

No positive cases reported from 325 districts: Health Ministry

WHO's National Polio Surveillance network team to be utilized to strengthen ongoing COVID-19 surveillance at district level: Health Ministry

Rapid Antibody based Blood test to be used for surveillance, not for diagnosis: ICMR

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The number of COVID-19 positive cases stands at 12,380 as on date, while 1489 people have recovered. A total of 414 people in the country have died because of the COVID-2019 infection. In the last 24 hours, 941 new cases and 37 deaths have been reported, while 183 people have recovered. This was informed by the Joint Secretary, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Shri Luv Aggarwal, at the daily media briefing on the actions taken, preparedness and updates on COVID-19, held at National Media Centre, PIB New Delhi today. The Joint Secretary further informed, case fatality rate is 3.3% and around 12.02% people have recovered so far.

The Joint Secretary also stated that no COVID-19 cases have been reported from 325 districts. Mahe in Puducherry is a district where no positive case has been reported in the last 28 days. The Joint Secretary gave credit for this positive result to the field level containment works. He further stated that 27 districts in 17 states have not reported any positive case in the last 14 days. These districts that have yielded positive results include - Patna in Bihar; Nadia in West Bengal; Pratapgarh in Rajasthan; Gir-Somnath, Porbandar in Gujarat; Bhadradi Kothagudem in Telengana; South Goa in Goa; Pauri-Garhwal in Uttarakhand, Pilibhit in UP, Rajouri in J&K Imphal West in Manipur, Bilaspur, Durg, Rajnandgaon- Raipur in Chhattisgarh, Aizawl West in Mizoram, Wayanad and Kottayam in Kerala, Davanagare, Tumkur, Koagu, Bellary and Udupi in Karnataka, SBS Nagar and Hoshiarpur in Punjab, Panipat and Rohtak in Haryana and Shivgiri in MP.

The Joint Secretary further stated:

- The Health Ministry along with all stakeholders is continuing its fight against COVID-19. Health Minister and MoS, Health Ministry held a video conference yesterday with health functionaries and WHO field officers. Detailed discussions were held on micro-plan for cluster and outbreak containment in co-ordination with WHO officers at district level.
- At the same time, an action plan has been prepared to use WHO's National Polio Surveillance team's network to strengthen the ongoing COVID-19 surveillance.
- Health Minister took part in an interactive session organised by CII, where he thanked Indian industry for contributing towards PM Cares Fund. Health Minister also said that he is aware of their hardships and addressed their concerns by speaking about the measures taken to revive economy. He also called for making use of Make in India opportunities in healthcare sector in course of ongoing COVID-

19 pandemic, so that India becomes more resilient and self-sufficient in providing critical healthcare equipment.

- Health Ministry has issued [an advisory for ensuring Safe Drinking Water during the pandemic](#). Public Health Departments have been asked to pay heed towards this issue and make safe drinking water available to vulnerable sections of society. Also, advice has been given for use of chlorine tablets, bleaching powder and hypochlorite solution.
- Health Ministry has also issued [detailed guidelines to States and UTs about providing essential health services during COVID-19](#), in which Maternal and Child Health, Prevention of Communicable Diseases and Treatment and Management of Chronic Disorders are included, so that complications can be avoided and emergencies taken care of. Other than dedicated COVID facilities, all other healthcare facilities can provide these services. Not-for-profit and private sectors can also be included in such healthcare services. It has been requested that healthcare workers' safety be ensured while working in these Non-COVID departments. Tele-health services to be promoted for avoiding overcrowding in health facilities. Immunisation and ante-natal care services should continue during lockdown. These and other similar services to be provided by fixing particular days in healthcare facilities. While delivering these services, physical distancing and other infection prevention protocols should be followed. Pregnant women, children with malnutrition, TB, leprosy, HIV, Viral Hepatitis and pulmonary diseases and services like dialysis to be monitored in health centres and Health and Wellness Centres by Primary Healthcare team.
- [The Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change has amended the Environment Impact Assessment \(EIA\) Notification 2006](#), to ramp up availability/production of bulk drugs within short span of time, so that appraisal can be done at state level rather than national level. Within a period of about two weeks, more than 100 such proposals have been received.

Stating that positive results are noticeable due to the action plan implemented at field level, the Joint Secretary reiterated that if the combined efforts of lockdown, social distancing and containment measures are continued, we will definitely be successful.

Informing that states have stepped up efforts to implement lockdown measures and that necessary action is to be taken at places where lockdown measures are being violated, the representative of the Home Affairs Ministry stated:

- According to Prime Minister's announcement about extension of lockdown till May 3, 2020, detailed guidelines have been issued by the Home Ministry, which is available on the Ministry's website. Home Ministry has written to all States and UTs to implement these guidelines at ground level and stressed on creating awareness about the guidelines for the benefit of common citizens.
- Availability of essential food items like rice, wheat, pulses and milk is satisfactory and it is being continuously monitored.
- While lockdown continues till May 3, 2020, travel by air, rail and road shall remain completely closed while lockdown continues till May 3, 2020. Taxi, auto-rickshaw, cycle rickshaw and also, cab aggregators' services shall remain closed till May 3, 2020.
- All shopping complexes, cinema halls, malls, gymnasiums, sports complex and similar places will remain closed till May 3, 2020.
- All social, political, sports, entertainment, cultural, religious gatherings shall be prohibited in the lockdown period. All religious places, places of worship and religious gatherings will also remain closed for public.
- The places which do not fall under hotspots may be given certain relaxations for movement after April 20, 2020, under the conditions that the lockdown guidelines and social distancing will be strictly implemented. These relaxations will be given so that agriculture and allied sectors remain fully functional and rural economy works efficiently.
- Lockdown rules to be strictly implemented at public places and workplaces so as to make it successful. Face-masks to be made compulsory at public places and all workplaces. Social Distancing norms to be followed; gathering of more than 5 people not to be allowed at public places; no spitting at public

places; sale of alcohol, gutka and tobacco at public places to be strictly prohibited, temperature screening at workplaces and use of sanitizers to be done.

- Senior citizens and those who are suffering from ailments and co-morbidities, parents having small children are to be encouraged to work from home. Employees of both private and government sectors to be encouraged all the more to download Aarogya Setu App. All Government Orders and SOPs related to the Lockdown Guidelines to be read carefully, so as to become aware of it and follow it.

A total of 2,90,401 COVID-19 tests have been done till yesterday, informed the representative of ICMR. Of these, 30,043 tests were performed yesterday which includes 26,331 tests in ICMR network labs and 3,712 tests in private labs. There are 176 labs in ICMR network and 78 private labs with 16,000 collection centres for COVID-19 testing.

Dr Gangakhedkar of ICMR further stated that a total of five lakh Rapid Testing Kits have arrived. He further said, Antibody Test is only to be done for surveillance, trend-checking in hotspots and other areas, that is, epidemiological purposes and not for early diagnosis. It is to be used on people coming from countries having high COVID-19 infection rate (when foreign travel is resumed), health care workers, contacts of lab confirmed cases showing symptoms, people living in hotspots having SARI or Influenza like symptoms and asymptomatic high-risk contacts. He further said, Sample pooling of RTPCR can be used for pooled testing in districts where infection rate is less than 2 percent. This reduces the cost without compromising on results.

LIVE tweets by [@PIB_India](#) from the media briefing can be found on [this thread](#).

DJM/SC

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