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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)

27<sup>th</sup> December, 2021

Dear Chief Secretary,

Kindly refer to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) Order of even number issued today, for ensuring implementation of the measures that need to be taken, in view of initial signs of surge in cases of COVID-19, as well as increased detection of the Variant of Concern (VoC), 'Omicron', in different parts of the country, as conveyed vide Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) D.O. letter dated 21<sup>st</sup> December, 2021.

2. The country has witnessed an overall decline in active cases. However, the new variant, Omicron (designated as a VoC by the WHO on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2021), is reported to be at least 3 times more transmissible than the Delta VoC, and is posing a new challenge for the COVID containment measures. In the countries with Omicron-driven surge, the growth trajectory of cases has been very steep. In our country, 578 Omicron cases have already been reported in 19 States/UTs.

3. Globally, Omicron cases have already been reported in 116 countries. Further, surge in cases is also being reported across various countries, especially in the USA, the UK, Europe (France, Italy, Spain), Russia, South Africa, Vietnam, Australia, etc.

4. In this background, in the MoHFW advisory dated 21.12.2021, a normative framework has been provided. With distinct presence of the Delta variant and detection of Omicron cases in many States, there is need for greater foresight, data analysis, dynamic decision making, and strict and prompt containment actions at the local and district levels, based on the assessment of the situation.

5. On 23<sup>rd</sup> December, 2021, the Hon'ble Prime Minister has reviewed the status of COVID-19, Omicron VoC and preparedness of health systems across the country. After review, he has directed that we should be 'Satark' and 'Saavdhan'. As per his directions, it is important to maintain a high level of vigil and alertness at all levels. State Governments should ensure that the health systems in the States are strengthened to meet any challenge posed by the new variant. Further, the State Governments/UT Administrations should ensure that oxygen supply equipment are installed and are fully functional and the buffer stock of essential drugs should also be maintained.

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6. I would like to reiterate that all the States/UTs must observe all precautions, and not let the guard down. Local/District Administration, based on the normative framework and assessment of the situation, should promptly take appropriate containment measures. States may consider imposing need based, local curbs/restrictions, to control the crowd during the festive season.

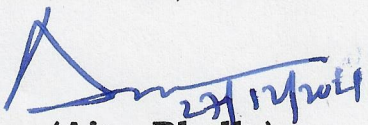
7. I would also like to emphasise that there should be continued focus on the five-fold strategy, i.e., Test-Track-Treat-Vaccination and adherence to COVID Appropriate Behaviour, to avoid the possibility of surge in COVID-19 cases, especially keeping in view the new VoC. The State enforcement machinery should strictly enforce the norms of COVID Appropriate Behaviour, i.e., wearing of face masks and maintaining safe social distancing in all public areas/gatherings.

8. As mentioned in my earlier DO letter, dated 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2021, with a view to discourage any misinformation in respect of the new VoC, which creates anxiety among the 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.

9. 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,



(Ajay Bhalla)

**Chief Secretaries of all States**