



**BRUHAT BENGALURU MAHANAGARA PALIKE
BANGALORE**

**ENGLISH NEWS PAPER
CLIPPINGS**

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COVID cluster in two schools; BBMP issues guidelines

Masks, social distancing in schools made mandatory

STAFF REPORTER
BENGALURU

As COVID-19 cases are gradually rising in the State, 31 students from two private schools in Bengaluru tested positive, leading both the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) and the Education Department to spring into action.

As many as 21 students from New Standard English School and 10 students from MES School of BBMP Dasarahalli zone, Rajagopalanagar, tested positive following a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) conducted during a vaccination programme on June 9 by the BBMP.

State Health Commissioner Randeep D. said the schools have been directed to ensure that students mandatorily wear face masks and they are physically distanced in the class or while eating.

“We have told them that all symptomatic students should not be allowed to attend classes. All the primary and secondary contacts of the infected children are being tested,” he said. The commissioner added that all are mildly symptomatic and home isolated.

BBMP Special Commissioner (Health) Dr. K.V. Trilok Chandra said as a precautionary measure, both the schools announced holidays for two to three days up to classes V and VI and the premises had been completely

Steps to be followed by educational institutions

- Thermal screening mandatory for all students and staff
- Anyone with COVID symptoms should immediately be tested, and isolated until the result is known
- Wearing masks, maintaining social distance, using sanitiser, and maintaining cleanliness on school premises compulsory
- Ensure all staff members are fully vaccinated. If there are any eligible staff who are not vaccinated, arrange for them to be vaccinated immediately
- Prompt action by all eligible students of the institute to get vaccinated

Steps to be taken by citizens/parents

- Ensure that all eligible members at home are vaccinated
- If any member of the household has symptoms, immediately get checked at the nearest COVID test centre
- Motivate all eligible children at home to take the vaccine
- Take care of the health of senior members at home

sanitised. All the students have been vaccinated.

But the incident led to panic among parents. Gayathri, the parent of a Class 6 student, told *The Hindu*, “My son is studying in class VI in a private school. COVID has consumed two years of our children’s education. Online classes were not convenient to the students and it led to a setback in the learning process. So, this academic year, we are very eager to send our children to school. But cases are rising again and we are scared. If the cases rise further, I don’t want to send my son to school.”

DPI meeting

Department of Public Instruction Commissioner Vishal R. convened a meeting on Tuesday and dis-

cussed with Health and education department officials and private school managements about the COVID situation. He instructed officials and school managements to effectively implement the standard operating protocol (SOP) in all the schools to prevent COVID and asked them to speed up the vaccination drive in schools.

Dr. Vishal, told to *The Hindu*, “Parents are playing a very important role in preventing the pandemic. So, it is very important to create awareness among the parents. There are already some SOPs in schools and they will be implemented effectively.”

He also urged parents not to panic.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 5

THE  HINDU

COVID cluster in two schools; BBMP issues guidelines

“If children are unwell, you need not send them to school. Vaccination drive is successfully going on all the schools across the state. As of now, the first dose of vaccination is almost 100% completed and the second dose coverage is around 90 to 92%,” he said.

D. Shashikumar, General Secretary of Associated Managements of Primary and Secondary Schools in Karnataka, said many

schools are not following SOPs and sanitising and screening the children regularly. “I request our group of schools to tighten the SOPs and sanitise and screen all the students regularly. Of late, socialisation of students in the school is high and we have failed to maintain social distancing. So, we will try to prevent group activities like playing, sharing food and group events at least for a month,” he said.

City inspection



Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai along with BBMP Chief Commissioner Tushar Giri Nath inspected various development works in Bengaluru on Tuesday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



BBMP ordered that status quo should be maintained on the property until a report is submitted by the legal cell of the civic body. ■ FILE PHOTO

THE HINDU

Idgah maidan: BBMP asks wakf board to submit ownership papers

A three-day deadline has also been given to the board

STAFF REPORTER
BENGALURU

Amidst the ongoing row over the ownership of Idgah maidan, the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) on Tuesday sent a letter to the Karnataka State Board of Wakfs to provide ownership documents. A three-day deadline has been given to the board to provide the documents for the 2 acre 10 gunta land.

