

**There will not be any shortage of hydroxychloroquine
in the country either today or in the future: Union
Health Ministry**

**Community support plays an important role in
helping to identify cases early which in turn is key to
containing spread and mortality due to COVID-19:
Union Health Ministry**

**States have started providing assistance to building
and construction sector workers, as per the
component under Rs. 1.7 lakh crore Pradhan Mantri
Garib Kalyan Yojana package: Union Home Affairs
Ministry**

Posted On: 08 APR 2020 6:10PM by PIB Mumbai

New Delhi / Mumbai, April 8, 2020

The total number of COVID-19 cases in the country stands at 5,194 as on date. A total of 149 people in the country have died because of the COVID-2019 infection. In the last 24 hours, 773 new cases and 32 deaths have been reported. A total of 402 people have recovered and have been discharged. 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.

Stating that around 80% of COVID-19 cases are mild or very mild, the Joint Secretary informed that as part of upgrading health infrastructure, COVID Care Centres, as proposed [in the guidance document released by the Ministry yesterday](#), are being set up in adequate number and speed to treat these cases. Hotels, lodges, schools, stadia, etc. will be used for this purpose. Additionally, required action is being taken in coordination with states to set up adequate number of dedicated COVID Health Centres and dedicated COVID Hospitals, to treat critical and severe cases, he further informed.

Shri Aggarwal stated that the Centre and states have taken a series of measures to break the chain of transmission. As cases increase, commensurate response and preparedness is also being adopted. As per guidelines and containment plan, action is being taken to manage COVID-19. He informed that, in Pune Central and Kondhwa regions, door-to-door survey is being undertaken in 35 sq. km. area, where teams are checking travel history, contact history and also co-morbidity factors of every person in households. In Pathanamthitta, Kerala, administration is taking required efforts for surveillance and contact tracing; in particular, technology is being used for preparation of war room and monitoring of clusters and households under quarantine. Required psychological support is also being given.

Shri Aggarwal also informed that:

- [HRD Ministry has launched an online training module for capacity building of frontline workers fighting COVID-19](#). It is called [iGOT](#) - Integrated Government Online Training course on COVID-19 pandemic, hosted on the DIKSHA platform. The module aims to train a larger force than is available at present, in order to replace the first line of workers and to tackle potential exponential or geometric increase in positive COVID-19 cases in subsequent stages of the pandemic. This includes Doctors, nurses, paramedics, technicians, Auxiliary Nursing Midwives (ANMs), State Govt. Officers, Civil Defence officials and volunteers of National Cadet Corps (NCC), National Service Scheme (NSS), Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS) and other volunteers.
- Health Ministry is launching [a training module by AIIMS for physicians providing medical care to pregnant ladies who are either COVID-19 suspects or confirmed cases](#); guidance on antenatal care and labour management will be given.
- [Indian Air Force has been continuing its support against novel coronavirus wherein medical supplies are being transported to equip the state governments and supporting agencies to combat the contagion effectively and efficiently](#). During the last few days, IAF airlifted essential medical supplies and commodities from nodal points to Manipur, Nagaland and Gangtok in North Eastern region; and the Union Territories of J&K and Ladakh.
- Centre is also strengthening field level training to ensure adequate infection prevention & control measures in hospitals further.
- Government is working towards bringing in a major behavioural change in terms of adopting social distancing measures.

Stating that we are dealing with an infectious disease, the Joint Secretary reiterated that even if we fail in one area, it can significantly affect the effectiveness of our overall effort. He requested everyone's full cooperation with respect to lockdown and social distancing measures, so that we are able to win the battle against COVID-19.

In reply to a media query, the Joint Secretary replied, "We have asked states and districts to focus on contact tracing and surveillance, and also upgrade hospital infrastructure. We need to continue to be alert in implementing lockdown and social distancing measures, it is a daily battle". Stating that early identification is key in containing the spread and mortalities due to COVID-19, he said that community support in turn plays an important role in helping to identify cases early.

Addressing another media query on hydroxychloroquine, Shri Aggarwal said, there will not be any shortage of hydroxychloroquine in the country either today or in future. "This is being monitored at the highest level", he said. At the same time, he highlighted that hydroxychloroquine is only for specific sets of people, to be used only based on prescription of registered medical doctors.

Informing that the State governments have increased efforts in implementing lockdown in hot spot areas, the Ministry of Home Affairs representative stated:

- Police monitoring has been intensified and public awareness is being improved with help of community leaders.
- Various measures such as area mapping and barricading have been taken by districts to enforce social distancing in markets, banks and other areas.
- Situation regarding essential goods and services is satisfactory. [Union Home Secretary, Shri Ajay Kumar Bhalla has written to all State Chief Secretaries to take urgent steps to ensure availability of essential goods, by invoking provisions of the Essential Commodities \(EC\) Act 1955](#). Keeping in view possibility of black marketing and hoarding, states can take measures such as fixing of stock limits, capping of prices, enhancing production, inspection of accounts of dealers.
- [Under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana, the Government had announced a package of Rs. 1.7 lakh crore](#), in which there is a component for building and construction workers. Under this component, states have been asked to utilize Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Fund to provide assistance and support to around 3.5 Crore registered workers to protect them against economic disruptions. States have started implementing this, in order to provide support and assistance to labourers employed in these sectors amidst the nation-wide lockdown. 31 states and UTs have already announced cash transfer benefits ranging from Rs. 1,000 - Rs. 6,000; more than 2 crore workers have

been given more than Rs. 3,000 crore rupees; and 29 lakh workers have been given food relief as well.

Till date 1,21,271 COVID-19 tests have been done, out of which 13,345 tests were done yesterday, stated the representative of ICMR. He further informed that 139 labs in ICMR network are working actively and 65 private labs have been permitted to do COVID-19 tests.

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

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(Release ID: 1612289)