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Ebola Scare: 21,799 passengers screened so far

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Global Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) epidemiological situation in EVD affected countries and travel-associated spread was reviewed by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. A detailed account of measures being undertaken for strengthening

preparedness and activities at points of entry, IDSP, laboratory was assessed.

Airport and port health organizations at ports of entry nationwide are actively performing disease screening on international travelers arriving from countries impacted by the Ebola outbreaks. Screening measures include travel history, taking body temperature and examination of high risk travelers by detailed medical examination. From August 1st to October 12, 2014, a total of 21,799 passengers have been screened [Low risk: 21,737; Medium Risk: 07 and High Risk: 55] have been screened at 18 airports upon arrival into India. As on date, a cumulative number of 1,128 passengers are being tracked by IDSP. Most of them are in the states of Maharashtra, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, West Bengal, and Delhi. 1,230 passengers have exited surveillance after follow up for 1 month. So far, over 1,000 travelers have been identified as suspected cases, 96 of the high-risk onesm have been tested but all were excluded after negative testing.

The health ministry has issued guidelines for travelers, immigration officials, airlines crew. Other Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) and public health measures are being undertaken including using the personal protective equipment. Immigration officials and airlines crew at 18 international airports where travelers from EVD affected countries can arrive via gulf have been trained.

The Control Room in the health ministry has received 790 calls since its inception on 09/08/2014 and 01 call received in the past 24 hours. Most of the callers have sought information on signs and symptoms of the disease

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One hospital in each state has been identified for admitting suspected cases and have a dedicated isolation facility for management of EVD cases. The Health Ministry has strengthened Ebola preparedness and is currently planning specific training exercises on surveillance and response measures in states where 18 international ports of entry are located and which are considered as priority areas. These exercises will be focused primarily on the role of health care workers in these local hospitals, contact tracing, laboratory sample collection, and transportation to identified labs, disinfection procedures, and personal protective gears for health workers.

The health ministry has been providing technical and material support to states for preparing health facilities with dedicated isolation wards, enabling them to provide [Ebola] case management in accordance with the clinical practice guidelines for diagnosis, treatment and care, and infection control guidelines.