The letter comes after the BBMP ordered that

status quo should be maintained on the property until a report is submitted by the legal cell of the civic body.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, S.M. Srinivasa, Joint Commissioner (West Zone), BBMP, said “There is some confusion now and they are claiming that it is their land. That is why we have sent them [the wakf board] a notice asking them to submit proof of ownership to us within three days”.

A few days ago, when some right-wing outfits had demanded clarification about the ownership of the Idgah maidan, the BBMP said that the ground was a playground

owned by the civic body, where prayer gatherings could happen twice a month.

It was also said that the ground could be used for other activities. However, Muslim organisations, both the wakf board and the Central Muslim Association (CMA), had said that the land is a gazetted wakf property held by the CMA. Some right-wing outfits in the city are now arguing that the national flag should be hoisted there on Independence Day. Apart from that, there has also been a demand to host the International Yoga Day on June 21 and the Azadi ka Amrut Mahotsav function on Au-

gust 14 and 15 at the disputed land.

It has also been reported that some organisations might go down the legal route to get permission to hoist the flag, at least on Independence Day.

Although BBMP officials clarified that a letter was sent out on Tuesday, the wakf board officials reported that they had not received it until the end of the day (8.30 p.m.). “So far, no letters have come to our office. We will check if we receive something on Wednesday and then speak about the course of action,” said Shafi Saadi, chairperson, wakf board.



Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike

N.R Square, Bengaluru - 560 002.

Covid-19 - Precautionary measures to be adhered by the public



It is mandatory to wear a mask to cover the mouth and nose in public places



Frequent washing of hands with soap or sanitizer



Keep a handkerchief or other garment in case of sneezing, coughing



Avoid touching of Mouth, nose and eyes with your hand



Spitting, urinating, or littering is prohibited in public places



Maintain Safe distance from others (Physical distance at least 6 feet)

♦ Penalty will be imposed if the mask is not worn or maintain physical space

♦ If you have any symptoms kindly get yourself checked in any one of the free testing centers immediately.

The public must comply with the above instructions to help control the Covid-19 virus

Rakesh Singh, I.A.S
Administrator, BBMP

Tushar Giri Nath, I.A.S
Chief Commissioner, BBMP

Control Room: 080-2266 0000, 2222 1188

TOLL FREE No. : 1533



"ಎಲ್ಲಾ ವೈಯಕ್ತಿಕ ಮತ್ತು ಸಾಮೂಹಿಕ ಜಟಿಲವಾಹಕರನ್ನೂ ಉನ್ನತ ಸಾಧನಗಳು ಪ್ರಯತ್ನಿಸಿ ದೇಶದ ಪ್ರಗತಿಯನ್ನು ಶ್ರಮಿಸುವುದು ಪ್ರತಿಯೊಬ್ಬ ಭಾರತೀಯನ ನಂಬಿಕಾರನಿಬ್ಧ ಮೂಲಭೂತ ಕರ್ತವ್ಯ"

COVID-19 surveillance to be undertaken continuously

This is to be done irrespective of whether the city witnesses a surge or not



Once under Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme, monitoring of COVID cases will be similar to that for other communicable diseases. ■ FILE PHOTO

AFSHAN YASMEEN
BENGALURU

The Centre wrote to the States on June 9 that the long-term vision is to fully integrate COVID-19 surveillance within the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP). In this context, Karnataka's Covid-19 Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) has recommended that the long term epidemiological trend of COVID-19 supported with genomic surveillance and sewage surveillance should be closely monitored now.

The Centre's letter said that COVID-19 has now entered a new phase characterised by sustained incidence of mild cases with very low hospitalisation and mortality rates in the country. So, does this mean COVID is entering an endemic stage now? Experts that *The Hindu* spoke to said that this cannot be said as of now based on the current transmission dynamics.

What is IDSP?

So, what does integration of

COVID-19 surveillance within the IDSP mean?

