



**Bruhat Bengaluru  
Mahanagara Palike**

**BRUHAT BENGALURU MAHANAGARA PALIKE,  
BANGALORE**

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# **COVID-19: Over 71% of those who died are men**

BENGALURU

COVID-19 deaths in the State reported among men outnumber those in women by a ratio of 2.5:1. Although the recovery rate among both genders is almost the same, over 71% (8,382 of the 11,678 deaths reported till November 23) are men, according to the State's COVID War Room data.

# **Adhere to COVID-19 norms at rallies: HC**

BENGALURU

The High Court of Karnataka on Tuesday ordered issue of notice to the BJP, the Congress, the Janata Dal, and the CPI (Marxist) asking them whether they are willing to ensure that their members and workers don't violate COVID-19 norms of wearing masks and maintaining social distance during political rallies/campaigns.

# PM tells States to prepare for vaccine distribution

## Keep up fight against COVID-19, he says

**NISTULA HEBBAR**  
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday asked the State governments to set up steering committees and block-wise task forces to prepare for the distribution of COVID-19 vaccines as and when they are available for disbursement, but spent much of his meeting with Chief Ministers emphasising that the focus should still be on containing the spread of the virus.

"Vaccines will be available when they pass all the tests for validation of data and regulatory frameworks. We must keep our focus on making sure there is no unmanageable surge in cases.

## Sputnik V shows interim efficacy of 91%

Russia's Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine is 91% effective, according to an interim analysis of clinical trial data, its developers said on Tuesday. The vaccine candidate is also being tested on volunteers in India and will cost "less than \$10 [₹700] for international markets", the Russian Direct Investment Fund said. ▶ PAGE 10

governments coordinating

We must keep our focus on making sure there is no unmanageable surge in cases. We don't know which vaccine will pass the scientific parameters for disbursement in our country and by what date, but I want all States to set up steering committees and task forces down to the block-level for preparing for vaccine disbursement," he said.

Mr. Modi added: "It will be a large-scale enterprise looking at the size of our country and keeping in mind our experience with large immunisation campaigns, we want this to be a smooth exercise with great coordination with State governments, who are the best judge of how things are to be done in particular States."

The government was in touch "in real time" with vaccine candidate institutions, manufacturers, international organisations and

governments coordinating vaccine efforts and international companies to ensure that information on vaccine availability was up to date, he said.

### Cold storage facilities

While the availability of vaccines was in the hands of scientists and the pricing depended on various factors, as public servants, governments should prepare cold chain spots, and availability of staff for disbursement and also any "adverse events" regarding side effects of the vaccine.

"Regardless of everything, whichever vaccine is distributed in our country, rest assured it will have passed all the scientific parameters," he said.

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# Over 71% of those who succumbed to COVID-19 in State are men

The high mortality in men points to better immune response among women

**AFSHAN YASMEEN**  
BENGALURU

COVID-19 deaths in the State reported among men outnumber those in women by a ratio of 2.5:1. Although the recovery rate among both genders is almost the same, over 71% (8,382 of the 11,678 deaths reported till November 23) are men, according to the State's COVID War Room data.

Of the total 5,38,674 men who tested positive in the State, 5,18,554 have recovered, registering a recovery rate of 96.2%. Of the 3,35,881 women who tested positive, 3,19,596 have recovered, a recovery rate of 95.2%.

The high mortality in men points to better immune response among women, but some doctors say that it is only proportionate to the case positivity among men.

For both the genders, more than half of the deaths occurred in the age group of 50-60 years and 60-70 years.

## Better immune response

Doctors said the apparent gender differences in favour of women in the risk of contracting and dying from COVID-19 could be due to a better immune response in them. Such trends have also been observed in previous epidemics, including severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS), they said.

Hema Divakar, consultant gynaecologist/obstetrician, said genes are likely to play an important role. "Women tend to have a more responsive immune system compared to men. Several re-



Free mass COVID-19 tests being conducted at K.R. Market bus stand in Bengaluru. ■ K. MURALI KUMAR

search studies have shown that estrogen, the dominant female hormone, could influence the response to infection as it exhibits antiviral properties," she said.

Stating that the outcome and survival rates from infections or sepsis are often better in women than in men, Dr. Divakar said an ar-

ticle written by Issac Mayonda from the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at St. George's University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, London, U.K., had explored whether estrogen protected women from COVID-19.

"The X chromosomes, of which women possess two, contain the largest number of immune-related genes of the whole human genome, theoretically giving women double the advantage over men in mounting an efficient and rapid immune response," she said quoting the article.

## Comorbidities

C.N. Manjunath, director of Sri Jayadeva Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences and Research, who is also part of the State's COVID-19 expert committee, said women generally make healthier lif-

estyle choices as compared to men. "Women do not smoke or drink as much as men, and they have a lower burden of lifestyle diseases (cardiovascular, diabetes, hypertension or chronic lung conditions). This factor could be the reason for the high mortality among men," he explained.

However, Anoop Amarnath, member of Karnataka's COVID critical care support unit, who heads the department of Geriatric Medicine at Manipal Hospitals, said the mortality is proportionate to the case positivity among men.

Stating that comorbidities may not explain the gender difference, he said: "One potential reason could be the fact that exposure to the virus is high in men compared to women. We need to do a complete analysis regarding this," he added.

## Consider promoting students from classes 1 to 9 without exams: Panel

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
BENGALURU

The State's COVID-19 Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) that met on Tuesday to discuss the State's preparedness to deal with a second wave has recommended that the Education Department should consider promoting students from class 1 to 9 without exams.

Sources in the TAC told *The Hindu* that it would be advisable if exams are held only for class 10 and 12 students. Also, the exams

should be postponed and held in May-June instead of the usual March-April and summer holidays should be done away with, the TAC members felt. "With the second wave expected any time after February, the Education Department can take a call on this after due deliberations," said one of the members from TAC.

## New cases

Meanwhile, the State on Monday reported 1,870 new cases, taking the total num-

ber of cases to 8,76,425. With 17 deaths, the toll rose to 11,695. This is apart from 19 deaths of patients due to non-COVID-19 reasons.

As many as 1,949 people were discharged on Tuesday, taking the total number of recoveries to 8,40,099. Of the remaining 24,612 active patients, 418 were being monitored in the ICU. Bengaluru Urban reported 927 cases, taking its tally to 3,65,317. With 12 deaths coming from Bengaluru, the toll in this district rose to 4,090.

# 'We're set for vaccine delivery'

29,451 vaccination sites have been identified: Sudhakar

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
BENGALURU

Following directions from the Centre, Karnataka has initiated measures for COVID-19 vaccine delivery, distribution and administration, with the State's task force also deliberating on the issue, Health and Medical Education Minister K. Sudhakar said on Tuesday.

The Minister said the government has identified 29,451 session sites (vaccination sites) and 10,008 vaccinators as per the norms of the Universal Immunisation Programme.

Health Care Workers data has already been compiled for all the government facilities. A total of 80% of the private health facilities have also shared their data. Compilation of data for the remaining 20% private facilities is likely to be completed in a week's time, the Minister said in a statement.

## Cold storage facilities

The State has around 2,855 cold chain points for storage and distribution of vaccines. With a view to have a better supply chain network and

distribution of vaccines in a timely manner, three new regional vaccine stores - Bengaluru Urban, Shivamogga and Ballari have been proposed. These newly proposed regional vaccine stores will also require additional Walk-in-Coolers and Walk-in-Freezers to be supplied, the Minister said.

"The Union Health Ministry is going to supply three Walk-in-Coolers and two Walk-in-Freezers for which necessary civil work is being initiated. In order to have an exact assessment of the cold storage capacity required for COVID-19 vaccine programme, we first need to assess the number of doses in



The government has identified Dasappa Hospital as the main storage centre with a mass cold storage facility in Bengaluru.

■ K. MURALI KUMAR

## CM-led panel to monitor vaccination

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
BENGALURU

Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa, along with Chief Ministers of seven other States, participated in a videoconference with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday.

After the meeting, Home Minister Basavaraj Bommai told media persons that the government had decided to constitute a State-level steering committee headed by the Chief Minister to monitor vacci-

nation for COVID-19. Similarly, Deputy Commissioners and tahsildars will head steering committees at the district and taluk levels, he said.

"Prime Minister has directed that arrangements for vaccination centres would be similar to the preparations made at the booth-level for elections. Vaccination centres would be formed and workers will be trained for the exercise," the Home Minister said.

each vial, the volume of a vial etc. We have already requested the Union Ministry to share this information," he said.

On dry storage facility, Mr. Sudhakar said that State has begun the process to assess the requirements. Regarding usage of Animal Husbandry Department's facilities, the Minister said that in order to have adequate capacity the cold storage facilities under the department are also being compiled.

## BBMP makes preparations

The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) has till date registered 95,011

health workers in the city. Most of the government healthcare facilities and medical and paramedical colleges have registered those working or studying there. However, only 1,450 of 4,275 private healthcare facilities in the city have enrolled their employees.

According to BBMP Commissioner N. Manjunath Prasad, the existing infrastructure - storage capacity of 23 lakh vaccine vials, 500 enrolled vaccinators and over 4,000 centres that have earlier administered polio and measles vaccines - is more than enough for the immunisation drive for health workers in the first phase.

# HC: It's time parties ensured workers adhered to COVID-19 norms at rallies

Court issues notice to Kannada Chalavali Vatal Paksha over December 5 Karnataka bandh call

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
BENGALURU

Taking note of a call given for a Karnataka bandh on December 5 to oppose the creation of the Maratha Development Board, the High Court of Karnataka on Tuesday ordered notice to the Kannada Chalavali Vatal Paksha, which has given the bandh call.

The court also ordered issue of notice to the BJP, the Congress, the Janata Dal, and the CPI (Marxist) asking them whether they are willing to ensure that their members and workers don't violate COVID-19 norms of wearing masks and maintaining social distance during political rallies/campaigns.

A Division Bench comprising Chief Justice Abhay



Supporters greeting KPCC chief D.K. Shivakumar with flowers at Magala village near Basavakalyan on Tuesday.

Shreeniwas Oka and Justice S. Vishwajith Shetty passed the order during the hearing of a PIL petition filed by Letz-kit Foundation, Bengaluru, on COVID-19 norm violations

by celebrities, political leaders, and elected representatives.

When brought to the court's notice the call given for bandh, the Bench said

there is every likelihood that COVID-19 norms would be set at knot.

## Take responsibility

The Bench observed that the "time has come for political parties to take responsibilities to ensure strict adherence to norms of wearing masks and maintaining social distancing during rallies" while pointing out that a large number of instances of violation of norms were by political parties during the recent bypolls to the State Assembly and other political rallies.

