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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. 40-3/2020-DM-I (A)

30<sup>th</sup> November, 2021

Dear Administrator,

Kindly refer to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) Order of even number issued today vide which MHA Order, dated the 28<sup>th</sup> September, 2021, issued for the implementation of prompt and effective measures for COVID-19 management, has been extended upto the 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2021.

2. Although, the overall COVID-19 cases in the country are continuously declining across the States/ UTs, the analysis of data for the week between 22 & 28 November, 2021, shows that 14 districts in two States have reported positivity rate of more than 10%; and 15 districts in eight States have reported positivity rate between 5% and 10%. Thus, COVID-19 is still a public health challenge and a matter of concern.

3. As has already been apprised by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), vide D.O. letter No. 25/S(HFW)/CVariant/2021, dated the 25<sup>th</sup> November, 2021, multiple cases of a new COVID-19 Variant of Concern (VOC), named as 'Omicron', have been reported in a few countries of Africa. This variant is reported to have a significantly high number of mutations and could have public health implications for the country. It is, therefore, imperative that all international travellers travelling from and transiting through these countries and also all other 'At Risk' countries indicated in the revised guidelines for international travel, are subjected to rigorous screening and testing. The contacts of these international travellers must also be closely tracked and tested as per the MoHFW guidelines. It has also been advised to ensure that samples of all travellers turning positive are sent to the designated INSACOG Genome Sequencing Laboratories (IGSLs), promptly as per the INSACOG Guidance Document issued by the MoHFW. Further, State Surveillance Officers must also establish close coordination with their designated/ tagged IGSLs for expediting results of genome sequencing and States/ UTs should undertake necessary public health measures in case presence of VOC / Variant of Interest is reported by the INSACOG network.

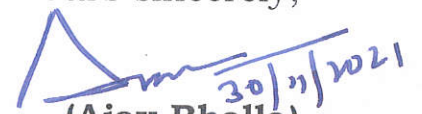
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4. The advisories issued by the MoHFW vide D.O. letters No. 25/S(HFW)/Cvariant/2021, dated 25.11.2021, No. Z.28015/185/2021-DMCell, dated 27.11.2021, and No. Z.28015/185/2021-DMCell, dated 29.11.2021, should be implemented on ground, in letter and spirit, so as to strengthen our preparedness against the new VOC.
5. With a view to discourage any misinformation in respect of the new VOC, which creates anxiety among public, all States and UTs should proactively and regularly hold media briefings at the highest level to disseminate the right information to them. States/ UTs should also educate them about various preventive measures undertaken by them and also advise them to strictly follow COVID Appropriate Behaviour.
6. I would also like to reiterate that there should be continued focus on the five-fold strategy, i.e., Test-Track-Treat-Vaccination and adherence to COVID Appropriate Behaviour, to avoid the possibility of surge in COVID-19 cases, especially keeping in view the new VOC.
7. Enforcement of COVID-19 Appropriate Behaviour is a *sine qua non* to contain the spread of COVID-19. As already reiterated in my DO letter of even no., dated 22.11.2021, the State Governments/ UT Administrations have to re-energise their enforcement efforts on COVID Appropriate Behaviour, especially, on the wearing of face masks, by taking innovative measures as have been communicated from time to time.
8. I would, therefore, urge you to issue necessary directions to the districts and all other local authorities concerned, to take necessary measures for prompt and effective management of COVID-19, strict compliance with various advisories issued by the MoHFW on the new VOC and strict enforcement of COVID Appropriate Behaviour.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,

  
30/11/2021  
(Ajay Bhalla)

Administrators of all UTs