

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3225
TO BE ANSWERED ON 13TH MARCH, 2020**

DEVELOPMENT OF VACCINE FOR CORONAVIRUS

**3225. SHRIMATI RAKSHA NIKHIL KHADSE:
SHRI ADALA PRABHAKARA REDDY:
SHRI RAKESH SINGH:
SHRI THOMAS CHAZHIKADAN:
SHRI MAGUNTA SREENIVASULU REDDY:
SHRI ANTO ANTONY:**

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

- (a) whether the Government has taken note of Coronavirus affecting many countries and reported deaths world over, if so, the details thereof along with the number of countries affected and number of deaths reported;
- (b) whether the Government proposes to promote any research institute to work on the vaccine against the COVID-19, if so, the details thereof along with the progress made and the time by which the vaccine is likely to be made available;
- (c) whether there is any threat of the spread of Coronavirus in the country, if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether any public health policy targeting the said issue has been formulated, if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) whether the Government is aware that the State of Kerala has successfully prevented the spreading of Coronavirus, if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND
FAMILY WELFARE
(SHRI ASHWINI KUMAR CHOUBEY)**

(a) to (e): As per World Health Organization (WHO) report dated 11.03.2020, a total of 1,18,322 confirmed cases and 4,292 deaths due to Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) have been reported from 113 countries/territories.

As on 12th March, 2020, a total of 73 positive cases have been reported in India. Out of this, 3 cases of Indian nationals were reported in Kerala, who have since recovered and discharged from the hospital.

World Health Organization (WHO) has declared Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) 'pandemic' on 11.03.2020.

Government has taken note of the outbreak of Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) in China and has initiated steps to monitor the situation in all States / Union Territories (UTs) of the country including Kerala, 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. 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 existing visas (except diplomatic, official, UN/International Organizations, employment, project visas) stand suspended till 15th April 2020. This will come into effect from 1200 GMT on 13th March 2020 at the port of departure.
- (ii) Visa free travel facility granted to OCI card holders is kept in abeyance till 15th April 2020. This will come into effect from 1200 GMT on 13th March 2020 at the port of departure.
- (iii) OCI card holders already in India can stay in India as long as they want.
- (iv) Visas of all foreigners already in India remain valid and they may contact the nearest FRRO/FRO through e-FRRO module for extension/conversion etc. of their visa or grant of any consular service, if they choose to do so.
- (v) Any foreign national who intends to travel to India for compelling reason may contact the nearest Indian Mission.
- (vi) In addition to Visa restrictions already in place, passengers traveling from /having visited Italy or Republic of Korea and desirous of entering India will need certificate of having tested negative for COVID-19 from the designated laboratories authorized by the health authorities of these countries. This is in enforcement since 0000 hrs. of 10th March, 2020 and is a temporary measure till cases of COVID-19 subside.
- (vii) All incoming travellers, including Indian nationals, arriving from or having visited China, Italy, Iran, Republic of Korea, France, Spain and Germany after 15th February, 2020

shall be quarantined for a minimum period of 14 days. This will come into effect from 1200 GMT on 13th March 2020 at the port of departure.

- (viii) Incoming travellers, including Indian nationals, are advised to avoid non-essential travel and are informed that they can be quarantined for a minimum of 14 days on their arrival in India.
- (ix) Indian nationals are further strongly advised to refrain from travelling to China, Italy, Iran, Republic of Korea, France, Spain and Germany.
- (x) All incoming international passengers returning to India should self- monitor their health and follow required do's and don'ts as detailed by the Government.
- (xi) All international Passengers entering into India are required to furnish duly filled self-declaration form in duplicate (including personal particulars i.e. phone no. and address in India) to Health Officials and Immigration officials and undergo Universal Health Screening at the designated health counters at all Points 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 are conducted on regular basis. 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.

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