Pointing out that the State government for the "sake of taking action" had taken belated steps against some of the party leaders and workers for violation of norms, the Bench said it is the res-

ponsibility of all political parties to join hands with the State government to ensure that the norms are strictly implemented during political rallies.

## Violations galore

The Bench decided to make political parties as respondents in the proceedings after noticing a large number of violation of norms and actions initiated by the State government only after the court took cognisance of such violations brought to its notice by the petitioners.

Meanwhile, the government counsel told the Bench that the amendment to rectify the error in the Karnataka Epidemic Disease Act, 2020 would be carried out during the forthcoming winter session of the State Legislature.



# Modi warns against false sense of security in virus fight

Reviews Covid situation with CMs of eight states

NEW DELHI, DHNS

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday cautioned against developing a false sense of security with regard to the coronavirus and asked chief ministers of eight hard-hit states to take steps to counter such an attitude among citizens.

"With increasing recovery rate, people have developed a false notion of security against the virus, thus leading to a rise in instances of negligence," said Modi, addressing the CMs via video conference.

"The trend of increase in the spread of the pandemic in countries where its impact was earlier lessening is being seen in some (Indian)

states as well, which necessitates greater alacrity and caution by the administration," Modi said.

Many Indian states are currently witnessing a rising trend in the daily number of fresh



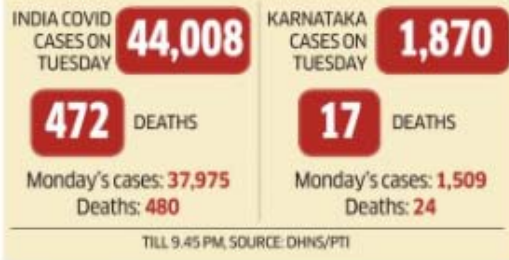
Cold storage units for Covid-19 vaccines at BBMP Dasappa Hospital near Town Hall in Bengaluru. DH PHOTO/PUSHKAR V

infections, which may have happened due to people lowering their guard during the Dussehra-Diwali festivities.

Last week, the Union Health Ministry sent teams to eight states to aid state authorities in their battle against Covid-19.

Modi reviewed the Covid-19 situation with eight high focus states — Haryana, Delhi, Chhattisgarh, Kerala, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Gujarat and West Bengal.

Sputnik shows 90% efficacy, Page 11



Subsequently, in a separate meeting, he discussed the modalities of Covid-19 vaccine delivery, distribution and administration with all the states and

asked them to keep their cold chain network ready.

The Prime Minister also emphasised enhanced use of gold standard RT-PCR

## Covid vaccine in a month: BSY

Karnataka Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa said the Covid-19 vaccine may be available in a month. The CM told reporters in Mysuru on Tuesday that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has hinted that the vaccine may be available in a month. We have made arrangements for the transportation, storage and administering the vaccine, at the district level, he said.

tests over less-accurate rapid antigen to bring down the positivity rate to 5% and fatality rate to 1%.

On the vaccine front, he discussed the requirements of additional cold chain storage with states.

Earlier, Health Ministry officials had pointed out that there were 28,000 cold chain points and 700-plus refrigerated vans that would be put to use for the Covid-19 vaccination programme.

Modi asked the CMs to ensure regular monitoring through the state-level steering committee and district-level task force to curb the pandemic.

# Start-up uses tech to help Covid patients in Leh

**Its software allows city specialists to provide critical care expertise**

**SURAKSHA P**  
BENGALURU, DHNS

**C**loudphysician, a Bengaluru-based start-up, has joined the efforts to combat the coronavirus outbreak in the remote Ladakh region by deploying the power of technology.

Seated at the company's command centre and using software in the city, a group of ICU experts, including doctors and nurses has been offering TeleICU consultations to their counterparts at SNM Government Hospital, a tertiary clinic located at 12,000 feet altitude in Leh, Ladakh, since November 13.

In fact, Cloudphysician Healthcare has been picked by the Department of Science and technology (DST) to bridge the dearth of expertise at remote areas using technology. Under an initiative called Centre for Augmenting War Against Covid-19 Health Crisis (CAWACH), the National Science and Technology Entrepreneurship Development Board (NSTEDB) that functions under the DST picked up 40



Representative image

out of 800 companies that applied for the initiative to harness technology in the fight against Covid.

Cloudphysician is one of the companies that received grants and interest-free loans to come up with solution. In fact, the company has received Rs 75 lakh for the effort.

Dr Dhruv Joshi, co-founder, Cloudphysician Healthcare, who is also a pulmonary and critical care specialist, told *DH* that the Leh hospital had a dearth of ICU specialists. "But the patients were plenty," he pointed out.

"The ten-bedded ICU is full. Despite the low population, the infectivity is high. There are only one or two tertiary hospitals in the area, one of them being SNM Government Hospital," he added. Changing ventilator settings

and recommending an appropriate treatment protocol for patients in Leh are some of the things the command centre here helps with.

Dr Dileep Raman, an Internal Medicine, Critical Care and Pulmonary Medicine specialist and also a co-founder of Cloudphysician, said the command centre in Bengaluru had three to five ICU doctors and nurses at any shift. "Some of the medications are pretty strong and only experienced nurses can handle," he said. "Covid ICU complications range from cardiac, renal and lung infections."

Dr Raman pointed out that the specialists at the command centre are only rendering ICU expertise and would not try replacing the bedside doctors. The team uses a software called RADAR that has components for video feed, writing notes, chat and a module to record and review the patient's vital signs both by the bedside doctor and the experts at the command centre.

"There are multiple video streams that we receive, one is a high-definition one, where we can even look at the patient's eyes and breathing patterns. We can even take images of the monitor where we do real time analytics. Another video stream is a standard teleconference one, for patient counselling, and talking to family members," said Dr Raman.

# App-based vaccination to cover all strays

Pilot project in two wards yields encouraging results

BENGALURU, DHNS

**M**oving away from the complaint-based rabies vaccination programme, the BBMP has adopted the scientific method of vaccinating the strays.

Using the mobile app provided by the NGO World Wide Veterinary Services, the civic body could map the vaccinated strays. It conducted a pilot project in Herohalli and Nagarabhavi in October and managed to vaccinate 85% of the strays in a month.

Dr C Lakshminarayana, Joint Director, Animal Husbandry, BBMP, said that they vaccinated 1,537 dogs in Herohalli and 413 in Nagarabhavi, besides 121 strays in Binnypet.



**A BBMP worker catches a stray dog at T Dasarahalli on Tuesday.**

DH PHOTO/B H SHIVAKUMAR

"The process is not time-bound as the area of the ward, the number of dogs mapped and difficulty in catching dogs, especially in open areas, need to be kept in mind," he explained.

He pointed out that the stray dog census conducted through the WWVS

app in 2019 November to enable the mapping process helped the officials in estimating the number of dogs in both wards. "A vaccinated dog will be marked with a coloured dye to avoid vaccinating the same dog twice. The dye is waterproof and lasts for four to six months. Unless all the dogs are vaccinated, we will not move to the next ward," Dr Lakshminarayana said.

Dr S Shashikumar, the previous joint director, said a systematic approach had helped them vaccinate more dogs in the two wards.

Contractors working on ABC and ARV programmes in each zone will be drafted in for the new project. Vehicles used for the project will have at least five to six dog catchers who will help officials vaccinate the strays. The veterinary inspector or other officials will take pictures of the dogs and upload them into the app with GPS coordinates on the spot.

## Meat ban today

BENGALURU, DHNS: The BBMP has banned the sale of meat on Wednesday in view of Sadhu Vasvani Jayanthi.

Abattoirs and meat-selling shops in the BBMP limits will remain closed for the day.

# Won't divert OBC funds for Veerashaiva-Lingayat Corp: Govt

## Backward Classes Welfare dept to bear initial costs

BHARATH JOSHI  
BENGALURU, DHNS

The funds earmarked for the development of other backward classes (OBC) will not be diverted for the newly-established Veerashaiva-Lingayat Development Corporation, the government said on Tuesday.

Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa, in a big dole, has set aside Rs 500 crore for the new Veerashaiva-Lingayat corporation. The initial cost of setting up the corporation will be borne by the Backward Classes Welfare department, stoking fears that funds kept for other communities might

be diverted.

"The allocation of Rs 500 crore for the Veerashaiva-Lingayat corporation is a separate one," Additional Chief Secretary (backward classes welfare) Gangaram Baderiya told *DH*, allaying fears that it would eat into the funds kept for other OBCs.

"The initial cost of setting up the corporation won't be much as it involves procedures such as registration," he added.

According to Baderiya, the administrative cost of running the corporation will not exceed Rs 4 crore annually.

The government order on establishment of the Veeras-

## Lingayat body gets first chief

Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa on Tuesday appointed Karnataka Veerashaiva Vidyabhivruddhi Samsthe president B S Paramashivaiah as the first chairperson of the new Veerashaiva-Lingayat Development Corpora-

tion. Yediyurappa is said to have pushed for Paramashivaiah, 81, to be nominated to the Legislative Council. Paramashivaiah is also vice-president of the Karnataka State Co-Operative Urban Bank Federation Ltd.

haiva-Lingayat corporation states that the cost incurred by the backward classes welfare department will be reimbursed later by the company.

"Over a period of time, a corporation will create its own assets and infrastructure. Its money will be kept in the banks and interest will be accrued. That's how the reimbursement will happen," Baderiya explained.

The Veerashaiva-Lingayat community is estimated to

form about 16% of the state's population and is considered to be the BJP's core support base. Yediyurappa, a Lingayat, is said to be keen to consolidate the community's support amid talks of a change in leadership.

Allocation of Rs 500 crore for the Veerashaiva-Lingayat community surpasses the amount of money set aside for others in the current fiscal - Christians (Rs 200 crore), nomadic/semi-nomadic groups (Rs 78 crore),

Ambigara Chowdaiah (Rs 50 crore), Vishwakarma (Rs 25 crore), leather artisans (Rs 12.5 crore), Upparas (Rs 10 crore), Arya Vysya (Rs 10 crore) and Kumbara (Rs 10 crore).

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the allocation for all community-specific boards and corporations got slashed by half. "Our allocation was reduced to Rs 5 crore from the original Rs 10 crore," Karnataka State Arya Vysya Community Development Corporation chairperson D S Arun said.

In spite of the fund crunch, the Arya Vysya corporation has planned to start a job portal and personality development programmes. In a recent review, the government asked all boards and corporations to adopt the Arya Vysya corporation's online application system in selecting beneficiaries, Arun pointed out.

