

## Maharashtra administers first dose to more than 81 lakh people: Health Secretary

Basic aim of Vaccination is to reduce deaths and protect healthcare system : Health Secretary

A positive wave of Jan Bhagidaari is very important to control the second wave of the pandemic: NITI Aayog

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"In Maharashtra, more than 81 lakh people have been administered the first dose of vaccine and more than eight lakh have received their second dose." Union Health and Family Welfare Secretary Shri Rajesh Bhushan appreciated the vaccination drive being actively carried out by various states including Maharashtra. He stated this during a media briefing on the actions taken, preparedness and updates on COVID-19, held at National Media Centre in New Delhi today.

Shri Bhushan also appreciated Gujarat, Rajasthan, UP, West Bengal, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Kerala which have performed well in the vaccination drive. "When such a vaccination drive is organised during a pandemic, the basic aim is to reduce deaths as well as protect the healthcare system. All over the world, the aim is to vaccinate those who are in need in order to save the vulnerable population," he pointed out.

Speaking about the biggest contributors of COVID cases across the country, Shri Bhushan said that, "Seven out of top 10 districts with active COVID19 cases are still from Maharashtra, while one each are from Karnataka, Chhattisgarh and Delhi. "

Districts with maximum cases as follows:

1. Pune
2. Mumbai
3. Thane
4. Nagpur
5. Nashik
6. Bengaluru Urban
7. Aurangabad
8. Ahmednagar
9. Delhi
10. Durg

He also mentioned that Maharashtra, Punjab and Chhattisgarh continue to remain a matter of concern. "From 3000 average daily cases in February to 44,000 cases per day now and 32 average daily deaths to 250 deaths per day now, Maharashtra continues to be a cause of concern for its share of the total number of cases and deaths nationally," he added. It was said that the state accounts for 58% of all active cases and 34% of all COVID-related deaths in the country

"Maharashtra's weekly COVID positivity rate which had declined to 6% during the beginning of February has now increased to 24% in the last week. This is a matter of concern. We need to work more strictly in matters of isolating people where it's needed." Union Health and Family Welfare Secretary Shri Rajesh Bhushan stated this during a media briefing on the actions taken, preparedness and updates on COVID-19, held at National Media Centre in New Delhi today.

Shri Bhushan also expressed concern over the decline in RT-PCR tests in Maharashtra. "The share of RT-PCR tests have decreased in the last few weeks; it has gone down from around 71% in March 1st week to only about 60% of total testing in the last week," he reported. "We advise states to keep the share of RT-PCR to 70% or above."

Speaking about the vaccination drive in the country he said that. "More than eight crore vaccine doses have been administered in the country in less than 80 days, which has been made possible by a close coordination between the Centre and State Governments," said Shri Bhushan.

- 8.31 crore vaccine doses have been administered till today morning;
- 5.35 crore people aged 45 or above vaccinated
- 89.6 lakh health care workers
- 97.28 lakh frontline workers vaccinated.

The Secretary also spoke about the actions taken to control the surge in states of grave concern. "We have deployed 50 high-level multi-disciplinary public health teams in 30 Maharashtra districts, 11 Chhattisgarh districts and 9 Punjab districts. They (having a public health specialist and a clinician) will help in surveillance, control & containment measures."

He went on to say that, "We have advised Maharashtra to use mobile testing labs in the geographically difficult terrains. Indian Council of Medical Research is assisting the Maharashtra Government in this work."

"The whole country has to fight against the pandemic with all its power. We have to use our old tools of COVID Appropriate Behaviour, Containment, Testing, Preparing Hospitals and, also, Vaccination all over, and especially in districts where the situation is grim," Member (Health), NITI Agog, Dr. V K Paul expressed his concern about the increasing trend of COVID cases in the country.

He also appealed to the citizens to strictly follow COVID Appropriate Behaviour. "The coming four weeks is very critical in the fight against COVID19. A positive wave of *Jan Bhagidaari* is very important to control the second wave of the pandemic."

In a reply to a media query, Director General, ICMR, Professor Balram Bhargava said, "Re-Infection' has been given a new meaning that has been accepted all over the world, where the first test should be positive, then a test should be negative and then again, a test should be positive within 102 days. Earlier, the time interval was taken as 86 days."

PPT presented by the Health Secretary can be accessed [here](#)

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