

[19 May, 2006]

RAJYA SABHA

**श्री सभापति :** नहीं। उडीसा का क्वेश्चन अलाऊ नहीं करूंगा।

**श्री रुद्रनारायण पाणि :** महोदय, एक लाइन के सर्वेक्षण के बारे में है।

**श्री सभापति :** ठीक है। दसवें प्रश्न का जवाब आप इनके पास भेज देना।  
...(व्यवधान)... नेक्स्ट। प्रश्न संख्या 502।

**Ban on retail sale of bird flu drugs**

\*502. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that approval has been sent to ban the retail sale of bird flue drugs; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. ANBUMANI RAMDOSS): (a) and (b) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

***Statement***

(a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Government of India has banned the retail sale of the antiviral drug 'Oseltamivir Phosphate' under Section 3 of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 (10 of 1955) vide notification No. S.O. 526(E) dated 12th April, 2006,

A Committee of experts, under Directorate General of Health Services after examining the issue, suggested only public distribution of the drug for the following reasons: (i) Tamiflu is known to cause toxicity such as nausea, vomiting and psychiatric symptoms and hence it is to be administered under strict medical supervision; (ii) because of the panic created by the first outbreak at Navapur, there would have been large scale stockpiling of the drug and its indiscriminate use if retail marketing was allowed; (iii) there is no human case of avian influenza in India to justify that the drug should be available in all hospitals/clinics, (iv) Inappropriate or indiscriminate use may result in development of resistance implying that the only drug available for prophylactic treatment of this disease could become useless; and (v) The entire strategic operations were in limited areas of 3 Kms and surveillance upto 10 kms and only cases falling within the standard case definition needed to be isolated under strict infection control practices in identified hospitals and then only administered Tamiflu.

**श्री तारिक अनवर :** सभापति महोदय, बर्ड फ्लू के प्रकोप की कीमत बड़े पैमाने पर देश को चुकानी पड़ी है। देश के साथ-साथ किसानों को भी और छोटे व्यापारियों को भी यह काफी महंगा पड़ा है। मंत्री जी ने अपने जवाब में इस बात को स्वीकार किया है कि भारत में मानव में एवियन इन्फ्लूएंजा होने का कोई मामला प्रकाश में नहीं आया है। यह अच्छी बात है कि ऐसा नहीं हुआ है। लेकिन मैं मंत्री जी से यह जानना चाहूंगा कि जब विदेशों में बर्ड फ्लू की शुरुआत हुई थी, तब उस समय कई इंटरनेशनल हेल्थ ऑरगनाइजेशंस ने इस बात के लिए भारत सरकार को आगाह किया था कि भारत में भी बर्ड फ्लू फैलने का खतरा है। मैं मंत्री जी से जानना चाहता हूं कि जब उन्हें इस सिलसिले में पूर्व सूचना थी तो भारत सरकार ने या स्वास्थ्य मंत्रालय ने इस दिशा में उसे रोकने के लिए क्या एक्शन लिया?

**DR. ANBUMANI RAMDOSS:** Sir, as soon as I took over as Health Minister, I was given information from international agencies like the WHO that there might be a future problem of Avian Influenza in India. Then, three months later, after taking over office, I called a meeting at my level and then, it was followed by subsequent meetings. In fact, in the last Session, I elaborately said what preparedness we have done, because it goes back year and a half ago, when series of meetings were held; series of workshops were conducted, and, in fact, at my level, I had held meetings with international bodies like the U.N., W.H.O., ICMR, research organisations and the industry in August, which were again followed by subsequent meetings by the hon. Minister of Agriculture. In fact, we had gone through a series of preparedness, and that was why, when the bird flue struck Maharashtra in the first phase, we went into action very quickly, and we were able to contain it.

In fact, the world bodies have appreciated us for our efforts at containment of this disease. It was immediate containment and preparedness which went on in a long way - preparedness in the sense that when the bird flu had struck in Maharashtra and parts of Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh, literally ten lakh people had been under survey. Now, ten lakh is quite a huge number, and they are all dispersed in three different States. So, we have been able to contain this problem. Till today, there has not been any human case of bird flu. So, because of our preparedness, we have been able to contain it at a very fast pace.

