

Cabinet Secretary chairs high-level meeting of States reporting high COVID-19 caseloads

By TIOL News Service

NEW DELHI, FEB 27, 2021: CABINET Secretary Mr Rajiv Gauba on Saturday chaired a high-level review meeting with the chief secretaries of Maharashtra, Punjab, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, Telangana, and Jammu and Kashmir, who have all been reporting a high active caseload or seen a spike in COVID-19 cases in the past week.

Mr Gauba reiterated that the States and Union Territories (UTs) need to maintain continued rigorous vigil in terms of containing the spread of the virus and not squander the gains of the collective hard work of the last year.

"They were advised not to lower their guard, enforce COVID Appropriate Behaviour and deal firmly with violations," said an official statement.

The meeting to review and discuss the COVID management and response strategy, held through video conference, was attended by the chief secretaries and senior health professionals.

Maharashtra, Kerala, Punjab, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Gujarat have shown a surge in new cases in the last 24 hours.

"Eight states are displaying an upward trajectory in daily new cases," the ministry said.

Maharashtra continued to report the highest daily new cases at 8,333, followed by Kerala with 3,671 while Punjab reported 622 new cases on Saturday.

In the last two weeks, Maharashtra has also shown the highest rise in active cases from 34,449 on February 14 to 68,810 currently.

Six states and UTs account for 82.3 per cent of the new deaths, which stood at 113 in the past 24 hours. Maharashtra reported the maximum casualties at 48, followed by Punjab with 15 daily deaths.

States informed the Cabinet Secretary about the enforcement of COVID appropriate behaviour by levying heavy fines and challans, reviewing the surveillance and containment activities closely with the District Collectors, and other steps being taken in line with the guidelines provided by Health and Home Ministries.

Mr Gauba strongly underlined that the affected States and UTs need to follow surveillance strategies in respect of potential super spreading events. Need for effective testing, comprehensive tracking, prompt isolation of positive cases and quick quarantine of close contacts were also strongly emphasized.