

Poland to shut its borders to foreign travellers: PM

March 13 2020

Poland on Friday said it was shutting its borders to foreign travellers to stem the spread of the novel coronavirus, which has infected at least 68 people.

It would also impose two weeks of quarantine on people returning from abroad, Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki told reporters.

"Most of the cases that have been propagating the coronavirus epidemic in Poland are imported cases," he said.

"We don't want the coronavirus to head our way in droves."

Morawiecki said Poland's borders would be closed for 10 days, but that the government might prolong the shutdown.

Interior Minister Mariusz Kaminski said that both the quarantine measures and the border closures would apply from midnight on Saturday.

Two people so far has died from coronavirus in Poland, which has a population of 38 million.

Morawiecki said that foreigners living or working in Poland would be able to enter but would also have to observe the quarantine—either at home or at an isolation site offered them.

Trains and airplanes will only be servicing routes within Poland.

Shopping malls will close, though grocery stores and pharmacies remain open, said the premier. Restaurants and bars will close their sit-in service but are encouraged to continue to provide a takeaway service.

Public gatherings of more than 50 people are also banned for the next two weeks, said the prime minister—and that also applied to mass in the devout Catholic country.

Poland has already shut down its schools, museums and cinemas.

Neighbouring Slovakia and the Czech Republic have also closed their borders to foreign travellers.

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