

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2494
ANSWERED ON:23.08.2013
MANAGING EPIDEMICS AND NATURAL CALAMITIES
Agarwal Shri Jai Prakash;Tomar Shri Narendra Singh

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

- (a) the criteria for declaring a disease as an epidemic or a pandemic;
- (b) the diseases declared as an epidemic or a pandemic during the last five years, State/UT-wise;
- (c) the steps taken/proposed by the Government to deal with the epidemics, pandemics and public health emergencies in the country;
- (d) whether the Government has approved a three-tier network of laboratories across the country for managing epidemics and natural calamities across the country; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof along with the financial and operational modalities worked out for the purpose?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD)

- (a): An epidemic is a sudden increase in the number of cases of a disease above what is normally expected in the population of a specific area. A pandemic is declared when an epidemic has spread to several countries or continents, usually affecting large number of people.
- (b): During the last five years, Pandemic Influenza A H1N1(swine flu) is the only disease that has been declared as a Pandemic by WHO.
- (c): Health is a State Subject. However, Ministry of Health has crisis management plan that was updated last on 24.07.2013 and circulated to all concerned. This plan provides for Crisis Management Group and Technical Advisory Committee. Emergency Medical Relief (EMR) Cell in Directorate General of Health Services coordinates all Public Health Emergency activities of national and international concern. Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP) has nationwide surveillance for providing early warning signs. National Centre for Disease Control is the identified agency for investigating outbreaks. Laboratories under IDSP network and Indian Council of Medical Research have been identified for testing clinical samples. Ministry of Health also provides support to the States in terms of guidelines and operating procedures
- (d) & (e): Government has approved a scheme for "Establishment of a network of laboratories for managing epidemics and natural calamities" to strengthen diagnostic capabilities of existing microbiology and virology laboratories in the country. The three tier network includes
 - (i) Regional Level Bio Safety Level (BSL) -3 laboratories
 - (ii) State Level BSL-2 Plus Laboratories
 - (iii) Medical College BSL-2 Laboratories. An amount of Rs 639.48 Crores has been approved for establishing 160 laboratories in the in this network all over the country.