

Govt grants Rs 900cr to accelerate COVID-19 vaccine development

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By TIOL News Service

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vernment announced the third stimulus package of Rs. 900 crore the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) for †Mission COVID Suraksha' to place the development of approximately 5-6 vaccine candidates.

The Ministry of Science and Technology said on Saturday that the mission envisages COVID-19 vaccine development with end-to-end focus from preclinical development through clinical development and manufacturing and regulatory facilitation for deployment, the DBT said.

"Mission COVID Suraksha is our targeted effort to enable development of indigenous, affordable and accessible vaccines for our country and will complement the National Mission of Atmanirbhar Bharat," said Dr Renu Swarup, Secretary, Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science and Technology and Chairperson of the Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC).

The aim is to consolidate all available and funded resources towards an accelerated product development, so the vaccines are brought closer to licensure and introduction in market for consideration of regulatory authorities for introduction in public health systems, to combat further spread of COVID infection.

Phase-I of the COVID Suraksha Mission has been allotted Rs.900 crore for a period of 12 months.

The important objectives of the fund will be accelerating pre-clinical and clinical development, licensure of COVID-19 vaccine candidates that are currently in clinical stages or ready to enter clinical stage of development, establishing clinical trial sites, and strengthening the existing immunoassay laboratories, central laboratories and suitable facilities for animal studies, production facilities and other testing facilities to support COVID-19 vaccine development.

They will also be supporting development of common harmonized protocols, trainings, data management systems, regulatory submissions, internal and external quality management systems and accreditations.

DBT said a total of 10 vaccine candidates have been supported by them so far of which 5 are in human trials including the Russian Vaccine Sputnik-V with at least 3 more in advanced stages of preclinical to enter human trials shortly.