

## Total shutdown in Tamil Nadu, Puducherry over quota stay

A day-long shutdown to protest a Supreme Court stay on quotas in central higher educational institutions crippled normal life in Tamil Nadu and neighbouring Puducherry Saturday with traffic keeping off the roads and schools and offices shut in most places.

All long-distance trains stopped plying at around 6 a.m. in the entire region while suburban train services in [Chennai](#) were halted.

Stranded passengers were provided food by the authorities, reports from Salem and Erode said.

Airports were nearly shut, while roads were mostly devoid of traffic.

The shutdown, called by the ruling parties, began at 6 a.m. in protest against the Supreme Court stay till August on 27 percent reservation for backward classes in higher educational institutions, including the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs).

The Tamil Nadu government had declared Saturday a holiday under the negotiable instruments act. All industries, offices, educational institutions and most businesses were closed for the day.

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) has estimated the loss due to the shutdown in Tamil Nadu at about Rs.7.5 billion.

Power and water supply, banks, hospitals and milk supply were exempted from the shutdown. Police said the shutdown was peaceful.

The Madras High Court declined to intervene in the protest, posting for hearing two weeks later two public suits that allege that such shutdowns cause inconvenience to the public.

In Puducherry, the strike was spearheaded by the DMK and the Congress, but the administration did not declare a state holiday. Office goers did come to their offices in the morning and were not disturbed.

Only the state Bharatiya Janata Party opposed the bandh, saying it was 'unnecessary and uncalled-for'.

Party national council member S.R. Seghar said that the strike affected hundreds of passengers, especially pilgrims to Palani and the six Murugan temples in Tamil Nadu.

Thousands of pilgrim heading to various temples to witness the divine wedding of Muruga (the deity Karthikeyan) and Valli had a difficult time. Hundreds were stay put on trains and those who chose to proceed on foot faced food shortage on the way because of closure of shops.

The temple procession of Lord Shiva in Chennai's Mylapore temple festival was affected by the strike.

Travellers on the East Coast Road, moving between Chennai, Mahabalipuram and Puducherry, both popular tourist resorts, also faced transport problems as buses did not ply on this well frequented

route.

Police said, no law and order problems were reported anywhere.

( © IANS / India eNews)