

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 685
TO BE ANSWERED ON 04.02.2022**

“OMICRON VARIANT”

**685. SHRI SANJAY SADASHIVRAO MANDLIK:
SHRI RAVINDRA KUSHWAHA:
SHRI RAVI KISHAN:
SHRI SUDHEER GUPTA:
SHRI A. GANESHAMURTHI:
SHRI BIDYUT BARAN MAHATO:
SHRI PRADEEP KUMAR SINGH:
SHRI MANOJ TIWARI:
SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV:
SHRI SHRIRANG APPA BARNE:
SHRI DHAIRYASHEEL SAMBHAJIRAO MANE:
SHRI PRATAPRAO JADHAV:**

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

- a) The total number of persons infected by the Omicron variant of COVID-19 along with the number of deaths reported and the number of patients recovered so far in the country, State/UT-wise
- b) Whether as per studies conducted, the Omicron variant is more contagious, if so, the comparative details thereof and the effectiveness of indigenous vaccine against the new variant;
- c) Whether the Government has revised its policy considering the less deadly nature of the new variant, issued advisory to State/UTs to manage the pandemic and opened new labs for genome sequencing of new variant and if so, the details thereof; and
- d) The other measures taken/being taken to prevent the spread of this new variant and minimize the fatality rate including releasing of funds to States/UTs and assistance of medical equipment's and other strict measures like imposing of lockdown in the country?

ANSWER

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE
(DR BHARATI PRAVIN PAWAR)**

a) to d) Omicron variant is the dominant variant in the country presently. The total number of COVID-19 cases and deaths reported the country during the months of December 2021 and January 2022 is as given at **Annexure**.

According to World Health Organization, Omicron variant has a significantly increased transmissibility as compared to the Delta variant, and as a result, it is rapidly replacing the latter globally. As per the available evidence, vaccines help in terms of lesser people getting infected, lesser hospitalization and lesser severity of disease amongst the patients.

Government of India is supporting States in their endeavor to manage COVID-19 since the beginning of pandemic. Given the emergence of mutated variants with variable impact on transmissibility, virulence and effectiveness of vaccines, likelihood of resurgence of COVID-19 trajectory in the country is monitored by various expert committees under Indian Council of Medical Research, Directorate General of Health Services and other relevant Ministries/Departments. 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 and its classification as a Variant of Concern by the World Health Organization, 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.

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 under Union Health Minister and senior officials of Health Ministry to review preparedness and response measures for COVID-19 pandemic. States/UTs have been repeatedly urged 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 emerges.
- 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 & FW vide letter dated 28th June 2021 has circulated to all States/UTs guiding principles for imposition of restrictions or allowing relaxation in context of COVID-19 based on COVID-19 testing confirmation rates and hospital bed occupancy rates. This has been reiterated by Ministry of Home Affairs under Disaster Management Act, 2005 vide order dated 29th June 2021.

The Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium (INSACOG) is a national multi-agency consortium of Genome Sequencing Laboratories (RGSLs) of Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Dept. of Biotechnology, Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), established by the Government of India for whole genome sequencing in the context of COVID-19 pandemic. 52 labs are presently functional.

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 crores (with Rs. 15,000 Cr as Central Component) has been approved to upgrade health infrastructure including maintaining buffer stock of essential drugs. 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.

Annexure

Total number of COVID-19 cases and deaths reported by all States/UTs during the months of December 2021 and January 2022

S. No	States/UTs	December 2021		January 2022	
		Cases	Deaths	Cases	Deaths
1.	Andaman and Nicobar Islands	37	0	2,057	0
2.	Andhra Pradesh	4,254	54	1,93,512	113
3.	Arunachal Pradesh	66	0	6,743	6
4.	Assam	3,865	66	94,022	278
5.	Bihar	519	2,433*	96,315	125
6.	Chandigarh	390	259*	23,298	39
7.	Chhattisgarh	1,218	7	1,15,173	234
8.	Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu	8	0	610	0
9.	Delhi	5,515	9	3,81,074	720
10.	Goa	1,770	137*	57,746	161
11.	Gujarat	3,643	26	3,22,902	320
12.	Haryana	1,669	9	1,72,608	223
13.	Himachal Pradesh	1,677	28	41,308	120
14.	Jammu and Kashmir	4,486	50	91,708	133
15.	Jharkhand	1,754	3	76,926	157
16.	Karnataka	10,648	124	7,78,790	615
17.	Kerala	1,07,410	7,486*	7,39,014	6,225*
18.	Ladakh	633	5	3,723	5
19.	Lakshadweep	22	0	640	1
20.	Madhya Pradesh	738	5	1,65,551	83
21.	Maharashtra	35,774	556	10,35,215	1,054
22.	Manipur	609	27	7,132	39
23.	Meghalaya	356	12	6,067	38
24.	Mizoram	6,590	49	31,091	64
25.	Nagaland	82	6	2,150	33
26.	Odisha	5,726	49	1,91,305	136
27.	Puducherry	568	9	31,286	47
28.	Punjab	1,336	45	1,36,591	570
29.	Rajasthan	1,249	8	2,44,033	282
30.	Sikkim	269	6	5,597	20
31.	Tamil Nadu	20,693	293	5,79,050	779
32.	Telangana	5,789	35	79,463	61
33.	Tripura	278	6	15,152	70
34.	Uttar Pradesh	972	5	301,964	274
35.	Uttarakhand	713	9	75,248	119
36.	West Bengal	19,656	284	3,58,572	826

*Includes COVID-19 deaths reconciled by the State/UT