

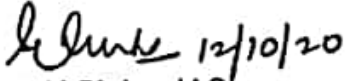
GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM  
HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE DEPARTMENT  
DISPUR ::: GUWAHATI-781006

ORDERS BY THE GOVERNOR  
NOTIFICATION

Dated Dispur, the 12<sup>th</sup> October 2020

No.HLA. 301/2020/120: In exercise of the powers conferred under the Epidemic Diseases Act. 1897, the Health & Family Welfare Department hereby notifies the COVID-19 Guidelines for organising Durga Puja 2020 (Annexure-A) in the State of Assam

All concerned are to strictly comply with the said guidelines.

  
(Samir K Sinha, IAS)

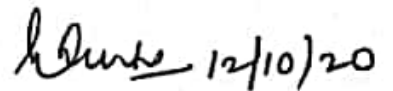
Principal Secretary to the Government of Assam  
Health & Family Welfare Department

Memo No.HLA. 301/2020/120 -A

Dated Dispur, the October 2020.

Copy to:

1. The Additional Chief Secretary, Home & Political Department.
2. The Director General of Police, Assam.
3. The Commissioner & Secretary, Health & Family Welfare Department.
4. Chief Executive Officer, Assam State Disaster Management Authority.
5. Special Secretary, Health & Family Welfare Department.
6. Mission Director, National Health Mission, Assam, Guwahati.
7. The Addl. Secretary, Health & Family Welfare Department, Dispur.
8. The Deputy Commissioner (all districts).
9. The Superintendent of Police (all districts).
10. The Director of Medical Education, Assam, Guwahati for necessary action.
11. The Director of AYUSH, Assam, Guwahati for necessary action.
12. The Director of Health Services, Assam.
13. The Director of Health Services (F.W.), Assam, Hengrabari, Guwahati.
14. Principal cum Chief Superintendent/ Superintendent, Medical College & Hospital (All).
15. The Joint Director of Health Services (all districts).
16. P.S. to Hon'ble Chief Minister, Assam, Dispur
17. P.S. to Hon'ble Minister, Health & Family Welfare, Assam.
18. P.S. to Hon'ble Minister of State, Health & Family Welfare, Assam.
19. P.S. to Chief Secretary, Assam, Dispur.
20. Any other concerned.

  
12/10/20

Principal Secretary to the Government of Assam  
Health & Family Welfare Department

COVID-19 Guidelines for organizing Durga Puja 2020

This year Durga Puja will be celebrated in the middle of the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, the citizens, organisers and the administration have to strictly follow the COVID-19 protocols during pandemic.

Puja Committees are to comply with health and safety norms in accordance with following guidelines:-

**1. Permission for organizing Durga Puja:**

- a) All organizers of the puja committee must take permission from the District Administration of the concerned district for organizing Durga Puja 2020.
- b) The district administration will convene a meeting of all Puja committees/ organizers for a detailed briefing on the protocol/ guidelines issued by the Government before giving permission, in order ensure compliance with COVID protocols. This is to facilitate District Administration to extend all possible support to the Puja Committee for successful and safe celebration of Durga Puja, maintaining COVID-19 appropriate protocol.

**2. Spacious open pandal with separate entry and exit:**

- a) Pandal should be spacious and must remain open from all sides.
- b) Pandals must keep adequate space for arrangement of physical distancing of at least one meter distance. Management must take measures to avoid crowding at all costs and not more than 10 to 30 persons can aggregate at a time depending on size of the pandal.
- c) Strict restrictions on crowding will apply during Aarati also.
- d) Entry and exit gates must be separate.
- e) Proper signage / floor marking must be made from entry to exit point so that visitors are properly guided on the route, once he/ she enters Puja pandal.
- f) Well trained committee volunteers wearing masks, must be stationed at different points inside the pandal to assist visitors.

**3. Compulsory mask and hand sanitizer:**

- a) Use of face masks properly shall be mandatory for all visitors visiting a pandal.
- b) To meet any exigency, organizers shall arrangement for any visitor to obtain a mask, who inadvertently comes to the pandal without wearing mask.
- c) Similarly, hand sanitizer must be kept at the entry gate and exit gate of Puja pandal.

