

**7. HIV TESTING UNDER MEDICAL EXAMINATION PROCEDURES
as Extracted from Hard Times for Positive Travel,
A Citizens Report on the Status of Travellers with
HIV/AIDS (ABVA, September, 1993).**

In February 1993, a French tourist visiting Calcutta fell ill. She was taken by a colleague tourist to a private nursing home of Calcutta. At the nursing home the tourist informed the doctors that she is HIV positive. This set a chain reaction of panic.

The patient, who had dehydration was shifted to another nursing home and subsequently deported from the country.

In the case of the French tourist, the medical personnel chose to inform the press about the case. The national press carried the news prominently, including a front page coverage. (Telegraph 1.2.92).

The West Bengal State Health Department subsequently convened a meeting to plan a massive public awareness campaign. It also planned to take steps so that all foreigners will be subjected to AIDS checks (Telegraph 16.4.92). Mr. Prashanta Sur, the West Bengal Health Minister said that "the government is considering steps to test the blood samples of foreigners, including tourists coming by air or by train as a part of the prevention measure against the spread of AIDS in the State. Testing the blood samples of sailors of ships anchoring at the Calcutta port after a voyage might also be examined (Statesman 16.4.92). He suggested the creation of an isolation bay for tests and check ups at airports and ports(Telegraph 17.4.92).

In August 1991 two foreign students were referred for HIV testing by the foreign students advisor at the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU). This is the normal procedure in case of foreign nationals. The students were found HIV positive both by the ELISA and Western Blot technique. The NICD conveyed the result of the tests to both the students and the advisor to the Health Ministry. According to the clearly laid down procedure the Ministry once informed that the person has AIDS or is HIV positive has to be deported (Hindustan Times, 10.4.92).

What about Indians returning from abroad?

Senior doctors in the Medical College Hospital have revealed that Keralites returning from the Gulf via Bombay are primary carriers of the deadly virus (Pioneer 28.3.92) . So far 22 Indians with AIDS have been sent back to India. But there was no trace of them in files maintained in the international sections and the special AIDS monitoring cell of the Health Ministry. (Indian Express 15.5.92). The Kerala Health Minister, Mr.R.Ramachandran Nair, announced in the State Assembly that the Government would take immediate steps to provide isolation wards in government hospitals for AIDS patients (Pioneer 28.3.92).