P4

# Breach of Covid rules: HC asks political parties to file response

## Govt told to furnish particulars on fine recovered

BENGALURU, DHNS

The high court on Tuesday made major political parties as respondents in the PILs seeking direction for strict implementation of Covid-19 rules - wearing masks and

maintaining social distancing.

The court has asked the political parties to file responses as to whether they will issue strict instructions to party workers to follow the rules.

A division bench headed by Chief Justice Abhay S Oka said

that the Covid rules on wearing masks and social distancing were being observed more in breach in large political rallies.

The court observed that the state government had not taken any action in such instances and in some cases the authorities took some action belatedly.

"Prima Facie it is the responsibility of political parties to ensure strict implementation of rules regarding wearing masks and maintaining social distancing. Time has come when political parties issue strict instruc-

tions to its workers about these rules," the bench said.

Meanwhile, the petitioners pointed out that a political party - Kannada Chalavali Vatal Paksha - has called for a state bandh on December 5 and there was a likelihood of breach of rules.

The court directed the petitioners to implead BJP, CPI (M), Indian National Congress, JD (S) and Kannada Chalavali Vatal Paksha as respondents. The court called upon the added respondents to submit whether they were willing to issue instructions to their party workers

to strictly abide by the rules of wearing masks and social distancing. The court also directed Kannada Chalavali Vatal Paksha to submit a similar response in view of the bandh called for.

The court also observed that the statement of objection filed by the state government was silent about the recovery of the fine amount. In view of the admitted fact that there are large scale violations, the court directed the state government to file supplementary statements of objections detailing the fine amount recovered.

P3

# Govt yet to zero in on vaccine to be administered in state

AKHIL KADIDAL  
BENGALURU, DHNS

**A**mid a clamour for vaccines after four international prototypes were shown to have efficacy against Covid-19, the state government says a decision has not yet been taken about which vaccine will be deployed in Karnataka.

"There are many companies which are at different stages of vaccine development. Based on scientific advice, the central government will decide which vaccine should be procured and administered," said the Minister of Health, Dr K Sudhakar.

The choice of vaccine will dictate the state's level of preparedness and how many deep freezers or refrigerators the government would need for vaccine storage.

A state government audit has found that the government currently has only 10 walk-in-coolers and four walk-in-freezers. Dr Sudhakar said that the Department of Health and Family Welfare will supply a further three walk-in-coolers and two walk-in-freezers.

The Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines use a nucleoside-modified messenger RNA to goad the body's own cells into generating antiviral effects against the Sars-CoV-2 virus. However, both require deep freeze coolers with temperatures as low as -70°C for storage. In contrast, the Oxford Astra-Zeneca vaccine uses a genetically modified virus as does the Russian Gamelya Sputnik V vaccine. Both require only standard



**The choice of vaccine will dictate the state's level of preparedness and how many deep freezers or refrigerators the government will need for vaccine storage.** DH PHOTO

refrigeration temperatures of -4 to -8°C for storage.

Prof Bhojraj Suresh, director of JSS Hospital in Mysuru, a WHO-approved vaccine site which has been conducting human trials of the Astra-Zeneca and Sputnik V vaccines, said that while much has been made of the efficacy of the vaccines, affordability and deployability are equally pressing matters for India.

"It isn't enough to simply say that a vaccine candidate has 95% efficacy against the virus. A vaccine's potential is also dictated by how quickly it can be distributed and deployed, using what storage facilities. Plus the life of the vaccine and cost have to be taken into account," Suresh said.

While the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines have displayed the highest efficacy against the virus, Suresh pointed out that neither of these two vaccines has undergone trials in India.

"It is contingent on how the immune structure of the body will respond to the design of

the vaccine. The Pfizer vaccine may well be deployed in India, but it has not undergone trials in India. There could be an added delay in deploying it here, because it would need to be certified first," he said.

This delay could potentially prompt the state government to attempt to deploy Sputnik V and the Oxford vaccines. "The issue is still premature to discuss," Sudhakar said.

However, he added that 2,855 cold chain points have been set up for storage and distribution of vaccines. Plans are underway to set up three new regional vaccine stores at: Bengaluru Urban, Shivamogga and Ballari, where the government seeks to instal walk-in-coolers and walk-in-freezers.

In a statement, Amit Chopra, managing director, Thermo Fisher Scientific, India and Middle East, said that "with many vaccine frontrunners in advanced stages of human studies, there is a need for large-scale cold storage facilities to accommodate one or more versions."

# CM-led panel to monitor Covid vaccination process in state

## Replicate poll arrangements to administer shots: PM

BENGALURU, DHNS

A state-level steering committee headed by the chief minister will be formed to monitor Covid-19 vaccination in Karnataka even as the government has identified 29,451 vaccination sites.

Speaking after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's video conference on Tuesday with Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa to chalk out the vaccination strategy, Home Minister Basavaraj Bommai said the government is planning to replicate arrangements made during elections to administer the vaccine to the population.

"Prime Minister Modi has

said that arrangements for vaccination centres must be similar to preparations at the booth level for elections. These centres should be formed and workers should be trained for the exercise," Bommai said.

Besides the state-level steering committee, district and taluk-level steering committees will also monitor vaccination drives at the local level.

A digital platform will be developed to collate inoculation data, as people who are vaccinated might require two or three doses to achieve resistance to the Covid-19 virus, the minister informed.

The vaccine will be distribut-



Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa takes part in a video conference with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Covid-19, at Vidhana Soudha in Bengaluru on Tuesday. Revenue Minister R Ashoka is also seen. DH PHOTO/PUSHKAR V

ed on priority to 30 crore people in the country, which will include one crore health workers, two crore corona warriors, 26 crore citizens aged above 50 and the remaining for those with comorbidities, Bommai

pointed out.

As many as 50 vaccines are undergoing clinical research throughout the world.

Of them, some 25 vaccines are in an advanced trial stage and five are undergoing trials

in India. Companies such as Bharat Biotech, Dr Reddy's Lab, PharmaGenica are ready to manufacture different vaccine candidates when they are cleared by regulatory bodies, Bommai said.

Since the exact date for vaccination is still unclear, people should be wary of the disease as the battle against Covid-19 will continue, he added.

Meanwhile, Health Minister K Sudhakar said the government has identified 29,451 vaccination sites and 10,008 vaccinators in keeping with the Universal Immunisation Programme norms. Karnataka has around 2,855 cold chain points for vaccine storage and distribution, Sudhakar said.

"Three new regional vaccine stores - Bengaluru Urban, Shivamogga and Ballari - have been proposed. These newly proposed stores will require additional walk-in coolers and walk-in freezers," he said, adding that the state already had 10 walk-in coolers and four walk-in freezers.

"The Centre will supply three walk-in coolers and two walk-in freezers for which necessary civil works are being initiated," he said.

## SC notice to Centre for fixing maximum rate for RT-PCR test

**NEW DELHI, DHNS:** The Supreme Court on Tuesday issued notice to the Union government on a petition filed by lawyer Ajay Agrawal for a direction to the Union government to fix the maximum rate for the RT-PCR test to Rs 400 for all Covid-19 patients uniformly across the country.

At present, the RT-PCR test is being fixed between the range of Rs 900 to Rs 2800 by various state governments, Union Territories and NCT of Delhi.

A bench of Chief Justice S A Bobde and Justices A S Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian sought a response from the Centre and Ministry of Health on a PIL by the Bofors-fame lawyer.

The petition filed by Agrawal sought a direction to the governments to fix the maximum rate for the RT-PCR (real-time reverse transcription-polymerase chain reaction) test.

"There is a big loot by laboratories and they are minting money to the tune of crores and crores of rupees. The margin of profit is so high as it is as high as 1400% in Andhra Pradesh and 1200% in Delhi," the plea filed by Agrawal claimed.

## Cyclone Nivar bringing rainy week to Bengaluru

**Weather office predicts a cloudy and wet spell**

**THERES SUDEEP**  
TEAM METROLIFE

**C**yclone Nivar is approaching Chennai and could result in rain in Bengaluru on Wednesday, according to Geeta Agnihotri, director-in-charge, Meteorological Centre, Bengaluru.

The wind speed will be around 100 to 120 kmph.

The cyclone is expected to result in heavy rainfall across south interior Karnataka on November 25 and 26. "Bengaluru is expected to get a share of this along with Chamarajanagar, Chikballapur, Kolar, Mysuru and more," she says.

The rain is expected to reduce substantially after Thursday.

G S Srinivasa Reddy, former director and currently consultant at the Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre, says the impact of the cyclone may not be as intense as expected.

He says the sooner the cyclone hits the coast the less severe it will be. "The strength of a cyclone gener-



### BBMP PREPAREDNESS

This year the BBMP is working with Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre (KSNDMC) to better the flood management in the city. "The city can handle up to 70mm rainfall per hour. Between 70mm and 100mm there is a likelihood of overflow of stormwater drains in certain parts of the city," says BBMP chief engineer Prahlad.

ally decreases once it hits the land. If it moves further north before reaching the coast then there might be heavier rains," he elaborates.

### **BBMP invites objections to felling of trees**

Bengaluru: The Deputy Conservator of Forests, Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) has sought opinions, suggestions and objections for cutting down 15 trees between East End Road and CSB Junction for a 2.66 km Namma Metro line from RV Road to HSR Layout via Marenahalli Road undertaken by the Bengaluru Metro Rail Corporation Limited. As per Section 8 of the Karnataka Tree Preservation Act, 1976, citizens can file their objections within 10 days to the DCF, BBMP. Many citizens have already raised their objections to the issue. "This is just eye wash. BBMP and BMRCL have identified 157 trees on the stretch. There is no mention of what will happen to the rest of them. The tracks should be chosen where trees need not be felled," said a member of the tree committee, on anonymity. **ENS**

# Metro work in full swing at tallest road-cum-rail flyover in South

S LALITHA @Bengaluru

AMIDST the bustling traffic all around, nearly 1,000 workers are busy at work 24x7 on the RV Road to Bommasandra Line (Reach-5) of Bangalore Metro. The undisputed attraction on this line is the Jayadeva Interchange Metro station that will connect this line with the Nagawara to Gottigere (Reach-6) line.

With five layers at the station that would soar to a height of 31 metres, it is set to be the tallest road-cum-rail flyover in South India, said N Sadashiva, Reach-5 Deputy Chief Engineer, Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited. "The road level, concourse area, R-5 level, Reach-6 level and the roof structure make it a unique piece of construction," he said. Four rig machines were imported from China for its work.

