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# Covid battle far from over: Health min in Rajya Sabha

Fatality Rate At  
1.6%, Recovery  
Rate At 77%

New Delhi: Sounding a note of caution, Union health minister **Harsh Vardhan** on



Tuesday told the Rajya Sabha that the battle against Covid-19 is far from over, at a

time when India's total tally has neared the five million mark. "I would urge all Members of Parliament that the coronavirus battle is still far from over. On one hand, when we are in an unlock stage to revive the Indian economy, and have a balanced approach, it is important that sustained community support is ensured to control the spread of the virus and break its chain of transmission," Vardhan said in the Upper House.

India on Tuesday reported a spike of 83,000 new cases in the last 24 hours, taking the country's total tally past 50-lakh mark, including 9,90,061 active cases. "Covid-19 fatality and recovery rates stand at 1.6% and 77.6% respectively. Maximum cases and deaths have primarily been reported from Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh,



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Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, West Bengal, Bihar, Telangana, Odisha, Assam, Kerala, and Gujarat," the minister further said.

He said about 40 lakh persons were under surveillance. "Extensive contact tracing of all positive cases is being undertaken by officials regularly through disease surveillance networks so as to break the chain of transmission," he added.

Vardhan also spoke about the clinical management of coronavirus, pointing out that no specific antiviral drugs have proved effective so far while the symptomatic treatment for fever and cough,

appropriate rehydration, and supplemental oxygen therapy remained the mainstay of treatment.

The minister, however, said that in India, drug hydroxychloroquine has been repurposed for mild and moderate cases. In addition, provisions for investigation and therapy have also been made for the treatment of Remdesivir, convalescent plasma, and Tocilizumab for managing severe cases under close medical supervision.

India has been able to limit its cases and deaths to 3,320 cases per million and 55 deaths per million which is one of the lowest in the world, he added. AGENCIES

## Call on plasma therapy for Covid-19 left to task force, JMG

New Delhi: The National Task Force on Covid-19 and joint monitoring group (JMG) of the health ministry will decide whether the plasma therapy should be continued in the treatment of coronavirus infected patients in India, said Dr Balram Bhargava, DG of Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), on Tuesday.

Dr Bhargava informed in context with the ICMR findings that revealed convalescent plasma (CP) therapy didn't help in reducing death due to the coronavirus in India. "Plasma therapy has been used for more than 100 years now for various virus infections. It was used in ebola and now for Covid-19. Whether it helps in coronavirus treatment or not, it is being studied. It will undergo peer review," he said during a press conference here.

"Once peer review happens and we get a full publication out, this data will be considered again by the NTF and joint monitoring group of health ministry, then a decision will be taken if we should continue with it," he said. ANI