State Health Commissioner Randeep D. said that the integration proposed under the ambit of IDSP would mean that henceforth, COVID disease surveillance will be undertaken in a continuous structured manner, irrespective of whether there is a surge or not. "Once under the IDSP, COVID incidence and prevalence would be regularly monitored similar to what is being done in terms of other communicable diseases. Joint Director, Communicable Diseases would be the nodal officer in charge of review," he said.

IDSP is one of the major National Health Programme. The key objective of this programme is to strengthen/maintain decentralised laboratory based IT enabled disease surveillance systems for epidemic prone diseases. This is to monitor disease trends and to detect and respond to outbreaks in the early rising phase through trained Rapid Res-

ponse Team (RRTs), the Commissioner explained.

Endemic yet?

TAC member Giridhar R. Babu, who also heads Life-course Epidemiology at Indian Institute of Public Health in Bengaluru, said, "Eventually COVID-19 will also become endemic. But, whether that is happening now cannot be said based on the current transmission dynamics."

Any disease becoming endemic means that it is constantly present in a defined geographical area or population. This is similar to malaria and cholera that continue to be there in some parts of the world but are not found in several other parts of the world and are not a concern there, he said.

"Adding COVID to the existing surveillance platform of IDSP will help track and monitor the disease at all times and not just when there is an uptick in cases. This is an ideal way of monitoring the disease instead of

THE HINDU

594 new cases in Karnataka

SPECIAL
CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

Karnataka on Tuesday saw 594 new infections taking the total number of cases to 39,57,343. With this the day's Test Positivity Rate (TPR) rose to 3.14% and the weekly TPR touched 2.28%. Of the new cases, 582 have been reported from Bengaluru Urban alone.

With zero deaths, the State's toll remained 40,066. Besides, 42 deaths of patients due to non-COVID-19 reasons have also been recorded. As many as 400 persons were discharged on Tuesday taking the total recoveries to 39,13,353. Active cases touched 3,882.

As many as 18,883 tests were conducted in the last 24 hours, including 11,750 RT-PCR tests. With this, the total number of tests rose to 6,66,39,421.

having a vertical reporting system," he said.

TAC Chairman M.K. Sudarshan said that many people are not getting tested and there is a restriction on testing asymptomatic persons. "It is because of this that testing levels are low. In this context, it is important that there is regular and continuous monitoring on surges and emerging new variants through the IDSP," he said.

THE  HINDU

Pourakarmikas threaten to strike work indefinitely

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MYSURU

Pourakarmikas have threatened to strike work across the State indefinitely from July 1 in protest against the State Government's failure to regularise the services of an estimated 40,000 temporary pourakarmikas in the State.

They are paid a measly salary of around ₹14,000 per month.

While the pourakarmikas of Bengaluru will gather in Freedom Park in Bengaluru on July 1, those in the rest of the State will gather in their respective district headquarters.

In big relief, China lifts two-year Covid visa ban on Indians

BEIJING, PTI

China has announced plans to provide visas to Indian professionals and families stranded in India for over two years following the strict restrictions imposed by Beijing in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. It is also processing requests of thousands of Indian students studying in Chinese universities who have conveyed their interest to rejoin.

On Monday, the Chinese Embassy in India updated its Covid visa policy to accept applications of foreign nationals and family members wanting to go to the Communist nation for resumption of work in all fields. The move comes as a relief to hundreds of Indian professionals and families who are stuck back home since 2020.

Besides Indians, the Chinese Embassy in New Delhi said family members of Chinese citizens and foreigners with Chinese permanent residence permits going to China for family reunions or visiting relatives can apply for visas. Many Chinese employees were also stranded in



A health worker takes a swab sample from a girl in Beijing. AFP

31 children test positive, later negative

Thirty-one children from two schools in Dasarahalli, North B'lu-ru, tested positive for Covid but a subsequent RT-PCR test returned a negative result.

Karnataka's positivity rate shoots past 3%, P5

India due to Beijing's blanket visa bans and flight cancellations. However, visas for tourism and private purposes remain suspended.

China is yet to announce plans to open flights between the two countries. Currently, only diplomats travel through expensive third-country flight routes.