**श्री तारिक अनवर :** चेयरमैन सर, मेरा माननीय मंत्री जी से दूसरा प्रश्न यह है कि माननीय मंत्री जी ने इसके लिए जो तमाम प्रयास किए हैं, मैं उनकी सराहना करता हूं कि भारत सरकार ने और

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स्वास्थ्य मंत्रालय ने उसको कंटेन करने के लिए प्रिकॉशन ली है। मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि whether it is a fact that lakhs of birds have been killed due to bird flu and farmers have suffered heavy losses. It has been mentioned that, at this stage, a decision has been taken to disallow sales of drugs for bird flu in the retail market and that the Government will now procure the drug and supply it through its own health agencies. I would like to know: why has this decision been taken?

DR. ANBUMANI RAMDOSS: Regarding part (a) of hon. Member's question, yes, Sir, it is a protocol that if there is any case of bird flu among the birds, we have to cull these birds out so that it does not affect the humans and it also does not spread to other parts of the country. In fact, the Animal Husbandry Department has been very active in culling out these birds and preventing the infection amongst the birds.

Coming to part (b) of the question as to why the sale has been disallowed in the retail market, four or five points have been given. Firstly, there is no human case of bird flu in this country. Secondly, we do not want a panic situation to be created in the country where there is advance stockpiling and where individuals start buying at a random pace. The main problem is, once the drug is taken arbitrarily, there will be a resistance to the drug. This is the only drug available for containment, not for fully curing the bird flu - only for containment. If individuals go on buying at their own will and fancy, there will be a resistance developed. One perfect example of this is the HIV AIDS. Because of people taking this medicine arbitrarily for HIV AIDS, we are now going in for second-line drugs because a resistance has been formed. And the cost factor also goes up. Sir, today, the cost of the first-line drug for HIV AIDS is only Rs. 550 a month. But the second-line drug costs nearly Rs. 10,000 a month. So, we do not want a situation like that to be created because of bird flu. That is why we said that the Government would regulate it. In fact, under the Epidemic Diseases Act and the Essential Commodities Act, together with the Consumer Affairs Ministry and the Law Ministry, we have taken a decision. We are not stopping the production in this country. Bird flu drugs are being produced in this country. But, then, we are saying that it should be regulated. Of course, I have already mentioned these points about how a panic situation could arise and there would be a resistance developed if it were taken

arbitrarily Also, this drug has side-effects. So, taking into consideration all these issues, we have prevented it.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Sir, the hon. Minister mentioned that they did not allow the retail vending of this drug for bird flu because it had side-effects. On the one side, there have been alarming news items that there has been a lot of culling out of birds in Maharashtra and other parts of the country and, on the other, the traders dealing in eggs and chickens have been propagating that it is not going to harm the people and, therefore, people can eat them. But the public is not sure which one is the correct course to take. Therefore, I would request that the Health Ministry should come out with a clear-cut directive so that the people know the reality. I am saying this because both the versions have been going on.

DR. ANBUMANI RAMDOSS: Sir, we have issued a series of advertisements, both in the visual and the print media and we have created a lot of awareness. The Animal Husbandry Department, the Agriculture Ministry, were very much involved in this whole thing. Today, I can categorically state that there has been no human case of bird flu in this country. That is one. In the birds, it has been contained. It had been there. The last known cases were in April. And, after that, it was just in Maharashtra and the borders of Gujarat, and just one district of Madhya Pradesh. So, it is perfectly right, or, it would be very safe to eat chicken and eggs today provided that they are boiled properly. In fact, they should be boiled at 70 degree centigrade for a minimum of about twenty minutes. In fact, the recent news says that it need not be boiled for twenty minutes; about five to ten minutes boiling at 70 degree centigrade is enough. The Indian cooking style is perfectly safe enough because unlike the Western cooking where it is half cooked, we have been cooking in the oil. So, it naturally goes above 100 degree centigrade. So, it is perfectly safe to eat chicken and eggs today. We have propagated it in a series of advertisements in the visual and print media.

