

West Bengal Government not to obstruct working of Central Teams

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The Union Government has directed Government of West Bengal not to obstruct working of Central Teams reg. review and on-spot assessment of implementation of Lockdown measures to fight COVID19 in the State.

It had been brought to the notice of MHA that both the Inter-Ministerial Central Teams (IMCTs), at Kolkata and Jalpaiguri respectively, have not been provided with the requisite co-operation by the State and local authorities. It was informed that they have been specifically restrained from making any visits, interacting with health professionals, and assessing the ground level situation. This amounts to obstructing the implementation of the Orders issued by the Central Government under the Disaster Management Act, 2005, and equally binding directions of the Supreme Court of India.

Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), on 19.04.2020, had deputed two IMCTs to the State of West Bengal, to review the implementation of lockdown measures after making on-spot assessment of the situation prevailing in identified select districts. The teams inter alia comprise public health specialists and officers of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), whose expertise can be leveraged by the State Government for management of COVID-19 pandemic.

These teams have been deputed under the authority conferred on the Central Government under Section 35 of the Disaster Management Act, 2005, which in turn authorises the Central Government to take all such measures as it deems necessary or expedient for the purpose of Disaster Management. The Supreme

Court, in its Order dated 31.03.2020, has also observed that the State Governments would faithfully comply with the directives and orders issued by the Union of India in letter and spirit in the interest of public safety. In view of above, an obligation is imposed on the State Governments in the interest of preventing the spread of COVID-19 that must be strictly followed

The MHA has thus directed the West Bengal Government to comply with the MHA Order dated 19.04.2020 and make all necessary arrangements for the IMCTs to carry out such responsibilities as have been entrusted to them in the aforesaid Order.

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