

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO 3305
TO BE ANSWERED ON 17th DECEMBER, 2021**

MYSTERIOUS RESPIRATORY ILLNESS OUTBREAK IN NORTH BENGAL

3305: DR. SUKANTA MAJUMDAR :

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

- (a) whether the Government has taken note that a large number of children died due to mysterious Respiratory illness outbreak in North Bengal Region of West Bengal during September 2021;
- (b) if so, whether the Government has sent an Expert Committee of Senior Doctors from All India Institute of Medical Sciences and National Institute of Virology to ascertain/assess the situation/cause of said outbreak;
- (c) if so, the outcome of the findings made by the Committee;
- (d) whether the State of West Bengal has sought any assistance to tackle the said outbreak; and
- (e) if so, reaction of the Government thereto and the other steps taken/being taken/being taken in this regard?

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

(a) to (e): The news of children dying of febrile illness in Jalpaiguri, West Bengal was captured by the Central Surveillance Unit of Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP) and shared with the State government. The state had reported influenza cases occurring due to respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and influenza type-B virus. Taking cognizance of the seriousness of the situation, Government of India issued an advisory to the State Government regarding prevention, management and control of the outbreak of Febrile Illness in Jalpaiguri district and State was advised to take prompt action for preparedness for Acute respiratory illness (ARI) and seasonal influenza (H1N1).

State Government was advised to take prompt action on following points: -

1. Ensure availability of necessary drugs and logistics at all Government hospitals /health facilities up to Primary Health Centre in State and monitor availability of Oseltamivir in all private chemist/pharmacies so that drugs are readily available.
2. Adequate number of dedicated beds for seasonal influenza may be ensured in State Government Hospitals.

3. State to ensure that sufficient number of ICU beds with trained staff should be available in designated health facilities for managing the cases of seasonal influenza.
4. Enhance awareness/IEC activities against seasonal influenza as per national guidelines.
5. State to follow the MoHFW guidelines for vaccination and management of seasonal influenza available at NCDC website (<https://ncdc.gov.in/>).
6. Ensure that vacant contractual positions under IDSP at state and the districts levels are filled at the earliest in order for smooth functioning of the programme.
