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Media alert from the Media Scanning & Verification Cell, IDSP-NCDC.

Alert ID	Publication Date	Reporting Date	Place Name	News Source/Publication Language
5848	24.03.2020	24.03.2020	Himachal Pradesh West Bengal	The Times of India English Newspaper 24 th March, 2020/Page No. 01
Title:	2 more deaths as new cases surge by 99; total now 498			
Action By CSU, IDSP -NCDC	Information communicated to SSU-Himachal Pradesh & West Bengal			

Covid-19 infections continued to spike across the country, with 99 fresh cases reported from states on Monday — by far the highest for a single day — even as two more Covid-19 patients succumbed to the disease, taking the coronavirus death toll to nine so far.

The count of coronavirus cases in the country stood close to 500, with 498 cases reported so far by the states. As many as 246 cases have surfaced in the past three days, accounting for nearly half of all cases reported since January 30.

The health ministry confirmed 478 cases, of which 40 are foreigners. On the brighter side, 35 patients have so far recovered and have been discharged, health ministry officials said.

The two Covid-19 deaths were reported from West Bengal and Himachal Pradesh, even as Kerala (28) and Maharashtra (23) continued to register the highest number of fresh cases. Gujarat, with 12 new cases, was another hotspot. In all, 15 states/ UTs

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**Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP), National Centre for Disease Control,
Ministry Of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India**

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reported new cases on Monday, with Himachal Pradesh entering the list with three cases and one death.

Meanwhile, the Indian Council of Medical Research, which has been conducting mathematical modelling of Covid-19 cases, said strictly implemented steps for social distancing would reduce the expected number of coronavirus cases by 62% and the peak number of cases by 89%.

“That’s why we are focussing so much on lockdown to stop the chain of transmission. People can help us by simply staying at home,” said an ICMR expert.

Identifying 75% of asymptomatic cases vital: ICMR

Strictly-implemented social distancing measures, such as home quarantine of symptomatic and suspected cases, will reduce the overall expected number of cases by 62% and the peak cases by 89%, thus flattening the curve and providing more opportunities for interventions,” he added.

He said, in the pessimistic scenario, where asymptomatic infections are half as symptomatic as the infectious symptomatic ones, this projected impact would fall to 2%.

ICMR said that identifying at least 75% of the asymptomatic individuals was needed in order to significantly delay the outbreak. “Additional detection of 90% of asymptomatic individuals would delay the average time of the epidemic by 20 days,” the organisation said in an update.

Bengal’s first Covid-19 death was a 55-year-old railway employee, who was admitted to Kolkata’s AMRI Hospital with severe respiratory distress, cough and fever on March 16. He had been confirmed positive for the virus two days ago. The patient died due to cardiac arrest at 3.35pm after two failed attempts to put him on ECM (extra-corporeal membrane oxygenation) support.

In Himachal Pradesh, a Tibetan who had recently returned from the US, was confirmed as the first death due to Covid-19 in the state.

R D Dhiman, Himachal Pradesh’s additional chief secretary (health), said, “The deceased had arrived in Delhi on March 15 and reached McLeodganj on March 21 in a taxi. He complained of respiratory problem on Monday and was taken to a private hospital. But as his condition deteriorated, he was referred to Tanda hospital, where he died.”

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