

1. Secretary to the Government of India, All Ministries/Departments.
2. The Chairman, UPSC, Shahjahan Road, New Delhi.
3. Secretary to the President of India (Rashtrapati Ke Sachiv), Rashtrapati Bhawan, New Delhi.
4. Secretary to the Vice-President of India (Up-Rashtrapati ke Sachiv), Rashtrapati Bhawan, New Delhi.
5. PS to Prime Minister of India, South Block, New Delhi
6. Secretary, Inter-State Council Secretariat, MHA, Vigyan Bhawan Annexe, New Delhi.

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**MINISTRY OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH RESEARCH**

**Monthly Summary for the Cabinet for August, 2020**

Monthly report in the format on important issues/ development for the month of August 2020 is submitted herewith.

**1. Important policy decisions taken and major achievements during the month:**

**a) Global coronavirus COVID-19 management measures in India:** Following new measures and initiatives were taken besides the timely COVID-19 testing and reporting.

- 1) **Expansion of COVID 19 testing facilities:** A total of 214 new testing labs (80 Govt and 134 Private) were approved and functionalized for covid-19 testing in the month. Accordingly, a total of 2,05,36,189 samples have been tested in the month and the testing capacity was increased up to 10, 23, 836 /day. Accordingly, presently ICMR has approved a total of 1524 (986 Governments and 538 Private) Labs for COVID-19 testing.

**State-wise details:** Andhra Pradesh (85); Arunachal Pradesh (13); Assam (25); Bihar (51); Chandigarh (4); Chhattisgarh (21); Delhi (66); Gujarat (60); Goa (7); Haryana (33); Himachal Pradesh (23); Jammu & Kashmir (26); Jharkhand (37); Karnataka (108); Kerala (73); Maharashtra (150); Madhya Pradesh (90); Manipur (10); Meghalaya (12); Mizoram (2); Nagaland (14); Odisha (48); Puducherry (9); Punjab (43); Rajasthan (41); Tamil Nadu (141); Telangana (51); Tripura (4); Uttar Pradesh (170); Uttarakhand (22); West Bengal (73); Andaman & Nicobar Islands (4); Dadra & Nagar Haveli (1); Sikkim (2); Leh-Ladhak (3); Lakshdweep (2) The details of these labs is as follows:

- **Real-Time RT PCR for COVID-19 :** 787 (Govt: 459 + Private: 328)
- **TrueNat Test for COVID-19 :** 619 (Govt: 493 + Private: 126)
- **CBNAAT Test for COVID-19 :** 118 (Govt: 34 + Private: 84)

- 2) **Development of Convalescents Plasma Bank at various Medical colleges and Hospitals in Orissa:** Veer Surendra Sai Institute of Medical Science and Research, Burla; Saheed LaxmanNayak Medical College and Hospital, Koraput; Sriram Chandra Bhanj Medical College & Hospital, Cuttack; Maharaja Krushna Chandra Gajapati Medical College and Hospital, Brahmapur; Capital Hospital, Bhubaneswar
- 3) **Developed 'DISHA',** a low cost, field-deployable, rapid diagnostic testing tool for SARS-CoV-2 from saliva samples by colorimetric rtLAMP assay.
- 4) **Developed assay for SARS-CoV-2 diagnosis,** titled SUSTJ-ICMR-NIV RT-LAMP Rapid Test, for SARS-CoV-2 diagnosis.

