National Exercise ‘VAJRA-SAT’ Concludes at Bengaluru, Strengthening India's Preparedness for Foot-and-Mouth Disease

Two-day exercise brings together 83 participants from 25 States, three Union Territories and key national institutions to strengthen surveillance, early detection and coordinated response

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The Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying (DAHD), Government of India, in coordination with ICAR-National Institute of Veterinary Epidemiology and Disease Informatics (ICAR-NIVEDI), Bengaluru, organised the two-day National Tabletop Exercise **‘VAJRA-SAT’ on Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) serotype SAT-1 preparedness** on 4–5 November 2026. The exercise, held under the theme **“Detect Early, Confirm Fast, Contain Together,”** concluded today with recommendations aimed at strengthening national preparedness and coordinated response to transboundary animal diseases.

FMD serotype SAT-1 has not been reported in India. In view of its geographical spread beyond Africa to parts of West Asia, the exercise was undertaken as a proactive preparedness initiative to safeguard livestock health, farmers' livelihoods and the livestock economy.

The exercise brought together **83 participants from 25 States, three Union Territories and key national institutions**, including State Animal Husbandry Departments, ICAR institutions, veterinary diagnostic laboratories, veterinary universities, vaccine manufacturers, and defence and border guarding agencies. Through simulated outbreak scenarios, participants deliberated on early detection, laboratory confirmation, epidemiological investigation, animal movement control, emergency vaccination preparedness, risk communication and coordinated response.



The exercise was inaugurated on 4 November by **Dr. Naveena B.M., Animal Husbandry Commissioner, DAHD**, who emphasised the importance of advance preparedness, early disease detection, timely response and effective coordination among Central and State agencies. **Dr. Baldev R. Gulati, Director, ICAR-NIVEDI**, highlighted the evolving epidemiological situation of FMD SAT-1 and the importance of risk-based surveillance, epidemiological intelligence and early warning systems. **Dr. J.K. Mohapatra, Director, ICAR-National Institute of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (ICAR-NIFMD)**, emphasised the importance of laboratory preparedness, rapid diagnosis and vaccine readiness. **Brigadier M.M. Ramachandra, Director, National Security Council Secretariat**, highlighted the importance of inter-agency coordination and border vigilance in preventing transboundary animal diseases.



The concluding session on 5 November was chaired by **Shri Rama Shankar Sinha, Additional Secretary (Livestock Health), DAHD**, who emphasised the importance of strengthening national and State-level preparedness and enhancing laboratory diagnostic capacity, including regional FMD laboratories and Regional Disease Diagnostic Laboratories (RDDLs), with technical support from ICAR-NIFMD.

During the concluding deliberations, participants highlighted the importance of timely reporting, rapid laboratory confirmation, disease surveillance, movement control, vaccine preparedness and inter-State coordination. The exercise provided valuable inputs for

developing appropriate preparedness and response strategies for FMD SAT-1. The observations and recommendations emerging from the exercise will further support national preparedness and coordinated response mechanisms.



A separate technical meeting on FMD-free compartmentalisation was also held on 5 November 2026, under the co-chairmanship of the Additional Secretary (LH) and the Animal Husbandry Commissioner, with participation from States. The discussions focused on FMD-free compartmentalisation of semen production centres and semen banks. The initiative aims to strengthen disease prevention, safeguard valuable livestock genetic resources and facilitate safe livestock trade.

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