

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

**LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO.47
TO BE ANSWERED ON THE 4TH FEBRUARY, 2022**

NEW COVID-19 VARIANTS

**†*47. SHRI RAKESH SINGH:
SHRI KALYAN BANERJEE:**

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

- (a) whether the Government has made preparations to deal with the current wave of COVID-19 in the country and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the Government has also taken note of the possibility regarding spread of more dangerous variants of COVID-19 after Omicron and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the measures taken to ensure adequate availability of hospitals, doctors, beds and medicines, State/UT-wise and to equip the Indian healthcare system to handle any future waves of COVID-19 and other epidemics/pandemics;
- (d) whether the Government has recommended any Standard Operating Procedure for the States/UTs to manage and respond to health emergencies of post COVID-19 Omicron and Flurona variants; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

**ANSWER
THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
(DR MANSUKH MANDAVIYA)**

(a) to (e) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

**STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. 47* FOR 4TH FEBRUARY, 2022**

(a) to (e): Government of India is supporting States in their endeavor to manage COVID-19 since the beginning of pandemic. Given the emergence of variants of COVID-19 virus with variable transmissibility, and virulence fluctuations in COVID-19 trajectory in the country is monitored by various expert committees under Indian Council of Medical Research & Directorate General of Health Services. Union Ministry of Health & FW continues to keep a close watch over COVID-19 situation across the country and globally.

With the reporting of Omicron Variant, a highly mutated variant of SARS-CoV-2 virus and its classification as a Variant of Concern (VoC) by the World Health Organization (WHO), the Union Ministry of Health & FW revised its Guidelines for international arrivals. Following a risk based approach; provisions for mandatory pre-departure & post arrival RT-PCR testing on day 8th of arrival and a mandatory home quarantine for 7 days have been made in the present guidelines for all international travelers to India. Union Ministry of Health & FW is accordingly coordinating and collaborating with other stakeholder Ministries/departments including Ministry of Civil Aviation, Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Ministry of Railways and all States/UTs etc. The current surge of COVID-19 cases in the country is showing a sustained declining trend since the last 10 days.

Besides regular review meetings at the level of Union Health Minister with all relevant stakeholders including subject experts, review meetings with States/UTs through video conferencing have been conducted regularly to review preparedness and response measures to address COVID-19 pandemic. States/UTs have been advised to undertake the following activities:

- Strict monitoring of International travelers in the community.
- Contact tracing of positive individuals & follow up for 14 days.
- Genome sequencing of positive samples through INSACOG Labs in a prompt manner.
- Continued monitoring of areas where cluster of positive cases emerge.
- Further strengthening of COVID-19 testing infrastructure and ensuring early identification of cases through adequate testing across the States.

- Ensuring preparedness of health infrastructure (availability of ICU, oxygen supported beds, ventilators, etc.) and upgrading health infrastructure under ECRP-II including in rural areas and for pediatric cases.
- Commissioning all PSA plants, ensuring sufficient logistics, drugs etc.
- Ensuring COVID-19 vaccination for the eligible population including coverage among young adolescents (15-18 years) and precaution dose for health care workers, frontline workers and elderly with comorbidities.
- Ensuring adherence to COVID Appropriate Behaviour.

Ministry of Health & Family Welfare continues to provide technical guidance for managing various aspects of COVID-19. To disseminate various clinical guidelines for appropriate management of cases, a series of webinars were held under MoHFW's Center of Excellence initiative for all State Level Centers of Excellence and district level public and private COVID health facilities in collaboration with AIIMS, Delhi and Indian Medical Association.

Union Ministry of Health & FW continues to provide support to States/UTs to enhance preparedness and response capacities against COVID-19 and other public health emergencies. Funding support is also provided to States/UTs through National Health Mission, State Disaster Response Funds (SDRF) and Emergency COVID-19 Response and Preparedness packages. Under ECRP Phase II, a package of Rs. 23,123 crore (with Rs. 15,000 Cr as Central Component) has been approved. Of this, as on 31st January 2022, funds to the tune of Rs. 7245.95 crore have been released to States/UTs as part of Central component to strengthen health infrastructure to manage any surge in cases.
