Guidelines

Independence Day Celebrations Programme, 14th August 2021

Objective
To provide health guidelines for prevention of transmission of COVID-19 during Independence Day celebrations and related events.

Rationale
COVID-19 pandemic continues with emergence of variants of concern which cause rapid human-to-human transmission. Independence Day of Pakistan is celebrated every year on 14th August. The events conducted in relation to Independence Day celebrations during Covid-19 pandemic can amplify the transmission of the virus and potentially disrupt the country’s response capacity. Preventive measures play an important role in limiting the spread of a disease and can help in reducing the infection transmission and unnecessary burden on health care facilities.

Preparations-Administrative and Logistics
- Mapping of all event areas by district and provincial administration in line with COVID protocols
- Media campaign for awareness of masses.
- Strict enforcement of SOPs by civil administration.

Maintaining Healthy Environments
Implement strategies to maintain healthy environments during independent day celebrations program/event
- Ensure vaccination of leaders and attendees (administration of at least one dose is mandatory)
- Hand sanitizers should be made available at the entry and exit points of the events/gathering.
- Encourage attendees ahead of the event to bring and use masks at the event.
- Ensure that:
  - masks are available at the venue
  - worn appropriately, to cover nose and mouth at all times during the event
- All common-touch surfaces must be frequently cleaned and sanitized with recommended disinfectants (alcohol or chlorine-based).
Washrooms must be cleaned frequently and sanitized
Ensure that shared equipment (e.g., microphones) are cleaned/disinfected frequently and after each use. Consider pre-recorded speeches.
Ensure adequate ventilation
Limit attendance and seating capacity to allow for social distancing. Encourage people to stay at least 6 feet apart by providing signs or other visual cues such as tape or chalk marks.
Where possible, use multiple entrances and exits; ensure that waiting areas are not crowded.
Prioritize outdoor activities where social distancing can be maintained as much as possible.
Broadcast announcements on reducing the spread of COVID-19 on public address systems.

Flag Hoisting Ceremonies
The flag-hoisting ceremony should be restricted to Government officials in their designated areas, outdoors.
Thermal scanning of all the participants attending the event may be carried out
The participants should strictly follow the healthy behaviors to prevent the spread of disease.
  o Practice social distancing and maintain 6 feet distance
  o All attendees should use face masks appropriately to cover nose and mouth
  o The rope of the flag and other frequently touched surfaces should be sanitized
  o The government official hoisting the flag should wear gloves and immediately discard them after hoisting

Note: The above recommendations are being regularly reviewed by the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations & Coordination and will be updated based on the international & national recommendations and best practices.

The Ministry acknowledges the contribution of Ms Javeria Yousaf and HSA/HPSIU/NIH team to compile these guidelines.

References
2. https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/10665-332235

For more information, please contact:

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http://covid.gov.pk/
http://www.hsa.edu.pk/  https://twitter.com/nhsrofficial