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Siddaramaiah, Congress MLAs want lockdown now

Express concern over rising Covid-19 cases

BENGALURU, DHNS

A section of Congress legislators, including Leader of the Opposition Siddaramaiah, mounted pressure on the government to impose another lockdown to contain the spread of Covid-19 with cases rising each day.

"This is the time we need lockdown. The previous one was ill-timed. Cases are increasing now - June, July and August. Experts say it'll go up till September," Siddaramaiah told reporters here on Friday. He added that the "ill-timed" lockdown spoiled both health and economy and the state and the centre had failed in handling the pandemic.

Some Congress MLAs minced no words about this during a meeting Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa held with Bengaluru representatives.

"All of us know that community spread has started already. Globally, lockdown has been done to stop it. But the government has said it won't impose a lockdown. So, who will be responsible for the spread? They say there'll be an economic crisis, but when there'll be no life, then what's the point?" Shantinagar MLA NA Haris said.

Hebbal MLA Byrati Suresh said he favoured another lockdown. "There's a shortage of cemeteries for those dying from Covid-19. I've said there must be a lockdown, but CM and his Cabinet colleagues didn't want it."

Calls for another lockdown have grown louder with Covid-19 cases rising, especially in Bengaluru. On Friday, the city saw 144 fresh cases, taking the tally of active cases to 1,327 with 81 deaths. In all, Karnata



Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa takes part in a meeting on Covid-19 pandemic, in Bengaluru on Friday. Primary and Secondary Education Minister S Suresh Kumar, Chief Secretary T M Vijay Bhaskar, Deputy Chief Minister Ashwath Narayan and Revenue Minister R Ashoka are seen. DH PHOTO

taka has seen 11,005 cases of which 3,905 are still active.

While the nationwide lockdown was imposed on March 24, Karnataka ordered the closure of malls, theatres, multiplexes, clubs, pubs and other commercial establishments on March 13. The state has been crawling back towards normalcy since June 1, which marked the start of Unlock 1.0.

"If the government announces another lockdown after consulting experts, we will cooperate," Shivajinagar MLA

Rizwan Arshad said. "But the government must financially help the poor who will be affected by it."

The ruling BJP has ruled out another lockdown, but one of its MLAs, Satish Reddy of Bommanahalli, expressed worry. "It's spreading in Bengaluru. We need to ensure compliance with safety measures, especially among the uneducated. We didn't say we want a lockdown, but the situation has to be brought under control," he said.