

Himachal Pradesh issues directions to hotels as tourist footfall increase

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As tourist influx increases in hill stations after relaxation of curbs, Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur has directed hotels in the state to follow all Covid-19 standard operating procedures.

"We are also a bit anxious as the tourist influx increased in the state. We welcome tourists but I urge them to follow Covid norms. They should follow social distancing and wear a mask. We have also directed hotels to follow SOP strictly," Thakur was quoted as saying by news agency ANI.

The CM's statement came after the Union health ministry said on Tuesday that it can re-impose restrictions again if Covid protocols not complied with.

"People travelling to hill stations are not following Covid-appropriate behaviour. We can nullify the ease in restrictions again if protocols not complied with," said health ministry joint secretary Lav Agarwal during a press conference.

ICMR DG Dr Balram Bhargava said that the pictures from hill stations are frightening. He said people must comply with Covid-appropriate behaviour.

Earlier, the chief secretary to HP government, Anil Kumar Khachi, had said that the administration has already unilaterally advised all district collectors to enforce Covid appropriate behaviour and guidelines strictly.

"We have already unilaterally advised all district collectors to enforce the Covid appropriate behaviour and guidelines strictly, taking all service providers and stakeholders into confidence," said Khachi.

In less than a month starting from June, there has been traffic of around six to seven lakh tourists in Himachal Pradesh.

"After the government has eased the Covid restrictions, the tourist inflow has picked up. Generally, we receive over 1.3 crore tourists but the Covid-19 pandemic since the last year hit the tourism business," said HP tourism department director Amit Kashyap was quoted as saying by ANI.

"Last year we received only 32 lakh tourists including foreigners. This year till 31 May, we received only 13 lakh tourists. But now in June after the restrictions have been relaxed, we have received six to seven lakh tourists within this period," he added.

With inputs from agencies.