

CABINET APPROVES RS. 15,000-CR. PACKAGE

Relevant for: Environment | Topic: Disaster and disaster management

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved a Rs. 15,000-crore investment package for the COVID-19 emergency response and health system preparedness, the government said in a statement.

Post facto approval was given to the package at a meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, said Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar at a press conference.

The funds will be used in three phases, with Rs. 7,774 crore for immediate use and the rest for medium-term support, that is one to four years, the statement said. "The key objectives of the package include mounting emergency response to slow and limit COVID-19."

The plan includes developing diagnostics and COVID-19-dedicated treatment facilities, centralising the procurement of essential medical equipment and drugs, strengthening the healthcare systems nationally and in States, bio-security preparedness and pandemic research.

Phase one of the plan has already been rolled out by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, with Rs. 3,000 crore in additional funds being released to the States and the UTs for strengthening facilities, it said. The network of diagnostic laboratories had been expanded and orders for 13 lakh diagnostic kits had been placed.

Health workers, including ASHA workers, have been given insurance cover under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana. "Personal protection equipment, N95 masks and ventilators, testing kits and drugs are being procured centrally," the statement said.

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