Coronavirus in India: First confirmed case reported in Kerala

Almost everyone now will be aware of the coronavirus and how fatal it could be. Though its epicenter is Wuhan in China, the confirmed cases of the virus have been reported in countries outside as well, including the U.S., Australia, Japan and others. So far, there had been no confirmed cases of the coronavirus in India, but today, the country reported its first confirmed case of the deadly virus.

Coronavirus in India

On Thursday, India’s Union ministry of health and family welfare confirmed the first positive case of coronavirus in India. The department informed that a female student, who is from the Indian state of Kerala, was studying in Wuhan.
University and traveled to India recently has been tested positive for coronavirus (nCoV).

“The patient has tested positive for novel coronavirus and is in isolation at the hospital. The patient is stable and is being closely monitored,” the ministry said in a statement.

Kerala’s health minister has called a meeting of the health secretary and other related officials to discuss plans to tackle the situation. As per news agency PTI, seven more people from different parts of Kerala have been kept in isolation wards. Also, a separate report says that about 400 people are under surveillance in their homes in Kerala. Moreover, authorities are also monitoring possible cases of the virus in other Indian cities, including Delhi and Mumbai.

The Indian government says that it is prepared to handle any medical situation, including the coronavirus in India. Further, the authorities say that thermal screening sensors have been placed, more equipment is being purchased, immigration and other staff members have been sensitized and hospitals have been asked to prepare isolation wards.

Is India prepared?

According to the Health Ministry, passengers are being screened (thermal and symptomatic) at 21 identified airports. Also, the health ministry has asked people, who have traveled to or from China since January 1 to report to the nearest health facility if they experience symptoms such as fever,
cough or breathing trouble. The Ministry has also established a 24/7 helpline (91-11-23978046) for any help or query related to the new virus.

The Indian government has plans to airlift the nationals from Wuhan. However, many say that bringing those Indian citizens from Wuhan is not a good idea due to the risk of infection. The Indian government is now waiting for approval from the Chinese authorities, which are managing the whole evacuation process.

A government official reportedly told Reuters that only those who don't have the virus will be brought back and kept in a quarantine facility outside Delhi.

FAQs on Novel #coronavirus:

What is #nCoV2020? What are its symptoms? How does it spread? What precautions need to be taken?
Read about this and more: @PMOIndia @drharshvardhan @AshwiniKChoubey @PIB_India @DDNewsLive @airnewsalerts @NITIAayog @ANI
Rising numbers

As of now, there is not much information on how dangerous this new virus is or how fast or easily it spreads. Its mode of transmission is also not clear yet, but it is believed to have originated from an animal, and now seems to be spreading from person-to-person. Also, the fact that it is a new virus, there are no drugs to cure it yet. Scientists, however, hope to test the first possible vaccines in the next few months. China is also testing the HIV drug Aluvia as a cure for coronavirus.

Since there is no vaccine available to cure the virus, the cases are being treated as per their symptomatology. Though the new virus is life threatening, it is not known how it would behave on a new population. Authorities have also come up with an advisory asking people to boost their immunity.

This new virus bears some resemblance to the SARS virus, which claimed about 800 lives in China and Hong Kong in 2002-03. World Health Organization (WHO) is still to decide whether or not to declare the new disease as a global emergency. However, considering the rising number of cases worldwide, WHO may soon do so.

On Thursday, the number of deaths in China due to the coronavirus jumped to 170 from 132 on Wednesday, as per the data from John Hopkins University. Moreover, total confirmed cases globally as of today are 7,783, with the majority from mainland China. According to the data from the World Health Organization (WHO), 15 countries, besides China, have reported 68 confirmed cases of the coronavirus.
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