

Dr. Harsh Vardhan reviews actions taken and further preparedness on Novel Coronavirus (COVID 19)

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Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister of Health & Family Welfare undertook a review of the ongoing Novel Coronavirus (COVID19) management across the country, with the senior officials of the Ministry, here today.

Dr. Harsh Vardhan was informed that at present, the screening of passengers is being done in all 21 airports, 12 major and 65 non-major seaports and border crossings. In all 4,214 flights and 4,48,449 passengers have been screened so far. Also, as informed by MEA, departure of the Air Force flight to Wuhan is being planned for 26th Feb and the evacuees will arrive on 27th February. As of now, 2,707 samples have been tested of which only 3 samples had earlier tested positive (Kerala) and all the three patients have been discharged from the hospitals and are now in home isolation. All Indian evacuees from Wuhan have tested negative for COVID19 and have gone back to their homes from the quarantine facilities. In all, 23,259 persons were brought under community surveillance in 34 States/UTs through the Integrated Diseases Surveillance Programme (IDSP) network.

Dr. Harsh Vardhan was briefed that a revised travel advisory on travel to Singapore has been issued on 22nd February, 2020. Regarding movement across Kartarpur border in Punjab, it was informed that in discussion with the Home Ministry, Health Ministry and Health Secretary, Punjab, special screening has been strengthened across the border and further necessary facilitation for masks to be worn by pilgrims is being initiated. He was informed that taking into consideration the larger cases being reported from other countries besides China, universal screening is being initiated from 10 countries and in this regard Special Secretary (Health) held a Video Conference (VC) today with officials of Airport Health Organization (APHO) from 21 airports and Health Secretaries of respective States. At present, in addition to screening of passengers from flights coming from China, Hong Kong, Thailand, Singapore, Japan and South Korea, entry screening has been extended to flights coming from Vietnam, Nepal, Indonesia and Malaysia w.e.f. 23rd February, 2020. Further, Secretary (HFW) informed that close coordination is being maintained with Indian embassies abroad to get daily updates on Novel Coronavirus (COVID19) across the world.

While complementing States for their exceptional efforts to manage the Novel Coronavirus (COVID19), Dr. Harsh Vardhan also directed that all Joint Secretaries and Senior Officers from Health Ministry may be deputed to visit States & UTs to ensure strengthening of the State surveillance machinery and to address their concerns, if any. The Union Health Minister appreciated the various precautionary measures being undertaken in close coordination with various ministries at the central level, States as well as Indian embassies abroad. He also lauded the States for actively monitoring the cases as well as updating the requisite information pertaining to screening and surveillance on the central web portal.

MV/PP

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