

Gujarat- Compulsory Covid testing of travellers from other nations to begin soon

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- **An official release stated that Health Minister gave the administration instructions to remain vigilant and take all necessary precautions to stop the spread of the coronavirus**

Rushikesh Patel, the health minister for Gujarat, requested on Wednesday that officials perform "compulsory" testing on visitors coming into the state from other nations due to an increase in COVID-19 cases in some countries.

Additionally, it was discovered that in September and November, Ahmedabad and Vadodara each recorded two cases of the BF7 sub-variant of Omicron, which is thought to be the cause of the infection count in China. Both the cases, who had foreign travel history, recovered, civic officials said.

An official release stated that Patel gave the administration instructions to remain vigilant and take all necessary precautions to stop the spread of the coronavirus during the meeting with senior Health Department officials.

During the meeting, he also went over the state's health centres and civil hospitals' availability of beds, ventilators, medications, and oxygen supplies. According to the minister, there are currently only a few new cases of COVID-19 appearing in Gujarat as a result of the proactive vaccination drive.

According to the press release, Patel asked officials to "compulsorily" test visitors coming into Gujarat from other countries. Following the meeting, senior health officials communicated via video link with district-level officers and superintendents of all the civil hospitals.

Manoj Aggarwal, the additional chief secretary, stated that the situation in Gujarat is under control and that everyone involved has been asked to maintain a stand-by position given the circumstances.

"We are conducting nearly 8,000 tests every day and the number of new infections remains in single digits. At present, there are only 20 active cases in Gujarat and none of them is admitted to hospitals," said the IAS officer after the meeting.

The Union Health Ministry had urged all states and union territories a day earlier to increase genome sequencing of positive samples in order to keep track of newer variants and provide prompt treatment.

Notably, the BF.7 sub-variant of Omicron is thought to be responsible for the recent rise in coronavirus infections in China.

Officials claim that this variant was found in Gujarat and that individuals have also previously tested positive for it. At least two cases of BF.7 infection were reported in Ahmedabad and Vadodara in September and November, according to officials, even though the state government has not stated how many cases of that variant are still active in Gujarat at the moment.

"A person from the Sola area of the city was found infected with BF.7 upon his arrival here from Australia in November. He returned after recovering from infection without getting admitted to the

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hospital. There are no active BF.7 cases in Ahmedabad at present," a senior official of the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation said on Wednesday.

According to Banchhanidhi Pani, the municipal commissioner of Vadodara, a woman was discovered to have the BF.7 variant upon her arrival in Vadodara from the US in September. In her home isolation, "She eventually recovered," Pani said.

(With inputs from PTI)