The Reach-5 elevated line runs to 6.3 km and is dotted by



**We have completed 65% of the civil work on this line, which comprises five stations of RV Road, Ragigudda, Jayadeva, BTM Layout and Silk Board stations. The foundation for piles, which is the crucial task, has been completed for all**

N Sadashiva, Reach-5 Deputy Chief Engineer, BMRCL

239 piers. "We have completed 65% of the civil work on this line, which comprises five stations of RV Road, Ragigudda, Jayadeva, BTM Layout and Silk Board stations. The foundation for piles, which is the crucial task, has been completed for all," Sadashiva said.

A massive task had begun on Monday, that of pouring 850 cubic metres of concrete mixture onto the concourse area using specially designed machines. The concourse runs

to a length of 53 metres, a height of 2.2 metres and a depth of 2.2 metres.

"Transit mixers which shifted the concrete from a plant in Bommanahalli were poured into a Boom Placer machine which used a pump to raise the mixture to the height of the structure and pour down the concrete," he explained.

The contractor for the line is a joint venture formed by two concerns, HCC and URCC, explained another engineer at the spot. They began work in January 2018.

The iconic flyover was completely demolished in July 2020 to facilitate the interchange station.

Work came to a standstill for nearly four months due to the pandemic and labour shortage. But work is on at a fast pace now.

The line is expected to be fully ready by December 2021 but would be commissioned anytime in 2022.



# Gandhi Bazaar will be the next walkers' delight

Blueprint ready for market zone; experts say pedestrian-only streets can improve air quality

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**

@Bengaluru

GANDHI Bazaar, the iconic market hub in old world Basavanagudi, will be the next pedestrian street. The blueprint is ready and local communities and the government are working together to turn it into a walkers' zone, a la Church Street.

V Manjula, Commissioner, Department of Urban Land Transport (DULT) on Tuesday said talks are on with locals, residents, commercial establishments and elected representatives. She was speaking at a virtual discussion, 'Implementation of Clean Air Street -- Ideas and Opportunity for Bengaluru', organised by B.Pac and DULT.

coming here use public transport. Both public transport and parking facility need to be improved. Manjula said Church Street serves as a pilot, and the authorities are still addressing issues like permitting traffic movement and other problems, which is a positive sign.

IISc, along with DULT, is also assessing air quality, traffic at boarding and aligning points of the Metro and bus stand, financial impact on the 54 commercial establishments on the stretch, and understanding people's minds on what a visit to Church Street meant then and now.

Architect Naresh Narasimhan, who reimagined Church Street, said it has been designed for upgradation for the next 30 years. It was initially meant for

Manjula said the design for Gandhi Bazaar has been prepared by GIZ, a German-based company. Locals are coming forward to suggest roads which can be turned into pedestrian zones, and details are being worked out.

Prof Ashish Verma, Associate Professor, Transportation Engineering Lab, Department of Civil Engineering, IISc, said they are conducting a quantitative and qualitative impact assessment study of Church Street. Initial findings have shown that 75 per cent of the commercial establishments have a positive perception now, though they have parking problems, and 46 per cent of people

pedestrians only, but the locals had to be convinced. Now, the government should implement it in other places, as it is keen on improving the city's air quality. For this, public transport and pedestrian-friendly streets are the way forward. Roads in Jayanagar 4th Block, Avenue Road and Malleswaram 8th Cross can be redesigned, Narasimhan said.

Srinivas Alavilli of Janaagraha said that pedestrian streets can be created wherever Cycle Days were held, like in Basaveshwaranagar, HSR Layout, Indiranagar and Jayanagar. Ward committees should also look at implementing the idea in their neighbourhoods



People shop at Gandhi Bazaar in Bengaluru | EXPRESS

# Yelachenahalli Line to begin operations in early Dec

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
@Bengaluru

THE Commissioner of Metro Rail Safety (CMRS) on Monday gave Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) the authorisation to launch commercial operations on the Yelachenahalli-Anjanapura stretch, the first one in Phase-2. Metro operations on

this southern extension of the Green Line is likely to begin operations in a fortnight.

Two senior Metro officials confirmed that they received the CMRS report on Monday. Asked when operations would commence, an official said, "There are some tasks to be attended and compliance to be reported. We are trying to expedite those tasks and it

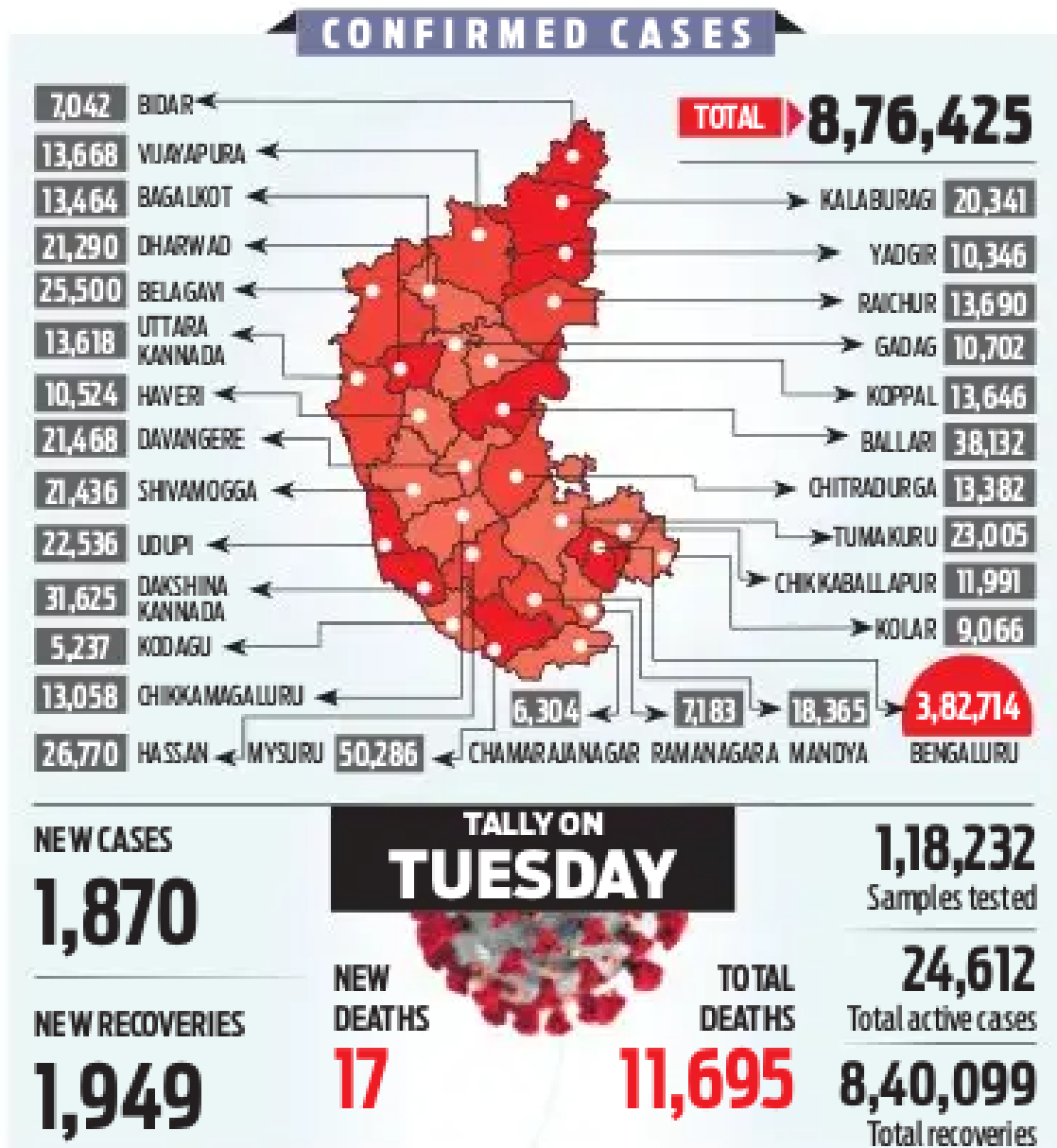
may take two weeks."

CMRS Abhay Kumar Rai confirmed that the authorisation had been given for the line. This 6.29-km elevated section with five stations was inspected by Rai and his team on November 18 and 19. He told *TNIE* that speed trials were conducted on trains for nearly four hours with a max speed of 90 kmph reached. Konana-

kunte Cross (earlier called Anjanapura Cross Road), Doddakallasandra, Vajrahalli, Thalaghattapura and Anjanapura stations dot the line.

BMRCL had initially proposed the launch of the line on November 1 and later postponed it to end of November. It now looks like the launch will happen only in the first half of December.

P2



P3

# 29K vaccination sites identified: Sudhakar

10K vaccinators also roped in, Karnataka well prepared to immunise people against Covid-19, says minister

## List of Covid warriors for vaccine gets bigger

Bengaluru: The number of frontline Covid workers in Bengaluru who will be given the vaccine first is only increasing by the day. BBMP officials said government health workers number around 15,000, while those in private hospitals, medical colleges, and labs number 12,000. BBMP marshals and police are not included in the list which is to be given to the government by November 30. Kalavathi D, BBMP nodal officer for the list, said "It is only getting bigger by the day. There is still time. By Nov 30, the contracts of many could end, some would leave, others will change their department and new people may be added. So the final list is yet to be prepared," she said. The government is also debating whether or not medical students should be included.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
@Bengaluru

THE Karnataka government has identified 29,451 vaccination sites and 10,008 vaccinators in line with India's Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP), Health Minister Dr K Sudhakar said on Tuesday.

Talking to the media after a video conference with Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah, he said Karnataka is well-prepared to deliver the Covid vaccine when it arrives.

The state government has already compiled the data on health workers in government facilities. Nearly 80% of private institutions have also submitted their data, and the remaining institutions will do so in a week's time. Health workers and Covid frontline across the state are slated to be vaccinated first.

He said that there is no dearth of cold storage facilities in the state, and that there are



A health worker puts away medical supplies in cold storage at Dasappa Hospital in Bengaluru on Tuesday | ASHSHKRISHNA HP

2,855 cold chain points for storage and distribution of vaccines.

"To have a better supply chain network and distribution of vaccines in a timely manner, three new Regional Vaccine Stores are proposed to be set up

in Bengaluru Urban, Shivamogga and Ballari districts. These proposed vaccine stores will require walk-in coolers and walk-in freezers," Dr Sudhakar said.

He said that Karnataka has 10 walk-in coolers and 4 walk-in

freezers, and that the Union Ministry of Health would supply 3 walk-in coolers and 2 walk-in freezers, for which the necessary civil works were being initiated. A list of cold storage facilities and equipment under the state's animal husbandry department are also being compiled. Also, spare cold storage facilities available with private hospitals, especially hospital chains are being assessed.

