

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1318
TO BE ANSWERED ON 06TH FEBRUARY, 2026**

ESTABLISHMENT OF VIRUS DETECTION AND SURVEILLANCE INSTITUTES

1318. SHRI M K RAGHAVAN:

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

- (a) whether the Government has proposed or approved the establishment of any new national institute(s) for the detection, surveillance and research of viruses, including facilities with Bio Safety Level-4 (BSL-4) laboratories, in the country;
- (b) if so, the objectives, functions, institutional structure and funding pattern of the proposed or approved institute(s);
- (c) whether the Government has conducted any assessment or study regarding regional requirements for virus detection and surveillance institutes, particularly in States that frequently report outbreaks of diseases such as Nipah virus infection and amoebic meningitis and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether the State of Kerala has been considered for establishing any such national or regional virus detection institute, in view of its past experience with emerging and re-emerging viral diseases in the country, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (e) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to ensure adequate virus surveillance, detection and research infrastructure in the State of Kerala?

ANSWER

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
(SHRI PRATAPRAO JADHAV)**

(a) to (c): Under the Pradhan Mantri–Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PM-ABHIM), Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has undertaken setting up of Zonal National Institutes of Virology (NIVs) at Bengaluru, Jabalpur and Jammu with BSL-3 laboratories, and at Dibrugarh with a BSL-4 laboratory. Setting up of National Institute for One Health (NIOH), Nagpur, has also been undertaken with BSL-4 and BSL-3 laboratories, including an animal BSL-3 facility. The upgrading of five Viral Research and Diagnostics Laboratories (VRDLs) into BSL-3 facilities has also been supported by ICMR through PM-ABHIM scheme. These initiatives aim to strengthen capacity for early detection, diagnosis and research on high-risk pathogens, support outbreak investigations and molecular surveillance, promote a One Health approach, and enhance preparedness for public health emergencies.

Under the VRDL scheme of Department of Health Research (DHR), 165 VRDLs have been set up

across 27 States and 5 Union Territories. Through the VRDL network, virus detection and surveillance activities are continuously carried out, and the resulting inputs are utilized for strengthening laboratory capacity and for prioritizing locations for augmentation of diagnostic and surveillance facilities.

The establishment of Zonal NIVs by ICMR and VRDLs in various medical colleges and research institutes has been undertaken based on the regional requirements for virus detection and surveillance, research needs as well as the proposals received from State/UT Governments.

(d) and (e): The Government of India, through the DHR under the VRDL Scheme, has undertaken measures to strengthen virus surveillance, detection and research infrastructure in Kerala, including strengthening VRDLs with equipment, reagents and trained manpower; upgrading laboratories for molecular diagnostics; conducting regular training and capacity-building programmes; and supporting research on emerging and re-emerging viral diseases of public health importance.

In order to ensure adequate virus surveillance, detection and research infrastructure in the State of Kerala in the State of Kerala, the following VRDLs have been established:

Institution / Unit	Location	Type / Category	
Government Medical College	Kozhikode	Regional Level	
National Institute of Virology Field Unit	Alappuzha	State Level	
Government Medical College	Thiruvananthapuram	Medical Level	College
Government Medical College	Thrissur	Medical Level	College
Government Medical College	Kannur	Medical Level	College
Government Medical College	Manjeri	Medical Level	College
Government Medical College	Ernakulam	Medical Level	College
Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences & Technology (SCTIMST),	Thiruvananthapuram	Medical Level	College

ICMR has a field unit of ICMR-NIV in Alappuzha and also supports the State of Kerala through existing national surveillance and laboratory networks, including access to apex and regional reference laboratories, genomic surveillance platforms, deployment of Mobile BSL 3 and technical support during outbreak investigations including recent Nipah virus outbreaks, as per national guidelines and mechanisms.
