

COVID-19 Vaccine Rollout

Dr. Harsh Vardhan reviews preparedness for Nationwide Vaccination Drive that commences tomorrow, visits the Dedicated COVID Control Room at the Union Health Ministry

The Union Minister dispels myths surrounding COVID19 vaccines, reassures country of efficacy of indigenously manufactured vaccines.

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The Union Minister of Health & Family Welfare, Dr. Harsh Vardhan, today reviewed preparations for the launch of the nationwide COVID19 vaccination drive scheduled to begin tomorrow. The Union Minister visited the Dedicated COVID Control Room which has been setup at the Nirman Bhawan premises of the Union Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.

The Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will flag off the 1st phase of the pan India rollout of COVID-19 vaccination drive tomorrow, 16th January, 2021 at 10:30 AM via video conferencing. This vaccination program will cover the entire length and breadth of the country, with a total of 3006 session sites across all States and UTs which will be connected virtually throughout the exercise. Around 100 beneficiaries will be vaccinated tomorrow at each of the session sites. The vaccination drive has been planned in a phased manner, identifying priority groups. Health Care workers, both in government and private sectors including ICDS (Integrated Child Development Services) workers, will receive the vaccine during this phase.

During his visit to the COVID Control Room, Dr. Harsh Vardhan minutely scrutinised each aspect of the working of CoWIN, an online digital platform developed by Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, which will be used to drive the COVID-19 vaccination programme in the country. It will facilitate real time information of vaccine stocks, storage temperature and individualized tracking of beneficiaries for COVID-19 vaccine. This digital platform will assist programme managers across National, State, and District levels while conducting vaccination sessions. It will help them track beneficiary coverage, beneficiary dropouts, sessions planned v/s sessions held and vaccine utilization

The platform enables national & state administrators to view & sort data of beneficiaries as per their gender, age & co-morbidity. They can also view the metadata of vaccinations and Adverse Event Following Immunization (AEFI) reported from constituent districts across States & UTs. District administrators can additionally create session sites at any location by entering the pin-code, followed by specifying the locality or villages and subsequently assigning a vaccinator. Dr. Harsh Vardhan suggested that the software modifications and lessons learnt while using the highly advanced CoWIN platform be incorporated into India's Universal Immunization Program.

The Union Minister also reviewed the Beneficiary Registration Page for all non-prioritized groups on CoWIN. He suggested pre-populating the software with beneficiaries by seeding it with electoral database, in addition to other documents that are authorized for registration.

The dedicated COVID Control Room has been involved in the massive exercise of monitoring district wise COVID19 data from across the country as well as in depth analysis of the data to interpret & evaluate the status of the pandemic. For the last several months, through this dedicated control room, the government has been closely monitoring parameters such as case fatality rates, infection rates, death rates & other parameters based on which containment strategies have been continuously evolved. The Control Room has also been helping to track & record best strategies being adopted by different countries as a part of their response system and translating them into key learnings for India.

The Union Minister also reviewed the working of the ‘Communications Control Room’ which has been closely monitoring the disinformation campaigns and rumour mongering in relation to administering of COVID19 vaccines. He advised the administrative machinery to go all out to counter the misinformation campaign being spread by vested interests.

Dr. Harsh Vardhan said India’s exercise to vaccinate its population against COVID19 shall be the largest immunization drive of the world. The Union Minister reiterated that both the indigenously manufactured vaccines, COVISHIELD & COVAXIN, have proven safety and immunogenicity records and are the most important tools to contain the pandemic.

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