

India may tweak its testing strategy as variants emerge



India may soon come up with a new playbook for covid-19 testing according to which individuals with covid symptoms will be prioritized for testing regardless of vaccination status or disease history. This is in line with the World Health Organization's (WHO) latest guidance for national SARS-CoV-2 testing strategies and diagnostic capacities. It comes against the backdrop of new SARS-CoV-2 virus variants surfacing around the country.

WHO has so far advanced

over 20 million covid-19 vaccine

doses, but many among the fully

vaccinated or those who have re-

covered from the disease seem to

be reluctant to take a test consid-

ering the limited diagnostic infra-

structure. Furthermore, with mu-

ture variants such as alpha, beta,

gamma, delta, and delta plus sur-

face, infections have been report-

ed even among fully vaccinated

people.

WHO has said if resources are

limited and it is not possible to

test all symptomatic people, indi-

viduals who are at the risk of de-

veloping severe disease, health

workers, or persons in health fa-

cilities, and the first symptomatic

individual or cohort of symptomatic

individuals in a closed setting,

such as long-term care facilities, are

the setting of a suspected out-

break, should be prioritized for

testing. Testing of symptomatic

people should be prioritized over

testing asymptomatic individuals,

but testing of symptomatic indi-

viduals can be informative in fol-

lowing contacts of confirmed cases

on healthcare and long-term care

facility workers who are frequent-

ly exposed to the virus, WHO said.

"India has been changing its

testing strategy from time to time

depending upon the epidemiologi-

cal situation of the virus. The

WHO recommendations are being

evaluated by the covid-19 testing

task force. If available for the coun-

try, the guidelines would be adopt-

ed. India has been focusing on

testing symptomatic persons since

the start of the pandemic and will

continue to do so," said Dr Rajni

Kant, director, Regional Medical

Research Centre, and head, re-

search management, policy plan-

ning and coordination of the Indi-

an Council of Medical Research

(ICMR).

"We are increasing our labora-

tory infrastructure and there is no

shortage in testing. Testing is criti-

cal to controlling the pandemic,

and we aim to increase testing to

more than 4.5 million a day," he

said.

WHO disapproved the proce-

dure of biological survey to screen

population for covid-19 and allow-

ing covid self test. "Wide-spread

testing of asymptomatic popula-

tions, including through self-test-

ing, is not recommended based on

lack of evidence on impact and

cost-effectiveness of such ap-

proaches and the concern that this

approach risks diverting neces-

sary resources from higher priority testing in-

terventions," said WHO.

"Member states that consider

Kazakhstan records 2,016 new cases of coronavirus, 13 deaths



AKIPRESS.COM - Kazakh-

stan has recorded 2,016 new cases

of the coronavirus infection, the

Health Ministry said on June 30.

878 cases were recorded in

Novosibirsk, 301 in Karaganda, 213

in Almaty, 126 in West Kazakhstan

region, 106 in Shymkent city,

56 in Aktyubinsk region, 89 in Aysay

region, 71 in East Kazakhstan re-

gion, 56 in Pavlodar region, 53 in

Alma-Ata region, 59 in Mangystau

region, 48 in Atyrau region, 47 in

Kostanay region, 32 in Tselinograd

region, 25 in Zhetysay region, 14

in Atyrau region, and 13 in

North Kazakhstan region.

In Kazakhstan's northernmost com-

munism today stands at 423,117 as

for

A surging crisis in Sri Lanka

India's COVID-19 wave has rightly attracted the attention of the world, but the rest of South Asia is hardly sitting pretty. Inevitably, Sri Lanka is feeling the heat. Over the last few months, the world has watched India struggle through an unrelenting COVID-19 situation. Over the first half of 2021, the pandemic's second wave swamped the country's fragile health system, resulting in a particularly high death toll. This prompted analysts to warn the situation in India is ticking time bomb for the whole South Asian region. One country that has seen this play out in a large second wave is the war-ravaged and economically hampered Sri Lanka. Earlier in the year Sri Lanka's health authorities issued that a failure to maintain COVID-19 guidelines during the Tamil-Sinhala New Year led to a surge in new cases, and they also confirmed that a new virus variant was behind the outbreak, the more contagious B.1.1.7 of Alpha variant. Since then, the emerging Delta variant has been found to be present in the population too.

