

Government launches 'Mission COVID Suraksha' to help boost vaccine development

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The Central Government has launched 'Mission COVID Suraksha' in order to facilitate the development of approximately 5-6 COVID-19 vaccine candidates. According to the Department of Biotechnology, it will also ensure that the vaccine candidates are brought closure to introduction and licensure in the market.

The DBT further informed that the mission focuses on the COVID-19 vaccine development with end-to-end focus from the preclinical stage through clinical development as well as manufacturing and regulatory facilitation.

Key Highlights

- Earlier in November 2020, the government had announced the third stimulus package worth Rs. 900 crores for 'Mission COVID Suraksha- the Indian COVID-19 Vaccine Development Mission'. The grant under the package will be provided to the Department of Biotechnology for the research and development of vaccines.
- The mission will help in accelerating the development of the COVID-19 vaccine. It will

also introduce them in the market for the consideration of regulation authorities for introduction in public health systems to control the further spread of infection.

- The DBT had earlier announced the programmes for vaccine development as well as other COVID-related solutions, but this mission will be dedicated purely to vaccine development.
- A total of 10 vaccine candidates have been supported by the Department of Biotechnology so far in both industry and academia.
- The mission's aim will also be to establish clinical trial sites. It will also strengthen the central laboratories, existing immunoassay laboratories, and suitable facilities for production studies, animal studies, and other test facilities for supporting vaccine development.
- Under the mission, cell line development, capabilities for process development, manufacturing of Good Manufacturing Practices, clinical trials, and batches for animal toxicology will also be supported.
- The key portion will be the development of a suitable target product profile so that the vaccines that are being introduced through mission have characteristics that are applicable to India.

SOURCE: *The Hindu*