

2nd Floor, Red Cross Building, New Delhi  
Dated 22nd April, 2021

**Subject: - Monthly Summary to the Cabinet for the month of March, 2021-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 March, 2021.

  
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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.
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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.

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

**Monthly Summary for the Cabinet for March, 2021**

Monthly report in the format on important issues/ development for the month of March, 2021 is submitted herewith.

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

- a) 04 VRDI.s at (i) JLNMC&S, Bhagalpur (ii) SLNMMC&H, Odisha (iii) VSSIMS&R, Burla, Sambalpur, Odisha and (iv) ICMR-Regional Medical Research Center, Gorakhpur, UP have been established during the month of March, 2021.
- b) Besides, SFC has appraised the Schemes of DHR for their continuation during 15<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission period from 2021-22 to 2025-26, in its meeting held on 18.03.2021 under the chairmanship of Secretary, DHR.
- c) **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 35 new testing labs (6 Govt and 29 Private) were approved and functionalized for covid-19 testing in the month. Accordingly, a total of 2,44,67,607 samples have been tested during the month and the testing capacity was increased up to more than 12,00, 000/day.
  - 2) **Approved a total of 2428** (1226 Governments and 1202 Private) Labs for COVID-19 testing as per the following **State-wise details:** Andhra Pradesh (124); Arunachal Pradesh (26); Assam (50); Bihar (63); Chandigarh (8); Chhattisgarh (48); Delhi (100); Gujarat (96); Goa (9); Haryana (56); Himachal Pradesh (32); Jammu & Kashmir (31); Jharkhand (43); Karnataka (190); Kerala (152); Maharashtra (220); Madhya Pradesh (112); Manipur (15); Meghalaya (19); Mizoram (11); Nagaland (14); Odisha (56); Puducherry (14); Punjab (57); Rajasthan (72); Tamil Nadu (260); Telangana (94); Tripura (5); Uttar Pradesh (236); Uttarakhand (62); West Bengal (126); Andaman & Nicobar Islands (5); Dadra & Nagar Haveli (1); Sikkim (3); Leh-Ladhak (4); Lakshdweep (2) ; Mobile testing lab (12)
- Real-Time RT PCR for COVID-19 : 1394 (Govt: 548 + Private: 846)  
- TrueNat Test for COVID-19 : 898 (Govt: 634+ Private: 264)  
- CBNAAT Test for COVID-19 : 132 (Govt: 42 + Private: 90)  
- Other Testing Platforms for COVID-19 : 04 (Govt: 02 + Private: 02)

- 3) **Signed MoU with Bharat Biotech International Private Limited, Hyderabad** for the transfer and production of the vaccine using isolate of the SARS-CoV-2 Brazil strain.
- 4) **Status of COVID-19 vaccines development in India:** Following four ICMR collaborative vaccines programs are under different stage of development.
  - a. **Development of Covaxin in partnership with Bharat Biotech International Limited (BBIL):** Performed the plaque reduction neutralization test (PRNT50) using sera collected from the 26 recipients of BBV152/COVAXINTM against hCoV-19/India/20203522 (UK-variant) and hCoV27 19/India/2020Q111 (heterologous strain). A comparable neutralization activity of sera of the vaccinated individuals against UK-variant and the heterologous strain showed similar efficiency. Enrollment and early analysis completed for Phase 3 clinical trials in 25,800 participants at 26 centers across India. Further analysis of data is under progress. Mild to moderate adverse events observed. Emergency use of vaccine has been authorized in India.
  - b. **Development of ZyCov-D vaccine in partnership with ZydusCadila Healthcare Limited:** Initiated A phase III, randomized, multi-centre, double blind, placebo controlled, study to evaluate efficacy, safety and immunogenicity of Novel Corona Virus -2019-nCov vaccine candidate by M/s Cadila Healthcare Limited. A total of 28216 participants to be enrolled at 46 centers. Trial is under progress.
  - c. **Development of COVISHIELD, Oxford recombinant vaccine in partnership with Serum Institute of India** India Phase2/3 trial completed, vaccine found safe and immunogenic. Vaccine has been authorized for emergency use in India.
  - d. **Development of Indigenous vaccine in partnership with Serum Institute of India (SII):** Completed pre-clinical studies of the indigenous SIIPR receptor-binding domain-virus-like particle (RBD-VLP) COVID-19 vaccine in the Syrian Hamster model and the results were shared with the respective stakeholders. Clinical phase of vaccine development is yet to be initiated.
  - e. **Two other vaccines trial; The Phase II clinical trial on** Dr Reddys Laboratories Limited and Sputnik LLC vaccine and Phase I/II Human Clinical Trial. on Biological E's novel Covid-19 vaccine are ONGOING.
- 5) **Accorded electron microscopy quality control services for COVAXIN** to Bharat Biotech International Limited.
- 6) **Performed validation of COVID-19 serological test kits:** During the period validated a total of 7 (seven) test kits for COVID-19, including 1 RT-PCR kit, 3 serological rapid antibody test kits and 3 ELISA kits for detection of anti-SARS-CoV-IgG antibodies. Their validation reports released through the ICMR online portal.
- 7) **Antiviral Screening of potential agents for COVID-19 (National priority):** Completed cell toxicity (MTT assay) and antiviral assays for compounds received from firms/ICMR. In vitro antiviral assays for one compound was also completed.
- 8) **Kits Distributed to Lab/States across the country during the month.**

| RT PCR | RNA Extraction | VTM    |
|--------|----------------|--------|
| 237444 | 155368         | 275300 |