In order to have an exact assessment of the cold storage capacity required for the Covid-19 vaccine programme, the number of doses in each vial, and the volume of a vial etc, need to be assessed.

On dry storage facilities, Dr Sudhakar said that the state is yet to assess the availability. He said that the Centre has already allocated a certain number of cold chain equipment according to UIP norms and that Karnataka has informed the Centre about additional requirement.

P2

# Students, lecturers test +ve, a week after reopening

MAHESH M GOUDAR  
@Vijayapura

A week after colleges reopened, a small number of teachers and students have tested positive in Vijayapura district while the results of many others are awaited.

Colleges in the state resumed classes on November 17, nearly nine months after they were closed due to the pandemic. The University Grants Commission had permitted colleges to hold physical classes provided students get an undertaking from their parents and a negative Covid test report before entering college premises.

However, on the day of reopening, not even 1% of students



Colleges have staggered entry for students due to Covid | EXPRESS

turned up for classes, one of the reasons being that they were waiting for their test results.

During the past week, district health authorities have been conducting tests for staff and students at the Karnataka

state Akkamahadevi Women's University (KSAWU), and private and government colleges in the district.

"A total of 3,000 samples were collected and tested for Covid-19 from the colleges across the district. Of them, 13 teachers and 12 students have tested positive so far and the results of around 1,000 samples are awaited," the district administration said.

Deputy Commissioner P Sunil Kumar told The New Indian Express, "We have not sealed down any college as the students and lecturers have undergone tests before entering college premises. We are continuing to test students by coordinating with the colleges."

The district health authori-

ties do not know which institution the infected lecturers and students belong to.

Professor Onkar Kakade, acting Vice-chancellor of KSAWU said, "We are yet to get the details of how many lecturers and students have tested positive but we are disinfecting classrooms each day. The students are yet to turn-up in good numbers to colleges."

Meanwhile, many colleges are continuing online classes due to poor turnout. Professor Ashok Pujari, principal of a private college said, "Since the college reopened only five students have come. Many have stayed away as they are yet to get their test reports. So we are continuing the online classes."

P2

# Notice to parties over violation of Covid norms

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
@Bengaluru

THE Karnataka High Court on Tuesday issued notice to political parties over a large number of mask and social distancing regulation violations during rallies and also possible violations during the proposed bandh called on December 5.

A division bench of Chief Justice Abhay Shreeniwas Oka and Justice S Vishwajith Shetty called upon them to file a response by December 2, the next date of hearing, whether they are willing to issue strict instructions to their workers not to violate regulations during the rallies and during the bandh.

The political parties to whom the notices were issued are BJP, CPI (M), Congress, JDS and Kannada Chalavali Vatal Party.

The bench directed the PIL petitioner, Letzkit Foundation, to implead the political parties as respondents.

On the last date of hearing, as the government had informed the court that its in-

tention was not to punish anyone for violating the regulations under the Karnataka Epidemic Diseases Act and hence it proposed to issue fresh ordinance to amend the regulations, the bench had directed the petitioner to furnish the list of recognised political parties to implead them as respondents and issue notice to them.

Accordingly, the petitioner's counsel submitted the list

while expressing apprehension about violation during the proposed bandh to protest the setting up of Maratha Development Authority by the government.

Then the bench said that there are instances of a large number of violations where rallies are organised by the political parties, as pointed out in the records submitted by the petitioner.

Either the state government has taken no action, or to save face has taken action against only a few. It is the responsibility of political parties to issue strict instructions to their workers, the bench observed



# K'taka govt working on booth-level vaccine centres

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

EARLIER in the day, Karnataka Home Minister Basavaraj Bommai, who also attended the virtual meeting, said a steering committee headed by the CM will be constituted in the state. The PM gave clear instructions on preparations required to be made and directed the states to form steering committees headed by the respective CMs, besides constituting district- and taluk-level committees, and training volunteers and health workers for the vaccination drive, Bommai said.

The purpose of the virtual meeting was to ensure proper implementation of the vaccine programme as and when the vaccine is available. The Government of India plans to give the vaccine on priority to 30 crore people, including one crore health workers, two crore corona warriors and 26 crore people aged above 50, the Home Minister said.

"Like how we make preparations

at the booth level during elections, vaccination centres have to be set up at booth levels too. All the workers have to be trained. Since the vaccine has to be given in two or three doses, we have to have information on a digital platform regarding those who got the first dose so that it helps to keep track of such people for the second dose," he said.

During the virtual meeting, the PM also sought suggestions from states and cautioned them against any laxity in the fight against Covid-19. Even after vaccination, there should not be any laxity in the fight against the pandemic, the PM told the CMs. He also informed the states about the progress made in vaccine development.

Apart from the CM and Home Minister Basavaraj Bommai, Revenue Minister R Ashoka, Social Welfare Minister B Sriramulu and senior officers attended the PM's video conference.



# Will follow scientific advice on time & choice of vaccine: PM

Says 'Safety As Crucial As Speed' In Meet With CMs

Sushmi.Dey@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: PM Narendra Modi on Tuesday said India would go by scientific advice in deciding which Covid-19 vaccine to use, emphasising that "safety is as important as speed" even as he said it was a national commitment to provide the shots to all its citizens.

Asked during a virtual interaction with chief ministers as to when the vaccine would be available, Modi said this was the task of the scientific community and the regulators and not for him to

## 'PRIORITY TO PROVIDE SHOTS FOR ALL'

► PM Modi assures all CMs that vaccination strategy and initial rollout will be finalised in consultation with states

► Scientists and regulators, "not politicians", to decide time frame of vaccine, PM says. Prices of shots not yet decided

► Modi says important to hike the number of RT-PCR tests, keep positivity rate under 5% & fatality rate below 1%

► India-based vaccines at forefront, he claims. Govt also in touch with global developers, manufacturers and regulators

“Priority will be to ensure vaccine reaches everyone”  
— PM Narendra Modi during his interaction with CMs



► Gear up to address adverse events: Centre P 9

comment on. The PM assured the states that the vaccination strategy and the initial rollout would be finalised in consultation with them and

► K'taka, Maha among 5 states in 1cr test club, P 9

said it had not been decided as to which vaccine would be available at what price.

► 'Block-level units', P 9

30k vax sites in K'taka ready, says minister

After PM Modi's video conference with chief ministers, the Karnataka government on Tuesday decided to form a CM-headed steering committee to monitor vaccination of the state's 6.5 crore population. Health minister K Sudhakar said the government has identified 29,451 vaccination sites and 10,000 vaccinators as per the Universal Immunisation Programme norms. Home minister Basavaraj Bommal said the government is all set for delivery, distribution and storage of the vaccine once it's available. P 2

P1

## K'taka govt picked up tab of treating 1.2L Covid-19 patients

Sunitha.Rao@timesgroup.com

Bengaluru: The Karnataka government has borne the treatment cost of close to 1.2 lakh Covid-19 patients in government and private hospitals, as per the pre-authorisation issued by government agencies till Monday.

According to Jawaid Akhtar, additional chief secretary, health and family welfare department, Karnataka is, perhaps, the only state in the country that's providing free Covid treatment for government-referred patients in private and government hospitals, irrespective of the finan-

'300 days on, state ready for 2nd wave'

Wednesday marks the 300th day since the first Covid-19 case was reported in India on January 30. Since then, Karnataka has moved from no testing facility in March to conducting 16,360 of RT-PCR tests for every one lakh population, the highest in India. Authorities say the state is now ready to manage a 2nd wave should one hit. P 2

cial status of the patient.

"We took a stand in June to treat patients free of cost in

private and government hospitals to whoever tests positive for Covid-19 and wants to come under the government quota. We did not consider whether they came from Karnataka or other states. We wanted to ensure treatment is given to all because of the unprecedented pandemic," said Akhtar.

The estimated cost of treating 1.2 lakh patients is close to Rs 599 crore. "The value is based on the pre-authorisation at notified cost. It may not be the final amount as the pre-authorisation could be cancelled in some of the cases," he added.

► Claims for treatment, P 4

P1

# B'LRU WATCH

## Covid figures as on Nov 24

Cases	Active	Cured	Deaths
3,65,317	18,057	3,43,169	4,091

P1

**PREVENTION ON** Disease Now Better Known, Medical Infrastructure In Place | Vaccination Drive Like Booth-Level Strategy: Minister

## 300 days on, Karnataka ready for a second wave: Task force

Sunitha.Rao@timesgroup.com

Bengaluru: From no facility to test for Covid-19 in March to conducting the highest number (16,360) of RT-PCR tests for every one lakh population in the country, Karnataka has come a long way in the fight against the pandemic. The learning curve has been steep and experts say the state is now ready to efficiently manage a second wave should one hit.

The state has registered 8.7 lakh cases and experts say understanding of the disease has evolved alongside clinical expertise and testing facilities.

Wednesday marks the 300th day since the first infection was reported (on January 30) in the country. Karnataka recorded its first case on March 8.

The virus spread slowly in Karnataka even as late as the first half of May when other states were reporting a surge. Yet, authorities struggled to coordinate a response. Incidents of patients dying without finding ventilators or beds and hearses queuing up before crematoria were commonplace then.

The cluster outbreak in a pharmaceutical company in Nanjangud, Mysuru district didn't help matters. Seventy-seven employees and their contacts were infected, but the source of the infection is still unknown.



**TRACE AND TREAT:** Experts working with the government say the state must continue to test 1 lakh samples every day until March

Yet, Karnataka's model was the stuff of headlines then. The state's quarantine app to monitor people in home quarantine was hailed as a best practice, but there were already signs of an impending surge.

With those working in Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Gujarat returning to their hometowns and villages, cases began to rise. Interstate travellers were a huge majority among positive cases reported from Mandya, Vijayapura, Yadgir, Kalaburagi and Udipi.

Meanwhile, more than 5 lakh migrant workers from Karnataka were repatriated to their home states in June-July. Just before cases began to peak. The spike coincided with Unlock measures, but by then, the state had managed to get private hospitals into the loop and a coherent trace, test and treat pattern began to emerge.

The number of cases began to taper off from October. Currently, of the 8.7 lakh cases, 8.3 lakh have recovered. The state has 24,708 active cases and has registered 11,678 deaths.

"From no Covid testing facility 300 days ago, we now have 162 testing labs and seven more are in the works.

Our hard work has yielded results," says Jawald Akhtar, additional chief secretary, health and family welfare department.

Akhtar said the decision to give cabinet powers to the Covid task force helped take and execute decisions quickly. "Karnataka is one state where patients in private hospitals referred by the government are given a free supply of remdesivir which has helped curb the mortality rate," he said.

