

Government of Jharkhand
Home, Prison & Disaster Management Department
(Disaster Management Division)

ORDER

Whereas, the Ministry of Home Affairs has issued lockdown orders vide Order dated 24.03.2020, Order dated 15.04.2020, Order dated 01.05.2020, Order dated 17.05.2020, Order dated 30.05.2020, Order dated 29.06.2020, Order dated 29.07.2020, Order dated 29.08.2020, Order dated 30.09.2020 and Order dated 27.10.2020 due to prevailing COVID 19 situation;

Whereas, in exercise of the power conferred under section 22(2) (h) of the Disaster Management Act, 2005, the undersigned in his capacity as Chairperson, State Executive Committee, vide Order no. 3185 dated 05.11.2020 extended lockdown related restrictions in the state of Jharkhand in the containment zone(s) up to 30.11.2020 due to COVID-19 and issued directions to all the Departments of Government of Jharkhand and all the District Administrations for the strict implementation of Guidelines and State Directives;

Whereas the festival of Chhath Puja is scheduled in the month of November during which devotees congregate on the banks of river/pond/lake/dam/reservoirs/any other water body. The devotees perform Puja by taking holy bath in the waters of river/pond/lake/dam/reservoir/any other water body and offer Arghya while standing in the water. These rituals are performed once at sunset and then at sunrise on the following day. This festival had been traditionally attracting huge congregations at the Chhath Ghats. Due to the fixed timing of performing the aforementioned rituals, it is not possible to stagger these huge congregations to ensure social distancing. Similarly due to the preference of



devotees to perform rituals at the bank of pond/lake/river it is not possible to have spatial spacing of devotees so as to ensure social distancing. The ritual of holy bathing in common waters of river/pond/lake/dam/reservoir/any other water body and standing in water is a matter of serious concern as it will amount to sharing of water thus enhancing the chances of spread of infection besides causing contamination of the water. It is precisely due to this reason that swimming pools have not been opened to the general public. It is also not possible to observe the national directive of *do gazkidoori* because of large number of people congregating at the same place and at the same time. Due to the very nature of rituals it is also not possible for people to observe the national directive of wearing of face cover/mask while offering Arghya;

Whereas the state has adopted a cautious approach in so far as the availing of relaxations permitted by Ministry of Home Affairs is concerned;

Whereas there has been a decline in the number of active cases of COVID-19 in the state and there has been a decline in the positivity rate as well;

Whereas there is a case for permitting the performance of rituals related to the observance of Chhath Puja by the people on one hand, on the other hand relaxations have to be graded and regulated because there also remains the overarching objective of curtailing the spread of COVID-19 infection so as to keep the mortality and morbidity rates as low as possible especially in view of the highly infectious and lethal nature of SARS-COV-2 virus;

Whereas after a careful review of the prevailing COVID 19 situation it is considered important to strike a balance between the permitting religious activities on one hand and ensure that there are checks and balances in place which could limit the spread of infection on the other hand;



Now therefore, in exercise of the power conferred under section 22(2)(h) of the Disaster Management Act, 2005 the undersigned, in his capacity as Chairperson, State Executive Committee (SEC), hereby issues directions to all the Departments of Government of Jharkhand and all the District Administrations for the strict implementation of the following order in the course of observance of Chhath Puja in the state of Jharkhand in November 2020.

1. Since it is not possible to ensure the compliance of national directive of social distancing norm of *do gaz ki doori* while performing Chhath Puja in the waters of river/pond/lake/ dam/ reservoir etc. therefore Chhath Puja in the waters of public ponds/lakes/rivers/dams/reservoirs/any other water body shall not be permitted so as to minimize the chances of spread of COVID-19 infection.
2. No stalls of any kind shall be set up by anyone on or near the banks of any public pond/lake/river/dam/reservoir/any other water body.
3. Earmarking/barricading/Special lighting of Chhath Ghats by individuals for the purpose of Chhath Puja is prohibited.
4. No bursting of firecrackers is permitted in public places.
5. There shall be no musical or any other entertainment/cultural program.



15/11/2020

Sukhdev Singh
Chief Secretary,
Jharkhand.

Memo no. 42/cs/Res

Ranchi, Dated: 15/11/2020

Copy to – Principal Secretary to Chief Minister/All Additional Chief Secretary/Principal Secretary/Secretary/Director General of Police/All Divisional commissioner/DIG/DC/SSP/SP, Jharkhand for information and necessary action.

Copy to – Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, New Delhi.



15/11/2020

Sukhdev Singh
Chief Secretary,
Jharkhand.