

COVID-19: 'Complete lockdown' on Sundays in Madhya Pradesh

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Bhopal: The Madhya Pradesh government on Wednesday decided to enforce a complete lockdown across the state on Sundays after a spike in COVID-19 cases in some districts during the past one week. In a new initiative, police will provide face masks to people who step out of homes without the protective gear, and recover its cost from them, a minister said.

Besides, the government also decided to increase vigil in border districts, claiming the spike in coronavirus cases has been caused due to entry of people from adjoining states.

Mostly border districts are affected (now) as we have successfully controlled the COVID19 spread in cities like Indore and Ujjain. "So, we decided for a complete lockdown on Sundays across Madhya Pradesh." A public advisory would be issued in this regard tomorrow (Thursday)," Minister for Health Narottam Mishra told reporters in the evening after a coronavirus review meeting. He described the COVID-19 situation in border districts as bad. Due to the spike in cases, the coronavirus growth rate in Madhya Pradesh has gone up to 2.01 per cent from 1.72 per cent earlier, the Review meeting, chaired by Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, was informed.

Mishra said the public advisory will include guidelines related to compulsory use of face masks, availability of hand sanitisers at workplaces, among others.

The advisory will also mention that the police will provide face mask if any person is found on streets without it on payment of its cost, he said.

Talking about the spike in cases, Mishra said the ongoing Kill Corona campaign of the government has so far covered 42 per cent of Madhya Pradesh's population. During the campaign so far, 40,000 people were tested for COVID-19, of which 583 were found to be positive, he said.

The situation in border districts is bad. People came from Dholpur (Rajasthan) to Morena and those from Jalgaon (Maharashtra) to Barwani. This has changed the situation. "Now, people coming from affected areas of other state will have to report to authorities, he said.

Mishra said health screening would also be carried out at borders. The minister said the state has now occupied the 15th place as far as nationwide coronavirus cases are concerned, while recovery rate has gone up to 75 per cent. Madhya Pradesh on Wednesday registered the highest single-day spike of 409 new COVID-19 cases including 115 from Morena, taking the infection count to 16,036.

The death toll went up to 629 after seven more COVID- 19 patients succumbed to the infection.