



## India's Covid-19 Emergency Response Package: Phase II

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### Why in News

The Union Cabinet has recently approved a Rs. 23,123 crore package to boost emergency response and healthcare systems.

It includes funding for 20,000 additional ICU (intensive care unit) beds and the setting up of paediatric units in all districts, ahead of a potential third wave of **Covid-19** in the country.

### Key Points

- **Background:**

- **Phase I of Package:** In March 2020, when the country was faced with the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Central Sector Scheme of Rs. 15,000 crore was announced for the "**India Covid-19 Emergency Response and Health Systems Preparedness Package**".

It aimed at providing a critical impetus to the efforts of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) and States/UTs, and catalysing health systems activities for pandemic management.

- Since mid-February 2021, the country is experiencing a **second wave** which has spread into rural, peri-urban and tribal areas.

- **Phase II of Package:**

- The Phase-II of the Package has **Central Sector (CS)** and **Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS)** components.

The Union government fully funds the central sector schemes, whereas centrally sponsored schemes are jointly funded by the Centre and states.

- It would be **implemented from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022**.

- **Purpose:**

- Includes funding for paediatric units in all 736 districts, and the setting up of 20,000 ICU beds, 20% of which would be “hybrid”, that is, for adults as well as children.

There are apprehensions about **a third wave of Covid-19 affecting children more than before.**

- It is **aimed at preventing the problems observed during the second wave**, including lack of transport facilities for oxygen and shortage of medicines, from happening again.
- The Centre **would provide support to its hospitals, the All India Institutes of Medical Sciences, and other institutes of national importance**, for repurposing 6,688 beds for Covid-19 management.
- **Genome sequencing** machines would be provided to the **National Centre for Disease Control**.
- The package would also provide for the expansion of the national telemedicine platform, **eSanjeevani**, by increasing daily consultations from 50,000 at present to 5 lakh.
- **States would be supported** to carry out at least 21.5 lakh tests a day and add 8,800 ambulances.

**Source: PIB**