- 5) **Completed population-based serosurvey** for SARS-CoV-2 infection transmission in Chennai, Odisha- (Koraput, Rayagada, Ganjam districts), Jharkhand- (Simdega, Latehar, Pakur districts) and Chhattisgarh- (Bijapur, Sarguja, Kabirdham districts); Kamrup (Metro), Udalguri and Karbi Anglong districts of Assam; Arwal, Buxar, Muzaffarpur, Begusarai, Madhubani and Purnea districts of Bihar.
- 6) **Initiated household contacts of diagnosed COVID-19 patients** in Agra, Chennai, Cuttack, Mumbai, Rourkela.
- 7) **Initiated WHO-India (ICMR) Solidarity trial** at VHS Chennai, AIIMS Rishikesh, BJGMC & Sassoon Hospital, Pune and YCM Hospital Pimpri .
- 8) **Initiated study on effectiveness of BCG vaccine** on preventing n-Corona virus infection in elderly people at Bhopal
- 9) **Initiated biorepository of Covid positive blood samples** at New Delhi.
- 10) **Status of Indigenous developments of Covid-19 vaccines:**
  - i) **Covaxin development in partnership with Bharat Biotech International Limited (BBIL):** Completed Phase I clinical trial on an inactivated whole virus candidate vaccine (BBV152) in 375 volunteers at 12 centers across India, along with completion of parallel pre-clinical studies in hamsters and rhesus monkeys. Vaccine is found safe and immunogenic. Phase II trial will be initiated soon.
  - ii) **Development of ZyCov-D vaccine in partnership with Zydus Cadila Healthcare Limited:** Completed phase I clinical trial and vaccine was found safe and immunogenic. Parallel pre-clinical studies in rhesus monkeys are under progress.
  - iii) **Development of COVISHIELD, Oxford recombinant vaccine in partnership with Serum Institute of India:** ChAdOx1-s, a non replicating viral vector vaccine is undergoing Phase II clinical trial in Brazil. Phase II/III bridging studies in India have been funded and started by ICMR at 14 clinical trial sites. Results are awaited
  - iv) **Development of Novavax vaccine USA in partnership with Serum Institute of India (SII):** ICMR also partnered with SII for clinical development of a glycoprotein subunit adjuvanted vaccine developed by Novavax USA. The clinical trial will be initiated in second half of October after the vaccine is manufactured by SII.

11) **Following procurement were made regarding Covid-19 during the month.**

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Statement showing the procurement made regarding COVID-19 through HITES and ICMR HQRS.			
S. No.	1 Name of Item	2 Quantity of order	3 Date of Purchase Order
1	RT-PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction) Kits	9 Lakh Tests	4-Aug-20
2	RT-PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction) Kits	15 Lakh Tests	4-Aug-20
3	RT-PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction) Kits	6 Lakh Tests	4-Aug-20
4	93313-1L Trizma Hydrochloride Hydrochloride Buffer Solution, 03690-100ML Ethylenediaminetetraacetic Minetetraacetic Acid Solution and 95284-1L Water	-	14-Aug-20
5	Cryovials, Externally Threaded Volume and Sterile Pure Viscose Swab	-	14-Aug-20

- 12) **Performed validation of COVID-19 test kits:** (RTPCR kits: 6; rapid antibody test kits: 18; ELISA kits : 13; RNA extraction kits: 11, VTM extraction kits: 2)
- 13) **Conducted Quality Assessment (QA)** of RTPCR testing for COVID-19 for 12 laboratories in Karnataka.
- 14) **COVID 19 kit depot management at and handling logistics** for Kit receiving and dispatch as per request and approval across the country.
- 15) Organized International Symposium on Science and ethics of vaccine development against COVID.
- 16) **Imparted training on laboratory diagnosis** of COVID-19 to the scientific staff of Autonomous State Medical College Society, Firozabad and F H Medical College & Hospital, Agra
- 17) **Imparted training on 'Donning and Doffing** of PPE and Use of Powered Air Purifier Respirator to professionals across various cities.
- 18) **Imparted Training on contact tracing for COVID-19** to medical officers, 600 virutal volunteers and 200 field level workers in Greater Chennai Corporation.
- 19) **Conducted Training program on COVID-19 diagnosis and testing** to personnel's from institutions and hospitals of Orissa, Manipur and Nagaland.
- 20) **Issued Invitation** for submitting Letter of Intent for Participation in **National Clinical Registry of COVID-19.**
- 21) **Press release on 'Leading global scientists and vaccine experts call for more innovation in efforts to control COVID-19'.**

22) **Regularly interacted with media** through telephonic medium, over 100 call per day.