31 kids test Covid +ve in two B'luru schools, retest negative

Most of the students mildly symptomatic

BENGALURU, DHNS

Thirty-one children from two schools in Dasarahalli, North Bengaluru, tested positive for Covid-19 but a subsequent RT-PCR test returned a negative result, officials said.

Most of the students were mildly symptomatic and none was taken to hospital. The infected students were from classes 5 and 6. Twenty-one of them were from one school and the rest from another institution. No teacher or any other member of the school staff tested positive, officials said.

The students were screened when a BBMP team went to the schools to vaccinate them against Covid-19 on Saturday. Some of them showed symptoms such as a mild cold. Officials decided to subject them to a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT). When some results came back positive, officials decided to test the students' contacts in the school, said K V Thri Lok Chandra, Special Commissioner (Health), BBMP.

In order to prevent further spread of the infection, author-

ities sanitised the school premises. The outbreak triggered panic, prompting the schools to declare a holiday for classes 5 and 6. However, there was a sigh of relief as the RT-PCR results of 21 students came back negative on Monday. Further relief came on Tuesday when the remaining students also tested negative in the RT-PCR.

The classes have resumed and there is no cause for concern. Dr Chandra said the civic body had directed all schools to screen students and teachers before they enter the class. "Symptomatic students should be sent home so that the rest are safeguarded," he said. "Our team will also conduct surprise checks of schools to ensure maximum compliance."

In a fresh circular, the BBMP directed schools to ensure that students and the faculty wear masks all the time. Temperature checks are to be conducted at the entrance. The sanitiser should be made available on the school premises. Schools should also ensure their staff are fully vaccinated and encourage students to take the vaccine.

The BBMP is also taking

BENGALURU, DHNS: In a new directive, the state government has advised schools to send symptomatic children back home.

Following the increase in the number of children testing positive for Covid-19 in the last few days, the department of public instruction convened a meeting with officials, representatives from private schools and BBMP on Tuesday.

Commissioner for Public Instruction Dr R Vishal said: "We have instructed schools to follow the standard operating procedure for Covid-19. We asked schools to send the kids back home if they have symptoms like cold, cough, fever, etc."

Vishal has instructed officials to ensure vaccination and booster dose for both children and staff.

Schools advised to send symptomatic kids back home

"We should ensure 100% vaccination and our officers will assist BBMP officials with logistics if there are any issues," he said.

The meeting was held after two private schools in Bengaluru were declared Covid-19 cluster, with 31 kids testing positive.

Private school managements have requested the department to issue a separate advisory for parents and to create awareness.

D Shashi Kumar, general secretary of Associated Managements of Primary and Secondary Schools in Karnataka, said, "We have even requested to limit the mass activities at schools such as prayer, physical education and cultural and sports activities at least for a month if the situation is sensitive."

The issue came up for dis-

cussion in the Covid-19 Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting on Monday. TAC opined that there is no need to panic and close down schools.

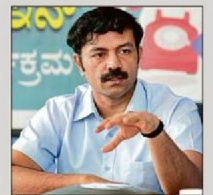
Speaking to *DH*, TAC chairperson Dr M K Sudarshan said: "No new variant of concern has been reported. However, as all activities are in full swing like international, inter-state and intra-state travel, all commercial business, educational activities are in full swing, it is bound to have some surges. Local containment measures will suffice. Those who are due for vaccination must get it and it is important to mask up in public areas, particularly in closed and crowded places."

He even advised parents not to send kids to schools if they are symptomatic.

steps to curb the spread of waterborne and insect-borne diseases such as cholera and dengue by testing tap water, borewell and RO plant water samples across the city and conducting site inspections to identify the breeding grounds for larvae.

K V THRILOK CHANDRA
Special Commissioner (Health), BBMP

Symptomatic students should be sent home so that the rest are safeguarded. Our team will also conduct surprise checks of schools to ensure maximum compliance



After months, state's positivity rate shoots past 3%

BENGALURU, DHNS

Karnataka's positivity rate shot past 3% after months, with the state reporting 594 fresh cases out of the 18,883 samples it tested on Monday, according to the health bulletin.

While the numbers show a persistent upward spiral of the infection, it's a matter of relief that there has been no confirmed Covid death this month yet.