SHRI MOINUL HASSAN: Sir, all of us know that our country's poultry industry which is one of the largest industries in the world has already been hit, and this industry has suffered massive losses. So far as the Bird Flu is concerned Sir, all of us know that the Indian Parliament, the Indian Railways and the Indian Airlines banned chicken for human consumption,

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for the time being. Sir, the whole scenario is such that the poultry industry is at stake. So far as the poultry industry is concerned, the common people, unemployed youths have engaged themselves in these small businesses.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Put your question.

SHRI MOINUL HASSAN: Yes, Sir; I am putting the question. My question is, these people, who have engaged themselves in the poultry business, have incurred heavy losses. I would like to know from the hon. Minister, through you, Sir, whether the Government of India, the Ministry of Health is in a position to provide some financial help to those people who have lost their business, which was their bread and butter.

DR. KARAN SINGH: The Agriculture Minister can answer this question.

DR. ANBUMANI RAMDOSS: Sir, this question relates to the hon. Agriculture Minister. With your permission, he could reply.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Do you want to reply? ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: He is always ready to reply. ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI MOINUL HASSAN: He is not only senior, but he is senior of seniors.

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: Sir, we had a series of meetings with the poultry association people of the country, and they have given certain proposal to compensate these losses. It is true that the issue was restricted to three districts. One, Surat, some of the area of the Surat; Nandurbar which is ten kilometres away from Surat area; Jalgaon and Borajpur. So, there was problem in just 100 kilometres, in the rest of the country, there was no problem at all. This problem was in this particular area, But, that area was in three States, namely, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat. So, about ten lakh bird were culled. The Government of India has sent a communication to all these three States that we will contribute about Rs. 25 or Rs. 21 per bird, we will give that compensation; the rest of the money should be provided by the State Governments. So, that entire operation was met. But, the real problem was something different. We had taken care of this particular area. But, the message had gone in the entire country that it is very risky to eat chicken and eggs. So, the market

had suddenly dropped. The price of an egg had come down from one rupee forty paise to just ten paise. And, the bird's price which was something about Rs. 85 per kilogram had come down to Rs. 5 to Rs. 6 per kilogram, and people were not ready to buy it. That is why most of the poultry owners were facing a lot of problems. So, they gave a proposal to us that we should instruct all the banks: Firstly, we should compensate their interests. So, the Government of India has decided to compensate four per cent interest of all poultry owners who have taken money from the banks. That money has been deposited in all banks in the respective poultry owners' accounts. Secondly, their entire liability was rescheduled in two to three years' time. Thirdly, irrespective of whether it is an NPA account or defaulter, the banks have been instructed by the NABARD and the Reserve Bank of India that the poultry owners should be provided money from the banks to purchase feed and for other expenses. They were quite happy with this and this particular mission was implemented.

SHRI MOINUL HASSAN: Is it for that region only or for the entire country?

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: It is for the entire country.

SHRI VASANT CHAVAN: In the bird flu affected areas of Maharashtra, there was a panic that people were not getting any medicines even after doctors' prescriptions. While in the second part of the answer the Government says, "There would have been large-scale stockpiling of the drugs and its indiscriminate use if retail marketing was allowed." May I know whether there are any cases detected, any instances found which indicates that there was stockpiling or indiscriminate use; and, if not, why did the Government exercise the ban and unnecessarily spread the panic in the bird flue areas?

