

We have to be prepared for the third wave

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Chandigarh,

Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh on Tuesday virtually inaugurated a 100-bed makeshift Covid hospital at Talwandi Sabo in district Bathinda, scaling up the state's preparedness for a third wave of the pandemic.

Thanking the HPCL-Mittal Energy Ltd (HMEL) team for supporting the state government in the development of the hospital to tackle future waves of the pandemic, the Chief Minister described it as yet another example of Punjabis rising to every

challenge, including during war time. No war since Independence had led to such loss of lives as the pandemic, he pointed out, adding that "we have fought together but the war is still on and we have to be prepared for the third wave."

The Chief Minister recalled that at the time of his first election from Talwandi Sabo, the region was deserted, with minimal facilities, and pointed to the progress made since then. The fact that the facility had come up in such a short time was a remarkable achievement, he said, thanking the technical team led by Dr N. Gopalakrishnan, Director of CBRI (Central Building Research Institute) for the feat, before handing over the facility to the Health Ministry to run and manage.

The 100-bed makeshift hospital for Covid patients has been built at a cost of Rs 651.21 lakhs, with the help of HMEL Refinery, Bathinda, under the guidelines of CBRI, Roorkee. The Government of Punjab has provided Rs. 4,51,21,000/- for setting up of this hospital out of SDRF funds, and HMEL Refinery Phullo Khari has contributed Rs. 2.0 crore out of CSR funds.

HMEL Refinery has also provided total 2.6 acre land for setting up the hospital. The land is sufficient for extension upto 200 beds in future as per requirement.

Health Minister Balbir Singh appreciated the establishment of such a modern facility in record time. Finance Minister Manpreet Badal said the national emergency had turned out to be a classic case of moving mountains once we make up our minds, and lauded the role of young officers in tackling the situation.

Chief Secretary Vini Mahajan said a similar facility would be available in Mohali soon.

HMEL's CEO, Prabh Das, thanked all the agencies involved in the development of the makeshift premises, which is well connected with nearby towns like Rama, Talwandi Sabo and Bathinda city, and will be helpful for the rural population of Bathinda and Talwandi Sabo Blocks.

Work on the hospital had started at the end of May after getting necessary approvals from competent authorities. It has been completed within a month and a half with the collaboration of multiple departments and agencies. While CBRI Roorkee undertook the task of structural design and furniture

procurement, the procurement of medical equipment has been handled by Vice Chancellor, Baba Farid University of Medical Sciences, Faridkot. HMEL Refinery had completed the work of external service i.e. water pipeline, drinking water pipeline, septic tanks, soakage pits, electrical supply cable, other electrical equipment & the oxygen pipeline upto hospital premises, amounting to Rs. 200.0 lakh.

While 25 beds in the air-conditioned hospital are of L-3 level, 75 are L-2 facilities. Well-equipped to treat all type of Covid-19 patients, the hospital has X-ray machines, ECG and Pathlab facility, etc. 24X7 oxygen, electricity, water, sewage facility is being provided by HMEL.

It can also be used for vaccination camps and other OPD Services for the local population. Once covid cases rises, more manpower will be deputed from SDRF funds as per requirement.

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