Hospitalisations, too, remain low. There were 400 discharges on Monday alone.

On Sunday, the state reported 463 positive cases, out of the 16,190 samples, at the rate of 2.56%.

Bengaluru continues to report the overwhelming majority of the cases. On Monday, the city saw 582 new cases out of the 17,960 samples. The positivity rate was 2.83%, up from 2.69% the day before. The city also saw 386 discharges.

Karnataka has an active



The low-testing puzzle

Karnataka appears to be doing fewer Covid tests than it was until a few days ago.

During weekdays earlier this month, authorities were doing more than 21,000 tests a day. This number slid to 18,883. The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) has suggested ramping up testing.

caseload of 3,882. The active caseload refers to the number of people who still have Covid-19. Bengaluru has the bulk of them (3,738).

Across the city, only 28 Covid patients are in hospital. Two of them are in HDU and one is in ICU.

The spike in Covid cases in Bengaluru has inevitably shot up the number of active clusters to 25. A cluster is a place where several Covid cases are reported. Twenty-two clusters have more than five cases each. The rest have fewer than three cases each.

CM undertakes surprise inspection of road projects in B'luru



Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai, BBMP chief Tushar Girinath and other officials during the inspection on Tuesday.

BENGALURU, DHNS

Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai on Tuesday carried out a surprise check of at least three projects taken up by the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP). He was accompanied by Chief Commissioner Tushar Girinath and a battery of officials from the BBMP's road infrastructure division. All the works inspected come under

the Mahadevapura assembly constituency. He first inspected the two-lane underpass in Marathahalli, which is under construction. The project is expected to help motorists heading from Old Airport Road to Kadubeesanahalli as well as residents of Ashwathnagar and Munnekolala.

The Chief Minister also visited the underpass in Kundalahalli junction, which is nearly complete. The project,

according to officials, will be thrown open to the public in seven to 10 days.

Bomma also inspected the work of widening the railway underbridge in Panathur Road near the Bellandur railway station. Recently, the state government approved many projects pertaining to Mahadevapura constituency. Mahadevapura MLA Aravind Limbavali was not present during the inspection.

Dengue cases rise but no deaths; Bengaluru Urban worst affected

BENGALURU, DHNS: Early rains have provided the perfect breeding ground for dengue mosquitoes in Karnataka with as many as 2,886 suspected cases being reported this month alone. Of this, 146 are confirmed cases of dengue.

While there have been no dengue deaths in the state this year, more than 36,000 suspected cases have been identified. Confirmed cases stand at 1,860.

Within the BBMP limits, 15,502 suspected dengue cases have been identified. Of them, 388 are confirmed cases.

Last year, there were 7,189 confirmed cases of dengue. Five of them died.

Dengue cases are rising across Karnataka. Udupi (217), Mysuru (171), Chitradurga (105), Koppal (94), Ballari (89), Vijayapura (85), Dakshina Kannada (81), Shivamogga (76) and Davangere (60) are

the worst-affected districts after Bengaluru Urban. The remaining districts have fewer than 50 cases each.

Chikungunya is also raising its ugly head with 27 districts reporting more than 10,000 suspected cases. More than 6,000 people have taken blood tests and 447 have a fever. Vijayapura (96), Kolar (76), Bengaluru Rural (38), Tumakuru (36), Chitradurga (26), Davangere (19), Hassan (15), Ramanagara (14), Bagalkot (11) and Shivamogga (10) are the worst-affected districts. The remaining districts have fewer than 10 cases each.

An official in the Department of Health and Family Welfare attributed the spike in dengue and chikungunya cases to weather changes, especially early rains. Maintaining basic hygiene and cleanliness are key precautionary measures, the official added.



WHO holds meet to decide if monkeypox is an emergency

► The World Health Organisation will convene an emergency committee of experts to determine if the expanding monkeypox outbreak that has mysteriously spread outside Africa should be considered a global health emergency, AP/PTI reports from Geneva.

