

## AIR Spotlight - PM's Message to People to follow Covid Appropriate Behaviour

AIR Spotlight is an insightful programme featured daily on the All India Radio Newsonair. In this program, many eminent panelists discuss issues of importance which can be quite helpful in [IAS exam](#) preparation. In this article, the topic of discussion is the Prime Minister's message to the people of India to follow Covid-appropriate behaviour.

### Participants:

- Shekhar Iyer, Political Analyst.
- Chetan Chauhan, Journalist.

### Context:

The Prime Minister discussed rising COVID cases in the northeast with the chief ministers of northeastern states.

### Prime Minister meeting with the chief ministers of Northeast states

- The Prime Minister expressed concern about the large number of people visiting hill stations which may increase [COVID](#) cases.
- His message in the meeting was also for the whole country. Crowds are gathering at various places in the country which can set an alarming condition. The laxity shown by crowds at various places in the country is a sign of concern.
- The Prime Minister stressed the inevitability of the third wave and the need for preparedness to tackle it.
- Handling the third wave depends much on individuals. When the third wave would come and what would be its magnitude depend on people as the virus requires people to spread.
- Following the address of the Prime Minister, the Union home secretary has written to all the chief secretaries of states to enforce COVID-appropriate behaviours. He has pointed out that with a small increase in the R factor or the reproduction factor, the mathematical model to analyze the spread of COVID points towards a grave situation.
- The Prime Minister stressed that even if one has been vaccinated, he or she should wear masks. As a large number of people are still unvaccinated, we have to be extremely careful.
- The Prime Minister emphasized micro containment zones in the northeast region to contain the spread of COVID.
- He appreciated the effort by Assam where the government established 6000 micro containment zones. In containment zones, it is easy to ensure accountability. If cases are rising in a particular area, its in-charge can be held responsible.
- The Prime Minister wants every state to learn from the past one and a half years of experience gained in handling COVID.

- The pattern of spread of COVID depends on human behaviour. For example, Kerala initially was successful in containing the spread of COVID. However, the cases there are rising. The virus is changing forms and is trying to affect more and more people.

**Also read:** [COVID Variants](#)

### **Strengthening health infrastructure**

- Due to the prolonged lockdown, economic activities nearly came to a standstill. People want to revive these. However, the danger is because of the laxity in enforcing COVID-appropriate behavior.
- The Prime Minister also highlighted the cabinet decision of allocating Rs. 23,000 cr to the second phase of strengthening health infrastructure both under the central scheme as well as under the centrally sponsored scheme.
- The idea is to utilize this money to build more hospital beds, ICUs, etc. to tackle future crises.
- The Prime Minister said that vaccination will be key to tackle the third wave. The central government has made vaccines free for all. The state governments need to identify areas where cases are rising and ensure rapid vaccination.

### **Concerns related to COVID preparedness:**

- States are highlighting the shortage of vaccine supply by the central government.
- There is another issue of vaccine hesitancy, where people are refusing to get vaccinated. The Prime Minister emphasized the need to involve social and cultural organizations as well as celebrities to fight against vaccine hesitancy.
- Like in polio vaccination, the role of community and religious leaders are critical in enhancing the rate of vaccination.
- Another issue is vaccine wastages. States need to ensure that vaccine wastage should be minimized.
- The health minister has pointed out that in 70 districts the positivity rate is increasing and the majority of these districts are from southern states.
- Southern states are contributing 50% to the everyday COVID cases reported across the country. The Prime Minister will hold a separate meeting with chief ministers of southern states on July 16.
- It is very surprising that in spite of having a strong health machinery, Kerala is witnessing an increase in the number of cases.
- In Tamil Nadu, after the state assembly elections were over, there was a tendency among people to forget COVID and live as if there was nothing to fear. People failed to realize that living with COVID was the new normal and they have to follow COVID-appropriate behaviours.
- Authorities also need to ensure that people wear masks, use sanitizers and maintain social distancing.
- Many states have demonstrated good practices to contain the spread of COVID. For example, Rajasthan has attained a faster rate of vaccination. Other states need to learn good practices.
- The Mumbai model has also been appreciated in containing the spread of COVID.
- The Prime Minister has suggested aggressive testing in clustered blocks of urban areas.

- Kerala also emphasized aggressive testing and subsequent follow-up during the first wave. Other states can learn from it.
- Now, the issue is that as we are entering the festive season in the next few months, we have to remember that it was the same period last year when the ground was prepared for the second wave. We need to keep these in mind.
- Uttarakhand has already banned Kanwar yatra. The [Supreme Court](#) has also asked the Uttar Pradesh government to explain why it is thinking of allowing the Kanwar yatra amid the looming third wave.

**Conclusion:**

- Every citizen needs to act responsibly in order to fight the upcoming third wave.
- The Prime Minister, again and again, has emphasized that wearing masks is the most important way to fight the pandemic, the second being getting vaccinated. This should be followed by every individual.

Read more Gist of AIR Spotlight [here](#).