

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GROUP OF MINISTERS (GoM) TO EXAMINE ALL THE ISSUES RELATING TO BHOPAL GAS LEAK DISASTER, HELD FROM 18th to 21st JUNE, 2010 IN ROOM NO. 103, NORTH BLOCK NEW DELHI

1. The Group of Ministers (GoM) regarding Bhopal Gas Leak disaster was reconstituted vide Cabinet Secretariat memorandum no. 47/1/7/93-Cab on 26th May 2010 to examine all the Issues relating to Bhopal Gas Leak Disaster including remediation measures and to make appropriate recommendations regarding relief and rehabilitation of Bhopal Gas Victims and their families. A communication dated 14th June 2010 has been received from the PMO stating that the Prime Minister has directed that the GoM may meet immediately to take stock of the situation arising out of the recent court judgement, to assess the options and remedies available to the Government on various issues involved and to report to the Cabinet within 10 days.

2. The reconstituted GoM had its first meeting on 18th June, 2010, under the chairmanship of Shri P. Chidambaram, Minister of Home Affairs. The meeting was attended by Shri Ghulam Nabi Azad, Minister of Health and Family Welfare, Shri M. Veerappa Moily, Minister of Law and Justice, Shri S. Jaipal Reddy, Minister of Urban Development, Shri Kamal Nath, Minister of Road Transport and Highways, Kumari Selja, Minister of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation and Minister of Tourism, Shri M. K. Alagiri, Minister of Chemicals and Fertilizers, Shri Prithviraj Chavan, Minister of State (Independent Charge) of the Ministry of Science and Technology, Minister of State (Independent Charge) of the Ministry of Earth Sciences, Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office, Minister of State in the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions and Minister of State in the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs and Shri Jairam Ramesh, Minister of State (Independent Charge) of the Ministry of Environment and Forests. Shri Babu Lal Gaur, Minister-in-charge of the Department of Bhopal Gas Tragedy, Relief and Rehabilitation, Government of Madhya Pradesh attended the meeting as a permanent invitee.

3. A list of officers of the Government of India and Government of Madhya Pradesh (M.P.), present in the meeting, is at **Annexure - 1**.

4. The Chairman of the GoM welcomed all the members and the officers to the meeting. He observed that the GoM has a broad mandate and solutions have to be found for issues pending for more than 25 years and sought cooperation of everybody so that the recommendations of the GoM can be finalised on 21.06.10.

5. With the consent of all the members, the following schedule of meetings was finalized:

Issue to be discussed	Date	Time
Compensation	18.06.10	2 P.M. onwards
Extradition of Mr. Warren Anderson	19.06.10	11-11:30 A.M.
Legal issues	19.06.10	11:30 A.M. to 1 P.M.
Bhopal Memorial Hospital & Research Centre/ Health Research/ Other Health related issues	19.06.10	6 P.M. onwards

HEALTH AND HEALTH-RELATED ISSUES

29. It was informed that pursuant to various orders issued by the Supreme Court, the Bhopal Memorial Hospital and Research Centre (BMHRC) was established in July 2000. The hospital has 8 Mini Units. Besides, there are 6 Hospitals, 9 Day Care Centres, 3 Unani, 3 Homeopathy and 3 Ayurveda Dispensaries run by the State Government for the gas-affected people.

30. There is an Advisory Committee appointed by the Supreme Court which is chaired by DG, ICMR. The Advisory Committee has not met for nearly two years. There is also a Monitoring Committee appointed by the Supreme Court. The chair of the Monitoring Committee has been vacant since 2008.

31. The GoM noted that BMHRC is run by Bhopal Memorial Hospital Trust (BMHT). There is a Board of Trustees chaired by Mr. Justice A. M. Ahmadi. There is also a Governing Body chaired by Mr. Justice Ahmadi. Both bodies meet infrequently, no more than twice a year.

32. BMHT has a corpus which has grown to Rs. 436 crore as on 31.3.2009. Nevertheless, financial projections made for five years beginning 2010-11 show that there will be a deficit every year and the deficit will rise every year. Salaries in BMTH are lower than salaries paid by Government of Madhya Pradesh in its hospitals. Many posts are vacant. Some departments are non-functional. On 26.10.2009, BMHT filed an application before the Supreme Court in Civil Appeal no. 3187-3188 of 1988, *inter alia* praying that the Central Government may be directed to take over the hospital after winding up the Trust.

33. ICMR established a research centre in Bhopal in 1984. It conducted epidemiological research and clinical studies. Some volumes of research papers were published in 1987 and 1994. ICMR stopped its research work on 31.12.1994. The research center was handed over to the Government of Madhya Pradesh and is now run as a Centre for Rehabilitation Studies (CRS). It has been carrying on some long term epidemiological studies.

34. In 2008, the GoM decided that ICMR will resume its research activities. From January 2009, ICMR has invited proposals to study genetic disorders, low birth weights, growth disorders, congenital malformations, etc. Despite poor response and after great difficulty, ICMR has identified two proposals for research and studies costing Rs. 80 lakh and Rs. 60 lakh respectively.

35. It is generally agreed that research and rehabilitation work is necessary in the following areas:

- (i) Respiratory diseases
- (ii) Eye-related diseases
- (iii) Cancer
- (iv) Total Renal Failure
- (v) Genetic disorders
- (vi) Congenital disorders
- (vii) Women-related medical issues
- (viii) Second-generation children related medical issues

36. After reviewing the state of affairs relating to health and health-related matters and

finding that the picture is very disappointing, GoM recommends the following:

- (i) The GOI may approach the Supreme Court to allow takeover of the BMHRC by the Government of India through the Department of Bio-Technology and the Department of Atomic Energy. The hospital can then be strengthened, upgraded and run as a super-speciality and research hospital. The State Government has no objection to this.
- (ii) All other hospitals may continue to be managed and run by the Government of Madhya Pradesh.
- (iii) ICMR should establish a full-fledged Research Centre in Bhopal. It will be its 31st centre. It must be on par with the existing 30 centres. The Research Centre should be set up and commissioned within 90 days of Government's decision. The staff of the existing Centre for Rehabilitation Studies, to the extent they are qualified, should be taken over by ICMR.
- (iv) An Empowered Committee under the chairmanship of Secretary, Department of Health and Family Welfare and including other officers of the Ministries/Departments concerned may be set up to approve all proposals, including purchases and appointments, relating to the proposed ICMR Research Centre to facilitate setting up of the Centre within 90 days. To the extent necessary GFRs and RRs may be suspended or relaxed as a one-time exceptional measure to enable the commissioning of ICMR Research Center. The Committee will be notified by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- (v) ICMR should immediately identify suitable scientists and doctors, through fresh appointments, deputation etc., and appoint them to the new Research Centre to conduct epidemiological studies and clinical research in areas identified by ICMR including areas noted in paragraph 35 above. ICMR may also involve the World Health Organisation and other Indian/international experts, as may be advised, to collaborate in the research activities.