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said on Tuesday he decided to convene the emergency committee on June 23 because the virus has shown “unusual” recent behaviour by spreading in countries well beyond parts of Africa, where it is endemic. “We believe

that it needs also some coordinated response because of the geographic spread,” he told reporters. Declaring monkeypox to be an international health emergency would give it the same designation as the COVID-19 pandemic and mean that WHO considers the normally rare disease a continuing threat to countries globally. The UK said Monday it had 470 cases of monkeypox across the country, with the vast majority in gay or bisexual men. British scientists said last week they could not tell if the spread of the disease in the UK had peaked.

DANGER LURKS AT EVERY STEP ON WEST OF CHORD ROAD

Pic: Syed Asif



POTHOLE WATCH



➤ The stretch between Deepanjali Nagar Metro to Vijayanagar is dotted with potholes almost everywhere

➤ A crucial road linking the busy Mysuru Road with western parts of Bengaluru

➤ Several motorists have lost balance and fallen on West of Chord Road

➤ Axed tree trunks dumped all along the stretch are forcing pedestrians to walk on roads

➤ Potholes have resulted in frequent traffic snarls all through the day

STOP BLAME GAME

“ There are potholes right under the Metro station as rainwater falling on the roof is let directly onto the road. Whenever we complain, BBMP and BMRCL blame each other for the mess

Anand | RESIDENT OF VIJAYANAGAR

“ The bad condition of the stretch is affecting the speed of vehicles considerably. Vehicular exhaust is inconveniencing people here

Suresh Babu | MERCHANT

“ Morning and evening peak hours are always problematic. Several parents come to pick up their children from nearby schools and it is too dangerous to ride with kids as pillion. On several occasions, children have fallen and sustained injuries

Sarala Kumari | RESIDENT

ACTED UPON COMPLAINTS

“ We had received complaints about multiple potholes and fixed them. Due to patchwork all along the stretch from Deepanjali Nagar Metro station to Vijayanagar station, it appears as if there are potholes. However, if there are any, we'll check and fill them

Narasaram Rao | CHIEF ENGINEER (SOUTH), BBMP

— Text by Syed Asif

21 kids test positive during RAT, negative in RT-PCR

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Health and education department authorities went into a tizzy after 31 students tested positive during rapid antigen tests (RAT) in two schools in Dasarahalli zone. However, when they were subjected to RT-PCR tests, 21 turned negative for Covid, while the results of the remaining 10 are awaited.

BBMP officials have appealed to students and parents not to panic. BBMP special commissioner (projects) Ravindra PN on Tuesday said 21 children studying in class 6 at New Standard English Medium School and 10 kids of class 5 at MES School showed Covid-19 symptoms during a vaccination drive on the campuses and were subjected to tests. With some turning positive following RAT, the Palike declared holidays for children studying in these classes and started contact-tracing.

Following detection of these cases, the urban local body sanitised the classrooms and instructed other schools co-

SCHOOLS TOLD TO UP SAFETY MEASURES

Following the outbreak of Covid-19 infection in two schools, Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) issued two sets of advisories to schools/colleges and parents. Thermal screening of students, teaching and non-teaching staffers at the entrance has been made mandatory in all schools. Any person with Covid-19 symptoms shall be sent for testing and be kept in isolation till the result comes in. The

wearing of mask has been made mandatory on school premises. School officials must ensure that all adults on campus are fully vaccinated, besides motivating children to take the vaccine.

Parents have been told to ensure vaccination of all family members. Further, they have been advised not to send their kids to school in case of Covid-19 symptoms. Instead, they must take the kids for Covid test and isolate them.

ming under its ambit to sternly follow Covid-19 protocols. "All have been asked to wear masks and sanitise hands regularly. The children had mild cold, fever and cough when the health team landed at the schools," Ravindra said.

Special commissioner (health) Trilok Chandra told **TOI** there is no need to panic as the standard protocol is being followed in schools. "Health officials are doing contact-tracing to contain further spre-

ad, but the good news is that 21 kids turned negative. These children were subjected to RAT on June 6. After that, samples were sent for RT-PCR; on June 11, reports of 21 kids were declared. Everything is under control."

Ravindra said the Palike is also working towards containing other vector-borne diseases like cholera and dengue. It is testing water samples in many areas and so far, no contamination has been found.

