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Department of Health Research
Ministry of Health & Family Welfare
(Department of Health Research)
R. & Section

जारी किया
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Subject: - Monthly Summary to the Cabinet for the month of June, 2020-Reg.

The undersigned is directed to circulate herewith a copy of the unclassified portion of the **Monthly Summary for the Cabinet** pertaining to the Department of Health Research (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare) for the month of June, 2020.


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To

1. All members of Council of Ministers
2. Deputy Chairman, NITI Aayog, Yojana Bhawan, New Delhi.
3. The Principal Information Officer, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, New Delhi.

Copy to:

The Director, Cabinet Secretariat, Rashtrapati Bhawan, New Delhi-110001

Copy also forwarded for information to:

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.

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

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 395 new testing labs (304 Govt and 91 Private) were made functional in the month. Accordingly, a total of 44,34,663 samples have been tested in the month and the testing capacity was increased to 2,07,871/day.
- 2) **i) Approved a total of 1007 (734 Governments and 273 Private) Labs for COVID-19 testing:**
 - **Real-Time RT PCR for COVID-19:** 559 (Govt: 359 + Private: 200)
 - **TrueNat Test for COVID-19:** 364 (Govt: 343 + Private: 21)
 - **CBNAAT Test for COVID-19:** 84 (Govt: 32 + Private: 52)

ii) Procurement of testing material:

S.No.	Name of Item	Quantity of order
1.	RNA Extraction Kit	33,00,000 Tests
2.	Combo RT-PCR Kits	29,00,000 Tests
3.	Viral Transport Media Kit	40,00,000 Test
4.	COBAS 8800 SARS-CoV-2 Assay Reagents and kits	2,00,000 Tests
5.	Standard Q Covid-19 Ag Test	1,00,000 Test
6.	Automatic RNA Extraction Machine	125 nos.
7.	Anti SARS Cov2 IgG Anti-body Detection ELISA Kit	500 Tests (92 Kits/test)

iii) Distribution of testing material:

The following kits were distributed by 16 regional depots to all Government RT-PCR Labs, CSIR/DBT/DST/DRDO labs across the country:

- RT-PCR Kits: 17,66,592
 - RNA Extraction Kits: 9,75,610
 - VTM: 10,36,600
- 3) **Issued guidelines** for validation and batch testing of covid-19 diagnostic kits.
 - 4) **Issued revised advisory** on the use of Hydroxychloroquine (HCQ) as prophylaxis for SARS-CoV-2 infection.

- 5) **Evaluated immunogenicity and protective efficacy** of inactivated SARS-CoV-2 candidate vaccine partnered with Bharat Biotech International Limited (BBIL) in animal models.
- 6) **Initiated 'A phase II, open label, randomized controlled trial** to assess the safety and efficacy of convalescent plasma to limit COVID-19 associated complications in moderate disease at KEM, Mumbai.
- 7) **Initiated a multi-centric study entitled** "To Evaluate the Effectiveness of BCG vaccine in Reducing Mortality in Elderly individuals in COVID-19 Hotspots in India"
- 8) **Initiated COVID 19 National sero-surveillance** in identified districts of West Bengal and in containment zones of Kolkata; hotspot areas in Mumbai; three districts each of Telangana State (Nalgonda, Kamareddy and Jangaon); Odisha (Ganjam, Raygada, Koraput), Chhattisgarh (Bijapur, Kabeerdham, Surguja), Jharkhand (Pakur, Latehar, Simdega), 6 districts of Maharashtra (Jalgaon, Ahmednagar, Beed, Nanded, Parbhani, and Sangli), 5 containment zones in Indore district of MP and Bhopal city and 5 containment zones in Hyderabad city.
- 9) **Initiated screening survey** of COVID 19 infection in high risk Bhopal gas tragedy survivors.
- 10) **Initiated COVID-19 TELE SURVEY:** Social drivers of acceptance and rejection of protective measures against covid-19 infection in the community.
- 11) **Initiated COVID-19 STIGMA STUDY:** Factors Related To Covid-19 Stigma: A Mixed-Methods Study'.
- 12) **Initiated 14 new clinical trial sites** for 'SOLIDARITY TRIAL' in hospitalised COVID patients.
- 13) **Undertaking 'Quality Control', 'Depot Holder' and distribution** of RNA extraction kits & other logistics to various testing laboratories across India.
- 14) **Validated (performance evaluation) a total of 44 COVID-19 commercial kits** (RT-PCR based 11 and Rapid antibody/ELISA based 33) during the reporting period.
- 15) **MoUs Signed:** six (6) with commercial companies (Voxture Bio, Trivitron, Avecon, Meril diagnostics, J. Mitra and Karwa enterprises) for the transfer of anti-SARS-CoV-2 IgG ELISA (COVID KAVACH) technology developed by ICMR; one (1) with E Biologicals, Hyderabad for the evaluation of the antiviral activity of equine antisera against SARS-CoV-2 and one (1) with Central Research Institute (CRI), Kasauli for the manufacturing of COVID-19 antisera.
- 16) **Established laboratory set up** for the antiviral testing/screening of compounds against SARS-CoV-2 at Poliovirus Group BSL-3 facility of NIV, Pune.
- 17) **Screened around 25 synthetic compounds** received from CSIR-National Chemical Laboratory, Pune (2 compounds), DRM Innovation, Mysuru (5 compounds), Cipla Limited (13 compounds) NIMR, Delhi (2 compounds), DRDO, Delhi (1), etc for their potential antiviral activity against SARS-CoV-2 infection. Some compounds showed higher selectivity index indicating that these compounds may be taken up for further studies.

