

We need to be more disciplined in our COVID appropriate behaviour

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The 16th meeting of the high-level Group of Ministers (GoM) on COVID-19 was chaired by Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister of Health & Family Welfare via a video-conference, here today. He was joined by Dr S. Jaishankar, Minister of External Affairs, Sh. Hardeep S. Puri Minister of Civil aviation, Sh. Nityananda Rai, Minister of State for Home Affairs, Sh. Mansukh Lal Mandaviya, Minister of State for Shipping, & Chemical and Fertilizers, and Sh. Ashwini Kumar Choubey, Minister of State, Health & Family Welfare along with Sh. Bipin Rawat, Chief of Defence Staff. The Hon. Members of the GoM and officers participated following norms of physical distancing.

The GOM was briefed about the latest status, response and management of COVID-19 in the country. A brief snapshot was presented to the GOM highlighting the comparative position of India vis-a-vis other countries in similar stage of easing lockdown, underscoring the benefits that have accrued from the lockdown and how this can be leveraged in management of disease. The GOM was briefed on the progress made in the spheres of the tasks assigned to the 11 Empowered Groups. The GoM was briefed about how the SoPs issued by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare for public and semi-public environments would allow resumption of economic activity without compromising the preventive measures to contain COVID-19.

Dr Harsh Vardhan, Chairman of the GoM, stated that as we enter into the Unlock1.0 phase where restrictions have been eased and curbs have been lifted, **we need to be more disciplined in our COVID appropriate behaviour to ensure that all follow norms of physical distancing, make use of masks and face covers in all public places**, adhere to norms of hand hygiene and follow protocols of respiratory etiquette. There is no space for complacency, he strongly reiterated. As all Government offices are opening now, he appealed to the Heads of Departments: "Let us also not forget the 'social vaccine' against COVID-19 through strict adherence of norms of physical distancing, hand hygiene and mask/face covers". He also reminded everybody to download Aarogya Setu app which will help in self risk assessment and in protection against COVID-19. More than 12.55 crore people in the country have

downloaded the app, as on date.

GoM was also apprised about the growing medical infrastructure in the country and was informed that as of 9th June 2020, the COVID related health infrastructure has been strengthened with the availability of 958 dedicated COVID Hospitals with 1,67,883 isolation beds, 21,614 ICU beds and 73,469 oxygen supported beds. 2,313 dedicated COVID Health Centres with 1,33,037 Isolation beds; 10,748 ICU beds and 46,635 oxygen supported beds have also been operationalised. Moreover, 7,525 COVID Care Centres with 7,10,642 beds are now available to combat COVID-19 in the country. The ventilators available for COVID beds are 21,494.

The Centre has also provided 128.48 lakh N95 masks and 104.74 lakh Personal Protective Equipments (PPEs) to the States/ UTs / Central Institutions. The Centre has further placed an order of 60,848 ventilators. ICMR's testing capacity has increased through 553 government and 231 private laboratories (total of 784 labs). More than 49 lakh cumulative tests have been conducted in the country, as on date. Also, 1,41,682 samples have been tested in the last 24 hrs.

Sh. Parameswaran Iyer, Chairman of Empowered Group-5, presented the critical strategies adopted by the EG to ease the burden of lockdown while enabling supply of critical items for the country to fight the pandemic.

Dr. Raman Gangakhedkar from ICMR presented details on the status of testing labs, augmented capacities for testing across the country, and also enlightened the GoM on various issues related to HCQ, Remdesivir, and sero-surveillance studies.

So far, a total of 1,29,214 people has been cured. 4,785 patients were cured in the last 24 hours. This takes the total recovery rate to 48.47%. The total number of active cases is now 1,29,917 .

Ms Preeti Sudan, Union Health Secretary, Sh. Rajesh Bhushan, OSD to MoHFW, Ms Arti Ahuja, Additional Secretary (Health) and Dr. Raman Gangakhedkar from ICMR attended the GOM through Video conferencing.

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