

High level Group of Ministers reviews current status, and actions for prevention and management of COVID-19

Adequate measures are being taken to combat
COVID-19; people are advised to take precautions
and to report immediately in case of any symptoms:
Dr. Harsh Vardhan

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On the directions of the Hon. Prime Minister, a high level Group of Ministers (GOM) was constituted to review, monitor and evaluate the preparedness and measures taken regarding management of Novel Coronavirus (renamed by World Health Organization as COVID-19), in the country. While the first meeting was held on 3rd Feb, 2020 at Nirman Bhawan, second meeting on 13th Feb., 2020, the third meeting was held here today under the chairpersonship of Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister of Health & Family Welfare. Sh. Hardeep S. Puri, Minister of Civil Aviation, Sh. Nityananda Rai, Minister of State for Home, Shri Mansukh Mandaviya, Minister of State (I/c), Ministry of Shipping, Chemicals and Fertilisers and Sh. Ashwini Kumar Choubey, Minister of State, Health & Family Welfare, members of the GOM, were present.

A presentation of the status of the COVID-19 was made to the GOM. The preventive steps and measures taken for management of COVID-19 disease in India were presented, which included information about the various travel advisories in view of the evolving global situation regarding COVID-19.

The meeting was attended by Ms. Preeti Sudan, Secretary (HFW), Sh. Pradeep Singh Kharola, Secretary (Civil Aviation), Sh. P.D. Vaghela, Secretary (Pharmaceuticals), Sh. Ravi Capoor, Secretary (Textiles), Dr. Balram Bhargava, Secy (DHR) and DG (ICMR), Dr. P. K. Kataria, Spl. Secretary (Textiles), Sh. Sanjeeva Kumar, Spl. Secretary (Health), Shri Manoj Bharti, Addl. Secretary (MEA), Sh. Amit Yadav, DGFT, Sh. Sanjay Bandopadhyay, Addl. Secretary (Shipping), Sh. Anil Malik, Addl. Secy (MHA), Sh. Anand Swaroop, Inspector General (ITBP), and Sh. Lav Agarwal, JS (MoHFW) along with other officials from Army, ITBP, Pharma, and Textiles.

Dr Harsh Vardhan addressed the media persons later in the day, on the evolving scenario and the GOM meeting.

Dr. Harsh Vardhan informed that universal screening is being done for the travellers from 12 countries for all the flights from China, Singapore, Thailand, Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea, Vietnam, Malaysia, Nepal, Indonesia, Iran and Italy at the earmarked aero-bridges. He added that the passengers are being screened at 21 airports, 12 major seaports and 65 minor seaports and land crossings particularly bordering Nepal. So far

5, 57,431 passengers have been screened at the airports, and 12,431 at the seaports. Passengers are further monitored under community surveillance through IDSP network on a daily basis. Also, 25,738 passengers are under community surveillance of the IDSP network. 15 labs are functional

and 19 more will be made operational soon, he mentioned. Reagents to test up to 25000 samples have been made available. Total of 3245 samples were sent out for testing, of which 3217 were found negative, 5 samples positive and 23 are under testing. Out of five positive cases, three earlier patients (in Kerala) are already discharged from the hospital and two new positive cases are found, one in New Delhi and one from Telangana with the travel history from Italy and Dubai, respectively.

Dr. Harsh Vardhan advised that Indian citizens need to avoid non-essential travel to Singapore, Republic of Korea, Iran and Italy. People coming from Republic of Korea, Iran and Italy or having such travel history since 10th February 2020 may be quarantined for 14 days on arrival to India. "We are monitoring the evolving global scenario. Restrictions may be further extended to other countries, as per the situation", he added.

He further informed that 112 people inclusive of nationals from Myanmar (2), Bangladesh (22), Maldives (2), Chinese (6), South African (1), USA (1) and Madagascar (1) from Wuhan were evacuated and are kept at ITBP camp at Chhawla. The first test of all of them is found to be negative. He added that 124 people are brought back from Japan through Air India flight on 27th February morning including 5 foreign nationals. They have also tested negative and are kept in the Army Facility at Manesar.

Dr. Harsh Vardhan also informed that all Joint Secretaries in Ministry of Health are assigned to assess the preparedness of States for COVID-19. In addition, more than 3695 Gram Sabha meetings have been conducted in 21 Bordering Districts in 5 States (Uttarakhand, Bihar, UP, West Bengal and Sikkim). As of now 10, 24,922 persons have been screened at the Nepal border. He further stated that the Personal Protection Equipment (PPE), N95 masks etc., are available in adequate quantity.

Dr. Harsh Vardhan advised that people need to take precautions and in case of any symptoms report to nearest public health facility or call at the Health Ministry 24x7 Control Room 011-23978046 or email at ncov2019@gmail.com.

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