



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

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 1st July 2021 to 31st 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

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