HIGHLIGHTS

- India’s response to COVID-19 has been pre-emptive, pro-active and graded with high-level political commitment and a ‘whole government’ approach to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- WHO Country office for India is working closely with Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) to strengthen surveillance, build capacity of health system and optimize ‘window of opportunity’ created by mandatory physical distancing in India.
- All incoming international flights have been suspended and as of 25 March (through an order) extension of suspension has been made till 14 April 2020.
- Indian Railways issued an order that the period from 22 March to 14 April will be treated under “Force Majeure”. Passenger movement has been restricted including inter-state travel, all efforts to ensure availability of essential commodities through its uninterrupted freight services in place.

INDIA SITUATION

- As of 28 March, 05:45 PM according to the MoHFW, a total of 909 COVID-19 cases (862 Indians and 47 foreign nationals) have been reported in 27 states/union territories (80 who have been cured/discharged/migrated and 19 reported deaths). Available at https://www.mohfw.gov.in/
WHO GLOBAL UPDATE
• United Nations launched a US$2 billion COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan to support the world’s most vulnerable countries. More information can be found here.
• WHO Director-General mentioned many key issues and action steps to effectively combat COVID-19, as well as maintaining physical distance. More information can be found here.

WHO COUNTRY UPDATE
WHO Country Office for India (WCO) has been working closely with MoHFW, on preparedness and response measures for COVID-19, including surveillance and contact tracing, laboratory diagnosis, risk communications and community engagement, hospital preparedness, infection prevention and control (IPC) and implementation of containment strategies.

Co-ordination and Partnership
• WHO has brought key international partners together under a COVID-19 Joint Response Plan (JRP) of UN agencies and partners. The draft JRP was reviewed during the health partners meeting on 27 March.

Testing
• ICMR has issued guidelines for use of commercial kits for nasal/throat swab based diagnosis of COVID-19
• 104 out of 119 proposed labs in public sector are functional for SARS-CoV2 test. Additionally, a total of 15 private labs in 7 states are functional. Geolocation of labs available here.

Capacity Building in states/UTs and districts
• MoHFW with support of WHO conducted orientation on COVID-19 preparedness, response and containment for officials in all states and UTs. The same has been conducted in 723 out of 755 (96%) districts across India.
• A nationwide training of frontline health workers on COVID-19 was launched by MoHFW and partners through a virtually conducted training of trainers for 546 participants of 37 states and union territories on 27 March.

New guidelines Issued
• MoHFW: Role of Frontline Workers in Prevention and Management of COVID-19 in English and Hindi
• WHO: COVID-19: Operational guidance for maintaining essential health services during an outbreak and the Handbook for public health capacity-building at ground crossings and cross-border collaboration

ADVICE FOR THE PUBLIC
For any queries related to health, people may contact Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW) 24*7 helpline number (+91-11-23978046) or email at (ncov2019@gmail.com).

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