



Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

# It is more important now to follow COVID Appropriate Behaviours because of the upcoming festival season, arrival of winter, opening up of economy: Dr. V.K. Paul

## Government may provide direct financial assistance to designated vaccine manufacturers to assist in R & D activities during clinical trials also: Health Secretary

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India has the highest number of recoveries from COVID-19 at more than 62 lakh patients. The active cases have also remained below 9 lakhs for the fifth consecutive day and is further declining. There is consistent trend of decline in average of daily positivity rate. Presently, the country's cumulative positivity rate is 8.07%, while weekly positivity rate is 6.24%, while the daily positivity rate is 5.16%. This has been stated by Shri Rajesh Bhushan, Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, in course of a media briefing on the actions taken, preparedness and updates on COVID-19, held at New Media Centre, New Delhi today.

Shri Bhushan further informed, there has been a continuous decline in the average daily new cases over the last five weeks. The weekly average of daily new cases fell from 92,830 cases in the 2nd week of September to 70,114 cases in 2nd week of October. The weekly average of daily new cases fell from 92,830 cases in the 2nd week of September to 70,114 cases in 2nd week of October. Presently the active cases of the country stands at 8,38,729. Further, there is significant increase in testing of COVID-19 and on the other hand, there is continuous decline in positivity rate also. On an average, 11 lakh 36 thousand tests are being conducted on a daily basis. The Health Secretary further informed that 14 States & UTs of the country have higher Tests Per Million and lower positivity rate than the national average. Stating this, Shri Bhushan said "Although positivity rate is declining, it is very important to maintain the high number and level of testing". While 86.78% patients have already recovered, 11.69% patients are still under active medical supervision or home isolation and 1.53% have succumbed to the virus.

The Health Secretary also informed that 10 states account for 79% of the total active cases in the country, which are: Maharashtra, Karnataka, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Assam, Chhattisgarh and Telengana. Maharashtra, Karnataka & Kerala contains maximum number of active cases as compared to other States & UTs, stated Shri Bhushan. The Ministry of Health



& Family Welfare holds separate detailed meeting with these states to decide upon their COVID-19 strategy. Further reiterating that people with comorbidities and elderly are at high risk, the Secretary stated, those aged 60 and above account for 53% of the deaths, those in the age group of 45 to 60 years account for 35% of the deaths and 26 - 44 years age group account for 10% of all deaths, while 18 to 25 years age group and those aged 17 years and below account for 1% of the deaths each. Gender-wise analysis shows, 70 % COVID related deaths have occurred to male patients. Again, case fatality rate amongst different age groups show that 24.6% of the patients aged above 60 years who have succumbed to the virus.

Press briefing on the actions taken, preparedness and upd...



Dr. V.K. Paul cautioned, new COVID-19 cases have increased in many countries with the arrival of winter. Second peaks are coming and lockdowns have been imposed in many countries, he informed. Appealing everyone to follow and spread the messages of Jan Andolan, he said, it is more important now to follow COVID Appropriate Behaviours as the upcoming festival season, arrival of winter, opening of economy has a possibility of increasing spread of the virus.

In reply to a media query on COVID-19 re-infection, DG, ICMR, Prof. (Dr.) Balaram Bhargava said, ICMR has decided upon a cut-off of 100 days for re-infection if it occurs, as antibodies are also assumed to have a life of four months, according to some studies. It is still work in progress, he added.

In reply to a query on mutations of SARS-COV2 virus, DG, ICMR said, minor changes called 'drifts' may happen from time to time, but major genetic mutations of viruses or 'shifts' may happen in about a decade or two. In this context, Prof. Bhargava said, effectiveness of a vaccine will not be determined by minor 'drifts'.

In reply to a media query, Health Secretary said, through the Department of Biotechnology, the Government is providing direct financial assistance to designated vaccine manufacturers to assist in R & D activities, which presently includes pre-clinical trials, and in future, may be extended for clinical trials also.

In reply to another media query on cold chain infrastructure for vaccines, Health Secretary stated, National Committee for Vaccine Administration's sub-group has already mapped the available cold chain infrastructure being utilized for the Government's immunization programme, and has also made



projections for additional requirements. Presently, that group is engaged in mapping the private sector facilities that could serve the needs of supplementing the cold chain equipment.

The presentations made in today's briefing can be accessed [here](#) and [here](#)

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