- 9) Undertaken Inter Laboratory QA/QC Programme (ILQC) for 39 COVID-19 laboratory /centres of Northeast India.
- 10) Conducted Genome sequencing of SARS-CoV-2 circulating in Belagavi District, Karnataka.
- d) Inaugurated the Desikan Bhawan with COVID -19 diagnostic facility at ICMR- National JALMA Institute of Leprosy and Other Mycobacterial Disease, Agra by Hon'ble HFM.
- e) Inaugurated New Green Campus of ICMR- National Institute for Research in Environment Health (NIREH), Bhopal by Hon'ble HFM.
- f) Initiation of rabies diagnostic facilities at ICMR-NIV, Pune: Steps to establish diagnostic facilities for rabies has been started. Real-time and hemi-nested Polymerase Chain Reaction protocols for detection of rabies virus were developed during the month and are being optimized. Immunofluorescence assays for rabies are being optimized at present.
- g) Production and Supply of MAC ELISA kits for Japanese Encephalitis, Dengue and Chikungunya: Supplied a total of 468 MAC ELISA kits; 428 kits (273 for dengue, 115 for Chikungunya and 4 for JE) to SSH and Apex Labs under the National Vector Borne Diseases Control Program; 34 kits (18 for dengue, 06 for Chikungunya and 10 for JE) to DHR-VRDLs and 6 kits (2 for dengue, 2 for Chikungunya and 2 for JE) to RMRC, Dibrugarh.
- h) Launched online course: "Ethics Review of Health Research (NleCer courses)" in collaboration with the SWAYAM initiative of the Ministry of Education.
- i) Received accreditation for DNB Pathology Programme by National Institute of Pathology, New Delhi from National Board of Examinations in Medical Sciences.
- j) Signed 2 MOUs with Department of Women and Child Development, Odisha for undertaking Annual Nutrition Survey and with Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Research and Training Institute (SCSTRI), Govt. of Odisha for "Mapping of sickle cell anaemia in the Tribal Sub Plan among the Tribal Communities of the State.
- k) Created and posted campaign with a hashtag #ICMR4NewIndia on the occasion of inauguration of "Bharat ka Amrut Mahotsav" 75 years of India's Independence by all ICMR institutional handles reached more than 3 million people on Twitter and led to 1.8K interactions.
- l) Published DG-ICMR interview focusing on the priorities for Budget 2021 for ICMR and the future of Health Research in India in LiveMint.

- m) Celebrated the 'International Women Day' at Belagavi, Bengaluru, Bhubaneswar, Gorakhpur, Kolkata, Mumbai, Pune, and Port Blair through lectures on Position of Women in Contemporary India.
- n) Commemorated 'International World TB Day' by organizing various events like TB Awareness lectures, slogan writing competitions at Chennai, Tiruvallur, Vellore and Madurai.
- o) 24<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> March, 2021 - A two-day webinar on "Costing for Economic Evaluation" held on 24th - 25th March 2021 organized by Health Technology Assessment in India (HTAI) Sec., Department of Health Research (DHR, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India in collaboration with International Decision Support Initiative (iDSI).
- p) MRUs
- Under the Central Sector Scheme of Establishment of Multi Disciplinary Research Units (MRUs), five new MRUs were sanctioned during the month of March, 2021 in the following Medical Colleges:

| S. No. | Name of College  |
|--------|--|
| 1.     | Kalpana Chawla Govt. Medical College, Karnal (Haryana)       |
| 2.     | Gulbarga Institute of Medical Sciences, Gulbarga (Karnataka) |
| 3.     | Raichur Institute of Medical Sciences, Raichur (Karnataka)   |
| 4.     | Bundelkhand Medical College, Sagar (Madhya Pradesh)          |
| 5.     | Govt. Medical College, Thrissur (Kerala)                     |

- Under the Central Sector Scheme of Establishment of Model Rural Health Research Units (MRHRUs), three new MRHRUs have been sanctioned as under:
  - MRHRU at Namkum, Ranchi, Jharkhand under mentorship of ICMR-Regional Medical Research Centre, Bhubaneswar (in March, 2021).
  - MRHRU at Aizawl, Mizoram under mentorship of ICMR- Regional Medical Research Centre, Dibrugarh (in March, 2021).

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