

Maharashtra, Kerala asked to impose night curfew as Covid cases spike

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India has asked the states of Kerala and Maharashtra to consider night curfews in areas with high COVID-19 case numbers as the country reported more than 40,000 new infections for two days in a row on Friday. Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla on Thursday reviewed the measures being taken by the governments in Kerala and Maharashtra for checking the spread of COVID-19.

Ajay Bhalla observed that more efforts would be required to arrest the increase in infections. "This would require adequate intervention in geographical areas having a higher infection, through measures such as contact tracing, vaccination drives, and COVID appropriate behavior," said a Ministry of Home Affairs statement.

Govt has also advised state governments that they should continue with their vaccination programs and in case they required more vaccines, the same would be provided to the extent possible.

Cases fell to a five-month low of 25,166 in the middle of the month but have risen sharply in the last three days, mainly in Kerala that recently celebrated a big festival.

India reported 44,658 new COVID-19 infections on Friday, taking the total to 32.6 million, the most in the world after the United States. Deaths rose by 496 to 436,861.

Kerala, on India's southern tip, has accounted for nearly 60% of the new cases in the past week and more than half of the total active cases, followed by 16% in the western state of Maharashtra.