

States, UTs on alert following respiratory infection in China

NEW DELHI, Nov 29 (IANS)

DAYS after the Union Health Ministry asked all States and Union Territories (UTs) to implement 'Operational Guidelines for Revised Surveillance Strategy in the context of COVID-19' which provides for integrated surveillance of respiratory pathogens presenting as cases of influenza like illness (ILI) and severe acute respiratory illness (SARI) among children in China, at least six states have put their health infrastructure on alert mode.

The State Governments of Rajasthan, Karnataka, Gujarat, Uttarakhand, Haryana and Tamil Nadu have asked its hospitals and healthcare staff to ensure preparedness to tackle

patients complaining of respiratory issues. The Karnataka health department has also asked citizens to be aware of the seasonal flu.

Listing the symptoms and risk factors of seasonal flu, the advisory also mentions dos and don'ts, which include covering the mouth and nose while coughing or sneezing; frequent washing of hands; avoid touching the face; and using masks in crowded spots.

In its advisory, the Rajasthan Health Department said the situation is "not worrisome at present" but the medical staff should keep vigil and prevent spread of infectious diseases.

It also said that adequate arrangements should be made in paediatric units and medicine departments.

US offers air defence version of Stryker armoured fighting vehicles

■ By **Ajit K Dubey**

NEW DELHI, Nov 29 (ANI)

THE US Government has offered the Stryker armoured fighting vehicle's air defence system version which can be deployed in high altitude areas to take out enemy aircraft to the Indian military.

"The Americans have offered the Stryker armoured fighting vehicles equipped with air defence systems to the Indian military. They have offered to co-produce the vehicles with Indian entities," defence officials told ANI. During the 2+2 dialogue with India, the American side had pushed for the co-production of the Stryker armoured combat vehicle and was announced by their Defence Secretary Lloyd J Austin as well.

This is not the first time that the US has made the push for the sale of Stryker systems to India and did that in the last few high-level meetings with Indian establishments.

India is considering the proposal made by the American establishment for the Stryker vehicles but has not taken any final decision about it, sources in the security establishment said. The American proposal has come at a time when the Indian defence industry has made significant progress in the field of developing armoured combat vehicles including vehicles like the Wheeled Armoured Platform developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation in association with private industry.

Atal Dulloo appointed new Chief Secretary of J&K

JAMMU, Nov 29 (PTI)

SENIOR IAS officer Atal Dulloo has been appointed as Chief Secretary of Jammu and Kashmir, replacing Arun Kumar Mehta who is due to superannuate at the end of this month.

According to an order issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs, Dulloo, a 1989-batch IAS officer of the Union Territories or Arunachal Pradesh-Goa-Mizoram and Union Territory Cadre, will assume charge as Chief Secretary of Jammu and Kashmir from December 1.

“Consequent upon the superannuation of Arun Kumar Mehta, IAS on November 30 and on repatriation from cen-

tral deputation, Atal Dulloo, IAS is hereby appointed as Chief Secretary, Jammu and Kashmir with effect from December 1 or from date of assumption of charge, whichever is later and until further orders. This issues with the approval of competent authority,” the Ministry said in an order on Wednesday.

On November 20, the Central Government repatriated Dulloo to his Union Territories cadre after working as Secretary of the Department of Border Management under the Home Ministry. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved Dulloo’s repatriation to his parent cadre.

India to build 10K houses in Lanka's tea plantation areas

COLOMBO, Nov 29 (PTI)

INDIA will build 10,000 more houses in the plantation areas of Sri Lanka

in an extension of its housing project in the country. The High Commission of India signed two significant agreements for the con-

struction of 10,000 houses in plantation areas of Sri Lanka under Phase-IV of the Indian Housing Project on Tuesday.