

## Health ministry focuses its attention on North-East

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Mr Jagat Prakash Nadda reviewed the health sector of the North Eastern states in a meeting held at Assam Administrative Staff College in Guwahati recently. Health ministers and secretaries of the eight north eastern states-Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Tripura, and Sikkim participated in the review meeting.

The Union health minister urged the states for optimum use of resources that are being provided by the center. The state health ministers presented the issues that need to be addressed on a priority basis for bringing about desired changes in the health scenario of the states. The Union Health Minister took note of the issues related to maternal health, child health, family planning, vector borne diseases and non-communicable diseases. Mr Nadda urged the states to accord priority to advance preparedness for dealing with dengue, malaria and other vector borne diseases in order to prevent the disease and effectively manage it with the onset of monsoon.

Mr Nadda informed of two important decisions that have been taken to bring about desired changes in health indicators- IMR, MMR and TFR. First, Regional Resource Centre Northeast will be developed for building capacities of the states for programme implementation, importance on Public Health Program, Information, Education and Communication (IEC) to be strengthened with community participation and quality assurance to be ensured. Second, a Joint Secretary from Ministry of Health and Family Welfare will visit North Eastern states once in a month to oversee implementation of programmes and address the bottlenecks.

The Union Health Minister was sympathetic of the difficulties that the north eastern states are facing in providing quality health care services-from difficult terrain, hilly areas, poor communication facilities, detrimental weather etc. He drew instances of his state which is also a hilly state. He suggested that innovative measures need to be evolved to overcome natural gap and build a robust system of our own. Shri Nadda suggested for strengthening District Hospitals and Sub-Divisional Civil Hospitals with rational deployment of doctors and paramedical staff. He stressed on the need to develop public health planning with quality training of paramedics.

The Union Minister emphatically said that there is no shortage of fund for ensuring health care services and urged that states should submit utilisation in time for streamlining the flow of funds from the state. He also urged that procurement should be transparent and need based for ensuring quality and regular supply.

The Union Health Minister appreciated each state for the achievements shown so far and urged everyone to work for betterment of the health care services. He particularly appreciated the efforts of Assam in introducing BSC (Community Health) for providing health care services in rural areas.

The Union Health Minister visited the North Eastern Indira Gandhi Regional Institute of Health and Medical Sciences (NEIGRIHMS), Shillong and addressed the meeting of the Governing Council yesterday.