- 18) **Conducted testing and validation experiments** for three commercial technologies/equipments claimed to be effective in surface decontamination of SARS-CoV-2.
- 19) **Prepared and supplied in house VTMs (Viral Transport Medium)** to military hospitals, IDSP Dibrugarh and other hospitals in Dibrugarh and upper Assam.
- 20) **Designed and in house developed Covid19 primers** with 100% specificity and 100% sensitivity compared to 100% specificity and 99% sensitivity with commercially available TaqPath Kit.
- 21) **Isolated SARS-COV2 (COVID19) virus** from samples obtained in Northeast India using VERO cell line.
- 22) **Developed an in-house TSP-PCR** for L and S strain typing of SARS COV2 which can distinguish between L and S type within 3 hours.
- 23) **Established COVID-19 testing facilities** at Raygada and Kalahandi of Odisha.
- 24) **Undertaken state level Covid-19 mentoring program** for cluster containment activities in Odisha.
- 25) **Performed QA/QC for COVID 19 samples** from 8 laboratory centres of Northeast India.

Training provided at national level-

- i) **Provided training (via Zoom) to representatives** of Voxture Bio, Trivitron, Avecon, Meril diagnostics, J Mitra, and Karwa enterprises on anti-SARS CoV-2 IgG ELISA kit procedure developed by ICMR.
- ii) **Imparted training** on Donning and Doffing of PPE, sample collection for COVID19 diagnosis, filling of CRF, sample transportation to lab technicians and senior medical officers of Air Force Station, Dibrugarh, Air Force Station, Chabua and Diphu Medical College and Hospital, Assam.
- iii) **Conducted training program on Viral Diagnostics' for representatives** from the molecular diagnostic laboratory Sindhudurg; District General Hospital, Sindhudurg; District Hospital, Hingoli; and District Public Health Lab, Kolhapur.
- iv) **Developed and distributed awareness posters and videos** in state of Gujarat.
- v) **Developed a video clip** for COVID and Non COVID activities by ICMR-NARI, Pune.
- vi) **Conducted online Quiz Competition** on COVID-19 by ICMR-NIOH Ahmedabad.
- vii) **Interviews conferred by DG, ICMR on COVID-19** are published in Science Reporter (July Edition), VigyanPragati (July Edition) and Outlook magazine etc.
- viii) **Made Press Releases on:** ICMR advises States to conduct sero-survey to measure Coronavirus exposure in the population using IgG ELISA test on 30th May, 2020.

ix. **Made regular telephonic interactions with media** (approx. 100 queries per day).

- B) Surveillance study for Japanese encephalitis:** A total of 5 sera and 5 CSF samples of 5 AES patients were received for testing during the month. All samples tested negative for anti-JE IgM antibodies. Samples of three patients were also screened for Chandipura virus infection by IgM ELISA and also tested negative. Also undertaken validation of two new batches of JE IgM ELISA kits and the reports communicated to the concerned authority.
- C) QC testing of the VRDLs:** A total of 764 samples were received from various VRDLs at the Resource Centre for Virus Research & Diagnostic Laboratories (RCVRDL) for QC testing. QC testing reports were issued to 11 VRDLs during the period.
- D) Initiated/completed 17 projects including.** Assessment of lifestyle changes on the impact of the lockdown due to COVID-19 pandemic among working personnel and their families; A phase II, open label, randomized controlled trial to assess the safety and efficacy of convalescent plasma to limit COVID-19 associated complications in moderate disease; Factors related to COVID-19 stigma: A mixed-methods study; Mental health and social stigma among healthcare personnel involved in the management of COVID-19 patients in India; Impact of COVID-19 on Maternal and Child health services through the public health system in India; Clinico-epidemiological dimensions of COVID-19 during infection & Post-discharge.
- E) Published 50 lead papers including.** National sero-surveillance to monitor the trend of SARS-CoV-2 infection transmission in India: Protocol for community-based surveillance; Healthcare workers & SARS-CoV-2 infection in India: A case-control investigation in the time of COVID-19; Coronavirus: Bibliometric analysis of scientific publications from 1968 to 2020; Development of indigenous IgG ELISA for the detection of anti-SARS-CoV-2 IgG; Evaluation of the susceptibility of mice & hamsters to SARS-CoV-2 infection; A phase-II, open label, randomized controlled trial to assess the safety and efficacy of convalescent plasma to limit COVID-19 associated complications in moderate disease respiratory virus detection among the overseas returnees during the early phase of the COVID-19 pandemic in India; Vaccines and therapies in development for SARS-CoV-2 infections; Distribution and growth rate of COVID-19 outbreak in Tamil Nadu.
- F) Several (Videoconferencing/ Webinar/ Virtual) International meetings** were held on 'COVID-19 and Beyond'; Priorities and Prospects for India-Africa Cooperation with Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA); meeting on India-Sweden Circular Economy to discuss & identify new areas of cooperation; meeting on Implementation of Biological Weapons Convention for ensuring biosafety and biosecurity post COVID-19; 136th virtual meeting of Health Ministry's Screening Committee (HMSC), wherein 59 new projects were considered for international collaboration/assistance; teleconference meeting with National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, NIH, USA on ICMR-BMGF-NIH Fellowship Programme.
- G) Observed 'World Environment Day 2020'** and 'Vanamahostav' from 5th-12th June 2020 through a mass plantation programme 'celebrating biodiversity' at Jabalpur and Belagavi.