WHO helps to develop skills and access to assistive technology in Tajikistan

15 healthcare workers and 30 participants from the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Tajikistan completed a 5-day of training to develop skills and competencies in providing assistive technology services at primary health care centers in Tajikistan. The primary purpose of assistive products is to maintain or improve an individual's functioning and independence and thereby promote their well-being. All assistive products should be provided by trained individuals. Examples include wheelchairs, hearing aids, crutches, shower chairs and spectacles.

WHO Europe, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Tajikistan, conducted the 5-day training course at the National Orthopaedic Center in Dushanbe, using WHO's Training in Assistive Products (TAP), a free, online interactive learning resource that teaches how to provide assistive products.

Dr. Rakhmat Raxlov, a family doctor from Rudaki district, said of the training, "Before, we only saw the symptoms of the disease.

"It is critical for all SARS-CoV-2 testing to be linked to public health actions to ensure appropriate clinical care and support and carry out contact tracing to break the chain of transmission, the apex

global public health agency said.

Molecular-detecting NAAT (Nucleic Acid Amplification Test) assays may be used as a screening tool for covid variants, but the presence of a variant should be confirmed through sequencing, it said.

"We have written to states that they should check for mutant viruses and follow the WHO guidance," said Dr. Sumitran Pandey, head, ICMS division of epidemiology and communicable diseases.

Uzbekistan to boost copper production

Uzbekistan plans to increase annual copper production from the current 140,000 tons to 400,000 tons in five years to meet growing global demand, Uzbek president's press service said Tuesday.

The central Asian nation's copper production has already increased by almost 1.5 times in the past five years and reached 140,000 tons in 2020, bringing 2.5 billion U.S. dollars of revenue from its export, the press service said.

The figures were revealed during a government meeting with the participation of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, who involved the plans to create a copper industry cluster and introduce modern technologies in the sector involving leading international companies.

Mirziyoyev also highlighted the experience of producing value-added products rather than exporting copper as a raw material, the press service said.

Lithuanian consulting experts demand for copper has been growing worldwide due to the growth in the production of electric vehicles, electrical engineering and the development of renewable energy.

Daily COVID-19 report: Pakistan's positivity rate goes up again, recorded at 2.3%

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan reported 27 new fatalities from coronavirus in the last 24 hours, followed by 42,067 more were conducted on June 29, of which 77 came back positive for COVID-19.

The country's positivity rate increased again and now stands at 2.3%.

A further 27 people died of coronavirus in Pakistan in the last 24 hours, pushing the national death toll to 1,204 since the pandemic started on March 23.

Health reported the most deaths in the last 24 hours, followed by Punjab. One of the 27 deaths in the last 24 hours, 19 people died on ventilators.

The total active COVID-19 cases in Pakistan are currently 11,606.

Assessing this previous week's breakdown, the active cases in Islamabad 1,242, Punjab 1,238, in Khuzdar Pakhtunkhwa 9,525, in Islamabad Capital Territory 1,500, in Balochistan 746, in Gilgit-Baltistan 64 and in Azad Jammu and Kashmir 461.

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Variant surge at border forces Bangladesh into new lockdown

Rising infections and crowded hospitals are being seen across Bangladesh, where a stringent lockdown is in place. The government will deploy military soldiers to enforce the lockdown and not let police enforce the lockdown, a preliminary report said.

Authorities warn that the rapid surge at border areas is increasing the 'covid' spread further into Bangladesh, and the increasing number of infections from the delta variant is a major concern.

"If people do not maintain health safety rules and if they do not stay at home, this wave of the pandemic in Bangladesh could be

fully minimized. Another 1.5 million have received one dose, but the shortage of Oxford-AstraZeneca imports, halted by India, have left them uncertain when they'll get their second dose.

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