

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

**RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.244
TO BE ANSWERED ON 20TH JULY, 2021**

**MEASURES TAKEN TO MINIMISE LIKELIHOOD OF THIRD WAVE OF COVID-19
PANDEMIC**

**244 SHRI VAIKO:
SHRI M. SHANMUGAM:**

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

- (a) whether Government has undertaken any detailed study with experts on how to minimise the threat and likelihood of third wave of Pandemic, if not prevention;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether health infrastructure has been strengthened and expanded to meet the challenges throughout the country, including oxygen cylinders, medicines and other equipments;
- (d) whether the vaccination drive is going on as per the schedule, as per the affidavit given to the Supreme Court; and
- (e) if so, by what time, the country will achieve universal vaccination and the details thereof?

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

(a) & (b): The strategy and interventions required to prevent resurgence of COVID-19 cases through instituting various public health measures has been deliberated upon in various technical committees under Indian Council of Medical Research, Directorate General of Health Services.

These technical committees include subject experts from the field of public health, clinicians, scientists, microbiologists, etc. drawn from eminent public health institutions and hospitals as well as World Health Organization.

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare continues to advise States to strictly follow five-fold strategy of 'Test-Track-Treat-Vaccination and adherence to COVID appropriate behavior'. States/UTs have been accordingly advised the same through formal communications, video conferences as well as through deployment of Central teams.

(c): Health is a state subject, Government of India has supported the states and undertook a series of action including further strengthening of existing health infrastructure to ensure provisioning of sufficient hospital beds, drugs, medical oxygen and other consumables to aid proper clinical care of COVID-19 patients.

Some of the ongoing initiatives to strengthen hospital infrastructure include:

With the intent to reduce the risk of cross infection to non-COVID patients as well as to maintain continuity of non-COVID essential health services in the country, a three-tier arrangement of dedicated COVID-19 health facilities [(i) COVID Care Center (CCC); (ii) Dedicated COVID Health Centre (DCHC) and (iii) Dedicated COVID Hospital (DCH)] has been implemented in the country.

Government of India in addition to providing services through hospitals/facilities available under Ministry of Health & Family Welfare also roped in tertiary care hospitals under ESIC, Defence, Railways, paramilitary forces, Steel Ministry etc. for management of COVID-19 cases. Further, many large temporary treatment facilities were established by DRDO to manage surge in COVID-19 cases in the country.

Due to concerted actions of Central and State Governments, the isolation bed capacity and ICU bed capacity which was merely 10,180 and 2,168 before the first lockdown (as on 23rd March 2020) could be increased to 18,21,420 isolation beds and 1,21,671 ICU beds (as on 16th July 2021).

Additionally, the reliance on imports with respect to ventilators was mitigated with concerted efforts of Governments and industry under the 'Make in India' vision. Till now State/UTs and Central Governments institutions have been allocated 56,218 ventilators of which 48,060 have been already supplied (as on 13th July 2021).

Taking note of spread of the disease to peri-urban and rural areas in many districts, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare on 16th May 2021 has issued an "SoP on Covid19 Containment and Management in Peri-Urban, Rural and Tribal Areas".

With the intent to protect pediatric age group in current and any future surges of cases, Guidelines for management of COVID-19 in children were also issued on 18th June 2021. The guideline provides guidance on the management of acute presentation of COVID-19 as well as Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome (MIS-C) in children and adolescents found temporally related to COVID-19.

Oxygen cylinders and concentrators are being procured and being supplied to States. Further PSA plants have been sanctioned across the country to augment oxygen supplies.

In addition, 'India COVID-19 Emergency Response & Health System Preparedness Package: Phase-II' has also been approved by the Cabinet with Rs 23,123 crores (with Rs. 15,000 Cr as Central Component & Rs 8,123 as State component) and is to be implemented from 1st July 2021 to 31st March 2022. It includes support to State/UT level for ramping up Health Infrastructure including those in rural, tribal and peri-urban areas closer to the community, providing support for procurement of Drugs and Diagnostics to enhance service delivery at district and sub district levels for management of COVID-19 cases (including pediatric care) and

for maintaining a buffer of drugs, support for IT Interventions such as implementation of Hospital Management Information System and expanding Access to Tele-Consultations in all districts, and support for Capacity Building and Training for all aspects of management of COVID-19.

(d): Yes, the vaccination drive is going as per the schedule and as per the affidavit given to the Supreme Court.

(e): The COVID-19 vaccination is an ongoing and dynamic process, which is being guided by National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration for COVID-19 (NEGVAC) on the basis of concurrent scientific evidence. In view of the dynamic and evolving nature of COVID-19 pandemic, no fixed timeline at present can be indicated for the completion of vaccination drive.