

UP's new Covid-19 guidelines authorise districts to clamp night curfew

The Uttar Pradesh government on Monday issued a fresh set of guidelines, authorising the districts' administration to impose local restrictions, including night curfews, depending on the assessment and requirement of the situation in a bid to contain the spread of the coronavirus disease (Covid-19), according to a circular issued by chief secretary Rajendra Kumar Tiwari.

The chief secretary has, however, clarified that no lockdown outside the containment zones can be imposed without the prior permission from the Central government.

The guidelines with regard to social and other gatherings, including marriage parties, outside containment zones will remain the same as issued by the state government on November 23.

The new instructions that are largely a reiteration of the Union home ministry's November 25 guidelines will come into effect on December 1 and will remain in place till further orders.

Issuing the circular, the chief secretary has asked commissioners, district magistrates and other officials to strictly enforce the fresh guidelines for surveillance, containment and caution against Covid-19 infection.

The chief secretary said though the number of positive cases had declined in most of the places, the positivity rate had increased in some cities and this, he

added, called for extreme caution and alertness since the virus may further spread due to festive gatherings and the cold weather.

Citing the new guidelines, the chief secretary said depending on their assessment of the situation and the requirement, the DM could clamp down night curfews and also impose Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) even outside a containment zone to contain the spread of the virus.

He also asked them to ensure demarcation of containment zones at the micro-level in line with the Centre's call for "dynamic containment zones."

"It has to be ensured that no movement of people in or out of these zones, except for medical emergencies and for maintaining the supply of essential goods and services, is allowed," the chief secretary directed the officials.

"The surveillance teams made for this purpose will necessarily do intensive monitoring of each house under the containment zones and quick isolation of Covid-19 patients (will be) ensured," he said.

Tiwari said the protocol related to social distancing, washing of hands and wearing of masks must be enforced strictly as before. He asked officials to penalise people who were found without a mask on their face in public places.

The new guidelines advise the vulnerable, including people above 65 years age and those with co-morbidity, pregnant women and children below 10 years of age, not to step out of their home unless it is essential to go out for a medical emergency.