As on November 22, Karnataka's case fatality rate of 1.3% was better than the country's 1.5%. But, India's 110.6 deaths per million is better than Karnataka's 190.

Dr MK Sudarshan, chairperson, Covid-19 task force, said the state is well-prepared for a second wave. "It's like standing on the shore waiting for the waves," he said. "We are wide awake. Our biggest advantage is that the disease is better understood now and clinical expertise and medical infrastructure is in place. However, we must be very cautious to prevent super-spreader events."

Dr V Ravi, senior professor and head, department of neurology, NIMHANS, who spearheaded Covid testing-related infrastructure in Bengaluru, said the state must continue testing one lakh samples a day till March 2021 to keep a lid on the pandemic.

### TRAJECTORY OF THE PANDEMIC

March 8: 46-year-old man from US tests positive; state's first case

March 10: 76-year-old man with travel history to Mecca dies in Kalaburagi. Tests positive posthumously. India's first Covid fatality

April: Cluster outbreak in Nanjangud, patient zero was never traced

June 23: State mandates 50% bed sharing in private hospitals for patients referred by government

July 16: Case load in state touches 50,000

Aug 26: 3 lakh cases recorded

Sept 18: 5 lakh cases recorded

Oct 12: Fatalities cross 10,000

Nov 4: Sero survey reveals 27.3% prevalence

Nov 21: 1 crore tests conducted

Nov 23: Highest number of RT-PCR tests done per lakh population across country



**LAYING GROUNDWORK:** BBMP has picked Dasappa Hospital in Bengaluru to store Covid-19 vaccines. From here they will be dispatched to primary health centres. "We have 150 ice-lined refrigerators and 150 deep refrigerators. A list of 95,000 healthcare workers in Bengaluru, who will be the first beneficiaries, is ready," said Manjunatha Prasad, BBMP commissioner.



## K'taka has 10k vaccinators, 30k sites, claims Bommai

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: The state government is set to deliver, distribute and store Covid-19 vaccine when it's available, home minister Basavaraj Bommai said.

After Prime Minister Narendra Modi's video conference with chief ministers, including BS Yeddyurappa, on Tuesday to chalk out strategy, Bommai said a state-level steering committee headed by Yeddyurappa will be formed to monitor the drive to vaccinate the state's 6.5 crore population.

Health and medical education minister K Sudhakar said the government has identified 29,451 vaccination sites and 10,008 vaccinators as per the Universal Immunisation Programme norms. The state has

booth level for elections. These centres should be formed and workers trained for it," Bommai said.

A digital platform will be developed to collate inoculation data, as people who are vaccinated might require two or three doses to achieve resistance to the virus, he said.

Karnataka has 2,856 cold chain points for vaccine storage and distribution. "With a view to have a better supply chain network and distribution in a timely manner, three new regional vaccine stores - Bengaluru

Urban, Shivamogga and Ballari - have been proposed. These Regional Vaccine Stores will require additional walk-in coolers and walk-in freezers," Sudhakar said.

Healthcare workers' data has already been compiled for all government facilities and 80% of private health facilities have shared their data. Compilation of data for the remaining private facilities may be completed in a week, he added.

Cold storage facilities under the animal husbandry department are also being readied. Spare cold storage facilities available with private hospitals, especially hospital chains, is also being assessed.

Sudhakar said people should be wary of the disease and take adequate precautions



P2



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TIMES NEWS NETWORK

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The vaccine will be distributed on priority to Corona warriors, citizens over 50 years and those with comorbidities.

"Modi said arrangements for vaccination centres will be like preparations at the

booth level for elections. These centres should be formed and workers trained for it," Bommai said.

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Sudhakar said people should be wary of the disease and take adequate precautions as the battle should continue till the vaccine is easily available for the common man.

## Four to six weeks: BSY

Later on Tuesday, Yediyurappa said Modi indicated that the vaccine is likely to be ready within 4-6 weeks' time. "We were told to make necessary arrangements to store and distribute it when available," he said in Mysuru.



# Covid helped BBMP see beyond roads, waste


Sunitha.Rao  
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**Bengaluru:** Public health, never among BBMP's priorities, is now at the top, thanks to the pandemic. Bengaluru was where the state's first Covid-19 case was reported and the city continues to account for around half of the state's daily infections.

Initially, the focus of the Palike's was to screen, isolate or quarantine international travellers. Another measure was to prepare state-run Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Chest Disease to handle patients - the city's first Covid-only facility.

Infection remained low until June and the city was regarded as one of the metros that managed the pandemic well. But cases began to rise in July and the 'Ben-

## BENGALURU'S CASE PROGRESSION

May 30 <b>336</b>	Aug 21 <b>1 lakh</b>	Contacts traced <b>24,47,393</b>	 Deaths <b>4,078</b> <small>(Data as on Nov 23)</small>
July 6 <b>10,000</b>	Sept 22 <b>2 lakh</b>	Recoveries <b>3,41,902</b>	
July 29 <b>50,000</b>	Oct 17 <b>3 lakh</b>	Cases <b>3,64,390</b>	

galuru model', hailed for its tech approach to trace contacts, took a beating. Bengaluru reported the highest number of infections among all cities in the country for several days in row.

The Palike's response was plagued with glitches, beginning with a delay in ambulances reaching patients to hospitals turning patients away. BBMP's move to barricade houses of infected people also led to stigma and fear of the virus.

With the city's response in

chaos, the government ushered in a change of guard, bringing in N Manjunatha Prasad, principal secretary, revenue, as BBMP commissioner on July 18. The first thing Prasad did was to inspect private hospitals. The government then used all possible legal means to ensure hospitals kept 50% of their beds to treat patients referred by public authorities.

Action was taken against non-compliance. More ambulances were added and the central control room for

monitoring beds was made more efficient.

"We hired 1,500 people on contract basis as swab collectors, lab technicians and data entry operators and their work has been crucial in testing and reporting," Prasad said. "In July, there were not enough testing facilities. We had to streamline the patient referral system. Not only was bed shortage a concern, we didn't have enough crematoria for fatalities in July. A dozen more graveyards were added, four of which were only for Covid victims."

The city has conducted more than 44 lakh tests and its daily target is 55,000 tests. The Palike is now gearing up to roll out the vaccine.

"We are working on vaccine storage in 141 primary health centres falling under BBMP," Prasad said.

## HC demands response from parties on SOPs

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Bengaluru:** The high court on Tuesday directed impleaded political parties and organisations to state whether they are willing to instruct their workers to strictly abide by rules about wearing masks and social distancing in public places.

A division bench headed by chief justice Abhay Shreeniwas Oka gave this direction after directing the petitioner to implead the major political parties — BJP, Congress, CPI, CPM, and the JD(S).

The bench, hearing a PIL filed by Bengaluru-based NGO Letzkit Foundation seeking strict implementation of SOP norms, pointed out that recently, there have been large political rallies where rules about masks and social distancing are only observed in breach.

"It is found that either the state government has not taken any action or in some instances, action was taken belatedly. Prima facie, it is the responsibility of political parties to ensure strict implementation of rules... Time has come when political parties have to issue strict instructions to their workers," the bench observed.

## Tweeple, B'lureans mock vax tourism

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**Bengaluru:** After Covidiot, work from home and Zoom meetings, the latest term to be added to pandemic lingo is 'vaccine tourism'.

Vaccine-vacations caught Twitterati's attention after a Mumbai-based travel agency announced packages to the US where travellers could get a dose of the vaccine. The travel operator's advertisement has since been widely shared and Twitter users like Radhika Gupta immediately responded with the tagline 'Say hello to vaccine tourism'.

Several users called it out saying one dose of the vaccine — both Pfizer's and Oxford's — was insufficient. "Both Covid vaccines require two doses, separated by a few weeks. I hope no one falls for this," Munim tweeted.

TOI asked Bangaloreans what they thought of the deal and many scoffed at it. Most said they would rather wait.

Avinash Kumal, content lead at a food tech company, said even if such deals were available in Bengaluru, he would not go for them. "I would put that money in fixed deposit, stay home and wait

### Travel agency clarifies

On Tuesday, a Twitter page with the username matching that of the travel agency, issued a clarification, insisting they do not collect an advance for the vaccine. "We are not holding or procuring any vaccine, everything will be arranged within laws of the US. We will only process your requirements. Right now, no time frame can be committed," the statement read.

for the vaccine," he said.

Homemaker Ishrath Mubeen said she found the deal amusing. "Why would one pay so much to risk infection on the way to get a vaccination? Travelling to a country that did not handle the pandemic well is definitely not advisable," she said, adding that people monetising such a situation is sad.

"While there are people who may have to wait for years to even get treatment, there are others who will shell out lakhs to go on a holiday," she said. Raagini P, a corporate communications professional, quipped: "I would have considered it if the destination was Switzerland."

P2

## ₹ 110cr Vrishabhavathi-diversion project stayed

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Bengaluru:** The high court on Tuesday restrained the civic authorities from executing the Rs 110-crore Vrishabhavathi-diversion project.

A division bench headed by chief justice Abhay Shreeniwas Oka noted that the response submitted to the court clearly indicated there was a proposal to divert the river without obtaining expert opinion.

The high court asked the state government and Kaveri Neeravari Nigama Limited to indicate if they would agree to get expert opinion and advice from National Environmental Engineering Research Institute.

The court is hearing a PIL

The HC bench observed that the response submitted to the court clearly indicated there was a proposal to divert the river without obtaining expert opinion



filed by Bangalore Environment Trust, headed by AN Yelappa Reddy, and six Ramana-gara farmers. They claim the project has been undertaken without obtaining expert advice or exploring alternatives, and that could have disastrous consequences.

### BDA chief's note withdrawn, HC told

**Bengaluru:** The Bangalore Development Authority informed the high court on Tuesday that its controversial July 8 office note has been withdrawn.

Apart from barring sharing of documents, the BDA commissioner's note had directed staff not to attend inquiries by any investigating agency, except BDA's special vigilance wing, without the commissioner's prior permission. A memo, enclosing the November 23 office note withdrawing the July 8 one, was placed before

the court. Accepting it, a division bench headed by chief justice Abhay Shreeniwas Oka disposed of the PIL.

Bengaluru-based social activist S Arunachalam had challenged the note, claiming it is devoid of any statutory power and would impede investigation by agencies like ACB, BMTF, etc.

