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AJAY BHALLA, IAS



गृह सचिव
Home Secretary
भारत सरकार
Government of India
नॉर्थ ब्लॉक/North Block
नई दिल्ली/New Delhi
23rd March, 2021

No. 40-3/2020-DM-I(A)

Dear Chief Secretary,

Kindly refer to Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) Order of even number issued today vide which guidelines for effective control of COVID-19 have been issued, which will be effective till 30th April, 2021.

2. As you are aware, with the coordinated efforts of the Central and State agencies, substantial gains have been achieved in containing the spread of COVID-19, which were visible in the sustained decline in the number of active cases, continuously for about 5 months. However, a fresh surge in COVID-19 cases is being witnessed in some parts of the country. Further, the situation might aggravate in view of the upcoming festivals.

3. It has been observed that there is a general laxity in the observance of COVID-19 appropriate behaviour. In this regard, my D.O. letter No. 40-34/2020-DM-I(A) dated 19.03.2021 may also be referred. It is again reiterated that State/UTs should take all necessary measures to promote COVID-19 Appropriate behaviour in work places and in public, especially in crowded places. For strict enforcement of wearing of masks, hand hygiene and social distancing, States/UTs may consider administrative actions, including imposition of appropriate fine.

4. It has further been observed that guidelines issued by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) on containment measures are not being strictly followed. It is again re-iterated that Containment Zones have to be carefully demarcated by district authorities, at micro level, and containment measures shall be strictly enforced by the authorities concerned, taking into consideration guidelines prescribed by MoHFW.

5. It is of utmost importance to follow test-track-treat protocol in all parts of the country. The protocol includes aggressive testing to detect early COVID-19 positive cases, timely isolation of such positive cases by providing them clinical interventions, timely contact tracing as per protocol and demarcation of Containment Zones. In some States/UTs, the proportion of RT-PCR test in the total mix is low. Such States/UTs should rapidly increase the proportion of RT-PCR test to the prescribed level of 70% or more.

..contd.p/2..

6. As emphasized earlier, guidelines/SOPs issued for various activities shall be strictly followed. States/UTs, based on their assessment of the situation, may impose local restrictions at district/sub-district and cities/ward level, with a view to contain the spread of COVID-19. However, there shall be no restriction on inter-State and intra-State movement of persons and goods including those for cross land-border trade under treaties with neighbouring countries.

7. The world's largest vaccination drive, against COVID-19, is proceeding smoothly in the country. However, the pace is uneven across different States and UTs, which is a matter of concern. Vaccination against COVID-19, in the present scenario, is critical to break the chain of transmission. Therefore, all State/UT Governments should rapidly step up the pace of vaccination, to cover all priority groups in an expeditious manner.

8. I would urge you to ensure compliance of the aforesaid guidelines and direct all authorities concerned for its strict implementation. Further, guidelines issued by MHA and consequent Orders issued by the respective State Governments/UT Administrations should be widely disseminated to the public and to the field functionaries for implementation.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,



23/03/21
(Ajay Bhalla)

To

Chief Secretaries of all States