

Kerala- Complete lockdown on weekend, mass testing campaign to be held on Friday

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- **The testing campaign will focus especially in areas where the test positivity rate is above 10%.**
- **A target of 3 lakh tests has been set for the campaign.**

The Kerala government has decided to extend its previous order and impose a complete lockdown on the coming weekend as well (i.e., 24 and 25 July). Along with this, a mass testing campaign will be held on Friday, with a special focus on districts where the positivity rate continues to soar.

The health and family welfare department has been given a target to conduct at least 3 lakh tests on the day, with a special focus on districts where the test positivity rate (TPR) is above 10%.

"Further, the number of daily tests shall also be enhanced urgently to the peak testing capacity for the effective containment of the pandemic," said the government in an order on Wednesday.

It stated that the present categorisation of the local self-government institutions (LSGIs) based on a seven-day average positivity rate will continue.

"District collectors are directed to identify and demarcate micro-containment zones in all district, regardless of the categorization of the LSG1 regions, and enforce special intensified stringent restrictions so as to bring down the new cases at the earliest," read the order.

State Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan had said on Tuesday that in the last three days the average test positivity rate in Kerala has increased to 10.8%. He informed that most numbers of Covid cases in the state are from Malappuram, Kozhikode and Kasaragod districts.

The CM made the statement while extending the Covid-19 restrictions already in place for another week.

Category 'A' includes areas with a positivity rate above 5%. Here, all types of shops and business establishments will remain open on all days except during weekend lockdown.

In 'B' category, areas with TPR of up to 10% are included. Shops selling essential items will remain open on all days here, while other non-essential item shops would function on Monday, Wednesday and Friday till 8 pm.

Areas in 'C' category are those where TPR is above 15%. Shops that sell essential provisions will remain open on all days in this category, while other shops are allowed to open only on Friday.

In 'D' category (TPR rate above 15%), only shops that sell essential provisions are allowed to open.

Shops in the category 'A', 'B' and 'C' LSGIs can function till 8 pm and banks can stay open to the public for five days a week.

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The state on Tuesday recorded 16,848 fresh Covid-19 cases, pushing the infection caseload to 31,87,716, while the Test Positivity Rate (TPR) climbed close to 12% after remaining around the 10% mark for several weeks.

Malappuram accounted for the most number of cases (2,752), followed by Thrissur (1,929), Ernakulam (1,901), Kozhikode (1,689), Kollam (1,556), Palakkad (1,237), Kottayam (1,101) and Thiruvananthapuram (1,055).

The death toll due to coronavirus rose to 15,512 with 104 more people succumbing, a state government release said.

As many as 12,052 people have recuperated, taking the total recoveries to 30,45,310 and the number of active cases to 1,26,398.