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# On day 1 of monsoon session, 25 MPs test COVID-19 positive

Battle against the virus is far from over, says Health Minister Harsh Vardhan

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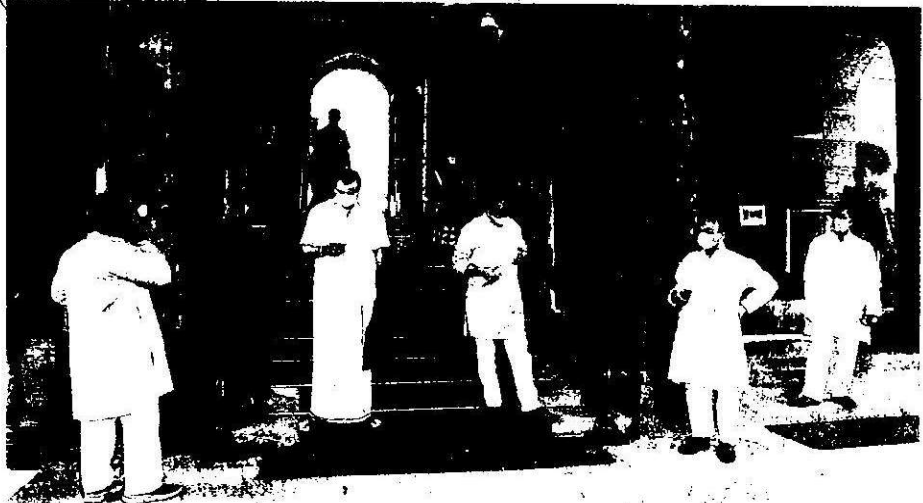
On the first day of the monsoon session of Parliament, 25 lawmakers are reported to have tested positive for COVID-19 even as Union Health Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan admitted in a statement in the Lok Sabha that the "battle against COVID-19 is still far from over".

Both Houses of Parliament did not release an official list of those who have tested positive.

## Most from BJP

However, sources said that 17 from the Lok Sabha and eight from the Rajya Sabha have been reported to be infected. According to sources, among the infected Lok Sabha members, the BJP has the maximum number of 12. The YSR Congress has two MPs and the Shiv Sena, the DMK and the Rashtriya Loktantrik Party one each. In the Rajya Sabha, two each were from the Congress and the BJP and one each from the TRS, Trinamool Congress, the AIADMK and the Aam Aadmi Party.

Dr. Vardhan said, "We are in the stage of unlock to revive the economy and it is important that sustained community support is en-



By the rule book: Members keeping distance outside Parliament House on the opening day of the monsoon session in New Delhi on Monday. •PTI

## Question Hour goes

The Lok Sabha on Monday adopted a motion to do away with Question Hour and private members' business this session citing curtailed hours, much to the resentment of the Opposition parties. PAGE 9

## 'No data on migrants'

The Ministry of Labour and Employment does not have any data regarding migrant workers who lost their jobs and lives during the lockdown, Minister Santosh Kumar Gangwar informed the Lok Sabha. PAGE 9

## DMK protests against NEET

DMK MPs staged a protest on the Parliament premises on Monday, demanding that the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) be scrapped. They later raised the issue in both Houses. PAGE 9

sured consistently to control the spread of COVID-19 infection and break its chain of transmission."

Currently, the maximum

COVID-19 cases and deaths have been reported from Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi,

West Bengal, Bihar, Telangana, Odisha, Assam, Kerala and Gujarat.

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## On day 1, 25 MPs test COVID-19 positive

The Minister said, "As on September 11, a total of about 40 lakh persons have been kept under surveillance and extensive contact tracing of all positive cases is regularly being undertaken through disease surveillance network so as to break the chain of transmission. In our country, about 92% of the cases are reported to be having mild disease. In only about 5.8 % of cases oxygen therapy is required and the disease may be severe enough to require intensive care in only 1.7% cases". Many epidemiological parameters such as mode of transmission, sub-clinical infection, period of virus shedding and role of immunity were being researched.

### Lockdown steps

The early lockdown measures was estimated to have prevented approximately 14-29 lakh cases and 37-78 thousand deaths. This time was also utilised to create additional health infrastructure, enhance human resource and produce within the country critical elements such as PPEs, N-95 masks and ventilators.

"A case in point is the increase in dedicated isolation beds 36.3 times and dedicated ICU beds above 24.6 times to what existed in March 2020. Whereas, there was no indigenous manufacturing of PPE, with the requisite standards, at that point in time. We are now self-sufficient and in a position to even export the same," Dr. Vardhan noted.

According to the Minister, as on September 12, a total of 15,284 treatment facilities, with 13,14,646 dedicated isolation beds without O<sub>2</sub> had been created. Also, a total of 2,31,093 oxygen-supported isolation beds and 62,717 ICU beds (including 32,575 ventilator beds) had been created. In addition, a total of 12,826 quarantine

and building an Atmanirbhar Bharat that would be able to take challenges of similar pandemics, epidemics and disasters in future.

"An Expenditure Finance Memorandum of ₹65,560.98 crore under the Prime Minister Atmanirbhar Swasth Bharat Yojana for strengthening it is under consideration. This includes investment in research, healthcare and public health infrastructure with particular focus on pandemic management," the Minister asserted.

### Repurposed drug use

Speaking about repurposed drug use in COVID-19, he said that 13 clinical trials of repurposed drugs and harnessing of traditional knowledge using the modern medicine approach were building a portfolio of therapeutic options for COVID-19 patients.

"Phase 2 clinical trial of immune modulator Sepsivac has been completed successfully. Phase 2 clinical trial of the first-ever phytopharmaceutical ACQH is underway. One prophylactic trial of Aswagandha and three trials of Guduchi + Pippali; Yashtimadhu; and polyherbal AYUSH drug (AYUSH-64) are planned on moderately ill COVID-19 patients," he stated.

The world was looking at around 145 candidate vaccines in preclinical evaluation and currently 35 vaccines in clinical trials.

"In India, the major focus has been on facilitating the development of COVID-19 vaccine. More than 30 vaccine candidates have been supported and they are in different stages of development; 3 candidates in advanced stage of Phase I/II/III trials and more than 4 are in the advanced preclinical development stage," he observed.

COVID-19 biorepositories have been set up and they