CHANDIGARH, APRIL 2: Punjab Chief Secretary Karan Avtar Singh on Thursday assured Prime Minister Narendra Modi that the State’s health machinery was fully geared to battle the deadly corona virus in the coming days and weeks.

He was participating in the video conference convened by the Prime Minister with all the Chief Ministers on COVID-19, which Captain Amarinder Singh could not attend due to the CWC meeting.

Karan Avtar Singh, along with Punjab DGP Dinkar Gupta, informed the Prime Minister that elaborate arrangements had been made to control the further spread of COVID-19 in the state. The CS also pointed out that strict enforcement of curfew was being ensured by the civil and police administration so that the people stay at home and observe health protocols, while maintaining social distancing.

The Chief Secretary told Modi that the Punjab Chief Minister was personally monitoring the entire situation across the state and all the Deputy Commissioners had been directed to ensure supply of essential commodities and services so as to minimise the hardships faced by the people amid the curfew restrictions. Besides, a Group of Ministers headed by the Chief Minister had been constituted to take stock of the situation on day to day basis, and a state control room had been set up to review the preparedness and address all the issues related to COVID-19.

On the treatment aspects, the Chief Secretary informed Modi that the state Government had roped in tertiary care centres and hospitals to provide healthcare facilities to the suspected as well as infected patients of Coronavirus. As many as 1380 beds and 101 ventilators have been demarcated in Government Medical Hospitals at Faridkot, Amritsar and Patiala for taking care of COVID-19 positive patients. He also informed the Prime Minister that 51 private labs had so far been allowed corona testing in the state.
Apprising the Prime Minister about the harvesting season in the state, Karan Avtar Singh said that the operations had already started in some places with the farmers being given some relaxation. They have been asked to maintain physical distancing during harvesting and a proposal of staggered harvesting, on district-wise basis, was under active consideration.

In view of the prevailing situation, the State Government was contemplating to introduce innovations in foodgrain procurement by making use of Uber type platforms for transport of foodgrain harvested by the farmers, said the Chief Secretary.

Dinkar Gupta informed the Prime Minister that the state police was working 24X7 for strict enforcement of lockdown/curfew restrictions, besides ensuring seamless supply of essential commodities/services to the people.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister asked the state administration to give special attention to testing, tracing, isolation and quarantine of suspected cases, which are crucial in the next few weeks. He also directed the CS to ensure uninterrupted supply of medicines, medical equipment, movement of raw material for medicines etc.

Emphasising the need for special care for doctors, health staff including nursing and paramedics, Modi said that all of them should be provided with necessary PPEs, Gloves, masks etc. He also underlined the need for separate/dedicated hospitals for COVID-19 patients.

Likewise, Ayush doctors in the State should be trained to treat COVID-19 patients that don't require much professional medical care, said the Prime Minister, adding that recruitment and training of such doctors should be immediately be started. The mapping of these doctors / health staff / workers with identified COVID-19 isolation Centres/hospitals should also be immediately planned, Modi added.

The Prime Minister further stated that the immunity guidelines send by the department Of Ayush should be shared with all the citizens and must be widely publicized. Retired Defence Personnel/GOG, NGOs, NCC, NSS, Volunteers should be involved at local level for better management of COVID-19, he said.

The data regarding the testing from authorised labs should be shared on daily basis with the Central Government, said Modi, adding that District Surveillance Officers should be recruited to further strengthen the existing surveillance system.