

Kerala goes under complete lockdown amid rising Covid cases. All you need to know

Updated: 08 May 2021, 02:37 PM IST

The restrictions came into force by 6 am and would be extended up to May 16 midnight, official sources said.

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Thiruvananthapuram: Shutting shops, suspending public vehicle transport and strictly restricting the on-road movement of people, Kerala came under complete lockdown from Saturday morning to contain the massive spread of COVID-19 pandemic.

The restrictions came into force by 6 am and would be extended up to May 16 midnight, official sources here said. The state government decided to impose a 9-day complete shut as the weekend restrictions and lockdown-like curbs imposed earlier failed to create any desired impact in terms of the daily caseload of the infected persons.

The number of daily cases had crossed 42,000 mark earlier this week but registered a slight dip on Friday- 38,460 cases- in the southern state, according to government figures. As lockdown is in place, only essential services are exempted and people are strictly warned against coming out in public places or travel unnecessarily. Police intensified patrolling in every nook and cranny of the state since morning to ensure that nobody is venturing out without any valid reason.

Around 25,000 police personnel have been deployed across the state to ensure adherence to guidelines. They could be seen stopping every single vehicle including two-wheelers and asking the riders about the purpose of their travel and seeking to show their identity cards.

Fine is being imposed and vehicles are being seized from individuals who violate the restrictions. According to police sources, an online pass system would come into force by this evening for those who have to go out for urgent needs. With this, people can travel for emergency purposes by obtaining pass from the police, they said. All borders are under the strict surveillance of the police and only freight vehicles and those having permission from the authorities concerned are permitted through check- posts, police added.

As per the official guidelines, banks, insurance, financial services, capital and debt market services as notified by SEBI and cooperative credit societies shall function only on alternate days during lockdown -Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Anyone violating the lockdown guidelines would invite punished under the relevant provisions of the Disaster Management Act-2005,Kerala Epidemic Diseases Ordinance-2021 and other relevant laws in force, police added. Railway sources said over 35 train, both long distance and intra-state, have been cancelled in Kerala.

It was not directly due to lockdown by because of poor occupancy in the wake of COVID-19 spread. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Friday sought the cooperation of the people during lockdown and said the stringent measures were for their welfare and urged them to avoid inter district travel.