

Principal Secretary to Hon'ble Prime Minister chairs high level meeting to review current status and preparedness for COVID-19

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In view of the recent reports of detection of certain newer variants of SARS-CoV-2 virus reported globally, Dr. P.K. Mishra, Principal Secretary to Hon'ble Prime Minister chaired a high-level meeting to review the global and national COVID-19 situation, newer variants in circulation and their public health impact.

The meeting was attended by Dr. Vinod Paul, Member, NITI Aayog; Shri. Rajiv Gauba, Cabinet Secretary; Shri. Amit Khare, Advisor PMO; Shri. Sudhansh Pant, Secretary, Health and Family Welfare; Shri. Rajiv Bahl, Secretary DHR and DG ICMR; Shri. Rajesh S. Gokhale, Secretary, Biotechnology and Ms. Punya Salila Srivastava, Additional Secretary to PM.

An overview of the global COVID-19 situation was given by Secretary (Health) including certain newer variants of SARS-CoV-2 virus like BA.2.86 (Pirola) and EG.5 (Eris), which have been reported globally. He underlined that as per World Health Organization (WHO), while EG.5 (Eris) has been reported from over 50 countries, the variant BA.2.86 (Pirola) is in four countries.

It was highlighted that while globally a total of 2,96,219 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in the past 7 days, India which contributes to nearly 17% of global population, has reported only 223 cases (0.075% of global new cases) in the past week. He added that the daily average of new COVID-19 cases continues to be below 50 from the entire country and the country has managed to maintain weekly test positivity rate of less than 0.2%. An overview of the Genome Sequencing of different variants circulating in India was also provided.

After detailed deliberations, Dr. P. K. Mishra highlighted that while the COVID-19 situation in the country remains stable and public health systems in the country remain geared up, there is need for States to monitor trends of ILI/SARI cases, send sufficient samples for testing of Covid-19 while ramping up Whole Genome Sequencing and maintain close watch on the new global variants.

MV

HFW/ review current status and preparedness for COVID-19/21st August 2023

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