The high court not only took the BDA to task but also observed that the government cannot remain a silent spectator when the note prima facie seeks to interfere with investigation by agencies. **TNN**

# Arogya trust got claims for treatment of 1L cases so far

►Continued from page 1

The Karnataka government's Suvarna Arogya Suraksha Trust, a wing of the health and family welfare department, has so far received claims for treatment of nearly 1 lakh cases amounting to Rs 380 crore. "We have paid Rs 190 crore of this amount so far. The rest will be reimbursed after scrutiny," said Akhtar.

While the entire cost will not be covered by the co-branded health scheme Ayushman-Bharat Arogya Karnataka (AB-ArK) scheme, the state government is ready to bear the rest of the burden.

"There are 16,113 packages under AB-ArK scheme. If a patient is from a BPL family and has undergone any treatment in hospital which falls under AB-ArK scheme, then the reimbursement will be claimed from the central government. For



**PANDEMIC BURDEN**

the rest, the state government pays," he said.

The state government has now prioritised its hospitals over private hospitals for Covid treatment following a decline in the number of Covid cases. As per the new regulation, patients will be referred to private hospitals only if beds in government hospitals are 90% full and if the patient's condition warrants specific care available only in private hospitals.

# PM: Prepare block-level structures for vaccination

## 'Focus On Virus While Waiting For Vaccine'

► Continued from page 1

The PM noted that participants in Tuesday's discussions were political leaders and added some people would do politics and this was not something he could stop. The comments were read in the context of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's demand the PM should reveal which vaccine India would use.

Official sources, though, said the PM was underlining that such decisions would be taken on the basis of expert advice. His interaction with the CMs was cordial and productive, the sources added. "Though two India-based vaccines are at the forefront, we're working with global firms also," Modi said, adding that adverse reactions were seen in drugs available for 20 years and more and so a decision needed to be taken on scientific basis.

"Safety is as important as speed for us. Whichever vaccine India will give to its citizens will be safe on all scientific criteria," Modi said while reviewing the Covid-19 situation. He met chief ministers in two batches, with a separate discussion with CMs of eight worst affected states.

India is looking at the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine candidate which has almost completed Phase 3 trials in India and has



## M'ashtra readies 10-member taskforce

Mumbai: Chief minister Uddhav Thackeray informed PM Modi the state has formed a task force to iron out all issues related to procurement, transportation and distribution of the Covid-19 vaccine. Headed by the chief secretary, the 10-member task force will include senior secretaries from the planning, finance, public health and medical education departments, some members from the state task force on Covid-19 and senior doctors from JJ and KEM hospitals.

"The state has set up a task force as some more clarity is required regarding the vaccine. It will study the requirement, procurement, distribution, cost and even possible side effects of the vaccine," said Thackeray. Thackeray along with CMs of other states attended two meetings chaired by Modi to review the Covid-19 situation and discuss vaccine distribution. He said the Maharashtra government is in touch with Adar Poonawalla, CEO of Serum Institute of India (SII), which is a partner in the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine.

Public health minister Rajesh Tope said five vaccines are currently under various stages of development in the country, of which two are indigenous and the rest are private efforts. Tope said as per the discussions regarding the vaccination drive, it is understood that the Centre will be steering the effort. **TNN**

Pune-based Serum Institute as a major manufacturing partner. Oxford University said on Monday that the vaccine candidate prevented 70% people from the infection in a large trial and it was set to initiate talks with regulators across the world to start supplies. There is also a locally developed vaccine candidate by Bharat Biotech and ICMR which too has shown promise during clinical trials and is currently undergoing phase 3 human trials.

The PM said the government was closely watching the development of vaccines and was in touch with Indian and foreign developers and manufacturers, global regulators, foreign governments, multilateral institutions and others.

He said a comprehensive plan for vaccine administration rollout would soon be ready and asked states to set up steering committees and structures down to the block level to ensure inocu-

lation as and when the vaccine came. Modi used the interaction to express concern over laxity and complacency, warning that India had steered past most of the year and should not stumble near the finish line. He asked states to ensure that there was no let-up in Covid control measures.

"There is currently no approved vaccine in the world, so we have to concentrate on corona (in the) meanwhile. It should not happen that having come this far, our boat sinks in shallow waters. We have to concentrate on reducing transmission, do vigorous contact tracing, keep positivity rate below 5% and keep case fatality rate below 1%, continue with awareness campaigns," Modi said. He added that it was important to increase RT-PCR tests, ensure better monitoring of patients, better equip health centres at village and community level and keep running awareness campaigns for safety.

# Why shouldn't RT-PCR test cost be capped at ₹400: SC

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** The Supreme Court on Tuesday sought the Centre's response to a PIL which sought capping of RT-PCR test for Covid-19 at Rs 400 for both government and private labs and hospitals, saying the cost of the kits have come down to Rs 200 now.

Petitioner Ajay Agrawal told a bench, headed by CJI S A Bobde, that while in Delhi RT-PCR test costs around Rs 2,400, it varied from Rs 900 (in Haryana) to Rs 3,200 (Meghalaya) in other states. "There is a big loot by the laboratories and they are minting money to the tune of crores. The margin of profit is as high as 1400% in Andhra Pradesh and 1200% in Delhi. The RT-PCR kits are presently available for less than Rs 200 in the Indi-

an market. There is no other cost involved in conducting the test," he said.

The bench sought response from the Centre in two weeks and tagged it along with another PIL filed by Sachin Jain, which was filed in the initial days of the pandemic and still pending. Jain had sought affordable health care and curbing the private hospitals' tendency to exploit the situation by overcharging Covid patients.

On August 31, the bench had said: "In the said meeting, all the states and UTs, may be advised to come up, within 2 weeks of the first meeting, with a master plan, both legislative and executive, taking cue from the already existing Public Health Acts of various states and taking cue from the National Health Bill, 2009."

# BANGALORE MIRROR

Dumping your trash slyly on the road? BBMP to install cameras at black spots to watch you and catch you

## AN EYE FOR AN EYESORE



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**T**o give some muscle to the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) marshals, to stop people from dumping of garbage on the roads, the Palike is planning to install more CCTV cameras in public places. This is a reprise of the Palike's plan in 2017 to set up 2,500 CCTV cameras to monitor illegal garbage dumping. At that time, the BBMP had given 10 lakh for each ward to set up cameras and a monitoring centre at the ward and zonal level.

While officials say that digital surveillance instils fear among those who are throwing garbage illegally, some residents say the areas which do not have cameras could become the new black spots.

Last week, the KR Puram zone of the BBMP floated tenders for installing CCTV cameras in wards such as Basavanapura, Devasandra, KR Puram, Rammurthy Nagar, A Narayanapura, HAL Airport ward and Vignan Nagar. The proposal



**“The commercial establishments can be identified by checking the vehicles used to dump waste. With regard to others, we will take the help of active local citizens' group to identify the offenders**

—BBMP official, KR Puram zone

however requires a lot of money. The BBMP plans to spend a minimum of Rs 1.30 lakh to as much as Rs 1.3 crore per ward.

In wards such as A Narayanapura, Basavanapura and Devasandra, the civic body

has prepared a budget of about Rs 55 lakh per ward for this programme. The KR Puram zone alone plans to spend a total of Rs 5 crore towards installing CCTV cameras.

An official in BBMP's KR

Puram zone said: the commercial establishments can be identified by checking the vehicles used to dump waste. “With regard to others, we will take the help of active local citizens

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 6 >>**

# K'taka reports 1,870 C+ cases, 17 deaths

**T**he state reported 1,870 new cases of covid-19 and 17 deaths, taking the total number of infections to 8,76,425 and the death toll to 11,695, the health department said on Tuesday. The day also saw 1,949 patients getting discharged after recovery.

Out of 1,870 fresh cases reported on Tuesday, 927 cases were from Bengaluru Urban alone.

As many as 12 out of the total 17 deaths

reported on Tuesday are from Bengaluru Urban, followed by Uttara Kannada (2), and Bagalkote, Ballari, and Mysuru (1).

Among the districts where the new cases were reported, Bengaluru Urban accounted for 927, Mysuru (159), Tumakuru (95), Bengaluru Rural (89), Vijayapura, Kalaburagi and Chitradurga (41), Mandya (37), Chikkaballapura (36), Hassan and Shivamogga (35), followed by others. — BMB

P2

# Centre firms up Aadhaar plan for covid vaccines

1.5 crore vaccines will be administered among covid warriors free of cost, rest will be released in open market

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**T**he government will link covid-19 vaccination to Aadhaar to ensure that there is no duplication and misuse, apart from keeping track of the vaccinated ones.

In the first phase, the government is expecting at least six crore vaccines, of which 50 per cent will be sent to Britain and Sweden, while the remaining three crore vaccines will be distributed in India.

Sources said the Centre will distribute 1.5 crore to all States and Union Territories and will be administered among healthcare workers and other frontline covid warriors free of cost. The remaining 1.5 crore vaccines will be released in the open market through the manufacturer.

On a priority basis, the Centre has decided to administer 30 crore people that includes healthcare officials, frontline warriors including pourakarmikas, police, armed forces and other volunteers. People in the age group of 50 and above will also be given priority.

**29,451 vaccination centres**  
There will be 29,451 vaccination centres in Karnataka. The State health department has already identified 10,008 vaccinators staff. Private hospitals, which have been asked to

**The Centre has decided to administer vaccines to 30 crore people including frontline warriors, police, and other volunteers on priority**

provide details of their health care staff, have already shared close to 80 per cent of the details and the remaining is expected to be released soon, Health Minister K Sudhakar said. According to him, the government has already made adequate preparations for vaccination storage and distribution.

During an interaction, Prime Minister Narendra Modi asked the Chief Ministers to set up a state-level steering committee headed by them, besides district and taluk-level committees.

Bommai said Modi asked states to

draw healthcare workers from both the government and the private hospitals and enlist volunteers to ensure proper distribution and administration of vaccines. He added that Modi has asked states to continue the ongoing treatment for covid-19 and follow precautionary measures to contain the pandemic. "He (Modi) asked us to fully prepare for vaccination and keep fighting the virus," Bommai said, quoting the Prime Minister.

When asked if there was any date fixed for beginning vaccination, Bommai said it is difficult to fix any date.

P9



# BBMP takes over the lake from Bidaralli Gram Panchayat, charts a rejuvenation plan

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**A**t last, Rampura Lake is set to become a destination worth visiting. The Lake, that's spread over 180 acres of land, was recently taken over by the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) from the Bidaralli Panchayat. The civic body has also prepared a development plan for the lake at an estimated cost of Rs 30 crore.

For many years, the Rampura Lake was being choked with sewage from neighbouring areas and wastewater from a dyeing unit. Bangalore Mirror had reported about how the dyeing unit was contributing to polluting the lake.

