

India's Tamil Nadu state shuts borders over virus fear

March 20 2020

The Indian state of Tamil Nadu on Friday took the rare step of closing its borders with several neighbouring states because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The Tamil Nadu government shut the borders with Kerala, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh states, which have reported a growing number of [coronavirus](#) cases.

While India has virtually sealed its land borders with other countries and incoming flights are banned from Sunday, officials said they could not recall a state closing internal borders like this in recent decades.

A government statement said the measure would last until at least March 31 and that only "essential goods" and [government](#) buses would be allowed across the [border](#).

"All passengers will be screened," the statement said.

Kerala was until recently one of the worst-hit states in India, which now has more than 220 cases and recorded four deaths from the virus.

Between them, the three states now cut off from Tamil Nadu account for more than 40 of India's cases.

The move came ahead of a nationwide one-day people's curfew that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has called for Sunday to test the

readiness of the country of 1.3 billion people to confront the growing number of cases.

While the curfew has been described as voluntary and police will not enforce the move, the right-wing leader said "all citizens must abide by this curfew. We shall neither leave our homes nor go onto the streets."

The Delhi metro will be closed and many railway services have been cancelled for the day.

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