

THE HINDU

Beaches and parks in State to open from today

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Tourism Department has taken steps to ensure adherence to guidelines to revive the sector hit by COVID-19

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Beaches, parks, and museums in the State will be opened for tourists from Sunday, marking the resumption of tourism activities after remaining shut for eight months.

The move, as part of reviving the tourism sector reeling under the pandemic outbreak, comes close on the heels of the opening of tourist destinations and services across the State on October 10. Adhering to standard operating procedures to ensure the safety of visitors, houseboats, personalised boating, and adventure tourism spots and hill stations had been thrown open.

"Tourism Department officials are making extra efforts to ensure that the guidelines are followed to the last detail," Tourism Director



Back in business: A street vendor on the Kozhikode beach cleaning his shop ahead of the reopening of the beach for tourists on Sunday. * K. RAGESH

P. Bala Kiran said on Saturday. As part of safety parameters for beaches, which do not have controlled access,

directives have been issued to ensure that officials are deployed at entry points, walkways, and open areas,

equipped with thermal scanners, sanitisers, and hand-wash facilities.

Boards featuring dos and

don'ts are being put up and walkways, handrails, and shelters will be sprayed with sanitisers at regular intervals. Tourism police will be posted, if necessary, to help Kudumbashree volunteers and lifeguards. A register will be kept at the entry for entering details of visitors.

For parks and museums, online ticket /SMS booking will be explored to the extent possible at gated entries. Vehicles will be allowed at parking areas for up to maximum one hour.

A register will be kept at all entry points for entering visitor's name, native place, contact number, and time and date of the visit.

"It is significant that we are reopening our beaches, including destinations such as Kovalam," Tourism Minister Kadakampally Surendran said. "The response in desti-

nations that resumed operations from October 10 has been encouraging, with footfall gradually increasing," Tourism Secretary Rani George said.

SOPs for tourists

As per the SOP issued by the government, visitors will have to wear mask, use soap and sanitizer and follow physical distancing at destinations.

Tourists coming for visits of less than seven days are exempted from quarantine but should register on the COVID Jagratha portal.

If they plan to extend their stay for more than seven days, they have to undergo a test at their cost on the seventh day at ICMR/ state government approved laboratories. They are advised to avoid travel if they are symptomatic.