Indian doc to hold second highest position in WHO

Anonna Dutt

✉ letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Dr Soumya Swaminathan, director general of Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), will be the deputy director-general, World Health Organization (WHO), in Geneva. This is the second-highest position at the UN's health agency.

Currently, she also holds the post of secretary of the department of health research in India.

The new WHO leadership team was announced on Tuesday morning by the DG Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, who was elected to the post in May 2017. "The team represents 14 countries, including all WHO regions, and is more than 60% women, reflecting my deep-held belief that we need top talent and gender equity to fulfil our mission to keep the world safe," he said.

"Every WHO member state gets a chance to nominate a candidate for the deputy's post and it was India's turn this year. Dr Swaminathan was India's nominee," said a source in the Union health ministry. Dr Swaminathan will replace Dr Anarfi Asamoa-Baah from Ghana, who joined WHO as a senior policy adviser to the DG and had served as the assistant DG of the communicable disease programme and the HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria programme.