

PM reviews India's COVID-19 vaccine roll-out strategy

By TIOL News Service

NEW DELHI, NOV 21, 2020: The Prime

Minister, Mr. Narendra Modi, on Friday held a virtual meeting with top health, research and cabinet officials to review India's strategy for developing and administering the COVID-19 vaccine to the masses.

"Held a meeting to review India's vaccination strategy and the way forward",

Mr Modi tweeted. The Prime Ministers said that at the meeting, issues related to progress of vaccine development, regulatory approvals and procurement were discussed.

"Reviewed various issues like prioritisation of population groups, reaching out to healthcare workers, cold-chain Infrastructure augmentation, adding vaccinators, and tech platform for vaccine roll-out", he added.

The Prime Minister appreciated the efforts of innovators, scientists, academicians and pharma-companies in their efforts to develop vaccines and has directed that every effort should be made to facilitate the research, development and manufacturing of the vaccine.

"Five vaccines are in advanced stages of development in India, out of which 4 are in Phase II/III and one is in Phase-I/II", the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said.

Countries such as Bangladesh, Myanmar, Qatar, Bhutan, Switzerland, Bahrain, Austria and South Korea have shown keen interest in partnering for vaccine development of Indian vaccines and its use.

In an effort to administer the vaccine at the first available opportunity, a database of healthcare and frontline workers, augmentation of cold chains and procurement of syringes and other supplies, tech platform for vaccine roll-out are in advanced stages of preparation.

The Government has provided assistance of Rs 900 crore under COVID Suraksha Mission to support research and development of a COVID-19 vaccination.

India's homemade vaccine, Covaxin, is in the third phase of human trials while vaccine maker Serum Institute's Adar Poonawalla said the Oxford COVID-19 vaccine should be available for healthcare workers and elderly people by around February 2021 and by April for the general public. Pfizer also announced that it would be seeking emergency use approval for its vaccine candidate.

India reported 46,232 new coronavirus cases, taking the nationwide tally to 90,50,597, while the death toll mounted to 1,32,726 with 564 new deaths.