

# Weekend lockdown in UP; night curfew will remain imposed in all districts

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The Uttar Pradesh government on Tuesday decided to impose a weekend curfew from Friday evening to Monday morning in the entire state till further orders amid the rising cases of coronavirus infections.

In a Cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the government, besides ordering a nearly 60-hour-long weekend curfew, also decided to keep all non-essential activities suspended in all districts of the state having 500 or more active cases.

It also decided to continue with the night-long curfew on weekdays throughout the state, a senior official said.

"Throughout the state, there will be night curfew. Throughout the state, the corona curfew will be enforced from Friday evening to Monday morning," Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Awanish Kumar Awasthi told PTI.

The move by the UP Government comes hours after the Supreme Court on Tuesday stayed an Allahabad High Court order asking the state government to impose strict restrictions till April 26 in five cities amid the surge in Covid-19 cases.

A bench headed by Chief Justice S A Bobde passed the order after Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for Uttar Pradesh, told it that the state government has taken several steps to contain the spread of coronavirus but to lockdown five cities by a judicial order may not be the right approach.

Mehta, while arguing that the high court order would create immense administrative difficulties, said the state government has issued several directions and taken adequate precaution on the issue.

In these circumstances, there shall be an interim stay on the order of the high court, the top court said.

The apex court appointed senior advocate P S Narasimha as amicus curiae to assist it in the matter and said the plea would come up for hearing after two weeks.

The high court had directed the Uttar Pradesh government to impose strict restrictions including the closing of malls, shopping complexes and restaurants till April 26 in five cities -- Allahabad, Lucknow, Varanasi, Kanpur, Nagar and Gorakhpur -- but stopped short of calling it a "complete lockdown".

On the issue of migrants coming back to the state from Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Delhi, Adityanath said the bordering districts of UP must exercise special caution, and provisions should be made for smooth movement of the migrant workers.

The Home Department and the transport department should co-ordinate and act, he said, adding adequate facilities should be made for testing and treatment of the migrant labourers, he said.