

Stock of HCQ available for domestic use is way more than the requirement for one month, additional supply of 2 - 3 crore tablets also tied up: Health Ministry

39 PPE manufacturers available in the country, 20 lakh additional N-95 Masks provided to the states, additional quantity being procured: Ministry of Health & Family Welfare

Domestic requirement will be the priority of the Government, while taking decisions on export of HCQ: Ministry of External Affairs

Nation has not yet entered the stage of "community transmission" of COVID-19: Ministry of Health & Family Welfare

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The number of COVID-19 positive cases in the nation stands at 6,412 as on date. A total of 503 people have recovered and have been discharged. A total of 199 people in the country have died because of the COVID-2019 infection. In the last 24 hours, 678 new cases and 33 deaths have been reported. 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.

Briefing about the **availability of PPE**, the Joint Secretary informed that 39 PPE manufacturers are available in the country today. PPE has been procured and given to states, due to which they have double the PPE stock available with them today, relative to what they had two months back. About N-95 masks, he informed that 9 lakh N95 Masks were available with the states two months back; 20 lakh additional masks have been provided to the states and additional quantity is being procured. Due to this, there will not be any shortage of N95 Masks at the field level, he assured. Order has been placed for around 49,000 ventilators, the supply will start coming soon, he added.

A representative of the Ministry of External Affairs informed:

- **20,473 foreign nationals have been successfully evacuated from India** till yesterday. It is an ongoing effort, where all Government departments and State Governments are working in coordination.
- Given the ongoing lockdown, no definite answer can be provided with regard to return of Indians abroad. It requires an assessment of the situation and decision can be taken only at a later stage. However, Indian Ambassadors and High Commissions are in constant touch with Indians abroad; they are being guided and are being given all support. MEA Helplines also are active, calls are being answered and guidance is being given.

As regards **export of hydroxychloroquin (HCQ)**, he assured the nation that domestic requirement will be the priority of the Government, while taking decisions on export of HCQ. He said that the Group of Ministers decided to release some surplus stock for export, after considering the availability of domestic stock and the country's requirement. He explained that certain medicines were in restricted list and others in prohibited list. Based on review by Committee of Secretaries and later by Group of Ministers, restrictions were lifted on many medicines, given domestic priorities. He informed that HCQ is in high demand globally and that many countries have requested for it. While exports to the first list of countries have been approved, the Government is working on second and third lists now.

About **stock of HCQ in the country**, Shri Aggarwal updated that based on the country's projected requirement, we need 1 crore tablets of hydroxychloroquin for the coming one week, while the country has 3.28 crore tablets today. The current supply is hence three times more than the domestic requirement for the coming week and is way more than the demand for the coming month as well. Additional supply of 2 - 3 crore tablets has also been tied up.

The Joint Secretary also informed that:

- [Centre has approved Rs 15,000 crore 'India COVID-19 Emergency Response and Health System Preparedness Package' to fight COVID-19](#). Under this response package, states will be supported in up-gradation of medical infrastructure, setting up of dedicated COVID Hospitals, upgradation of testing facilities, supply of logistics such as PPE and training of health workers.
- Health Minister held a video-conference meeting with Health ministers and officers of all states. Issues including setting up of Dedicated COVID Hospitals, preparedness, contact tracing and surveillance were discussed. States have ensured that they are fully ready to deal with the situation.
- The Health Ministry has issued [detailed guidelines on blood transfusion services during COVID-19, stating how blood banks should function as a life-saving device during COVID-19](#), and on what precautions they should take.
- In the context of Covid-19 situation, considering the immediate requirement of ventilators and other items, [the Central Government has granted exemption from Basic Customs Duty and Health cess, on the import of the following goods](#), with immediate effect: Ventilators, Face masks, surgical Masks, Personal protection equipment (PPE) Covid-19 testing kits inputs for manufacture of the above items
- The Health Ministry has issued [a video tool to spread awareness on use of different types of PPE in different areas](#) such as high-risk, moderate risk and low-risk areas.
- [A nation-wide online training seminar on pregnancy and labour management](#) has been conducted by AIIMS, for the guidance of pregnant ladies, in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic. Many people participated in this seminar.
- From one lab in January 2020, 146 testing labs are functional in the public sector today. 67 private labs are there too, for which there are more than 16,000 collection centres. We have performed 16,002 tests yesterday.

Replying to a media query, the Joint Secretary reassured that the nation has not yet entered the stage of "community transmission" of COVID-19. He reiterated that what is important is how well we are able to collectively adopt required precautionary and containment steps.

The Joint Secretary reiterated that India's frontline health workers are our biggest strength in the fight against COVID19 and that even one incident against them can hurt their morale and strength. Stating this, he appealed that none should commit any act by which morale of the frontline workers may come down. Speaking on the need to combat stigma associated with COVID-19, Shri Aggarwal also requested all to come forward and inform authorities if anyone observes symptoms, so that testing and treatment can be done.

Informing that enforcement of lockdown is happening in the entire country, the representative of the Home Affairs Ministry stated:

- [Home Minister has reviewed protection of Indo-Pak and Indo-Bangladesh borders via a video-conference meeting with officers of the Border Security Force](#). The HM has instructed to strengthen vigilance at borders, especially at areas without border-fencing and has asked not to allow any cross-border movement. The Minister also asked BSF to educate our farming brethren in border areas about COVID-19 and to help them stay safe. He directed BSF to also coordinate with district administration and prevent any inadvertent movement across the border.
- Urban local bodies have strengthened their efforts in containing the spread of COVID-19 in hot spots.
- [MHA has again written to states today to enforce lockdown effectively, especially considering upcoming festivals](#).
- As per update from states on April 9, 2020, 37,978 relief camps and shelters have been set up, 14.3 lakh stranded migrant workers and other needy people are provided relief. Out of this, more than 34,000 relief camps have been set up by State Governments, while 3,900 camps are by NGOs. In addition, a total of 26,225 food camps have been set up in the country, in which more than 1 crore people are being provided food. Around 16.5 lakh workers are being provided food and relief by their employers and industries.

The ICMR representative informed that [the COVID-19 testing strategy has been expanded](#) to include all symptomatic cases in hot spot areas as well. There are 213 laboratories, including 146 labs in public sector and 67 labs in private sector. As per the update at 9 PM on April 9, 2020, 1,44,910 samples from 1,30,792 suspected patients were tested. 5,705 of these tests turned out to be positive. 16,002 samples were tested yesterday, which marks a substantial increase in the number of tests done relative to the last few days.

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

- [Employees Provident Fund Organisation \(EPFO\), a statutory body under Union Ministry of Labour & Employment has processed about 1.37 lakh claims across the country disbursing an amount of Rs. 279.65 crore under a new provision especially formulated by amending the EPF Scheme, to help subscribers fight Covid-19](#).
- During the last two days, there have been some reports in media about various protocols to be followed by train passengers and resumption of train services after the lockdown. In [a media advisory on this matter](#), it has been stated that that final decision regarding above matters is yet to be taken and premature reporting on such matters is leading to unnecessary and avoidable speculation in the minds of public in such extraordinary times.

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

DJM/SC

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