



Ministry of Home Affairs



Cabinet Secretary reviews state of COVID-19 preparedness in Delhi



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Shri Rajiv Gauba, Cabinet Secretary, Government of India, today reviewed various aspects of COVID-19 preparedness in Delhi. Officials of the Government of NCT of Delhi (GNCTD) made a presentation in the meeting, covering issues of recent trends in active cases, deaths and positivity rate; availability and expansion plans of medical infrastructure; status of oxygen availability; home isolation procedures and helpline; ambulance services; and testing. The meeting was attended by the Home Secretary, Dr. V.K. Paul, Member, NITI Aayog, Chief Secretary, Delhi and other senior officials of GNCTD, senior officials of the Union Health Ministry, and Commissioners of Municipal Corporations of Delhi and Chairman, NDMC.

The Cabinet Secretary emphasized the need to ramp up the medical infrastructure in Delhi, at the earliest, to cater to the increasing demand for COVID beds, ICUs and ventilators. He also stressed the need to make available all relevant information on COVID beds and other facilities/ medicine availability to the public, through dedicated websites/ apps, on the basis of which people in need of such facilities/ medicines can approach the right place. A single helpline should be created at the front end, to provide relevant clinical information to the needy people, and should be popularized; the helpline can be serviced through a dedicated and well-staffed call centre. On issues related to availability of oxygen, the Cabinet Secretary expressed his anguish at recent instances, where people had suffered due to lack of adequate and timely availability of oxygen. He asked the Delhi Government to make all out efforts to lift their allocated oxygen, using all the means at their disposal; and also to ensure that the oxygen available to them is distributed rationally and in a transparent manner, so that there is no diversion or leakage. On the issue of adequate medical and healthcare human resources, he asked the Delhi Government to create flexible procedures to engage the services of retired medical professionals. Cabinet Secretary also asked for further augmentation of testing facilities and timely availability of test results.

Union Health Ministry official stressed the need to restart the earlier practice of transparent electronic displays, at each hospital site, of the number of beds available in that facility for COVID patients. The Additional Secretary, Health also emphasized the need for setting up oxygen audit Committees in various hospitals and medical facilities.

Dr. V.K. Paul emphasized the seriousness of the present situation and recommended that small nursing homes and hospitals be roped in for augmenting the medical infrastructure of the Capital. He asked for Covid Care Centres to be opened in hotels and similar places, as per the protocol. In order to supplement the 24x7 helpline of the Delhi Government, he recommended that the Delhi Medical Association be requested to offer around 50 doctors, who can voluntarily provide medical consultation to COVID-19 patients. The helpline/ medical professional can provide guidance on use of medicines, oxygen concentrators and other medical facilities.