23) **Live tweeting done on ICMR Twitter handle**, during International Symposium on Novel ideas in Science and Ethics of Vaccines against COVID-19 pandemic

- b) **Released observations of 'National Cancer Registry Programme'**, that estimates 12 percent increase in cancer cases in the country by 2025.
- c) **Gene pool analysis of highly pathogenic H5N1 and low pathogenic H9N2 avian influenza viruses isolated from India:** Serum specimens of chickens (100 nos.) referred by the Disease Investigation Section (DIS), Department of Animal Husbandry, Government of Maharashtra. Hemagglutination inhibition assay was performed for the detection of antibodies against avian influenza H5N1 and H9N2 viruses. All the specimens were found negative. Tracheal swabs of chickens referred by the DIS for virus isolation in embryonated chicken eggs are presently being processed.
- d) **Zika epidemiology and surveillance:** A total of 75 serum samples received under the Cohorts for Zika Epidemiology in India (COZEI) study for serological testing for Zika and other flaviviruses tested negative. Reports issued to SMS Medical college, Jaipur.
- e) **Initiated/completed 5 projects viz.** An explorative study to assess the arsenic, iron and fluoride contents of drinking water in entire state of Tripura; Association of chronic environmental organophosphorus pesticide exposure with neurodegenerative diseases: Case control study in rural West Bengal; MicroRNAs and Exosomes: The key players in rotavirus stability, viral RNA transmission and infection; Implementation of hypertension and diabetes control initiative in Chennai; Assessment of comparative performance (efficacy and safety) of C-Tb with quanti FERON-TB Gold Plus and 2 T.U. Tuberculin PPD RT23 SSI detection of TB infection in general and key population.
- f) **Published 42 lead papers** including exploring repurposing potential of existing drugs in the management of COVID-19 epidemic; Structural basis for designing multiepitope vaccines against COVID-19 Infection: In silico vaccine design and validation; A preliminary study on contact tracing & transmission chain in a cluster of 17 cases of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 infection in Basti, Uttar Pradesh, India; Transcriptome and viral growth analysis of SARS-CoV-2 infected Vero CCL-81 cells;
- g) **Undertaken more than 10 (Videoconferencing/ Webinar/ Virtual) meetings** on various issues including meetings of Health Systems Steering Group to identify research priorities for inclusion in the UN Research Roadmap for the COVID-19 recovery; meeting with the Zydus Cadila, to discuss the progress with the work on COVID-19 vaccine; meeting with Panacea Biotech, to discuss the progress of the vaccine studies; meeting with the team from Biological E to discuss the evaluation of therapeutic efficacy of purified F(ab')<sub>2</sub> fragments of SARS-

CoV-2 immunoglobulins in a Syrian hamster model; meeting with Serum Institute of India to discuss the work planned on the COVID-19 vaccine; meeting of investigators taking part in National registry on COVID-19 among pregnant women and neonates; meeting on National Clinical Registry of COVID 19; telecom meeting with US official from NIAID regarding ICMR- NIH- BMGF Clinical research fellowships under newly signed DoI between the parties.

- h) **Started WHO FCTC knowledge hub and Online Tobacco Cessation Course** by smokeless tobacco at NICPR, Noida.
- i) **Organized an online International workshop 'EDUCATION FOR EFFECTIVE NUTRITION IN ACTION (ENACT)'** as part of "Strengthening capacities for nutrition – sensitive agriculture and food systems".
- j) **Observed 'the World Breastfeeding Week'** with the objective of raising awareness amongst Indian population, in an attempt to meet the target of increase in exclusive breast feeding by at least 50%, as per Page 26 of the National *Nutrition Strategy, 2017 which is now POSHAN Abhiyan*. Conducted a two-hour Webinar on "Exclusive breastfeeding and Complementary Feeding Practices; Online slogan competition conducted to the public for promotion of breastfeeding for healthy nation.
- k) **Started the proceedings of a webinar series on "Mind Body Integration for Wellness" initiated by MYAS (Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports).**

## **2. Celebrated 74th Independence Day of India.**