DR. ANBUMANI RAMDOSS: Sir, I have already answered the question. Today, there are no human cases of bird flue in the country. Secondly, we have done an extensive surveillance of the affected areas. A million population was screened and people were isolated if they had any symptoms of cold or any of the symptoms. They were isolated and tested there. Samples were sent to both Delhi and Pune labs. And, for the whole process, we have had rapid response teams there. A lot of things have gone into this surveillance project. We have taken a decision because some of the industry said that they are going to flood the market with the bird flu drugs. This should not be taken arbitrarily. I have given example of

HIV and what they have one. When the HIV drugs were given arbitrarily, these drugs are supposed to be given for lifelong. Some doctors and private institutions, which we are now trying to regulate, are giving for 3 weeks, 4 weeks and there is a resistance; the price of the drug will shoot up from Rs. 550 to Rs. 10,000 for the second line drugs. We do not want the situation like that to happen. That is why we had to take a decision in consultation with the Law Ministry and the Consumer Affairs Ministry to ban it, because this is a temporary phenomenon. It is not that we are stopping the production, drugs are being produced. In fact....

SHRI VASANT CHAVAN: These are all speculations and no facts.

DR. ANBUMANI RAMDOSS: What speculation?

SHRI VASANT CHAVAN: Speculation that they may pile stocks, they may do it indiscriminately.....

DR. ANBUMANI RAMDOSS: It is the responsibility of the Government to take stock of the situation under the Epidemic Diseases Act. We have to act anticipating these things in the country. It is my responsibility.

**श्री कांजीभाई पटेल :** धन्यवाद । सर, मैं दक्षिण गुजरात से आता हूँ और मेरे पास का जिला सूरत इससे affected है । गुजरात गवर्नमेंट ने बडर्स को उस एरिया में लाने से रोकने के लिए एक नोटिफिकेशन जारी किया था कि वहां से बडर्स गुजरात के सूरत या वलसाड़ जिले में न आने पाएं । इसके जरिए गुजरात और महाराष्ट्र के बडर्स ऑनर्स के बीच एक conflict हुआ था । क्या कोई ऐसे conflict के किस्से सरकार के ध्यान में आए हैं?

DR. ANBUMANI RAMDOSS: Sir, individual States took individual decisions and we have to inform the States about the problem. Firstly, in Maharashtra, we had informed and we called up the Chief Minister and informed about the situation and the situation was well under control. The States took decisions on transportation of poultry food across the border because Gujarat was closed, Madhya Pradesh was closed and the States had taken decisions. Some States like Kerala, though there was no bird flu, they also banned the import or export across the border. So, States had to take some decision to contain this disease. We have advised the States according to the spread of the disease. In fact, we have told the States not to create a situation of panic and to tackle the situation together. So, the Centre and the States—Maharashtra, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh—are coordinating perfectly in this matter.

**श्री सभापति :** नेक्स्ट क्वेश्चन । मैंने जान-बूझकर आपको मुर्गों की लड़ाई में नहीं डाला है । आपने क्वेश्चन पूछना चाहा था, लेकिन मुर्गों के मामले में मैंने जान — बूझकर बीच में नहीं डाला । नेक्स्ट क्वेश्चन ।

**Medicines prescribed/dispensed by C.G.H.S. dispensaries**

\*503. SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) the list/names/details of the medicines that can be prescribed/ dispensed directly by the MO/CMO of C.G.H.S. dispensaries;

(b) the proportion of such medicines dispensed as compared to medicines dispensed through indent procedure on recommendation of Specialists, in terms of their cost value (latest available figures);

(c) whether it is a fact that the activity of diagnosis and treatment has concentrated with the Specialists and the dispensaries are just centres for disbursement of medicines; and

(d) the remedial steps proposed, if any, to restore the real utility of the dispensaries?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. ANBUMANI RAMDOSS): (a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

**Statement**

*Starred question no. 503 for 19th May, 2006*

(a) Medical Officers/Chief medical Officers of the CGHS dispensaries can prescribe all the drugs listed in CGHS formularies of Generic and Proprietary drugs. The lists are given in Annexure.

*[See Appendix—207 Annexure No 14]*

(b) A comparative statement indicating the expenditure incurred on purchase of drugs by CGHS through Medical Store Organisation (MSO)/ HSCC and by CGHS Medical Store Depots, on account of purchase of imported drugs and directly purchased costly drugs from the manufactures and the expenditure incurred on the local purchase of medicines for the year 2005-06 is given in the Statement-I (*See below*)