



## Report on Pandemic Threat

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According to a report released by the **Global Preparedness Monitoring Board (GPMB)**, the chances of a global pandemic are growing and the world is not prepared for the same.

- The report titled '**A World At Risk**' has been authored by 15 global scientists and public health leaders, including **India's principal scientific advisor, Dr K Vijay Raghavan**.
- It is co-convened by the **World Bank** and the **World Health Organization (WHO)**.
- WHO tracked 1,483 epidemics in 172 countries between 2011 and 2018.

### Key Findings

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- **Epidemic-prone diseases**, such as influenza, Ebola, Zika, plague, yellow fever and others, are harbingers of a new era of high-impact, potentially fast-spreading outbreaks that are more frequently detected and increasingly difficult to manage.
- **Reasons Behind frequency:** Population growth, urbanisation, globally integrated economy, widespread and faster travel, conflict, migration and climate change.
- **Possible Impact:** A pandemic equivalent to the 1918 Spanish Flu could kill 80 million and wipe out nearly 5% of the global economy, devastating health systems and hitting low-resourced communities the hardest.
- **Indian Context:** India has handled the **threats of Nipah** and **zoonotic influenza viruses** quite well. However, the threat of a devastating pandemic looms large on the world and India remains highly vulnerable.

- **Suggestions:**
  - **Intergovernmental organisations**, donors and multilateral institutions need to come together **to strengthen funding mechanisms**, information sharing and continuous monitoring.
  - **Multilateral financing organisations** like the International Monetary Fund and World Bank need to **integrate preparedness into replenishments**, national and international financial risk assessments, incentive systems and funding mechanisms.
  - **Increasing country preparedness** by
    - raising funding,
    - doing more research into new technologies, vaccines and medicines,
    - establishing rapid communication systems,
    - launching a coordinated government, industry and community response;
    - and following through on international commitments.
  - Investing in building a **competent health system:**
    - Building high health system capability for prevention, effective surveillance, early detection and containment and appropriate management of any cases.
    - This requires a sufficiently large and well-skilled **health workforce** with public health expertise and well-resourced health care infrastructure apart from robust health information systems that can provide early alerts.

## Global Preparedness Monitoring Board

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- Created in response to recommendations by the UN Secretary General's Global Health Crises Task Force in 2017, the GPMB was co-convened by the World Health Organization and the World Bank Group and formally launched in **May 2018**.
- It is an **independent monitoring and accountability body** to ensure **preparedness for global health crises**.
- Its secretariat is located in Geneva, Switzerland.

**Source: HT**