

More than 60% health care workers given the first dose within a month of the launch of COVID Vaccination, 1.7 lakh second doses also administered: Health Secretary

24.57 lakh frontline workers vaccinated till date: Health Secretary

187 cases of UK variant, 4 of South Africa variant and one Brazil variant of SARS-CoV-2 detected in the country: DG, ICMR

Neutralization potential with UK variant is there with the vaccine that we have: DG, ICMR

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More than 87.40 lakh COVID-19 Vaccine doses have been administered till today. Out of these, more than 62.8 lakh healthcare workers have received vaccine, that is, more than 60% health care workers of the country have received the first dose of vaccine within a month of the launch of vaccination. Out of them, more than 1.7 lakh doses have received the second dose of the vaccine, which forms 37.5% of the eligible vaccinations who have already received the first dose. Further, 24.57 lakh frontline workers that is 26.3% of them have also received vaccine. Overall, 14 States and UTs have already covered 70% of the registered healthcare workers for the first dose of vaccination. At the same time, 11 States and UTs have covered less than 50% of their healthcare workers till now. The second dose of vaccine has been administered to more than 60% of eligible healthcare workers in 8 States and UTs. Again, 8 States have shown more than 40% coverage of Frontline Workers' vaccination. On the other hand, 10 States and UTs have covered less than 10% of frontline workers' vaccination. Out of them, Assam and Ladakh are yet to start vaccination of frontline workers. Vaccination of frontline workers was started 13 days ago. This has been stated by Union Health Secretary Shri Rajesh Bhushan in course of a media briefing on the actions taken, preparedness and updates on COVID-19, held at National Media Centre in New Delhi today. Out of a total 1.09 crore COVID-19 cases recorded in the country till date, only 1.25% are active cases presently, further informed the Health Secretary.

Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomic Consortia (INSACOG) has found 187 UK variants in the country, stated Director-General of ICMR Prof. (Dr.) Balaram Bhargava. "There has been no mortality and all the confirmed cases have been quarantined and treated", added DG, ICMR. He further stated, "Neutralization potential of the UK Variant matches other heterologous virus strains in India and the vaccines that we have". The South Africa variant of SARS-CoV-2 has been detected in four different South Africa returnees in January, 2021. These travellers and their contacts have been tested and quarantined. ICMR-National Institute of Virology (NIV) at Pune is attempting to isolate and culture the South Africa variant strain, informed DG, ICMR. The Brazil variant of SARS-CoV-2 has been detected in a Brazil returnee this month. The traveller and his contacts have been tested and quarantined. This virus strain has been successfully isolated and cultured at ICMR-NIV, while experiments to assess virus effectiveness are underway, he further informed.

At this time, there are less than 1.40 lakh active cases in the country and the numbers are further declining, while the cumulative positivity rate which stands at 5.27% is also declining. In the last week, 93 COVID-19 related deaths occurred daily on an average in the country. "The range of daily active cases in the last 15 days has varied from 12,500 to 9,000 per day. Similarly, the range of deaths over the last 15 days fluctuated from 78 deaths to 120 deaths per day", added the Health Secretary.

Kerala and Maharashtra are still having the maximum number that makes up for 72% of the active cases nationally. Kerala has 61,550 active cases and "reported 2884 new cases in the last 24 hours which is a significant decline from what it had reported in the previous 24 hours", stated Shri Bhushan. Maharashtra, on the other hand, has a total of 37,383 active cases and "has reported 3,365 new cases in the last 24 hours", further stated Shri Bhushan. The reports and findings given by the central teams which were at Kerala and Maharashtra as well as the central teams' guidances and advices have been shared with the respective state governments, he further informed.

While Kerala accounts for around 45% of the total active cases, Maharashtra accounts for 27%, followed by Karnataka at around 4% and West Bengal at about 3% of the active cases.

India has reported 0.5% deaths per million population in the last seven days, while many other countries are showing an increasing trend for COVID related deaths, said Shri Bhushan. India also reported 56 new cases per million population in the same period.

Although cases and positivity rate are declining, corona virus has still not gone away and is still affecting our population and can still raise the number of cases in a population, stated Dr. V.K.Paul and called for carrying on with the COVID Appropriate Behaviours. In the context of detecting the UK and other variants of SARS-CoV-2 in the country, Dr. Paul said that, hopefully these strains will not cause catastrophic situations, but the vigil to contain this disease must continue. Much of the implementation of vaccination program has been as per plan, said Dr. Paul. Dr. Paul also stressed that immunization will be complete only after receiving the second dose of the vaccine. 24 countries have been sent vaccines from the Indian soil, he also informed.

RT/SC/DL

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