

## **UTTARAKHAND HIGH COURT ORDERS FOR COVID DEATHS AUDIT**

During this difficult time another issue that came up is the correct data for the number of deaths by Covid. Many states are currently facing this issue of not knowing the authentic data of Covid deaths due to which death auditing is done by the government.

States like Bihar and Rajasthan are doing the audit of the deaths due to Covid where it was found that several deaths were not reported or if they were reported they were reported twice.

Similar was the stance of Uttarakhand High court while deciding on a writ petition filed by lawyers and activists, Sachdanand Dabral, Dushyant Mainali, Anu Pant and Rajendra Arya.

The Uttarakhand High court ordered the state to audit the Covid deaths as hospitals were making delay in reporting the death count by Covid.

There are more than 3.35 lakh Covid cases in the state and more than 6800 deaths and it was further reported that approximately 10% of the deaths are reported late.

Anoop Nautiyal of Social Development for Communities Foundation (SDC) said hospitals should be ordered to report deaths within 24 hours to enable the authorities to effectively deal with the situation. “Last year 89 backlog Covid deaths were reported while the rest of such deaths have been reported from May 9 onwards. Initially, authorities tried to be strict on this issue, but hospitals continued to report backlog deaths. Since May 17, the hospitals have reported nearly 700 backlog deaths and these deaths have been reported every day for the last 23 days”, Nautiyal, who has been tracking the state’s statistics, said. <sup>1</sup>

While deciding the court passes several other orders which are as follows:

1. The Uttarakhand High Court directed the state government to file a detailed affidavit listing its preparedness for the third Covid wave according to the guidelines of the committee that has been made for the listed purpose.
2. The High Court also directed the state government and Centre to collaborate to ensure the state gets a regular supply of life-saving Covid drugs and medicines for the treatment of black fungus.

---

<sup>1</sup> Neeraj Santoshi, **Conduct Covid death audit, orders Uttarakhand high court**, <https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/dehradun-news/conduct-covid-death-audit-orders-uttarakhand-high-court-report-by-june-21-101623263349947.html>, Hindustan Times,10-06-2021

3. The Uttarakhand High court ordered the senior health officials present at the virtual hearing to apprise the court about how and where black fungus patients are being treated and the efforts to spread awareness about the treatment facilities.
4. The court also directed the secretary health to issue a circular on pricing of Covid treatment in private hospitals, items wise, process-wise and treatment-wise.
5. Beside the audit of death the high court also directed the state government to conduct an audit of ventilators and ICUs available in government hospitals, how many of them are being used and how many are non-functional.
6. The court also directed the government to make a portal for the Covid resources and a task force should be made which could work with full pace.

Beside these order the court also wanted the state to check into the transparency in the number of tests being conducted.

The court also took note of selling of vaccines at overpriced rate.

Also there is ongoing preparation for the char dhaam yatra which should be taken into cognizance as it might be the outburst of Covid.