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Is public negligence driving India towards the third wave of COVID-19?

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**To the editor**

India has barely recuperated from the second wave of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) [1,2] and has reached a peak of 414,188 cases (300.13 per million) on May 6, 2021. The prediction and preparedness for the third wave of the COVID-19 in the nation has been described earlier [3]. In addition, the utility of the vaccination certificate in the pandemic mitigation has also been described previously [4]. However, the people of India are further lowering the guard against COVID-19, indicating the signs of the predicted third wave in the country.

After the relaxation in the COVID-19 regulations by the respective state governments, the people again started mass gatherings in the tourist spots such as Kullu, Manali (Himachal Pradesh), Mussoorie, Nainital (Uttarakhand) etc. Therefore, looking at the public disposition, the state government of Himachal Pradesh has implemented strict regulations such as imposing a fine of Indian rupees 8000 (US $ 107.61 as of August 3, 2021) or seven days imprisonment on violation of COVID appropriate behavior (CAB). Other state governments should also enforce these types of strict measures to control the public overcrowding at the tourist spots throughout the nation.

The Government of India has been issuing periodic messages for public awareness about the precautionary measures for the control of COVID-19 through television, radio, newspapers, and social media (Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram). However, the disregardful incidents of mass gatherings, religious pilgrims, and other events violating the COVID appropriate behavior have indicated ignorance of the government messages that may cause the resurgence of SARS-CoV-2 infections in the coming months.

The Government of India has already boosted the immunization programme (administered 472.22 million doses) as on August 3, 2021 [5] aiming to achieve the vaccination of the whole country by the year-end. However, the people of the nation, apart from getting the COVID-19 vaccine jab, should also abide by non-pharmaceutical interventions such as wearing masks, maintaining social distance, and regular hand washing. The Prime Minister of India has coined the slogan “Dawai Bhi, Kadaai Bhi” (yes to medicine and yes to caution), advising people not to let their guard down while fighting against the COVID-19.

In conclusion, the Government of India is trying its best to overcome the grave situation of COVID-19 in the nation, along with strategic plans for the mitigation of subsequent waves of the COVID-19. However, the people of the nation should also own up the responsibility of being a citizen of the nation and devoir the fight against this pandemic. The people need to comply with the protocols for the prevention of the COVID-19 and avoid unnecessary traveling in this situation. The government should also put a ban on tourist places, picnic spots etc. An efficient strategic initiative by the government along with an amenable inclination of the public, can drive the country towards a safe and COVID-free stature.

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