



NDMA'S NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS FRAMEWORK FOR BIOLOGICAL BIOSECURITY THREATS

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The Government is prepared to respond to any biological attacks in the country.

The National Disaster Management Guidelines on Management of Biological Disasters, 2008 contain a threat-perception and risk-management framework covering biological safety, biosecurity and public-health preparedness. Biological and Public Health Emergencies have also been incorporated in the National Disaster Management Plan, 2019.

Continuous technical assessment, disease surveillance and early warning are undertaken by the concerned scientific, public-health and security agencies, including the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, National Centre for Disease Control, Indian Council of Medical Research and other designated agencies.

The NDMA Guidelines and the National Disaster Management Plan provide an overarching national framework for prevention, preparedness, early detection, containment and coordinated response to biological emergencies.

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) which has been designated as nodal Ministry for biological disaster, has informed that health is a State subject and it provides requisite technical and financial support to States/UTs for strengthening their public health preparedness and response capacities against outbreak of epidemic prone communicable diseases. To enhance disease surveillance activities, MoHFW has strengthened the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP) across the country, which allows for a decentralized system of response through trained multi-disciplinary Rapid Response Team (RRTs) to institute requisite public health control and containment measures.

In terms of laboratory strengthening, under IDSP, States have strengthened laboratories at district and State levels. Further, Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has established a network of more than 150 Viral Research and Diagnostic Laboratories (VRDLs) for strengthening of nation-wide network of laboratories for timely laboratory based diagnosis of pathogens. ICMR has developed two mobile Biosafety Level 3 (BSL-3) laboratories to provide essential on-site diagnostic services during outbreaks, especially in remote areas.

Funding support has been provided to States/UTs for health system strengthening to meet any exigency due to public health emergencies like pandemics, including strengthening of health infrastructure for enhancement of bed capacities, including ICU beds, expansion of laboratory network, surveillance, procurement of medical logistics etc.

With the long-term goal to better prepare our country against public health emergencies, Pradhan Mantri - Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PM- ABHIM) has been launched with the intent to enhance the capacity of primary, secondary and tertiary health care facilities/systems and institutes for identifying and managing any new and emerging diseases.

Further, the Battalions of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) are trained in basic Chemical Biological Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) course and the earmarked teams are equipped with requisite rescue, detection, monitoring and decontamination equipment.

NDRF teams are deployed on requisition from concerned State/District authorities across India.

NDRF conducts regular multi-agency mock drills on biological and biosecurity emergencies based on vulnerability profile of States/UTs. These drill involve all major disaster management stakeholder, including Civil Defense, SDRFs, Health Departments, Fire Services, Police, Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs), district administration and hospitals. The exercises help test emergency response plans, improve coordination among agencies, enhance community awareness and strengthen overall preparedness. The response is carried out in accordance with Standard Operating Procedure (SOPs), the Incident Response System (IRS) and established inter-agency coordination mechanisms.

In addition, MoHFW also conducts series of mock drills for testing and strengthening cross sector response across India.

This was stated by the Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs Shri Nityanand Rai in a written reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha.

RK/RR/PR/PS/SKS

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