

India's swine flu deaths rise close to 400

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NEW DELHI: Three more swine flu deaths, all in Maharashtra, were reported Wednesday, taking the total toll in the country due to the influenza A

(H1N1) virus to 399, health authorities said here.

Also, 150 new cases were reported in the country, taking the total number of people affected with the virus to 12,334.

While one death was reported Wednesday from Maharashtra, where maximum H1N1 deaths have occurred in the country, two were recorded earlier. "But the laboratory confirmation came today. It confirmed that the earlier two deaths also were due to swine flu," a health official said here.

"Till date, samples from 65,803 people have been tested for influenza A (H1N1) in government laboratories and a few private laboratories across the country and 12,334 of them have been found positive," said an official statement here.

Among the new cases, 48 were from Delhi alone and the figure includes 19 children, state health officials said.

So far, Delhi has reported over 3,279 cases of swine flu and 15 people have died of the disease.

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"The government has authorised two private hospitals - Sir Ganga Ram Hospital and Action Balaji Hospital - to treat H1N1 patients in Delhi after thoroughly examining their capabilities," Delhi Health Minister Kiran Walia said.

The minister said these hospitals would each establish a 20-bed isolation ward for swine flu patients.

With this, the number of private hospitals authorised by the government to treat swine flu has reached four, including Apollo and Moolchand hospitals.

"These hospitals can issue prescription for the purchase of Tamiflu medicine after seeing the positive reports of H1N1 from the accredited laboratories," said an official statement here.

The other states from where new cases were reported are Karnataka (23), Kerala (21), Tamil Nadu (19), Maharashtra (19), Haryana (16), Uttar Pradesh (2), Uttarakhand (2) and Gujarat (1).