

Bill Summary

The Kerala Epidemic Diseases Bill, 2021

- The Kerala Epidemic Diseases Bill, 2021 was introduced in, and passed by the Kerala Assembly on June 3, 2021. The Bill repeals the Cochin Epidemic Diseases Act, 1072 (Malayalam calendar), the Travancore Epidemic Diseases Act, 1073 (Malayalam calendar), and the Kerala Epidemic Diseases Ordinance, 2021. The Bill provides for the regulation and prevention of epidemic diseases in the state of Kerala. Key features include:
 - **Preventing the spread of epidemics:** The state government may notify any disease as an epidemic disease, throughout, or in parts of the state. In the event of an outbreak of an epidemic disease, the state government may take certain measures to curb the spread of the disease. These include: (i) sealing state borders, (ii) restricting public and private transport, (iii) inspecting or quarantining persons arriving into the state by air, rail, road, or sea, (iv) prescribing social distancing norms, (v) restricting congregation of persons in public or religious spaces, and (vi) prohibiting and restricting the functioning of shops, commercial establishments, factories, workshops, and godowns. Further, the state may empower the District Collector to enforce these measures.
 - **Offences and penalties:** Any person, institution, or company found to be: (i) violating or abetting the violation of regulations or orders made under this Bill, or (ii) obstructing any officer empowered under this Bill, may be punished with an imprisonment term of up to two years, a fine of up to Rs 10,000, or both. All offences under this Bill will be cognisable (a person may be arrested without warrant) and bailable.
 - **Composition of offences:** Offences may be compounded on the application of the accused, either: (i) before the prosecution, or (ii) with the permission of the concerned court, after the prosecution, and upon payment of a fee. When an offence is compounded, the offender and any vehicles seized, shall be released.

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