

Health Secretary reviews preparedness of States with concerned Ministries/Depts 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, & 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 being closely and regularly monitored by PMO, 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 the new visa restrictions/advisories issued in view of the emerging scenario globally. She asked states to create awareness regarding these.

She advised that the States/UTs need to be more vigilant. Secretary (HFW) reviewed the preparedness of all the States/UTs in terms of orientation of health and other agencies; adherence of various prevention & management protocols; awareness regarding prevention of Novel Coronavirus among the people being screened and those transiting the border with Nepal; self-reporting by these people; isolation wards; protective gear etc. She asked states to take necessary steps for contact tracing and adequate surveillance management. She also informed that in order to meet with the increasing demand of additional manpower to undertake screening at airports States should provide required health workforce and other logistic supports to APHOs. The States bordering Nepal have informed that they are taking necessary measures and following up on the guidelines issued by the Government on screening & management. States that do not have airports or seaports, such as Haryana, reported that special awareness drives at Toll plaza, Bus stations and Railway stations are also being initiated. Kerala, which has reported 3 positive cases, all of students from Wuhan, China highlighted the close monitoring and surveillance being carried out by them across all administrative units in the state. District Collectors are included in review and monitoring of the situation. Community engagement through focussed awareness is a key component.

During the video conference she informed that earmarked aero bridges will be used at 7 international airports (Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai, Cochin, Bengaluru, Hyderabad & Chennai) at the dedicated gates to screen passengers from China, Singapore, Thailand & Hong Kong for Novel Coronavirus so as to ensure effective prevention. Ministry of Tourism stated that they are coordinating with the Hotels Association for wider self-reporting by travellers visiting religious and other tourist places in states.

Secretary (HFW) informed that the screening of passengers is now on in all 21 airports, International Seaports and border crossings. She also stated that 777 flights and 89500 passengers were screened so far at 21 Airports. 454 samples were tested out of which 451 found negative and 3 sample were found positive. 3935 passengers 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.

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