

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

**RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 736
TO BE ANSWERED ON 13TH DECEMBER, 2022**

THREAT OF NEW VIRUSES AND PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES

736. SHRI KARTIKEYA SHARMA:

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

- (a) whether Government has conducted a thorough study on the impacts of the spread of drastic diseases through new forms of viruses in the country;
- (b) if so, the details of such recent viruses which affected Indians;
- (c) the details of precautionary measures taken to check the spreading of drastic diseases in the country;
- (d) the number of Indians who got affected with monkeypox so far;
- (e) the details of present status of COVID-19 cases being reported in the country, State-wise; and
- (f) the details of researches which are going on to produce effective medicines against such drastic diseases in the country?

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

(a) to (c): Department of Health Research has a network of 145 Virus Research and Diagnostic Laboratories (VRDL) across various geographical locations of India. These network laboratories are trained for screening of viral diseases. They have also contributed in study of various aspects of COVID-19 to understand Clinical, immunological and genomic analysis, Vaccine effectiveness, and reinfection studies. These studies have generated valuable information in the Indian context and have helped in making various policy decisions. Besides this, many other viruses of public health importance such as Nipah, Dengue, Zika, Chikungunya, Japanese encephalitis, Polio, Influenza and other respiratory viruses have also been studied in VRDLs and ICMR institutes.

ICMR-National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune is equipped with Bio-safety level-IV facility. It is WHO referral center for emerging viral infections and is involved in conducting workshops for diagnostic preparedness and awareness for health care sector as well as VRDLs for emerging

and re-emerging viral diseases which sensitizes the people to take precautionary measures to avoid spread of the communicable diseases. National influenza center at ICMR-NIV also monitors the evolution of Influenza and SARS-CoV-2 viruses through Pan-India surveillance program with help of 30 VRDLs, located across different geographical location in India. Also, Integrated Disease Surveillance Program (IDSP) division of National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) gathers the data on various communicable diseases including drastic diseases spread through new forms of virus. The IDSP surveillance network has detected outbreaks caused by these viruses like CCHF (2011), Nipah (2018), Zika (2016), COVID-19 (2020) and Monkey pox (2022).

(d): As on 8th December, 2022, as per information shared by States/Union Territories (UTs), a total of 23 confirmed cases due to Monkeypox have been reported in the country.

(e): The trajectory of COVID-19 cases in the country is witnessing a slow and sustained decline since mid-July 2022. As on 8th December, 2022, as per information shared by States/UTs, a total of 4,244 active cases of COVID-19 are reported in the country. States/UTs wise details are available at <https://www.mohfw.gov.in/>

(f): ICMR has constituted the National Task Force to provide guidance for COVID testing and treatment and had issued guidelines for repurposing of drugs for COVID management. The National Task Force on COVID-19 evaluated emerging evidence to synthesize guidelines on management of the disease. A clinical guidance for management of adult COVID patients was issued for Remdesivir, Tocilizumab, Budesonide and methylprednisolone. Regarding COVID-19 vaccines, ICMR's research has been able to support development of an indigenous vaccine, COVAXIN.
