



ASSAM

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| Web : police.assam.gov.in

ASSAM POLICE AS FRONTLINE ANTI-COVID WORKERS

While handling the COVID-19 pandemic in Assam, the various arms of the State Government came together to work as one team. This 'Team Assam' was led by Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal. Health Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma; the Council of Ministers & other elected representatives; the civil administration, led by Chief Secretary Kumar Sanjay Krishna; Assam Police, led by DGP Bhaskar Jyoti Mahanta; Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA), Indian Railways, Airport Authority of India and Departments like Health & Family Welfare, Social Welfare, Food & Civil Supplies, etc, were all part of this Team Assam. A State Level Advisory Committee, under the Chairmanship of the Assam Chief Secretary, was formed to manage the state's response. In fact, in Assam, the entire exercise of handling the pandemic was seamless from day one, with every department and agency working together in every step.

The Assam Police, led by its DGP Bhaskar Jyoti Mahanta, formulated and adopted a multi-pronged approach to handle the pandemic as soon as the lockdown was announced. The DGP called the senior officers of Assam Police who formed his core team and had a detailed discussion, where he elaborated on the priorities of the Government and what should be the response of the Police to ensure proper lockdown and, at the same time, carry forward other policing duties. During these initial meetings, the DGP, along with his core team, formulated the strategy to fight the pandemic. The core idea was based on certain basic leadership principles: identifying the right man for the right job; delegation of duties; decisive and clear-cut actions and orders; and vigorous communication. The Police administration of the state went ahead with this in a very scientific manner.

As the various phases of the lockdown progressed, the strategy and tactics of Assam Police kept changing based on the situation as well as based on the guidelines issued by the central and state government. The various facets of this strategy and the activities carried out by Assam Police are discussed below:

Devising Tactics & Operations: Several tactics were deployed by the Assam Police to implement its strategy on the ground. At the very onset, the Assam Police formed six different teams to handle the pandemic. Six senior officers were put in charge of these teams, which covered areas like **contact tracing, supply of essential goods, relief measures, running helpline numbers**, etc. Each of them were given clear directives and areas of responsibility. The DGP regularly reviewed the progress and collected feedback from the officers. Based on the feedback and responses he received, further improvisations were carried out.

Communication Strategy: Assam Police used its dedicated SMART Social Media Centre – Nagarik Mitra to create awareness, nullify fake news, and extend help to the elderly parents of people of Assam who were working outside the state but whose parents were staying in Assam without care and assistance of their Children. Apart from handling regular queries, this Social Media Centre also responded to people who were reaching out to the police for help through Twitter, Facebook and WhatsApp. From providing life saving medicines, to food essentials and ration, the social media team coordinated with the concerned Districts Police to facilitate the delivery of essential items to people in need. All the district arms of the police were also running their own relief campaigns and providing assistance to the needy. Assam Police also set up a total of 13 helpline numbers to deal with calls and messages from people within the state as well as from those people from Assam who were/

are stranded outside the state. Of these 13, four numbers were used as senior citizens helpline to cater to their health-related assistance, such as medicine delivery or transportation to hospital during medical emergencies. Separate mental health helpline too was set up by the Assam Police, with a team of Clinical psychologists being entrusted to run six different helpline numbers and provide tele-counselling.

Briefing & Sensitizing the Police Machinery:

The Assam Police personnel were made aware of the strategy adopted by the police headquarters besides making them understand the Do's & Don'ts. The DGP visited all the districts and interacted with the policemen working on the ground. This was done both to make them aware of the strategy as well as to ensure that the morale of the force remained high. Clear and specific instructions with proper and scientific SOPs were created and circulated through the rank and file of the Assam Police. Multiple Video Conferences were held with the SPs & DCs of all the districts of Assam. The DGP, along with his senior officers, made several field visits across the state.

