GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH RESEARCH

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.1630
TO BE ANSWERED ON 11TH FEBRUARY, 2022

INQUIRY ON ILLEGAL RESEARCH IN VIROLOGY

1630. SHRI Y. DEVENDRAPPA:
SHRISHA.BRA.DR.JAI SIDDESHWAR SHIVACHARYA MAHASWAJIJI:

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

(a)   the current status and progress of the inquiry ordered into a study conducted by researchers from the U.S., China and India on bats and humans carrying antibodies to deadly viruses along with the details of virologists who participated and their status thereof;

(b)   whether the Government has taken note that few scientists belonged to Wuhan Institute of Virology's Department of Emerging Infectious Diseases who illegally participated in this research funded by Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) of USA and if so, the details thereof;

(c)   whether the scientists were permitted to access live samples of bats and bat hunters without due permission from Government; and

(d)   if so, the details thereof and the action taken by the Government in this regard?

ANSWER
THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
(DR. BHARATI PRAVIN PAWAR)

(a) to (d) To investigate in the research study conducted by Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) - National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS), Bengaluru alongwith international partners on "Filovirus reactive antibodies in humans and bats in North-East India imply zoonotic spill", a Committee was constituted to enquire into the matter. The Committeewas mandated to look into the work done, methodology followed and places visited during the course of the study. The enquiry Committee has submitted the report and has mentioned concerning lapses in the study protocols and procedures. To streamline processes and avoid such lapses, a meeting was convened with stakeholder Ministries / Departments with the members of the Enquiry Committee in which ways and appropriate action to be taken were detailed.

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