Salient points in India's fight with the Pandemic - 3 May 2021

- Presently, of the total cases, 81.77% cases have recovered, 17.1% are active and cumulative fatality is 1.1%. Even if we consider the last 2-3 months the death rate is well below the 1% mark.
- An analysis of daily cases and death shows certain positive developments. The number of cases has been decreasing for two days continuously from over 4 lakhs to 3.68L. This trajectory is visible in deaths as well. However these are very early signs and continuous monitoring is ongoing
- There are some causes of concern which would require extra effort. There are 12 states which have more than 1lkh active cases and 7 states have active cases from 1L to 50K.
- Sample case positivity of states: 22 states have a higher positivity rate than 15%, 9 stats with 5 – 15% and 5 states less than 5%.
- Early signs of plateauing is visible in some states. Some of these are Chhattisgarh (15,500 to 14,900 cases), Delhi (25,200 to 24,000), MP (13,000 to 12,800). Plateauing is also visible in Jharkhand, Punjab. Telangana. Early stages of plateauing is also visible in UP and UTK. Reduction in cases is also visible at the Zila/District level. In Maharashtra, there are 12 ZIlas which have seen reduced cases. However, these are early stages and continued efforts of containment need to be maintained to ensure early gains are preserved.
- At the same time there are states which are seeing an increasing number of daily cases like Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Karnataka and Kerala, Chandigarh, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh. It is important for these states to focus on containment and micro level analysis

Vaccines & Recoveries (Positive trend)
- We have covered 12.07 Cr above 45 years, 1.57 Cr Healthcare workers and 2.06 Cr Frontline workers. Vaccinations for those between 18-44 years have made an initial beginning with 18 L vaccinated.
- Daily recoveries too have begun to see positive developments. While on 20th April there were 2,59,000 cases against 1,54,000 recoveries, which implies 60% active cases were being added on a daily basis. On 30th April there were 77% recoveries, 2nd May 78% and on 3rd May 82%.

Positive Decisions
- Use of gaseous oxygen for medical use is being planned.
- Next to those industrial units which are making oxygen suitable for medical purpose and which are in close proximity to towns, temporary covid centres

will be set up. Work on 5 facilities has already begun. The plan is to increase these to 10,000 oxygenated beds

- There are 1500 oxygen PSA plants which are being developed in an expedited manner.
- Nitrogen PSA plants are being converted to oxygen PSA plants to supplement the production of oxygen. 14 Industries have been identified for this purpose. 37 PSA units have been identified among these industries for this purpose. We are considering either to make temporary hospitals around these or try to shift these plants to hospitals
- In order to buttress human resources it was decided that NEET and PG exam will be postponed for 4 months. A minimum period of one month will be given before scheduling the exam to give students enough time to prepare. Additionally Medical interns will be channelled towards Covid care as part of their internship and Final Year MBBS students will be utilized for tele-consultation and monitoring of mild Covid cases under supervision of faculty.
- Final year PG students will continue their residency until replenished by the fresh batch. Qualified nurses will be utilized in full-time Covid nursing duties under the supervision of senior doctors and nurses. Allied health professionals based on training will also supplement the medical personnel.
- Those medical personnel who complete 100 days of Covid duties will be given Prime Minister's Distinguished Covid National Service Samman and will be given priority in medical recruitments.
- Medical students and healthcare professions will be supported through vaccine and insurance.
- We have requested states who have vacant positions either for doctors or nurses or allied professions to fill these through an accelerated process within 45 days

Management of cases
- To prevent run away infections we are following a supply side approach (hospitals, medical resources). It is important to focus on demand side management as well, to break the chain of transmission.
- MoHA has issued guidelines under Disaster Management Act and have reiterated guidelines of the MoH&FW, that all states should identify districts of concern, where positivity is higher than 10% or where ICUs /oxygen catered beds have been filled to 60% of capacity. States have been requested to identify zilas/districts where cluster of cases exist and take local containment measures to reduce mingling of people and follow efforts

in lines with epidemiological situation. Intensive actions in these cases should focus on containment and ban on non-essential congregations and gathering, essential services continued focus on testing and surveillance, special teams on containment.

- The health infrastructure will be continuously upgraded and steps are taken to ensure information of hospital availability is publically available.
- Reduce misinformation and panic and focus on covid appropriate behaviour

Achievements

- Daily production of oxygen has increased from 5700 MT on 1 August 2020 to 9000MT currently. Oxygen sales are at the level 7500-8000MT.
- In order to reduce the turn around time, the government has decided that empty tankers will be transported by the Air Force to the place of production to be filled. And oxygen full tankers will be sent through railways' "Oxygen Express" special trains.
- Supply is being continuously monitored and developed keeping in mind the needs of the states.
- Based on the suggestion of the Central Government and with the aim of increasing the number of tankers, State Governments have made positive strides in converting 50% of nitrogen and argon tankers to oxygen tankers. Tankers from abroad are being purchased, hired and being made in India
- MoRT&H along with states have developed and are deploying real time GPS tagging systems on these trackers. This ensures that any diversions or unauthorised stops can be identified.