KERALA EXPRESSES CONCERN OVER EVACUATING NRIS WITHOUT COVID TESTING

Thiruvananthapuram, 05 May: Kerala Chief Minister, Shri Pinarayi Vijayan today welcomed the decision of the Government of India to evacuate the Pravasies and those stranded in foreign countries but expressed concern over bringing them back without Covid testing before the flights. The State is also apprehensive about the limited number of people being brought back.

The total number of Pravasi Malayalees who have registered on the Norka website expressing their desire to return to Kerala is 4.42 lakhs. Out of this 1,69,136 persons constitute the priority group - people who had lost jobs, persons whose employment contract has not been renewed, those released from prison and awaiting deportation, pregnant women, children separated due to lockdown, persons whose visit visa has expired, students who have completed courses and whose visa has expired etc. As against this number, the Central Government has only approved the return of 80,000 Keralites.

The Chief Minister informed that he has written to the Prime Minister to bring back all the people in the priority group. The State Government has collected data through its official website and wants to share this with Central Government (MEA) and the concerned Embassies but no option for sharing this data has been provided yet.

“At the same time, it is quite unfortunate that internationally accepted health protocols are not being followed while arrangements are being made for bringing back our people from countries where the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has been severe. People travelling in chartered aircraft should be screened for Covid-19 before boarding itself. Not doing so will result in people who are carriers of infection travelling along with others and spreading the infection to all. Kerala has systematically prepared for the return of Non-Resident Keralites (NRKs) to the State but internationally accepted norms should be followed”, he added.

In the first five days, only 2,250 people are proposed to arrive at three International airports in Kerala at Kochi, Kozhikode and Thiruvananthapuram. The Kannur International Airport has been left out from the list. As per Norka registration, 69,179 persons have stated their arrival Airport as Kannur. The State has requested that Kannur International Airport may also be included in the list immediately. This would help people avoid unnecessary travel during the lockdown period.
The CM has assured that Kerala is fully prepared to receive the pravasies being evacuated and all arrangements are in place for testing and quarantining them. Everyone will be sent to quarantine centres for a minimum seven days and then tested. If they are negative, they will be sent home for a further seven days quarantine. Those positive will be shifted to hospitals for treatment.

Kochi port is being prepared to receive two ships from the Maldives and one from UAE. Arrangements are being made there in coordination with the Cochin Port Trust and Indian Navy.

New guidelines for Keralites coming from Red Zones in other States

Thiruvananthapuram, 05 May: Kerala today announced new quarantine guidelines for those stranded Malayalees coming in from red zones in other States.

“There are some areas in the country where the outbreak is severe. Ten districts/places with the most severe outbreaks have been identified and special attention will be given to those coming from such Red Zones. Just like for those returning from overseas, they will have to spend a week in government quarantine centre and then tested. If they are negative, they will be sent home for a further seven days quarantine. Those positive will be shifted to hospitals for treatment”, the Chief Minister said. Nobody should be stranded at state borders, so they should ensure that they have proper passes, both from the place of departure and destination.

Efforts are being made to arrange special trains to bring back Keralites from far off states. Students who are stuck in Punjab and Haryana will be brought to Delhi, and from there to Kerala by train.

Keralites stranded in other States have started reaching Kerala. So far, 1,80,540 people have registered through Norka website expressing their desire to return to the State. Of these, 25,410 passes have been issued and 3,363 of them have reached back in the last two days.

Minister of Health & Social Justice, Smt K K Shailaja; Revenue Minister, Shri E Chandrasekharan, and Chief Secretary, Shri Tom Jose IAS were also present.

Kerala Covid-19 Tracker

Three new cases today, total 37 patients under treatment
Thiruvananthapuram, 05 May: After a brief gap of two days without any positive cases, three new cases of Covid-19 were confirmed in Kerala today. All the three are cases of local transmission and are from Wayanad district. Meanwhile, there were no recovery cases today as there were no negative results. This was announced by Kerala Chief Minister, Shri Pinarayi Vijayan while briefing the media.

There are a total of 502 confirmed cases of Coronavirus infection in the State and 37 patients are currently under treatment in various hospitals.

21,342 persons are under surveillance in different districts across the State, 21,034 quarantined at their homes and 308 isolated in hospitals. 86 people were hospitalised today.

So far, 33,800 samples have been sent for testing and 33,265 samples have been confirmed with no infection. 1,024 tests were conducted today. As part of sentinel surveillance, 2,512 samples were tested from people in the high-risk group and of these, 1,979 samples have tested negative.

Four districts in the State are free of Covid patients but Kannur district still has the highest number of 18 patients followed by six in Kottayam district and four in Wayanad district.

The Chief Minister also announced that 980 doctors will be appointed on a three months contract. This temporary appointment by the Health Department will help the State to address the health issues due to the large inflow of Pravasi Malayalees to the State from both within and outside the country and also to help in Covid prevention and care.

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