- d) The Puja pandal campus must be sanitized twice (once in the morning and evening) along with nearby areas, as a strict public health measures due to the pandemic.

**4. Guidelines for inside Puja pandal and keeping adequate volunteers:**

- a) Puja Committee must keep adequate number of volunteers inside and outside the pandal to ensure that visitors maintain physical distancing, wear mask properly and sanitizes hand while visiting pandal.
- b) *All the volunteers, priests and Puja organizers must get mandatorily tested for COVID-19 before Pooja starts (on Panchami day) and after immersion (Ekadasi day).*
- c) Volunteers should sanitize their hands, wear mask/ face shield properly and should maintain physical distancing while interacting with visitors.
- d) Keeping in view the COVID protocol, all gathering (*in the form of Anjali, prasad distribution, sandhya arati etc*) should be done very carefully adhering to COVID norms and in small groups in a staggered manner.
- e) A priest must use microphone so that devotees need not come close to him to offer *anjali*
- f) Devotees should be encouraged to bring flowers from home to avoid congestion at the flower distribution and collection point during offering of *anjali*.
- g) There will no distribution of Prasad in the pandal or community feasting. Packet distribution of Prasad, may be done to the residences of the devotees by the organisers.

**5. Movement of devotees during Puja days:**

- a) All the Puja pandals must be closed for the devotees at 10:00 PM and puja committee has to ensure this strictly.
- b) Pillion riding will not be allowed for males during puja days. Pillion riding is allowed during puja for women or child below 15 years;

**6. Organizing cultural program before, during and after puja days:**

- a) Organizing cultural programmes before, during and after Puja days is strictly restricted. No such event can be organized by the Puja committees.

**7. Restriction on mela, fair, setting up food stall, roadside restaurant etc.:**

- a) Dry Day is to be declared from the day of Dashami till immersion process gets over.
- b) Restaurants will be closed at 9:00 PM and only takeaway food should be allowed, subject to relevant permissions from the Government.

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- c) Strict restriction is to be imposed on organizing melas, fairs, roadside shops, setting up of roadside food stall/ temporary restaurant, as these might lead to crowding of people.

**8. Emphasis on print, electronic and Social Media:**

- a) The use of print, electronic and social media must be optimal to generate mass awareness about the COVID-19 protocols during Durga Puja and to request devotees to follow the norms strictly to avoid any unnecessary crowding near, inside the pandal.
- b) All measures should be taken to avoid unnecessary rumours, misinformation campaign about COVID-19 and other issues during Pooja time.

**9. Low profile inauguration of pandal and immersion of idol:**

- a) The inauguration of Puja pandal and immersion of Durga idol (Biarjan) should be a low-key affair with minimum people and adhering to all COVID norms.
- b) Organizers may explore the possibility of inaugurating the Puja pandal in virtual mode, which is the safest way.
- c) In all activities, sanitizing, using of mask and physical distancing must be ensured.
- d) Before immersion, ghat has to be sanitized and Durga idol should straight be taken at the ghat without any stoppage on the way to avoid any unnecessary crowding.
- e) Immersion must be planned by the district administration in a staggered manner throughout the day, by allotting specific time to each of the puja committee for immersion. No procession will be allowed and one protima will allowed to be immersed at a time by maximum 10 persons accompanying each protima.
- f) If necessary, the immersion process might take extra days to complete the process adhering COVID-19 norms.

**10. Assistance from State Government and other public and private organizations:**

In order to assist Pooja Committees to conduct Pooja in a safe manner, adequate support may be provided from different Government departments, NGOs etc. to the extent possible.

- a) Fire services in case of need;
- b) The urban local body will also provide services to the puja committees in terms of cleanliness and sanitation;

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- c) The Power Department will make provision of additional power supply to the Puja pandal, if the puja committee submits a formal request in the appropriate application form and on payment of the fee.
- d) The district civil and police administration will extend all necessary support, as and when needed, for the already permitted pandals.
- e) The PHE department will ensure supply of adequate drinking water to the Puja committee but for this prior information must be given to the PHE Department, water supply point for timely supply on payment of the stipulated charges.

*h. Gupta*  
12/10/20