

West Bengal extends Covid-19 lockdown till 15 June: What's allowed and what's not

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The ongoing Covid-related restrictions in West Bengal were in place from 15 May to 30 May.

The West Bengal government on Thursday extended the Covid-related restrictions on services and movement in the state till 15 June in view of an unprecedented surge in coronavirus cases.

Restrictions in Bengal were currently in place from 15 May to 30 May.

State Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has sought the cooperation of Bengal's residents and appealed to them saying, "Please don't call this a lockdown. Covid numbers have come down. For economy's sake there will be no total lockdown."

The pandemic situation in Bengal eased a little because of existing restrictions, CM Banerjee said. She also said that the Covid-19 numbers in the state were declining and, for the economy's sake, she was not announcing a "total lockdown".

The restrictions announced earlier this month will carry over into the new 'near-lockdown' period.

What's allowed and what's not in Bengal:

- 1) All offices and educational institutions will be shut, as well as transport services, including the metro. Petrol pumps and banks will operate from 10 am to 2 pm.
- 2) All emergency services will be allowed, as will home deliveries and other online services.
- 3) Grocery stores and shops selling essential items will stay open between 7 and 10 am. Shops selling sweets, including traditional Bengali sweetmeats, can open from 10 am to 5 pm.
- 4) Industries will be closed but tea gardens can function, although at 50% strength only.
- 5) No cultural, political, academic, administrative or religious events and functions will be allowed during this period. No outdoor congregations will be permitted between 9 pm and 5 am.
- 6) A maximum of 50 guests are allowed at weddings.
- 7) Shopping complexes, beauty parlours, cinema halls, sports facilities and restaurants were shut indefinitely on 1 May.

Bengal Class 10, 12 board exams

CM Banerjee said that the state will hold the Class 12 board examinations in the last week of July, while the tests for Class 10 will take place in mid-August.

The dates will be announced later by the respective boards, she added.

"We have decided to hold the secondary (Madhyamik) and higher secondary (Uccho Madhyamik) examinations... adhering to all COVID-19 safety protocols," Banerjee told reporters at the state secretariat. Meanwhile, West Bengal logged 16,225 fresh Covid-19 infections on Wednesday, raising the tally to 13,18,203, a health department bulletin said.

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The death toll mounted to 14,827 after 153 more fatalities were reported from different parts of the state, it said.

West Bengal now has 1,23,377 active cases, while 11,79,999 patients have recovered from the disease, including 19,071 since Tuesday.

A total of 1,21,21,940 samples have so far been tested for COVID-19, taking into account 63,976 clinical examinations in the last 24 hours, the bulletin said.

Meanwhile, at least 59,593 people were vaccinated in the state during the day, officials said.