

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1102
TO BE ANSWERED ON 25TH JULY, 2025**

RAMBAAN LABORATORY

† 1102. DR. KALYAN VAJJINATHRAO KALE:

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

- (a) whether any concrete steps have been taken by the Indian Council of Medical Research to strengthen the public health delivery system and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the Government has set up Small Bowel Series-Laboratory-3 and SBS-3 labs and accommodated them adjoining the hospitals for early detection of the virus;
- (c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (d) the details of the locations where the laboratories call RAMBAAN are functioning in the country;
- (e) whether Rapid Action Mobile Labs called RAMBAAN in Maharashtra have been deployed outside health institutions;
- (f) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (g) the time by which these mobile labs are likely to be provided for all the health institutions in the State of Maharashtra?

ANSWER

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
(SHRI PRATAPRAO JADHAV)**

(a): Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), an autonomous body under Department of Health Research (DHR) has 28 institutes across the country with state-of-the-art facilities working for formulating, coordinating, and promoting biomedical research. ICMR supports over 300 Medical Colleges and Institutions through extramural research grants. Additionally, 30 large multi-state projects on projects under 12 identified Priority areas have been supported under National Health Research Programme (NHRP).

DHR has played a pivotal role in establishing Viral Research and Diagnostic Laboratories (VRDL) network throughout the country. 165 such VRDL laboratories have been approved. The primary objectives of the VRDL scheme are to facilitate innovative research, provide high quality diagnostic services and offer technical training to public health professionals. These laboratories support the health system by enabling timely diagnosis, identifying viral pathogens, aiding in

resource deployment during outbreaks, generating data on viral diseases and conducting research to inform public health policies.

With the long-term goal to prepare the country against public health emergencies, Pradhan Mantri - Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PM-ABHIM) has been launched for developing capacities of health systems and institutions. Under the scheme, four zonal National Institutes of Virology (NIVs) at Jammu, Dibrugarh, Jabalpur and Bengaluru and National Institute of One Health (NIOH) Nagpur have been approved for ICMR. Satellite Centre of National Institute of Translational Virology and AIDS Research (ICMR-NITVAR) Pune has also been approved. Besides, 10 Viral Research & Diagnostic Laboratories (VRDLs) have been inducted for upgradation to Infectious disease Research and Diagnostic Laboratories (IRDLs), and 05 VRDLs have been inducted for upgradation to Biosafety Level 3 (BSL-3) laboratories.

ICMR has informed that it has played a pivotal role in managing and responding to the COVID pandemic. This included scaling up of lab capacity (1 to 3300 labs) within 18 months, development of indigenous vaccine, COVAXIN, clinical trials of Covishield and Covavax; validation of all kind of COVID Diagnostic tests leading to 50 times cost reduction; issuing clinical guidance and advisories, conducting genomic sequencing, clinical trials for plasma therapy, participating in WHO solidarity trail, conducting sero-surveys to understand population immunity etc.

Further, ICMR has contributed significantly to the development of indigenous vaccines and therapeutics for various infectious diseases. It has also supported field validation of in-vitro diagnostic (IVD) devices, point-of-care testing kits, and surveillance tools that are directly and indirectly linked to public health service delivery.

(b) to (f): ICMR has informed that under PM-ABHIM scheme, two mobile Biosafety Level 3 (BSL-3) vans called RAMBAAN (Rapid Action Mobile BSL-3+ Advanced Augmented Network) have already been procured and deployed at National Institute of Virology (NIV) Pune and Regional Medical Research Centre (RMRC) Gorakhpur. These vans can be deployed to any location based on outbreak needs. For instance, during the Nipah virus outbreak in September 2023, a mobile BSL-3 van was deployed to Kozhikode, where it facilitated testing of suspected samples. Similarly, in July 2024, the van was deployed to Malappuram for outbreak response activities. Mobile laboratories help in real time data collection that ensure quick containment and prevent further spread of any emerging viral infections. These Mobile labs have also been used for comprehensive training of scientific and biomedical personnel in laboratory operations and biosafety protocols.

(g): Mobile BSL-3 Labs are highly specialized labs with costs running into several crores. They are not required for all health institutions, however Mobile BSL-3 Labs including the one stationed in NIV Pune in Maharashtra can be quickly deployed wherever required during the outbreaks.
