

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

**RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.2347
TO BE ANSWERED ON 16TH MARCH, 2021**

NEW VARIANT OF COVID-19 VIRUS

**2347 SHRI K. SOMAPRASAD:
SHRI SYED NASIR HUSSAIN:**

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

- (a) the total number of new variants of the COVID-19 virus reported so far in India
- (b) the total number of people who have been infected with this new strain
- (c) whether people who have been infected once could get re-infected by the new virus strain
- (d) if so, the steps being planned by Government to avoid such re-infections and
- (e) the details of total number of COVID-19 reinfections that have been reported so far in the country?

ANSWER

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND
FAMILY WELFARE
(SHRI ASHWINI KUMAR CHOUBEY)**

(a) & (b): Three new variants of concern has been reported so far in India. They are UK variant (B.1.1.7), South Africa variant (B.1.351) and Brazil variant (P.1).

As on 4th March 2021, a total 242 samples have tested positive for different variants in India.

(c): As per World Health Organization, in the three countries where the pandemic is being driven by the variant mutants of SARS-CoV-2 virus, namely United Kingdom, South Africa and Brazil, the South African and Brazilian variants have the potential to reinfect persons who have been previously infected with SARS-CoV-2.

(d): Recognizing that the mutant variants of SARS-CoV-2 are driving the pandemics in countries of their origin, namely United Kingdom, South Africa and Brazil, Government of India has revised its guidelines for international travel to minimize the risk of importation and further spread of these mutant variants in India.

A genomic consortium of 10 regional laboratories with National Center for Disease Control as the apex laboratory has been established to perform genomic sequencing of the samples from positive travelers and 5% of the positive test samples from the community.

Such international travelers who test positive are kept in special isolation ward, till such time they test negative. The contacts of such cases are also kept under institutional quarantine, till such time they test negative.

(e): No case of re-infection by mutant variants of SARS-CoV-2 virus has been reported from India so far.