

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY  
DEPARTMENT OF BIOTECHNOLOGY**

**LOK SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 930  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 18/09/2020**

**COVID-19 Biorepositories in India**

930. DR. JAYANTA KUMAR ROY:  
SHRI BHOLA SINGH:  
SHRI VINOD KUMAR SONKAR:  
SHRI RAJA AMARESHWARA NAIK:  
DR. SUKANTA MAJUMDAR:  
SHRIMATI SANGEETA KUMARI SINGH DEO:

Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) Whether the Government has established the largest network of five dedicated COVID-19 Biorepositories in India; if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the Government has successfully completed pan-India 1000 Genome sequencing of SARS- CoV-2; if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the sequence data has been released in Global Initiative on Sharing All Influenza Data (GISAID) for use by researchers across the Globe;
- (d) if so, the details thereof;
- (e) the details and status of Corona virus vaccine development along with its distribution and immunization plan; and
- (f) the other steps taken/being taken by the Government in this regard?

**ANSWER**

**HON'BLE UNION MINISTER FOR SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY, EARTH  
SCIENCES AND HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE**

**(DR. HARSH VARDHAN)**

(a) Yes Sir, 5 National COVID-19 Bio-repositories have been established by the Department of Biotechnology (DBT). This is a part of the Network of 16 COVID-19 biorepositories established in the country by Department of Biotechnology, Indian Council of Medical Research and Council of Scientific and Industrial Research. The

list of biorepositories can be accessed at <https://www.icmr.gov.in/cbiorn.html>. The repositories are collecting clinical and viral samples. So far, 44452 clinical samples and 17 viral isolates have been collected which are accessible to researchers and industry for developing diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccines.

**(b)** Yes, the Pan India 1000 SARS-CoV-2 RNA Genome Sequencing has been successfully completed and announced on 1st August, 2020 by the Department of Biotechnology. This was led by National Institute of Biomedical Genomics (NIBMG-Kalyani), West Bengal, an Autonomous Institute of Department of Biotechnology, along with five other National clusters; clinical organizations and other hospitals.

**(c) & (d)** Yes, these sequences have been uploaded on Global Initiative on Sharing All India Influenza Data (GISAID) for use by researchers across the globe. These sequences have been uploaded under the 'Pan India 1000 SARS-CoV-2 RNA Genome Sequencing Consortium'. The link for GISAID website is <https://www.gisaid.org>. These are now available for use by researchers.

**(e) & (f)** Nationally, nearly 30 vaccines candidates are under development, by both industry and academia. These vaccines are in different stages of pre-clinical and clinical development of which 3 candidates are in advanced stage of Phase I/II/III trials and 4 are in advanced pre-clinical development stage. Support is also being extended for development of vaccine associated research resources, establishment of clinical trial sites and notifying enabling regulatory guidelines.

A high level expert group is looking into matters related to vaccine distribution and immunization. The distribution and immunization of the coronavirus vaccine are subject to availability. Once available the Corona virus vaccine distribution follows the same route as for the current practice of vaccines distribution under Universal Immunization Program (UIP).