

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE**

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2649
TO BE ANSWERED ON 06TH MARCH, 2020**

RAPID SPREAD OF CONTAGIOUS DISEASE

**2649. DR. BHARATIBEN DHIRUBHAI SHIYAL:
SHRI SHANKAR LALWANI:**

Will the Minister of **HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE** be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the world is facing rapidly spreading Coronavirus outbreak and is simultaneously also facing the challenge of infectious diseases, malnutrition and non-communicable disease epidemic;
- (b) the plan of action with the Government to deal with the situation in India; and
- (c) the details of steps taken/proposed to be taken to bridge the broad gap between rural and urban population with regard to availability of healthcare facilities/system?

**ANSWER
THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
(DR. HARSH VARDHAN)**

(a): Yes. As per the World Health Organisation (WHO) situation report dated 04.03.2020, a total of 80,422 confirmed cases of Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) and 2,984 deaths have been reported in China. A total of 12,668 confirmed cases and 214 deaths have been reported outside China from 76 countries. Cases of other infectious diseases like seasonal influenza A (H1N1), and other non-communicable diseases are also reported by various states.

(b) & (c): Government has taken note of the outbreak of Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) in China and has initiated steps to monitor the situation in India, as follows:

I. Screening of passengers was initiated in the country since 18th January 2020. Initially airports at Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Kochi were covered and subsequently expanded in a total of 21 airports. As per the evolving situation, initially Universal Screening was taken up for all passengers coming via direct flights from China, South Korea, Japan, Iran, Italy, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, Nepal, Thailand and Singapore. Now, directions have also been issued for Universal Screening for all international passengers coming in the country. Signages have been displayed at prominent places in airports

and ports, In-flight announcements are being made and self -declaration forms are being filled up by all passengers. As on 4th March, a total of 6,241 flights have been screened covering a total of 6,11,167 passengers. Teams of Specialist doctors were sent to all the airports to ensure effective screening and arrangement for isolation in the attached hospitals. Besides this, screening has been initiated in border crossings. Arrangements have been made for in-flight announcements in incoming flights, filling of self-declaration forms by incoming passengers. Signages have been displayed at prominent locations at ports and airports for guidance and convenience of passengers. First Travel advisory was issued on 17th January 2020 and as situation is evolving, the travel advisories are accordingly getting revised. Extant advisories provide that:

- (i) All Regular / eVisas issued to nationals of Italy, Iran, South Korea and Japan issued on or before March 03, 2020 and who have not yet entered India, stand suspended with immediate effect.
- (ii) Regular / eVisa issued to nationals of Peoples Republic of China issued on or before February 05, 2020 were suspended earlier, which shall remain in force.
- (iii) Those requiring to travel to India due to compelling reasons, may seek fresh visa from the nearest Indian Embassy / Consulate.
- (iv) Regular / eVisas issued to all other foreign nationals who have travelled to Peoples Republic of China, Iran, Italy, South Korea and Japan, on or after February 01, 2020 and who have not yet entered India, stand suspended with immediate effect.
- (v) All foreign and Indian nationals entering into India from any port, are required to furnish duly filled self-declaration form including personal particulars and travel history to Health officials and Immigration officials at all ports.
- (vi) Passengers (foreign and Indian) arriving directly or indirectly from China, South Korea, Japan, Iran, Italy, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, Nepal, Thailand, Singapore must undergo medical screening at port of entry.

II. The government has conducted training for the officers of ports, airports and border crossing points and has sensitized them on management of high risk pathogens such as Ebola and Coronavirus. They have been equipped with personal protective equipment. Additional doctors, nurses and paramedic staff have been deployed at the airports for smooth, effective and convenient screening of passengers.

III. Guidelines on clinical management, infection prevention control, surveillance and sampling etc. have been disseminated to the States and also made available on the website of the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. The risk is communicated through media including social media.

IV. Government of India has also initiated a series of action to prevent entry of the disease and to contain it. A Group of Ministers (GoM) consisting of Minister of External Affairs, Minister of Civil Aviation, Minister of State of Home Affairs, Minister of State of Health and Family Welfare, Minister of State of Shipping under the chairmanship of Union Health Minister has been constituted. Meetings of GoM have been held on 03.02.2020, 13.02.2020, 02.03.2020

and 04.03.2020. Cabinet Secretary has taken series of meetings with all related Ministries / Departments such as Health, Defence, External Affairs, Civil Aviation, Home, Textiles, Pharmaceuticals, Commerce.

V. Central Government has engaged all the State Governments, on a continuous basis, in efforts for management of COVID-19. Cabinet Secretary has also taken meetings with State Chief Secretaries. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare is constantly reviewing the evolving scenario. Series of Video Conferences have been held with Chief Secretaries and also with Secretaries, Health of the States / (Union Territories (UTs)).

VI. Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP) has been geared up to track and follow up passengers coming from the affected countries particularly China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Nepal, Japan, South Korea, Iran and Italy. Government have made arrangements for testing of samples at the National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune and 14 other Viral Research & Diagnostics Laboratories (VRDLs) of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) in different parts of the Country. Adequate laboratory reagents are available to test samples. Sufficient stock of Personal Protective Equipments (PPE) is maintained. A 24x7 Control Room has been activated. Rapid Response Teams (RRTs) of the States /UTs have already been trained in management of MERS-CoV outbreak and Ebola Virus Disease.

VII. The Joint Monitoring Group (JMG) under the Chairmanship of DGHS has held series of meetings to assess the risk and review the preparedness and response mechanisms to manage any case that might get imported to India. WHO, being represented in the JMG is providing Ministry with regular updates and technical information.

VIII. Senior officers of the Ministry of Health & family Welfare have been deputed to visit States / UTs to review the management of COVID-19 in each State / UT.

IX. Press releases are being issued on regular basis. Information about travel advisory and other pertinent issues is also being shared on social media.

Government is monitoring the situation closely.

Further, Government of India has launched POSHAN (Prime Minister Overarching Scheme for Holistic Nourishment) Abhiyaan, to address malnutrition in India through convergence, behaviour change, Information, Education and Communication (IEC) advocacy, training and capacity building, innovations and demand generation. POSHAN Abhiyaan focuses on educating families on the need for nutrition and motivating them on adopting these into their behaviour. The promotion of locally available nutritious food through various community based events (CBEs), exhibitions, rallies, workshops and meetings is one of the strategy under the POSHAN Abhiyaan. Anaemia Mukt Bharat (AMB) strategy, Defeat Diarrhea (D-2) initiative and Home Based Care of Young Children (HBYC) are the important components of the POSHAN Abhiyaan implemented by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.