

Lockdown to be extended for two weeks, Centre to issue guidelines - Karnataka CM

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The lockdown during the next two weeks will be different from the last three weeks, says Yediyurappa

Karnataka Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa on Saturday said the lockdown in place to control the spread of Covid-19 will be extended for two more weeks and the Centre will issue guidelines regarding its implementation in a couple of days.

“Prime Minister Narendra Modi said for no reason there should be any relaxation in the lockdown, suggestions have come regarding extension of lockdown. In a couple of days guidelines will be issued about the implementation of the lockdown during the next fifteen days,” Yediyurappa said.

Speaking to reporters after the four-hour long video conference that the Prime Minister had with Chief Ministers of all states, he said, “PM noted that lockdown was inevitable for next fifteen days, but guidelines will be informed...so till April-end it is certain.”

Modi held a video conference with all state chief ministers to discuss the situation arising due to the Covid-19 pandemic and to take their feedback on whether the 21-day shutdown should be extended.

Other than the Chief Minister, Home Minister Basavaraj Bommai, Health Minister Sriramulu, Medical Education Minister K Sudhakar, Primary and Secondary Education Minister Suresh Kumar, along with top officials of the state government were part of the video conference.

The lockdown during the next two weeks will be different from the last three weeks, Yediyurappa said.

“The Prime Minister said during the next fifteen days lockdown will be relaxed in the graded manner agriculture and industrial sectors will be given relaxation. Government offices will be allowed to function with partial strength.

He (Modi) will announce such measures soon,” the Chief Minister added.

During the video conferencing, several Chief Ministers are said to have suggested for extension of the national lockdown by at least a fortnight after April 14.

According to Yediyurappa, the Prime Minister said next two-three weeks were critical and these three-four weeks will decide whether we have succeeded or failed. If the situation worsens we have to face the crisis.

“The PM has assured that the Central government is fully with states,” he added.

Yediyurappa on Thursday had said all his cabinet colleagues were of the unanimous opinion to extend the lockdown for about fifteen days after April 14, and a final decision in this regard will be taken after consulting the Prime Minister on Saturday.

A committee of health experts tasked with devising an exit strategy for coronavirus lockdown in Karnataka on Wednesday had recommended for its continuation in “hotspots” along with some relaxations.

In its recommendations submitted to Yediyurappaon, it has said schools and colleges should remain shut till May 31 and advocated restrictions on public transport to continue for some more time even while suggesting odd-even formula for private vehicles.

While non-air conditioned shops can be allowed to function and IT/BT companies, government offices providing essential services and factories can operate with 50 per cent staff, the committee has said.

The recommendations were for a period of next 15 days from April 14 after the current national lockdown.

The committee comprising among others Narayana Health founder-chairman Dr Devi Prasad Shetty, Jayadeva Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences director Dr C N Manjunath was set up for devising the exit strategy for the lockdown.