

Health Secretary reviews preparedness of Ministries/Depts and States on Novel Coronavirus through video conference

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Ms. Preeti Sudan, Secretary (HFW) chaired a video conference (VC) with Health Secretaries from States/UTs along with senior officials from Ministry of Shipping, Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Civil Aviation, Ministry of Tourism and Ministry of Home Affairs to review their preparedness for prevention and management of Novel Coronavirus, here today.

Secretary (HFW) informed that various precautionary measures have been undertaken in close coordination with the concerned ministries at the central level. She also said that the situation is under control in the country and is being regularly monitored by Prime Minister's Office, Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister of Health & Family Welfare and Cabinet Secretary on a daily basis regarding the updates, status of preparedness and action taken so far. She reiterated that the new visa restrictions/advisories are issued in view of the emerging scenario globally. She asked states to enhance the awareness activities regarding the updated advisories.

She advised that the States/UTs need to stay on alert and be more vigilant. She informed that a portal has been put in place as a special surveillance web tool to monitor the cases on real time basis. This will also help for national-level monitoring. She advised that all the States/UTs need to fill the data accurately and in timely manner.

She elicited that the States/UTs needs to coordinate to strengthen between them especially on the border areas at the level of Chief Medical Officer of the concerned districts. This step will also provide boost to the robust administration structures at the district level.

She also informed that Universal screening for all flights from Singapore and Thailand besides Hong Kong and China at earmarked aero-bridges. She added that all the possible support has been extended to all the States/UTs to combat the situation arise due to Novel Coronavirus. She also informed that Secretary, Ministry of Human Resource Development has been requested to take adequate measures to spread awareness of hygiene among the students across the country.

States/UTs have reported that the protocols and guidelines issued are being followed to avoid any eventuality. They further informed that the sufficient stocks for the Personal Protection Equipments and masks have been procured. Adequate IEC activities like hoardings at the State's borders, pamphlet distribution, announcements etc. are being undertaken to spread awareness about the symptoms and precautions. The States bordering Nepal have informed that they have made all necessary arrangements for screening of people transiting across the border. Orientation of the medical personnel and health officials has been conducted regularly. Special Gram Sabhas are being organised to boost awareness and sensitisation regarding the Novel Coronavirus diseases, its symptoms, preventive measures, reporting etc.in the border villages.

Secretary (HFW) informed that the screening of passengers is now on in all 21 airports, International Seaports and border crossings. She also stated that 1275 flights and 139539 passengers were screened so far at 21 Airports. All 645 evacuees from Wuhan have been tested negative for nCoV. As of now 1232 samples have been tested and 1199 samples were found negative, 30 are under process and 3 sample tested positive (Kerala). 6599 persons are presently under community surveillance in 29 States/UTs. She further elaborated that containment and

prevention activities shall be taken up on utmost priority. All the states need to strengthen their rapid response teams to counter any eventuality. Also there needs to be role clarity and robust administrative structures in place at all Districts.

Dr. Ganga Khedkar, Scientist G and Head of ECD Divison, ICMR informed that laboratory Guwahati Medical College, Assam has also being utilised now for testing of Novel Coronavirus.

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