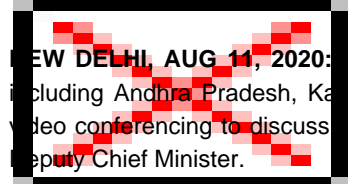


PM favours ramping up testing in Bihar, WB, Telangana, UP & Gujarat

## By TIOL News Service



**NEW DELHI, AUG 11, 2020:** PRIME Minister Mr Narendra Modi today interacted with Chief Ministers and representatives of ten states including Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Punjab, Bihar, Gujarat, Telangana, and Uttar Pradesh via video conferencing to discuss the current situation and plan ahead for tackling the COVID-19 pandemic. Karnataka was represented by the Deputy Chief Minister.

### Teamwork by Team India

Prime Minister said that everyone has shown a great degree of cooperation and the teamwork displayed by Team India has been remarkable. He talked about the challenges and pressure faced by hospitals and health care workers. He mentioned that almost 80% of active cases are from the participating 10 states, and if the virus is defeated in these ten states, the entire country will emerge victorious in the battle against COVID-19.

### Increasing testing, bringing down fatality rate

Prime Minister noted that the number of daily tests has reached almost 7 lakh and is increasing continuously, which has helped in early identification and containment. The average fatality rate in the country is amongst the lowest in the country and is continuously going down. The percentage of active cases is reducing, while the recovery rate is increasing, he said. He noted that these steps have boosted the confidence of people, and said that the target of bringing down the fatality rate below 1% can be achieved soon.

Prime Minister underlined that what has emerged from the discussion is an urgent need to ramp up testing in Bihar, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Telangana. He said that containment, contact tracing and surveillance are the most effective weapons in this battle. People have become aware and are ably assisting these efforts, as a result of which, we have been successful in using home quarantine so effectively. He noted the usefulness of the Aarogya Setu app and said that as per experts, if we are able to identify the cases in the initial 72 hours, then the spread of the virus can be slowed down. He emphasized on the need to trace and test all those who had come in contact with an infected person within 72 hours. This should be followed like a mantra, with the same earnestness as washing hands, maintaining do gaz doori, wearing masks etc, he said.

### Strategy in Delhi and nearby states

Prime Minister recounted the experience of the Home Minister in preparing a roadmap for tackling the pandemic together with Delhi and nearby states. He said that the main pillars of this strategy were segregation of containment zones and focus on screening, especially of those in high risk category. The results of these steps are there for all to see, he said, adding that steps like better management in hospitals and increasing ICU beds also proved very helpful.

### Chief Ministers speak

The Chief Ministers provided feedback on the ground situation in their states. They praised the leadership of the Prime Minister for the successful management of the pandemic and thanked him for his constant guidance and support. They talked about tests being conducted, steps taken to increase testing, use of tele-medicine and efforts to ramp up health infrastructure. They requested further guidance by the Union Health Ministry for conducting sero-surveillance, while also suggesting the setting up of an integrated medical infrastructure in the country.

### Praise by WHO

Defence Minister emphasized that the government is making all possible efforts in this battle against the virus, which have been praised by the World Health Organization as well.

Secretary, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare presented an overview of COVID cases in the country, noting that the rate of growth of cases in some states is higher than the average rate, and requested the States to focus on optimal utilization of testing capacity. He emphasized on the need for reporting accurate mortality figures and also talked about perimeter monitoring of containment zones with the help of local communities.

Union Finance Minister, Health Minister and MoS Home Affairs were also present during the interaction.