

Govt's teams visit 4 states to review Covid ex-gratia compensation claims

Updated: 09 Apr 2022, 06:23 AM IST

A central team has been rushed to Maharashtra, Kerala, Gujarat, and Andhra Pradesh to scrutinise claims related to Covid ex-gratia compensations, the Union Ministry of Health said in a statement.

The three-member team to Maharashtra will be led by Dr Sunil Gupta, Principal Consultant, National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC). Dr P Ravindran, Advisor, MoHFW, Calicut will lead the team to Kerala, while Dr S Venkatesh, Principal Advisor, NCDC is heading the Gujarat team. The three-member team to Andhra Pradesh will be headed by Dr S K Singh, Director, NCDC.

The Centre's move is against the backdrop of the Supreme Court's order dated March 24, 2022, in which it directed the Centre to conduct an inquiry into fake ex-gratia claims on the death of kin due to Covid-19 while observing that nobody can be permitted to avail the compensation by making a false claim or submitting the false certificate.

The apex court said "nobody can be permitted to misuse" the compensation and it is also against "morality and is unethical", which can never be accepted.

Thereafter, the Court had directed the union health ministry and National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) to carry out random scrutiny of the 5% of the claim applications filed in Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Kerala, and Maharashtra.

Under section 52 of the Disaster Management Act, a person convicted for making fake claims will be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to two years, and also with a fine.

This week the Centre informed the Parliament that states and union territories have reported 5,21,358 Covid deaths till April 4.

Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare Bharati Pravin Pawar said "An ex-gratia of ₹50,000 as per central, state, and district level was approved. The NDMA has proposed ₹50,000 compensation".