

Maharashtra decides to extend lockdown at least till April 30

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Making the announcement, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray said that the lockdown can be relaxed in certain areas while on others it will become stricter.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Saturday announced that the state will extend the lockdown till at least April 30 and asked people to be "mentally prepared" for a longer wait if the situation did not ease by then.

"The lockdown will be extended till April 30, that's a minimum. I am emphasizing the word minimum, because we need the people's co-operation to break the cycle. People should not come out unless absolutely necessary. Do not crowd markets and co operate, and only then we can tackle this by April 30," he told the media.

Thackeray addressed the media after a video conference of chief ministers with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in which almost all states spoke in favour of extending the nationwide lockdown over the Covid-19 epidemic.

"I am addressing you because there was speculation and rumors about what transpired in the meeting with the PM. As your chief minister I thought I should address you directly. We have told the PM that the lockdown needed to be extended to combat the disease. Maharashtra will not lift the lockdown after April 14th," he said.

The CM emphasized that if people did not stay at home and the disease spread further than the lockdown in the state could be further extended.

"In some areas we would relax restrictions and in other places we would have to tighten restrictions to prevent the spread of the disease," he added.

The chief minister said that the number of cases in Mumbai and Pune were worrying but added that state health authorities were trying to break the cycle of infections and that 70% of the people who tested positive were either asymptomatic or with mild symptoms.

Thackeray said the high number of fatalities was primarily due to the disease affecting senior citizens and people having other ailments like high blood pressure, diabetes and kidney disease.

"The other reason was that many of them came to us after the disease had progressed a lot," he said

At the meeting, the chief ministers despite coming from different political parties and ideologies were in sync with the Centre, Thackeray said, adding, "We are all united, and if we can be united even after this then we can be a super power."

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