

PM CARES FUND ALLOCATES 3,100 CR TO BOOST FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19

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The PM CARES Fund Trust on Wednesday decided to allocate 3,100 crore for fight against the COVID-19 pandemic and the amount will be used, among other things, to purchase ventilators and caring for migrant workers, the Prime Minister's Office said.

Out of the 3,100 crore, nearly 2,000 crore will be earmarked for the purchase of "Made-in-India" ventilators and 1,000 crore for care of migrant labourers, it said.

Another 100 crore will be given to support coronavirus vaccine development efforts, a PMO statement said.

Prime Minister Modi had announced creation of the PM's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations Fund (PM-CARES) where people can contribute to help the government fight against coronavirus and similar "distressing situations".

The trust was formed on March 27 and is headed by the prime minister. The other ex-officio members of the trust are the defence minister, the home minister and the finance minister.

For augmenting the infrastructure to tackle COVID-19 cases across the country, 50,000 'Made-in-India' ventilators will be purchased from PM CARES Fund at a cost of approximately 2000 crore, the statement said.

These ventilators will be provided to government-run COVID hospitals in all states and union territories for better treatment of the critical COVID-19 cases, it added.

Several institutions of higher learning and defence establishments have pitched in to produce low-cost ventilators after the outbreak of the virus.

For strengthening the existing measures being taken for the welfare of the migrants and the poor, states and UTs will be given a lump sum assistance totalling 1,000 crore from the fund.

The amount would be provided to state governments and UTs for district collectors or municipal commissioners to strengthen efforts to provide accommodation, food, medical treatment and transportation to the migrants, the statement explained.

Several special trains have ferried lakhs of migrant workers back to their home states as they were unwilling to stay in cities citing uncertain future due to coronavirus lockdown.

Several of them have walked hundreds of kilometres to return to their native place.

The statement said state and UT-wise funds will be released on the weightage of population of the state as per 2011 Census – 50 per cent weightage. Number of positive COVID-19 cases as on date – 40 per cent weightage. And equal share -- 10 per cent weightage for all states to ensure basic minimum sum for all.

The fund will be released to the district collector or district magistrate or municipal commissioner through the State Disaster Relief Commissioner.

Referring to a vaccine to fight the virus, the statement said it is the most pressing need. "... and Indian academia, start-ups and industry have come together in cutting-edge vaccine design and development."

To support the COVID-19 vaccine designers and developers, an amount of Rs. 100 crore will be given from the fund as a "helping hand" to catalyse vaccine development, the statement said.

The 100 crore will be utilised under the supervision of the Principal Scientific Advisor.

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