1) In the context of omicron threat, real-time and reliable morbidity surveillance is essential for better preparedness. Elaborate.

B:—
The Covid-19 pandemic, originated in 2019, still exists in 2021. The virus has undergone many mutations. Recently WHO has informed the emergence of a new Covid-19 variant called as 'Omicron'. It is labelled as a Variant of Concern as it has mutated in 32 critical regions.

The Omicron variant was isolated in South Africa which has an excellent health infrastructure. Because of this it was able to identify new variant, isolate it quickly and inform the WHO.

This provides the fact that real-time surveillance can entail a nation to prepare quickly and properly.

In India, real-time disease surveillance is done on ICDS platform. The platform has detailed procedure which can also track the possibility of a disease outbreak.

Measures to increase Surveillance

1) Creating a pan India digital map of possibility of viral spread.

2) Faster roll-out of National Digital Health Policy.

3) e-Seva centres to be used as a platform for doctor-patient online consultation (like e-Sanjeevani)

4) Continuous and regular updation of data which is critical to combat fake news.

5) Integrating data about cremation digitally helps to ascertain the real cause of death.

6) Local physicians & pharmacists to inform local bodies if patients have Covid-19 symptoms.

7) Citizens to be advised to take vaccines as early as possible.

The govt. follows the policy of test-trace-treat to detect viral spread. In addition, leveraging the digital technologies and local bodies can leave a multiplier effect to prepare better for the next wave of viral spread.