Residents of the locality have complained of the stench from the lake, which has made the air unbreathable and spiked the mosquito population. But this was not always the case, residents recall. According to them, more than a decade ago, Rampura Lake was a home for many migratory birds, but the pollution had affected the ecology of the area.

"I welcome the rejuvenation of Rampura Lake but there will be no use if the authorities fail to ensure native trees for the migratory birds. Development of the lake should not be confined to making pathways and other amenities but must take steps to ensure biodiversity," said



Satheesh Poojary, a wildlife photographer and conservationist.

Emphasising on the need to take up the rejuvenation of Rampura Lake as early as possible, Ashok Kumar C, a resident, said that it has become difficult for people to visit the lake due to the bad odour emanating from stagnated sewage in the lake.

"The stink here can render one breathless. The BBMP engineers should take up the clean-up and rejuvenation work at the earliest," said Kumar.

Subhadra C, a resident of Kalkere, said the authorities should focus on maintenance of the lake in the long term. "It is good that the BBMP has decided to rejuvenate the lake but the important thing is that it has to appoint home guards to prevent and penalise those dumping garbage into the lake.

The BBMP engineers should also to plant na-

**Development of the lake should not be confined to making pathways and other amenities. Steps must also be taken to ensure biodiversity**

-Satheesh Poojary, wildlife photographer and conservationist

tive saplings on the lake bund to attract migratory birds," suggests Subhadra.

BBMP (Lakes) assistant executive engineer Shivalingappa Savukar said the developmental work at the lake is expected to be completed in 12 months. "Our priority is to divert the sewage flowing into the lake. The lake bund will be developed for the benefit of people who visit the lake in the morning and evening for a walk. As part of the rejuvenation of the lake, the silt that was accumulated over all these years will be removed as soon as possible," said Savukar.



# Black spot creators will be caught on camera

**CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1**

group to identify the offenders," he said.

Besides the zonal offices, the BBMP's Solid Waste Management division too has a similar plan. It has already prepared a detailed action plan to install CCTV cameras across 198 wards. "Some areas have had it for some time. They are working well. We have prepared a plan to install more cameras in about 100 places where large black spots exist," said a senior BBMP official. The initiative, officials say, will be of help in identifying those who are dumping waste, be it the local residents or the commercial establishments. "Since we already have marshals on the ground, we can either penalise or educate them so that they do not repeat it. We also get to understand the root cause of such offences, which could be due to the irregular waste collection or some other reason," the official explained.

They also bet on the patterns in human behaviour to act responsibly if they know that they are being monitored.

Some residents say this is a waste of money. Sneha Nandihal of I Change Indiranagar said the officials should focus on addressing the root cause of the problem. "In some places, collection of waste may not be happening properly. Officials should be looking at different solutions instead of the cameras. Even if the BBMP installs them, there is all possibility that dumping might happen in places that are not monitored," she said. VK Srivatsa, a resident of Balaji Layout in Hemmigeपुरa wondered if the CCTV cameras will be monitored round the clock. "We know that a lot of CCTV cameras are either dead or not monitored well. The BBMP might do this just because they have the budget. But if they are not monitored well, it won't work. People are also very smart. They will definitely find many places to throw garbage," he said. Sandhya Narayan, a solid waste management expert, said the CCTV cameras are needed to fix black spots. She suggested that the BBMP must take help of active local residents including apartments to monitor these cameras. "The cameras will identify whether it is the commercial establishments or the residents who are dumping the waste," she said.

# THE ECONOMIC TIMES



## Vaccination Drive will be Systematic, Sustained: PM

CMs asked to prepare cold storages, briefed on broad framework

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New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi assured chief ministers of a smooth, systematic and sustained vaccination drive against Covid-19, adding that safety and speed were crucial.

"Right now, we do not know whether there will be one or two or three doses of the vaccine or

**RESOLVE ALL  
CONUNDRUMS  
➡➡ SEE EDIT**

**3 CR FRONTLINE  
WORKERS TO  
GET FIRST SHOT  
➡➡ PAGE 4**

the price," he told them in his closing remarks after meetings with them. "We do not have answers to these questions yet."

He cited complicating factors such as diplomatic interests, competition among corporates and waiting for word from the World Health Organisation (WHO). Modi was responding to questions by chief ministers on when a vaccine would become available and how much it would cost.

# State Identifies 30k Sites, 10k Vaccinators

At PM's meet, CM says Karnataka fully equipped for a smooth rollout of vaccine as and when it is ready

### Our Bureau

**Bengaluru:** With a near clarity emerging on the release of Covid-19 vaccines in the next few weeks, Karnataka is gearing up for a vaccination effort unprecedented in scale as well as the size of population targeted at one go. The state has about seven crore people.

Karnataka is fully equipped for a smooth rollout of the vaccine as and when it is ready, chief minister BS Yediyurappa informed a meeting of chief ministers of eight states addressed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday via video conferencing.

The government, health & medical education minister K Sudhakar said, has identified 29,451 vaccination sites and 10,000 vaccinators. He also said the state will make use of the 2,855 cold chain centres for storing anti-Covid jabs. Besides, the government will tap the infrastructure at the animal husbandry and veterinary science department, and put its cold storage facility also to use, he added.

The state is going by the guidelines of the Centre in the delivery, distribution and administration of vaccines, the health minister said. Healthcare workers, Covid warriors, people with comorbid conditions and senior citizens will get the vaccine shots on priority in view of a higher risk they face.

The health department has kept the data



**BBMP has identified Dasappa Hospital near Town Hall to refrigerate and store Covid-19 vaccines as and when they are shipped to the city. Vaccines will be stored here before they are dispatched to the government health centres. — N Narasimha Murthy**

on healthcare workers battling the infection at government facilities ready. As for health facilities in the private sector, 80% of them have shared the data and the government is hopeful of gathering the rest in about a week's time.

The minister said the state has identified

three new regional vaccine stores in Bengaluru Urban, Shivamogga and Ballari. These stores will require additional walk-in coolers and walk-in freezers which will be supplied shortly, he said. "Assessment of the vaccine stores has been completed. The state has 10 walk-in coolers and four

walk-in freezers and the Centre will supply additional facilities," Sudhakar said.

A steering committee headed by the chief minister will take all important decisions on vaccine supply and administration, home minister Basavaraj Bommal said. Expert committees will monitor the vaccination efforts at the district and the taluk levels, he added.

Karnataka has been witnessing a steady decline in positivity as well as death rates, raising hopes of a faster recovery of the economy. Health minister Sudhakar tweeted that the state's polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) tests per lakh population is the highest in the country. "As on Monday, Karnataka conducted 1,03,29,743 tests out of which 71,03,652 (68.77%) are RT-PCR tests, clocking more than 16,000 tests per lakh population." The state's positivity rate now stands at 1.57% and the fatality rate is 1.59%. As on Monday, the number of active cases in the state was 24,708 of which 18,409 were from Bengaluru.

The mood over the past few days has turned celebratory due to the torrent of media reports about a few global pharma players pushing the boundaries for an early launch. AstraZeneca-Oxford, Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech SE have reported varying degrees of efficacy, raising hopes. Within India too, Bharat Biotech is developing an indigenous vaccine with ICMR.

P3

# Centre Flags High Covid Nos in 4 Opposition-ruled States

Delhi, Maharashtra, Kerala and Rajasthan in the spotlight

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**New Delhi:** Four opposition-ruled states, Delhi, Maharashtra, Kerala and Rajasthan, have been flagged as the biggest concerns by the Centre on the Covid-19 front after a review by Prime Minister Narendra Modi with the chief ministers on Tuesday, given a high test positivity rate and deaths there over the last one week.

In a presentation made at the meeting, the health ministry pointed out that Delhi had seen an average of 111 deaths daily in the past one week while Rajasthan, which had so far done well in keeping the number of deaths per million low, was now repor-



ting an extremely high average of 21% test positivity rate since last week.

The average test positivity rate was also high at 15.3% in Kerala and 13.5% in Delhi while Maharashtra still has a high average of daily deaths at 93 over the past one week though the state has managed to reduce its test positivity average to 8.2%. The health ministry in its presen-

tation pointed out that the national average test positivity rate over the past one week was at 4.7% and the four states in question need to work much harder to bring down their test positivity rate below 5%, as directed by the PM at the meeting. PM also said the fatality rate should be brought below 1% but this seems difficult soon.

As per the presentation,

Delhi and Maharashtra are big concerns here reporting 448 and 379 deaths per million respectively, which is nearly four times the national average.

Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal, however, assured the PM that Delhi will turn the corner soon and said the positivity rate and the number of cases in the national capital were now on the decline after seeing a high of 8,600 cases last week. He also blamed the rising air pollution in Delhi due to stubble fires to be a major cause for the rising Covid cases and asked for PMs intervention to stop this. Kejriwal also asked the PM for 1,000 beds to be reserved in central government hospitals in Delhi for Covid patients given the rising number of cases.

P3

# 3 crore Frontline Workers to Receive Vaccine First

Second group to be given priority will be elderly, with a focus on those with co-morbidities

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**New Delhi:** The government has estimated that there are around 3 crore healthcare workers and frontline workers in high-risk sectors who will receive the first shot of the Co-

vid vaccine, as and when it becomes available in the country.

This means up to 60-million doses, depending on the dosage regimen of different vaccines, will be reserved for the first group of people who will be vaccinated.

Frontline workers will include police personnel, sanitation staff and others. The second group of people to get priority are the elderly, with special focus on those with co-morbidities. These are estimated to be another 25-27 crore individuals who could account for another 500-540 million doses.

These numbers are being computed

by the health authorities as they gear up for a massive immunisation programme to begin as soon as a coronavirus vaccine is available. The Centre will procure the Covid-19 vaccines directly from drug makers and distribute them to the states.

Serum Institute of India, the strategic manufacturing partner of AstraZeneca in India, has said it can manufacture 400 million doses of the vaccine by April 2021, subject to the company getting regulatory approvals. In addition, vaccines developed by Bharat Biotech and Zydus Cadilla are undergoing phase-III and phase-II clinical trials respectively.



Indian vaccine makers also have manufacturing tie-ups with Novavax and Johnson & Johnson, whose vaccine candidates too are undergoing trials.

A senior government official said

state governments have a list of healthcare workers and other frontline workers. "District immunisation officers and other relevant officials will provide the list," he said.

The second group of the elderly, including those with co-morbidities, will be required to enrol voluntarily for the vaccination programme, and will be subject to verification, said the official. People in high-priority groups, selected to receive the Covid-19 vaccine first and for free, will get SMS alerts with details of their vaccination session including time, date and location and the vaccinator's name.