**Media Brief Office of Principal Scientific Adviser to Government of India**

**Update on Science, Technology and Innovation response to COVID-19**

A Science and Technology Empowered Committee for COVID-19 responsehas been constituted on 19thMarch 2020.The committee is chaired by Prof. Vinod Paul, Member, NITI Aayog and Prof. K VijayRaghavan, Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India, and is responsible for coordination amongst science agencies, scientists, industries and regulatory bodies, and to take speedy decisions on research and development to implementation related to the Sars-Cov-2 virus and the COVID-19 disease.

The other members of the committee are Secretary,Department of Science and Technology (DST), Secretary, Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Secretary, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), Secretary, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), Secretary, Department of Telecommunications (DoT), Secretary, Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO), Secretary, ICMR,  Secretary,  Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB), Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) and Drug Controller General of India (DCGI).

The committee has rapidly worked towards implementation of scientific solutions.The following actions are in place keeping in view the critical need to increase the testing facilities for COVID-19:An office memorandum allowing institutes under DST, DBT, CSIR, DAE, DRDO and Indian Institute of Science (IISc) to self assess and prepare their labs for research and testing through the standard and rigorous protocol.Testing will be stratified according to priorities set by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) and ICMR. Research will also be stratified into short and mid-term returns.

Labs at DST- Sri Chitra Institute of Medical Sciences, Thiruvananthapuram, DBT- Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Biotechnology, Thiruvananthapuram, CSIR- Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB), Hyderabad, DAE- Tata Memorial Hospital, Mumbai have already been notified as testing labs by ICMR. Other labs that have the infrastructure/capacity to carry out the tests are being readied.The scientific preparedness for testing large volumes of patients is being put into place. Testing will allow informed decision for isolation and quarantine of individuals and localities.

The Government is working proactively with private sector to carry out large scale COVID-19 testing and serology assays. This will allow surveillance and clinical research to manage and control the spread of the virus.

The scientific institutions supported by various ministries/ departments have all come together and have initiated multidisciplinary projects for:

1. Repurposing of drugs and a task force on repurposing of drugs has begun gathering in depth information on various drug candidates to allow informed decision making. The regulatory/legal processes are also being addressed.
2. Mathematical models to track the disease spread and models to predict the medical equipment and auxiliary requirements of the COVID-19.
3. Manufacturing of test kits and ventilators in India.

Also please find attached is the manual on “Masks for Curbing the Spread of SARS-CoV-2 Coronavirus Illustration by MoHFW: A manual on homemade masks” for information disbursement.

[click here to see](http://164.100.117.97/WriteReadData/userfiles/FINAL%20MASK%20MANUAL.pdf)

**Source**

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