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AJAY BHALLA, IAS



गृह सचिव
Home Secretary
भारत सरकार
Government of India
नॉर्थ ब्लॉक/North Block
नई दिल्ली/New Delhi

D.O. No. 40-34/2020-DM-I(A)

19th June, 2021

Dear Chief Secretary,

As you are aware, during the 2nd wave of COVID-19 pandemic a significant surge in COVID cases was witnessed in several States and UTs. Many States imposed restrictions in order to contain the spread of infection.

2. With the decline in the number of active cases, many States and UTs have started relaxing restrictions. I would like to highlight that the decision to impose or ease the restriction has to be taken, based on the assessment of the situation at ground level. While the opening up of activities, after decline in cases is essential, the States and UTs must ensure that the whole process is carefully calibrated.

3. While opening up, it would be extremely important to follow the fivefold strategy of COVID appropriate behaviour, test-track-treat and vaccination. Regular monitoring of COVID appropriate behaviour is required to prevent relapse. To reiterate, COVID appropriate behaviour includes mandatory use of masks, hand hygiene, social distancing and also proper ventilation of closed spaces. However, easing of restrictions in some States, have led to resumption of crowding of people in markets etc. without adherence to the norms of COVID appropriate behaviour. It is, therefore essential to ensure that complacency does not set in, and there is no let-up in adhering to COVID appropriate behaviour, while opening up activities.

4. To contain the spread of infection on a sustainable basis, it is necessary to continue the strategy of test-track-treat. It may especially be ensured that the testing rate does not come down. As the situation is dynamic, a close watch needs to be kept on early signs of a surge in active cases or high positivity rates. A system should be in place at the micro-level to ensure that whenever cases rise in a smaller place, it gets checked there itself, through local containment measures as per the existing guidelines issued by Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.

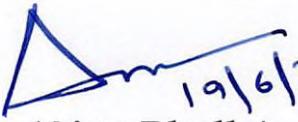
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5. Vaccination against COVID-19, in the present scenario, is critical to break the chain of transmission. Therefore, all State/ UT Governments should step up the pace of vaccination, to cover the maximum number of people in an expeditious manner.

6. I, therefore, urge you to issue directions to district and all other authorities concerned, to keep a close watch on the situation, while activities are opened in a cautious manner, and to scrupulously ensure that there is no complacency in adhering to COVID appropriate behaviour and in the test-track-treat-vaccinate strategy.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,


19/6/2021
(Ajay Bhalla)

The Chief Secretaries of all States.