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Caution at companies as HMPV cases surface in India

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India Inc on the alert as HMPV cases rise in Asia

Health ministry will increase testing for HMPV as precautionary measure

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India Inc is closely tracking the surge in cases of Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV)—which causes respiratory illness—in some Southeast Asian nations following an outbreak in China, and has asked its employees to travel to these countries only if necessary, and take precautions such as masking up to dodge the infection.

Malaysia has reportedly seen a jump in HMPV infections, whose symptoms include fever, runny nose, and shortness of breath.

“We are closely watching this space. Group companies where we see most travel to these destinations are asking employees to exercise all precautions, including the use of masks, sanitisers, and even avoiding travel, if possible. Employees are to check latest company advisories before any travel,” said Supratik Bhattacharyya, chief talent officer for RPG Group.

The information technology-to-tyre conglomerate is not the only business house keeping an eye out for the latest reports on HMPV cases, some of which have been reported in India as well.

An energy company held an internal meeting of HR officials on Monday to discuss the strategies that they will need to put in place should there be a surge in cases in India. “The stock markets have taken a dip and the virus is one of the reasons. We discussed what steps to be taken and when should a formal advisory go out,” said a senior official of the company, declining to be identified.

The benchmark Sensex lost nearly 1,260 points, or 1.6%, on Monday to settle at 77,964.99 amid fears of a virus surge and weakness in bank stocks following a muted credit growth.

To be sure, aviation consultants have emphasized that the government may



India has so far seen five HMPV cases, as per media reports.

AFP

need to start monitoring international passengers coming into the country.

There are some firms that have stuck to the safety protocols adopted during the covid-19 pandemic. “Masks in case of common cold, regular washing of hands, and sanitizing of devices are encouraged. As our employees regularly travel across the globe, we encourage them to follow local

ended 22 December.

The Indian health ministry convened a joint monitoring group meeting with experts from the World Health Organization (WHO), and medical agencies last Saturday. It had then noted that while there was no unusual surge in respiratory illnesses, the government will increase testing for HMPV as a precautionary measure.

Media reports put the number of HMPV cases in India at five.

India’s government and the medical community have pointed out that there is no reason for alarm, but have advised caution.

“Health experts have clarified that HMPV is not a new virus. It was first identified in 2021 and has been circulating in the entire world since then,” health minister J.P. Nadda said. There is no reason to worry and the government is closely monitoring the situation, he said.

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With inputs from Priynka Sharma

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CAUTION ADVISED

HMPV is a respiratory illness, with symptoms including fever, runny nose, shortness of breath

THE govt may need to start monitoring international passengers coming into the country

GOVT and medical community have said that there is no reason for alarm, but advised caution

and international health advisories,” said Adarsh Mishra, chief human resources officer, Panasonic Life Solutions India.

During covid years, Indian companies had mandated work from home, and it was only in 2024 that businesses began asking their employees to return to office.

HMPV caught global attention when China reported a surge in the respiratory illness with flu-like symptoms in the week