

SHRI D. RAJA: Sir, I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether he has anything to say on the price rise, because the House is very keen to know. Since the hon. Minister is sitting here, we would like to have his reaction. We would like to know whether the Government will consider whatever we have expressed here.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now, we are taking up the Calling Attention motion.

SHRI D. RAJA: Sir, let us know whether the Minister wants to respond. He is ready to respond to the issue...*(Interruptions)*... He wanted to say what the Government is doing.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I have no objection if he responds.

SHRI D. RAJA: Sir, it is a matter of concern for me, for you, for the entire House and for the people in the entire country. Let the hon. Minister say what the Government is thinking on this.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY; THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF EARTH SCIENCES; THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS; AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN): Sir, we have said that we will give ample opportunity to discuss the whole issue when we take up the discussion on the Budget and let hon. Members raise whatever they want to raise. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: This matter is over. ...*(Interruptions)*... The matter is over. ...*(Interruptions)*... Now, we are taking up the Calling Attention. Hon. Members have already been informed through Parliament Bulletin, Part-II that the Calling Attention has to be concluded within one hour. The Members who initiate the Calling Attention should not take more than seven minutes and other Members who seek clarification should not speak for more than five minutes. I would again like to emphasise that there should not be speeches, there should only be clarifications on the statement made by the Minister. I hope the Members, participating in the discussion, will scrupulously observe the time limit. Mr. Mysura Reddy, please call the attention of the Minister.

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Situation arising out of growing number of Swine Flue cases in the country

SHRI M.V. MYSURA REDDY (Andhra Pradesh): Sir, I would like to call the attention of the Minister regarding the spread of Swine Flu in the country.

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): Sir, I would like to brief the hon. House on the spread of H1N1 virus in the country and the Government's preparedness to deal with the situation in the backdrop of the present global scenario.

The World Health Organization has declared the present spread of influenza AH1N1 (earlier called the swine flue) as a global pandemic and raised the alert level to six on 11th June, 2009, implying the widespread of human infection. The disease, first noticed on March 18, 2009, in Mexico, spreads to 116 countries with 70893 laboratory-confirmed cases and 3411 deaths as on 30th June, 2009.

In our country, the first case was reported on 13th May, 2009. Since then, there have been 109 laboratory-confirmed cases of influenza A H1N1. All these are travel-related cases, being brought to India by passengers coming from affected countries, except for nine, which are secondary cases reported in the immediate family contacts. These nine cases are geographically scattered. All the cases have been detected early, put on treatment and cured. Out of these 109 cases, 70 have been discharged as on 30th June, 2009. It is a matter of great satisfaction that timely institution of public health measures have prevented community spread so far.

My Ministry took a series of actions from the very beginning. A comprehensive plan, including guidelines and standard operating procedures, was put in place. Travel advisory to defer non-essential travel to the affected countries was widely made known through print media. Entry screening of passengers started at 22 international airports and five international checkpoints through an informative health-screening card and is still continuing.

Community surveillance to detect clusters of influenza-like illness is being done through Integrated Disease Surveillance Project that has pan India presence. The National Institute of Communicable Diseases, Delhi and National Institute of Virology, Pune are testing clinical samples. I have ensured that sixteen additional laboratories are made available for testing the samples of influenza A H1N1 from 1st July, 2009.

All States, wherein ports, airports and international checkpoints are located, have identified hospitals with isolation facilities where patients are now being treated. I have requested the States to strengthen isolation facilities including critical care at district level. The Central and the State Rapid Response Teams are ready to be deputed to manage community outbreak situations should the need arises. On my directions, the rapidresponse teams in districts are also undergoing refresher training. Teams of physicians from all the States and Union Territories have also been trained.

There is adequate quantity of Oseltamivir, the drug recommended by the World Health Organization. About ten million capsules are in the national stockpile. Another six million capsules are in stock as banking arrangement with pharmaceutical companies. Stockpile of personal protective equipment is being increased from one lakh to ten lakhs. These medical supplies have been decentralized which would be taken up to district level.

The Task Force in the Information and Broadcasting Ministry has already undertaken short-term media campaign. The materials prepared by my Ministry with assistance from UNICEF, after approval of the Task Force, are appearing in print and visual media. A comprehensive

longterm media plan in consultation with the Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity has been drawn up. The plan covers both electronic and print media, which would run throughout the year.

Travel advisory, do's and don'ts, and other pertinent information have been widely published to allay fears and avoid panic. Media is kept informed on daily basis.

I would also like to share with the hon. Members that many of the travel related cases could have been averted if the Governments of affected countries had followed exit screening at their airports. Therefore, I requested the hon. Minister of External Affairs to take up the issue of exit screening with countries reporting large number of cases. The Minister of External Affairs has personally interceded in this matter and a message has been issued to all Heads of our Missions in these countries instructing them to raise urgently with the concerned authorities the issue of introducing 'exit screening'. I have also requested the hon. Minister of Civil Aviation for in-flight announcement and to ensure availability of screening forms in flight.

I have been reviewing the situation on a regular basis. Let me assure the Parliament and the people of the country that the Government is fully geared up to deal with the situation.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now, clarifications will be sought after the lunch. The House is adjourned till 2 o'clock.

*The House then adjourned for lunch at fifty-eight minutes
past twelve of the clock.*

The House reassembled after lunch at two minutes past two of the clock.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN in the Chair.

MEMBER SWORN

1. Dhiraj Prasad Sahu (Jharkhand)

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Situation arising out of growing number of Swine Flue cases in the country

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now, Calling Attention motion. Shri Mysura Reddy, you have seven minutes.

SHRI M.V. MYSURA REDDY (Andhra Pradesh): Sir, this is an important issue causing concern to the people of India. Though the epicentre of Swine Flu, Mexico city, may seem a world away from India, the flip side is that distance no longer works as a prophylactic measure. The WHO's influenza alert, Phase-6, clearly brings out the magnitude of the problem. But the hon. Minister's statement is not satisfactory. Without dwelling on other things, I wish to seek a few clarifications from the hon. Minister.