

LOCKDOWN INDIA VS. UNLOCK INDIA

The Government of India ordered nationwide Lockdown on 24th march 2020 as a preventive measure against the coronavirus pandemic in India, limiting the movement of the entire population of India. The Lockdown was first implemented when the number of confirmed cases in India was 500. Then the lockdown was extended as the cases increased until June 8, when Unlock 1.0 was implemented in India.

The Lockdown was ordered after a 14-hour voluntary public curfew followed by enforcement of a series of regulations in the country's COVID-19 affected regions. The lockdown ordered on 24th march, 2020 restricted people from leaving their homes. Essential services like groceries, medications, and banks were allowed to function with restrictions of social distancing and mask-wearing. All transport services—road, air and rail—were suspended. Educational institutions and industries were also suspended. Thousands of people emigrated out of major Indian cities, as they became jobless after the lockdown. Due to the lockdown, more than 350 deaths were reported as of 10 May, with reasons ranging from starvation, suicides, exhaustion, road and rail accidents, police brutality and denial of timely medical care. Among the reported deaths, most were among the marginalized migrants and labourers. Rivers became cleaner as industries were closed due to the lockdown. The quality of air had significantly improved during the lockdown.

In the Unlock India, the lockdown measures were relaxed in a graded manner, keeping the spread of COVID-19 in view. Most activities with the exception of educational institutions, international air travel, places of recreation (swimming pools, gymnasiums, theatres, entertainment parks, bars, auditoriums and assembly halls) and large gatherings of any kind are permitted outside of containment zones. The phases of the Unlock India had an economic focus.

Lockdown restrictions were only being imposed in containment zones, while activities were permitted in other zones in a phased manner during Unlock India. Shopping malls, religious places, hotels and restaurants were permitted to be reopened from 8 June. Large gatherings were still banned. There were no restrictions on inter-state travel. Night curfews were in effect from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m. in all areas. In Phase II, all educational institutions are scheduled to reopen in August, pending consultations with state governments. In Phase III, easing of restrictions on international air travel, operation of metros and recreational activities would be decided upon in August.

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