Enforcing Lockdown: While enforcing lockdown, Assam Police followed its motto - Jana Heete, Jana Sewarthe – i.e. for the welfare of the people, for the service of the people. An ecosystem was created wherein the police force felt proud of its ethos and the service delivery attitude emanated from within the force. As the first phase of lockdown was announced, police began keeping strict vigil. During the initial days, strict action was also taken against the offenders. However, it was done not in the form of a show of force but as a service to the people of the state. The lockdown was strictly enforced mainly for the protection of the citizens, so that they stay safe and not get infected by the virus. It was more of a kind of service, than a containment measure. Along with it, the police was also involved in generating awareness about the lockdown guidelines among the people. This was done through social media as well as by various police teams who went around their respective jurisdictions to make the people aware of the lockdown guidelines as well as the precautions they need to take to stay safe from the disease.

Supporting Healthcare Professionals: One of the core aspects of the strategy devised by Assam Police was to ensure the safety and security of the healthcare professionals. Assam Police personnel were entrusted with the responsibility of security and protection of the healthcare professionals when they were discharging their duties as well

as when they were off-duty. The police personnel were deployed at the quarantine centres and they helped the healthcare workers in managing these centres and the isolation wards. They helped the health professional in ensuring home quarantine of vulnerable individuals. They accompanied them from village-to-village when they went for community-based surveillance to contain the possible spread of COVID-19. Along with these, the movement of healthcare professionals, medicine and other essentials during the lockdown was taken care of by Assam Police, in many cases using its own infrastructure.

Assisting the Needy: Assam Police assisted and supported those people who were left helpless because of the lockdown. These included destitute, daily wage earners, elderly people who lived alone, people of Assam stranded outside the state and those from outside who got stuck in Assam, among others. The requests received through social media too were responded to immediately and the needy provided with food, materials and medicines as the case required. The help was not only limited to humans but also to animals and birds. Assam police helped feed stray animals like dogs, monkeys as well as cows. They rescued injured animals, arranged for their treatment and transported them to shelter homes.

Ensuring Safety of the Police Personnel: Keeping the personnel of the force safe from COVID-19 was another core area of concern of Assam Police. At the very onset, Assam Police prepared and issued an advisory to all its field officers so that they can take care of the safety of the personnel under their command. The SOP thus prepared contained guidelines as to what the field officers need to do to maintain hygiene, social distancing, taking care of the families of the police personnel, quarantine measures of the force personnel, etc. Assam Police also procured protective items for their personnel. In initial stage, it included masks, gloves and sanitizers. Later on PPE kits too were procured for the personnel. Sanitizing materials like Sodium Hypochlorite and Bleaching Powder were also procured, along with Spray Machines. These materials were distributed among the police forces in all the districts and the battalions.

Transporting the Stranded: As the lockdown restrictions eased, Assam Police began to chalk out strategies to get the people of Assam back from other states. Assam government formed a task force to facilitate the return of the people of the state stranded in different places across the country. The Assam Police then assisted the state government in

facilitating and arranging the transport of stranded passengers from various parts of the country back to Assam. They also facilitated the movement of outbound people from the state. A Command and Control Centre was set up at Guwahati, which looked after the entire inter-state movement of the stranded people. This Centre was involved in data analysis, data mapping, planning and information dissemination to the concerned citizens.



INDIAN POLICE RESPONSE TO COVID - 19



TWITTER

Assam Police @assampolice

May 27 "Wash Your Hands" campaign launched to mitigate the risk of Coronavirus.



Assam Police Sishu Mitra Webinar-II "Protecting Children from Crime during COVID-19" was held on 27/05/2020. May 28

Dhubri Police May 23

Glimpses of awareness program by Dhubri Police on "Social Distancing Norms" conducted in association with Muhurto.



Udalguri Police @udalguripolice May 23

Announcements being carried out in front of quarantine centres alerting the inmates that anyone found violating institutional or home quarantine norms will be severely dealt with, as per law.



DGP Assam @DGPAssamPolice May 14

Visit at the Inter-State border at Srirampur to take stock of the situation. Interaction with VDPs & Village Heads.



Dibrugarh Police @dibrugarhpolice May 11

Janmoni Gogo who sold vegetables on a bicycle to feed her family was gifted the little entrepreneur a moped / bike by the police department.

