

All preparations are on track for COVID-19 vaccine roll-out from 16th January 2021: Health Secretary

27 crore prioritized age group and comorbid persons in the sequential roll-out of vaccines after 3 crore healthcare and frontline workers: Health Secretary

54,72,000 doses of vaccine received till 4 PM today, SII to provide 1.1 lakh vaccines at Rs 200/dose, BBIL to provide 55 lakh vaccines at Rs 206/dose: Health Secretary

Media can play a very important role in COVID-19 vaccination by providing support, correct messaging, confidence building and creating a positive environment: Member (Health), NITI Aayog

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All preparations are on track for COVID-19 vaccine roll-out from 16th January 2021. So far 26 virtual meetings/trainings held with States/UTs on the roll-out of COVID-19 vaccines. Different category of professionals will be required for discharge of different responsibilities. For that purpose, 2360 Master Trainers, 61,000 Programme Managers, 2 lakh Vaccinators, 3.7 lakh other Vaccination Team Members have been trained so far. This has been stated by Union Health Secretary Shri Rajesh Bhushan in course of a press briefing on the action taken, preparedness and updates on COVID-19 held at National Media Centre in New Delhi today.

Shri Bhushan further informed that in the sequential roll-out of vaccines, 27 crore (approx) prioritized age groups, consisting of those aged above 50 years and the people aged less than 50 years having comorbidities will be given vaccine after the first two phase of vaccination of 1 crore (approx.) healthcare workers in public and private sectors, followed by 2 crore (approx.) front-line workers. He further informed that 54,72,000 doses of vaccine have been received till 4 PM today. All the doses, consisting of 1.1 crore doses from Serum Institute of India (SII) and 55 lakh doses from Bharat Biotech India Limited (BBIL), will be received in all states and UTs by Thursday (Jan 14, 2021).

Shri Bhushan further informed, COVID-19 vaccines will first arrive at the 4 GMSDs at Karnal,

Kolkata, Mumbai and Chennai. All states have atleast one state level regional vaccine stores which are temperature controlled, while some of the bigger states have more than one stores. Uttar Pradesh has 9, Madhya Pradesh has 4, Gujarat has 4, Kerala has 3, J&K has 2, Karnataka has 2 and Rajasthan has 2 stores.

He also noted that the cost of vaccination of Health Care Workers & Front Line Workers will be borne by Central Government. States are not required to bear any expenditure for this purpose, he added. Shri Bhushan mentioned that there are five key principles for COVID-19 vaccination exercise which may last beyond a year. These are: people's participation; utilization of experiences from elections at booth-level and Universal Immunization Programmes; no compromise of existing healthcare services; no compromise on scientific and regulatory norms and other SOPs; and an orderly, smooth implementation driven by technology.

Shri Bhushan said, Central Government has been pro-active and pre-emptive in addressing the needs of vaccination in the country. In May, 2020, a task force was set up under the Principal Scientific Adviser to promote indigenous R&D in vaccines, pharmaceuticals and diagnostics. Then the National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration for COVID-19 (NEGVAC) headed by Member (Health), NITI Aayog and Union Secretary, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, was set up in August, 2020, to address vaccine procurement, logistics, prioritization of population groups etc. Shri Bhushan further stated that two COVID-19 vaccines - Covishield and Covaxin have received Emergency Use Authorization, both having established safety and immunogenicity. This apart, vaccine candidates like Zydus Cadila, Sputnik V, Biological E and Gennova are in the pipeline. "In the coming months, all of these four or some among these have possibilities of being taken up by the national regulator for consideration of EUA".

The Health Secretary also informed about COVID-19 vaccines around the world and their pricing. Pfizer-BioNTech's vaccine needs to be stored at -70 degrees C and has been priced at 19.50 US dollars per dose, while the vaccines of other manufacturers like Moderna, Sinopharm, Sinovac Biotech, Navovax, Gamaleya Centre and Johnson & Johnson need a storage temperature of 2-3 degrees C and are priced at or above Rs 734 per dose. Shri Bhushan informed that the Central Government is procuring 110 lakh doses of COVISHIELD vaccine from Serum Institute of India at the cost of Rs. 200/dose (excluding taxes). 55 lakh doses of COVAXIN vaccine are being procured from Bharat Biotech India Limited (BBIL). While the cost of 38.5 lakh doses of COVAXIN is Rs. 295/dose (excluding taxes), the rest of 16.5 lakh doses of COVAXIN are being provided free of cost to the Government by BBIL. Hence, the cost of COVAXIN is coming to Rs. 206 per dose.

Speaking about the factors which are to be the responsibilities of State Governments in the process of rolling out COVID-19 vaccination from January 16, 2021, the Health Secretary stated, states should ensure that all logistics are ready, continuous oversight and personal involvement at the highest level in the entire process and taking special care of the communication activities and utilization of all channels to create an encouraging environment highlighting that vaccines are safe and immunogenic. "This will ensure that all targeted beneficiaries receive the vaccine, there is no wastage and everyone knows what is supposed to be done", he further stated. Stating that our challenge is greater and more complex than more than 50 countries where vaccination has already started, the Health Secretary said, we need to be more prepared. There is a gap of 28 days between two doses and effectiveness begins 14 days after the second dose. The Union Health Secretary called for highlighting this aspect along with COVID Appropriate Behavior which needs to be followed even after vaccination.

At the vaccination sites, IEC materials will be displayed in regional languages which are to be provided by the states at the vaccination session sites. These banners will highlight three key messages: 1) Following COVID Appropriate Behaviour even after vaccination, 2) COVID-19 vaccination is absolutely safe and so there should not be any hesitancy about getting vaccinated, 3) IDs which may be used while getting vaccinated at a session site, much in the lines of establishing identity while going for casting vote in an election.

Dr. V.K. Paul, Member (Health), NITI Aayog stressed upon not lowering guard and continuing with COVID Appropriate Behaviour, containment strategy, contact tracing and standard of care for positive patients. Stating that media can play a very important role in COVID-19 vaccination, he appealed to them for support, correct messaging, confidence building and creating a positive environment for vaccination. Dr. Paul further informed that the Indian Medical Association has given a call for supporting the two indigenous vaccines. He appealed to the healthcare workers and all others to come forward for vaccination and reiterated about the proven safety and immunogenicity aspects of the vaccines. He also called upon NGOs which are eager to work for this national mission of vaccination to contact and coordinate with district administration.

Shri Bhushan also said, COVID-19 situation is still worrisome across the world. The graph of cases is climbing across countries like USA, UK, Brazil, Russia and South Africa which have a population which is much lesser than India. However, the number of new case are coming down in India. Active cases in the country continue to decline, presently it is less than 2.2 lakhs. With this, the level of active cases has become similar to the numbers last seen on June 30, 2020. Since then, the number of cases were rising and reached a high level, after which it started declining. India has seen 1.04 crore COVID-19 cases, while cases and deaths per million population has been 7,493 and 109 respectively. The active cases at present form about 2.07% of the total cases till date. "Even this percentage is coming down in a rapid and significant manner", added the Health Secretary.

Also, 18.2 crore COVID-19 tests have been done till date. This apart, case positivity rate is coming down- cumulative positivity rate being 5.7% and positivity rate over the last one week being 2%. While 43.96% of the total active patients are in healthcare facilities, 56.04% of them are in home isolation. Only two states - Maharashtra and Kerala have more than 50,000 active cases at present. Stating these, Shri Bhushan said, "Within the country we have achieved a lot because of active collaboration between the Union Government and State Governments and Union Territories".

[The presentation made by the Health Secretary in today's press briefing may be accessed here.](#)

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