HIGHLIGHTS

- Prime Minister exhorts Chief Ministers of multiple states to increase the number of vaccination centers and to scale up RT-PCR tests (Link)
- Union Health Secretary calls on States to optimally use COVID-19 vaccine and to reduce vaccine wastage drastically (Link)
- Maharashtra, Punjab, Karnataka, Gujarat, and Madhya Pradesh continue to record a steep rise in cases, and account for over 80% of daily new COVID-19 cases (Link)
- Center closely monitoring and actively engaging with States/UTs regarding surge of COVID-19 cases (Link)
- Union Health Secretary urged state of Uttarakhand to employ stringent measures to control the spread of COVID-19 during Kumbh Mela (Link)
- India records a milestone in COVID-19 vaccination with administration of over 4 crore vaccine doses (Link)
- Centre writes to States/UTs to increase the interval between two doses of COVISHIELD to 4-8 weeks from initial 4-6 weeks (Link)
- India crosses a key milestone in universal primary healthcare as it reaches its target of operationalizing 70,000 Ayushman Bharat – Health and Wellness centers ahead of time (Link)

INDIA SITUATION

- As on 21 March, India has reported 159,755 COVID-19 deaths with case fatality ratio (CFR) of 1.38%. Maharashtra has reported highest number of COVID-19 deaths (53,300) followed by Tamil Nadu (12,590) and Karnataka (12,432), details here.
- In the past week, India has reported 1,148 deaths, of which the highest were in Maharashtra (489) followed by Punjab (228) and Kerala (101). Punjab has reported highest CFR (3.0%) followed by Maharashtra (2.2%), Sikkim (2.2%) and West Bengal (1.8%). details here.
- More than 85% of affected districts reported one or more COVID-19 case in last seven days

COVID-19: STATUS ACROSS STATES

In the past week, as compared to previous week, 31 states have shown an increase in cases. The states/UTs with decrease in cases during last week are Nagaland, Kerala, Meghalaya & Manipur.
In Haryana, State police has launched a two-week campaign to promote COVID appropriate behaviors; under this campaign those found without masks will be provided one for free.

In Madhya Pradesh, weekend lockdown has been imposed in three cities namely, Bhopal, Indore, and Jabalpur.

In Punjab, schools and anganwadi centers have been closed due to the surge in number of cases.

**WHO GLOBAL UPDATE**

- COVID-19 highlights urgent need to reboot global effort to end tuberculosis; thus, building up health systems so everyone can get the services they need to fight against TB, details [here](#).
- WHO Global Advisory Committee on Vaccine Safety (GACVS) COVID-19 subcommittee on safety signals related to the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine has concluded that the vaccine (including Covishield) continues to have a positive benefit-risk profile, with tremendous potential to prevent infections and reduce deaths, details [here](#).
- New research from WHO and partners shows that the COVID-19 pandemic is severely affecting the quality of care given to small and sick newborns, resulting in unnecessary suffering and deaths, details [here](#).

**WHO COUNTRY UPDATE**

**Coordination**
- WCO continues to provide technical support to MoHFW, NCDC, ICMR and NDMA at the national level and through task force/control rooms at the state and district levels.
- Attended high level COVID-19 review meetings in Assam, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh.
- Participated in COVID-19 response and vaccination review meeting chaired by Health Secretary in Jammu and Kashmir.

**COVID-19 vaccination**
- High level oversight during vaccination is provided by WHO teams at district and state levels.
- WCO continues to support training/retraining of vaccinators and other vaccination team members.
- WCO is supporting monitoring of vaccination sessions across the country and continues to provide surge support for training, microplanning and monitoring.
- WCO has deployed two officials in Mandi and Kangra regions in Himachal Pradesh to support COVID-19 vaccination drive, and to strengthen monitoring and surveillance for routine immunization and VPD.
- Advocating for an increase in session sites in Nagaland.
- WCO continues to support assessment of private hospitals in Kerala to enrol them as COVID-19 vaccination centres.

**Contact Tracing, Containment and Surveillance**
- Country office continues to provide technical support for COVID-19 containment activities in Andhra Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.
- In Uttar Pradesh, to identify ILI/SARI symptoms, a total of 31,544,836 houses have been covered and 162,017 symptomatic identified with the support of WHO field teams.

**Essential Services**
- Efforts to strengthen VPD surveillance and immunization are underway in Himachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu.
• Supporting Punjab and Tamil Nadu in strengthening and streamlining AEFI surveillance
• Supporting Chandigarh, Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra in planning and implementation of Intensified Mission Indradhanush 3.0
• Supporting Chandigarh, Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Laskhwadeep in conduction of training program on Integrated Disease Surveillance Program-Integrated Health Information Platform (IDSP-IHIP)

As of 21st March 2021, India has tested more than 233 M samples. Tests include both, RTPCR and Rapid Antigen. Most of the large states are ramping RTPCR tests. India’s current test positivity rate (7DMA) is 3.48%.

Testing - National Level

23,35,65,119
Cumulative Tests

GUIDELINES THIS WEEK

• Interim recommendations for the use of the Janssen Ad26.COV2.S (COVID-19) vaccine [LINK]
• A guide to contracting for health services during the COVID-19 pandemic [LINK]

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

In case of any queries on COVID-19, call +91-11-23978046 or 1075 (Toll-free). State Helpline here.
WHO Country Office for India I Telephone number: +91-11- 66564800 I Email: wrindia@who.int