

## Relief for farmers: MHA says agricultural activities allowed from April 20 | 5 points

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All agricultural and horticultural activities will remain fully functional. (Photo: PTI)

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Agencies engaged in procurement of agri products will remain open
- Shops of agriculture machinery, its spare parts and repairs will remain open
- Manufacturing, distribution and retail of fertilisers, pesticides and seeds will be allowed

In its latest guidelines issued for the nationwide lockdown, the Union Home Ministry has provided some relaxations to agriculture-related activities. The guidelines that were issued today say that some activities will be allowed from April 20 to help "mitigate the hardship" faced by the public. Agriculture is one of the essential sectors that has been given these relaxations.

This move comes at a time when the harvest season of Rabi crop is at its peak. Amid the nationwide lockdown that started on March 25, there were concerns among the farmers whether they would be permitted to harvest crop and whether procurement agencies would be operational amid the lockdown.

On Tuesday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his televised address to the nation announced that the lockdown has been further extended to May 3 to arrest the spread of novel coronavirus in India. He however said that certain essential activities will be permitted from April 20 after an assessment of each region.

The following agricultural activities will be permitted from April 20 under the new MHA guidelines:

- 1) All agricultural and horticultural activities will remain fully functional.
- 2) The guidelines says all agencies engaged in procurement of agricultural products, including MSP (Minimum Support Price) operations, will be allowed to function.
- 3) Besides this, mandis that are operated by the Agriculture Produce Market Committee or as notified by the state/UT government (eg. satellite mandis) will be allowed to operate. The guidelines also allows direct marketing operations by the state/UT government or by industry, directly from farmers/group of farmers. State/UTs may promote decentralised marketing and procurement at village level.
- 4) Shops of agriculture machinery, its spare parts (including supply chain) and repairs will remain open. Manufacturing, distribution and retail of fertilisers, pesticides and seeds too have been permitted to remain open.
- 5) The guidelines allow movement (inter and inter state) of harvesting and sowing related machines like combined harvesters and other agriculture/horticulture implements.

**Source:** <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/coronavirus-lockdown-mha-guidelines-agriculture-farmers-key-takeaways-1667094-2020-04-15>