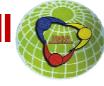




Media Scanning & Verification Cell



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Media alert from the Media Scanning & Verification Cell, IDSP-NCDC.

Alert ID	Publication Date	Reporting Date	Place Name	News Source/Publication Language
6079	17.02.2021	17.02.2021	Maharashtra	www.indianexpress.com/English https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/pune/general- slackness-in-maharashtra-says-ncdc-step-up-testing- and-contact-tracing-7192058/
Title:	Rise in Covid-19 cases in Maharashtra could be due to 'overall slackness'- NCDC			
Action By CSU, IDSP –NCDC	Information communicated to SSU-Maharashtra			

The National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), whose teams had visited Maharashtra last month to assess the coronavirus situation, has said the recent rise in numbers in the state could be attributed to an "overall slackness".

"There is a lot of susceptible population and when our team visited Akola, Amravati, Yavatmal and other areas, we found that people are not following basic rules of wearing masks," Dr Sujit Singh, director of NCDC, told *The Indian Express.*

"Also, marriages are taking place with large gatherings as earlier. People do not fully understand that a big proportion of the population is still susceptible to the disease, and the vaccination is yet to commence in some areas and many age groups," he said.

Maharashtra has been witnessing a slow but steady rise in coronavirus numbers during the last two weeks. On Tuesday, the state government brought back some restrictions on gatherings and movement and warned that even a lockdown could be imposed again if the situation deteriorated further. The government has asked everyone to strictly follow the norms of physical distancing and always wear face

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masks in public. Local authorities have been instructed to impose heavy penalties on people not following the rules. "We have asked health officials in Maharashtra to do a microanalysis. The increase is not uniform across the state. There are certain districts and wards where a sudden rise has been noticed," Singh said.

"When we had visited Amravati (two weeks ago), there were about 200 active cases. Now there are about 400. There is a need to put a check on the further spread. After a micro-analysis, some restrictions on movements need to be put in place, if it is required," he said.

Singh said the team had seen an overall laxity in the way the situation was being handled in the state, especially in matters of testing and contact tracing.

"Home isolation rules are being flouted, and there is no one to enforce these. There is no stamping on the houses where positive cases have been detected. We have asked the district administrations to strictly enforce the rules, and also increase testing in a big way. Let's try to achieve 100 per cent testing in these problematic areas," he said.

"Maharashtra has to be very careful, and any slackness on the part of the public or government authorities would lead to a surge in cases. Overall, the situation is not very bad right now, but there are a few districts where things need to be tightened," he said.

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