



SC Orders on Covid-19

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Why in News

Recently, the **Supreme Court** of India has passed an order asking people to behave responsibly with the medical teams fighting the **Covid-19 pandemic**. The order has also made the testing for **Coronavirus** free in all hospitals.

Key Highlights of Order

Responsible Behaviour Towards Medical Teams

- The order comes in the **backdrop of several petitions** highlighting the need to provide sufficient protective gear to the medical professionals. A few of them also **highlighted the violence against the doctors**.
- The SC has called Covid-19 a '**National Calamity**' and termed doctors and health workers as '**Corona Warriors**'.
- All citizens of the country have been urged to act in a **responsible manner and be helpful** to the government and medical staff who are trying to contain and combat the pandemic.
- **Medical teams will be provided protection** while visiting the screening sites or places where new positive people are found or quarantined.
- The police have been ordered to **take action against people who obstruct and commit any offence against doctors**, medical staff and other medical officials performing their duty.
- The government has been directed to **explore alternatives, including enabling and augmenting domestic production** of protective clothing and gear for medical professionals.
 - This includes alternative modes of production of such clothing (masks, suits, caps, gloves, etc.) and **permitting movement of raw material**.
 - The government may also **restrict export of such materials** to augment inventory and domestic stock.

- It is the responsibility of the Centre and the States to ensure availability of appropriate **Personal Protective Equipments** (PPEs) to doctors, nurses, ward boys and other medical and paramedical professionals.

Free Testing for Covid-19

- The order comes in response to a **petition asking for implementation of free testing** by private labs.
An earlier SC notice also **challenged the legality of the advisory price cap of ₹4,500 in private labs and hospitals** saying that it may not be within the reach of a large population of the country.
- The order states that the tests relating to Covid-19, whether done in **approved government or private laboratories, shall be free of cost.**
- The government has been **asked to issue the necessary directions** immediately.
- These tests must be **carried out only** in the **National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories** (NABL) accredited laboratories or any agencies approved by the **World Health Organisation** (WHO) or the **Indian Council of Medical Research** (ICMR).
- Recently, the government has also decided to **provide free testing and treatment** to the **existing beneficiaries** of the **Ayushman Bharat Scheme or the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana** (PMJAY).

Source:TH