

Karnataka lockdown- CM BS Yediyurappa hints at extension of strict Covid curbs with relaxation for some sectors

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- **Responding to a question regarding the second lockdown relief package, the BS Yediyurappa said he will take a decision on it in a couple of days.**

Karnataka Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa today hinted that strict measures may continue, saying coronavirus has not completely come under control in the state and cases are still high in rural areas. The CM however indicated that relaxation may be given to certain sectors, as he announced that export oriented businesses will be allowed to operate from Thursday, as reported by news agency PTI.

"I will have a discussion with everyone to make a decision on measures that need to be taken regarding lockdown. Most importantly I have decided to give permission to those involved in exports. So export oriented business will be allowed from Thursday," Yediyurappa said.

B S Yediyurappa said he will hold a discussion on various other related things with senior ministers and officials, and by today or tomorrow will take a decision on the lockdown. "Will discuss on how to go about, by extending the lockdown and taking strict measures, with experts and will take a call after taking their suggestions.

Coronavirus has not completely come under control, it is still high in rural areas, we will take a decision considering how to balance things and go ahead," he added. The CM is chairing separate meetings with experts, also senior Ministers and officials this evening. The state's COVID-19 Technical Advisory Committee (TAC- consisting of experts), in its report to the government has mentioned that the positivity rate has to come below 5 percent and number of cases should be below 5,000, only then the restrictions can be relaxed. The state government had initially announced 14 days "close down" from April 27, but subsequently imposed a complete lockdown from May 10 to 24, as the COVID cases continued to spike.

Citing lockdown yielding results and experts advice, it was further extended till June 7. Responding to a question regarding the second lockdown relief package, the Chief Minister said he will take a decision on it in a couple of days. Yediyurappa had earlier said that a second financial package for the COVID-induced lockdown was under consideration, and is aimed at providing relief to certain sections left out of the first one.

The state is currently under lockdown till June 7, and there were speculations about it being extended. As the State was battling the second wave of the pandemic, he had recently announced an over ₹1,250-crore financial package as relief for those whose livelihood has been affected by the lockdown. The total number of active cases in Karnataka fell below 3 lakh mark, as the state on Tuesday had reported further decline in fresh cases at 14,304. The total number of infections stood at 26.18 lakh while the toll was 29,554. The positivity rate stood at 12.30 per cent, case fatality rate (CFR) was at 3.24 per cent.