooth manner, so that these units don't face any problems in their functioning.
- Lockdown measures are being enforced effectively. States, in cooperation with civil society organizations and volunteers, are making efforts to ensure door-to-door delivery of essential commodities, so that people need not leave their homes.
- Units of Indian Army have come forward in distributing food in rural areas and in improving community awareness.
- Situation regarding essential commodities is under control. In the MHA control room, officers of Ministry of Civil Aviation, Department of Consumer Affairs and Ministry of Railways have been working

in coordination with states to resolve logistics problems.

- Many people are working from home these days, during the nationwide lockdown, Social media is being used in a big way. In this context, the Twitter handle [@CyberDost](#) of MHA is providing helpful information on ensuring one's safety from cyber-crime and financial crimes. Many tips on cybersecurity too are being shared by this Twitter account. Citizens are requested to follow this account for their safety. Citizens may also use resources on [National Cyber Crime Porting Portal](#). Cyber-crime can be reported on this portal, this will help ensure one's safety on cyber space.

The ICMR representative informed that there are 219 testing facilities in the country as on date, including 151 labs in public sector and 68 in private sector. He updated that 1,86,906 COVID-19 samples have been tested till date. Out of this, 7,953 samples - 4.3% - were found to be positive. In the last five days, 15,747 samples per day were tested on average, out of which 584 samples per day on average turned out to be positive.

Responding to a media query on vaccine against COVID-19, he informed that more than forty candidate vaccines are under development at present, but that no vaccine has entered the next stage so far.

The Principal Director General of Press Information Bureau, Shri K.S. Dhatwalia, informed that:

- Some countries have requested India for the supply of hydroxychloroquin; after making an assessment of the domestic requirements and keeping adequate buffer, the release of HCQ for 13 countries has been approved by the Group of Ministers.
- The Ministry of Finance has extended the deadline for mandatory minimum deposit in Public Provident Fund and Sukanya Samriddhi account for 2019-20 by three months, till June 2020.
- The Government had announced that free LPG Refills are to be provided to Ujjwala beneficiaries over the period of 3 months, from April to June 2020. [About 85 lakh PMUY beneficiaries have got the LPG cylinder in April, 2020.](#)

LIVE tweets by [@PIB_India](#) from the media briefing can be found on this [thread](#).

DJM/SC

(Release ID: 1613674)