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VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

PM reviews ministries' work, 3rd time in 2 weeks

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The Prime Minister-led Council of Ministers on Friday and Saturday held a review meeting of various ministries, the third one in two weeks, to list priority areas for future and track progress of the ongoing projects. At the meeting, Union secretaries gave presentations on the five-year vision related to their respective ministries.

5-YEAR ACTION PLAN

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- The government's focus sectors are economy, water conservation and health delivery

Held for the first time in the new year, the two-day inter-sectoral ministerial presentations were supervised by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and attended by all ministers. It was an extension of the PM's regular project update mechanism that happens under eight groups comprising various ministries.

Sources said the aim of the review was to determine gap areas and push for quick solutions for faster delivery of projects. The review would also aid the country's movement towards the sustainable development goal set by the UN. A major new element in the review was the PM's direction to all ministries to submit a five-year vision document, detailing policy and plan. The PM personally saw all presentations on the vision document.

The government's focus sectors are economy, water conservation and health delivery.

In its five-year vision document, the Health Ministry has promised to push major outreach programmes to eliminate tuberculosis. Notably, India is the global capital of TB, accounting for one-fourth of the new cases annually, and nearly the same number of deaths.

Recently, the government had introduced a new regime to address multi-drug resistant tuberculosis to contain deaths from this severe form of infection.

Another major focus area in health is a move towards a food free of high-salt, high-sugar products for which the apex food regulator has already put out a draft notification for public comments.

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India's notification is the first of its kind and proposes to ban sale of high-salt, high-sugar products in schools and in 50-m periphery. Meanwhile, the ministry has also launched a 'Eat right movement' to tackle the growing non-communicable disease burden in the country.

"Our five-year focus will be on tuberculosis since the PM has committed to achieving the TB-free India by 2025, rather than the WHO target of 2030. The elimination of TB is our top goal. The focus is also on preventive and promotive health and consolidation of old projects, especially Ayushman Bharat," a top Health Ministry source said.

The ischaemic heart disease is the leading cause of death in India, closely followed by chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases and strokes.

The latest World Health Statistics Report said the ischaemic heart disease was responsible for 12,15,000 deaths in India, constituting 12.4 per cent of all deaths in the country. This was followed by chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, which led to 10.8 per cent (10,61,000) of all deaths.