

Update on COVID-19:

Through dedicated and collaborative efforts, we have evacuated 124 persons from Japan and 112 persons from Wuhan: Dr Harsh Vardhan

Posted On: 27 FEB 2020 1:02PM by PIB Delhi

“As many as 124 persons have been evacuated from Japan including 119 Indian citizens and five nationals from Sri Lanka, Nepal, South Africa & Peru by an Air India flight. These were quarantined onboard the Diamond Princess Cruise ship at Yokohama due to COVID-19. In addition, 112 persons have been evacuated from Wuhan, China, the epicentre of the COVID-19 outbreak by an IAF flight. These include 76 Indian citizens and 36 nationals from countries such as Bangladesh, Myanmar, Maldives, China, South Africa, USA and Madagascar”. This was stated by Dr Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister for Health & Family Welfare, early morning here today. The evacuees have reached India today, he stated.

Dr Harsh Vardhan added that while the evacuees from Japan will be quarantined at the Army camp at Manesar, those from Wuhan shall be housed at the ITBP facility at Chhawla. He said that of the 138 Indian nationals on board of Cruise Ship Diamond Princess, 119 out of 122 who were tested and found negative as per latest PCR test have been brought back as 3 Indian nationals opted not to come back. All other 16 are in hospitals in Japan getting treatment and quarantined. “Government of India, as an expression of solidarity with Chinese people at this difficult time, has also sent a consignment of 15 tonnes of Indian Medical Relief for COVID-19 to Wuhan, China”.

Dr Harsh Vardhan stated that “Apart from expressing gratitude, I am extremely proud of the way multiple Ministries, our Armed forces, our doctors, Air India, our Embassies, both at China and Japan, and the many unseen who worked behind the scenes, made this happen. All have put India and Indians first. Salutations to the collaborative and dedicated efforts of all these agencies.” In the spirit of India’s cultural mores of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, he highlighted that India volunteered and evacuated nationals from other countries also while undertaking the evacuation from both Japan and Wuhan.

The Union Ministers said that in view of the evolving global situation regarding spread of COVID-19, in addition to the previous travel advisories, additional instructions have been issued, whereby Indians have been advised to avoid all non-essential travel to Singapore, Republic of Korea, Iran and Italy. Also, people coming from Republic of Korea, Iran and Italy or having such travel history since 10th February 2020 may be quarantined for 14 days on arrival to India.

Dr Harsh Vardhan also stated that senior officers of the Health Ministry of the rank of Jt. Secretary and above are visiting States to assess their preparedness for surveillance and management of COVID-19. “These visits shall ensure strengthening of the State surveillance machinery and to address their concerns, if any. A checklist is provided to them for compliance; they will submit the report by 2nd March 2020”, he stated.

He stated that as many as 4,82,927 passengers have been screened from 4787 flights as on date. Screening at 21 Airports, 12 major seaports and 65 minor seaports and land crossings particularly bordering Nepal is continually undergoing. Passengers are further monitored under community surveillance through IDSP network on a daily basis. A total of 23,531 passengers are presently under community surveillance through IDSP.

Besides, of the 2836 samples sent for testing, 2830 are found negative, 3 samples were earlier found positive

in Kerala (these have recovered and have been discharged) and 3 are under testing. All 645 evacuees at the earlier camps at Manesar and Chhawla were discharged on 18th February 2020.

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(Release ID: 1604508)