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Amid surge, PM stresses on the need to 'test, track & treat' more

At meeting with CMs, he rules out large lockdowns

NISTULA HEBBAR
BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN
NEW DELHI

Amid growing concerns over vaccine shortage, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday told the Chief Ministers of the States that the surge of COVID-19 – crossing peak levels of the first wave – required a firm strategy of "Test, Track and Treat", while seeming to rule out any large scale lockdown.

Intensive testing, testing 100% in well-defined micro containment zones, tracing at least 30 contacts of every positive case and ensuring that all eligible people were vaccinated was the strategy required, Mr Modi said.

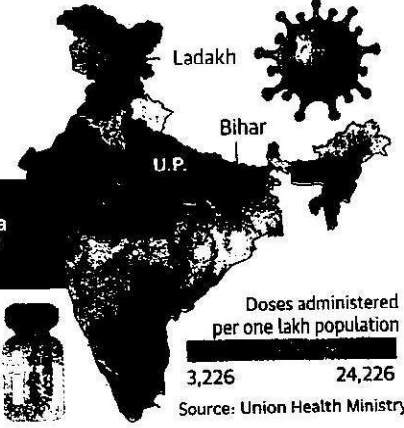
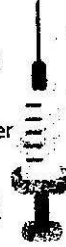
He was addressing Chief Ministers online as the country battles a massive second wave of COVID-19 infections. He stressed on the need to demarcate specific micro containment zones, almost

State of vaccination

Ladakh has already administered over 24,000 doses per 1 lakh people, while Bihar and U.P. have given only around 3,200. The map depicts the number of doses administered per one lakh people

■ The country has administered over 9,01,98,673 doses in total as of 7 a.m. on Thursday (6,581 doses per 1 lakh population). There are over 4.3 crore doses in stock/ nearing delivery to the States/U.T.s, according to the Union Health Minister

As of 11.45 p.m. on Thursday, India recorded 1,31,787 new cases



Source: Union Health Ministry

'Double mutant' strain named

The "double mutant" virus that scientists had flagged last month as having a bearing on the spread of the pandemic in India, now has a formal scientific classification: B.1.1.617. > PAGE 10

ruling out large scale lockdown in towns and cities.

"Many States have faced criticism due to a large num-

New cases cross 1.15 lakh again

As of 10 p.m. on Thursday, India reported 1,18,993 COVID-19 cases and 698 deaths. Daily infections have crossed the one-lakh mark for the second consecutive day. > PAGE 10

ber of cases, but I tell them not to bother; keep the testing rates high, trace as many contacts as possible, and test

India sees 180 AEFI deaths

According to a presentation made to the National AEFI Committee on March 31, there have been 617 severe (including deaths) adverse events following immunisation. > PAGE 10

100% in micro containment zones," he said.

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PM stresses on need for more 'test, track & treat'

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"These zones cannot be large undefined areas. If cases arise in a block of flats that tower can be a micro containment zone, the entire complex cannot be a containment zone," Mr. Modi added. Mr Modi admitted that the long battle against COVID19 may have led to "COVID fatigue" among people and local administration, but that it needed to be gotten over and urged that governors of States and civil society members, people of influence be roped in to emphasise COVID appropriate behaviour again.

Mr Modi also suggested that a "Teeka Utsav" (Vaccination Festival) be organised between April 11 (birth anniversary of social reformer Mahatma Jyotiba Phule) and April 14 (birth anniversary Dr. Bhimrao

Ambedkar) as a way of ensuring maximum vaccinations of those eligible.

"A set out festival like this can be used to motivate many people to get themselves vaccinated," he said.

Addressing the issue of shortage of vaccines raised by several States, the Prime Minister again urged that strict testing and raising the share of testing by RTPCR to 70% of all tests be undertaken, stating that "vaccination will be a long process which will go on side-by-side."

"I urge the youth, instead of waiting for the vaccine, to not just follow COVID-19 appropriate behaviour, but also urge others and help those with less digital literacy and in the eligible category to be vaccinated," he said.