

AJAY BHALLA, IAS



गृह सचिव  
Home Secretary  
भारत सरकार  
Government of India  
North Block,  
New Delhi

D.O. 40-3/2020-DM-I(A)

07<sup>th</sup> April, 2020

Dear *Chief Secretary,*


The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) vide its orders under the Disaster Management Act have allowed manufacture/production, transport and other related supply-chain activities in respect of essential goods like foodstuff, medicines and medical equipment. However, there are reports of loss of production due to various factors, especially reduction in labour supply. In this situation, the possibility of inventory building/hoarding and black marketing, profiteering, and speculative trading, and the resulting price rise of essential goods cannot be ruled out.

2. State/Union Territory Governments are advised to take urgent steps to ensure availability of these essential goods, by invoking provisions of the Essential Commodities (EC) Act 1955. These measures include fixing of stock limits, capping of prices, enhancing production, inspection of accounts of dealers and other such actions. Offences under EC Act are criminal offences and may result in imprisonment of 7 years or fine or both. State/Union Territory Governments may also consider detention of offenders under the Prevention of Black-marketing and Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act, 1980.

3. Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, Government of India, are authorising States/Union Territories to notify orders under the EC Act, 1955 by relaxing the requirement of prior concurrence of the Central Government up to June 30, 2020. I would urge you to personally take urgent steps to ensure availability of these commodities at fair prices for public at large.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

  
(Ajay Bhalla)

To  
Chief Secretaries of all States  
(As per standard list)

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To  
Administrators of Union Territories  
(As per standard list)