3 lakh sites inspected for larvae

Bengaluru: BBMP is conducting an extensive survey to identify larvae-breeding sites to tackle dengue in the city. The civic body identified nearly 4,000 sites so far.

BBMP special commissioner (SWM) Harish Kumar said the Palike surveyed over 2 lakh houses and nearly 3 lakh potential larvae-breeding sites. They were found to be breeding at 3,954 places. BBMP plans to clear stagnating water at potential breeding sites and instruct people to ensure zero stagnation. In areas where larvae are found, they will be destroyed with insecticides.

The city recorded 38 cases of dengue, a majority from Dasarahalli zone, in the last 10 days.

The corporation is also sending water samples from various places, including government hostels, to check for contamination caused by sewage mix. "Not a single sample taken from tap water or borewell was found to be contaminated," Kumar said, adding the city has not recorded any cases of cholera.

He said BBMP will hold property surveys to identify those owned by the urban local body. "We will recruit government surveyors for the exercise. The Palike will also clear all encroachments found during the survey." TNN

81-year-old has been tree guide in 2 parks for 16 yrs

Petlee.Peter@timesgroup.com

Chethan Shivakumar

Bengaluru: It is 6.45am on Sunday and Lalbagh Botanical Gardens is brimming with morning walkers and joggers. Amid the crowd stands out an octogenarian clad in white shirt, denim bottoms and leather hat, adjusting his microphone, even as an enthusiastic bunch gathered around him awaits to hear tales of Bengaluru's best and historic green turf.

Vijay Thiruvady, 81, has been conducting heritage walks at Lalbagh and Cubbon Park for the last 16 years. He is no ordinary narrator of history, but a man with in-depth knowledge of the plants and trees of the two landmark locations of Bengaluru and is well-versed with the evolution of the Garden City itself. His heritage walks are sought after, with many tourists from across the globe adding them to their bucket list.

A mathematics and architecture graduate, Thiruvady hails from Tamil Nadu but spent most of his young years in Delhi. Four decades ago, he migrated to Bengaluru on work and has made the city his home ever since. Post retirement in his mid 60s, Thiruvady joined Bengalurean Arun Pai's startup, Bangalore Walks, floated in May 2005, in an attempt to give visitors



MASTER STORYTELLER: Through his walk-the-talk at Lalbagh and Cubbon Park, Vijay Thiruvady has enlightened more than 15,000 people on the history of trees in the lung spaces and those of Bengaluru

and even Bengalureans a briefing about the city's rich green history.

"I joined in September 2005 and began the Lalbagh heritage walk and there has been no stopping since, except during the pandemic," the Koramangala resident says.

Through his walk-the-talk at Lalbagh and Cubbon Park, Thiruvady has enlightened over 15,000 people on the history of the trees there and those of the city, with interesting anecdotes like an expert storyteller. "In my early days in the city, I used to spend hours at Lalbagh with botany books, identifying the trees. I think the botanical garden is the best place in the whole of

Bengaluru," he said.

Apart from being the senior-most man involved in heritage walks in the city, Thiruvady is the only one to have conducted heritage walks inside the coveted Madras Sappers headquarters at Ulsoor.

"They have a rich history in relation to the city and most of it is showcased at their museum at Madras Sappers. Unfortunately, the pandemic situation brought the heritage walk at the location to a temporary halt," Thiruvady said.

The avid dendrophile has no plans to retire from what he loves the most, but will continue with his sharp narration of enthralling stories of Bengaluru and its trees.



Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike

N.R Square, Bengaluru - 560 002.

Covid-19 - Precautionary measures to be adhered by the public



It is mandatory to wear a mask to cover the mouth and nose in public places



Frequent washing of hands with soap or sanitizer



Keep a handkerchief or other garment in case of sneezing, coughing



Avoid touching of Mouth, nose and eyes with your hand



Spitting, urinating, or littering is prohibited in public places



Maintain Safe distance from others (Physical distance at least 6 feet)

♦ Penalty will be imposed if the mask is not worn or maintain physical space

♦ If you have any symptoms kindly get yourself checked in any one of the free testing centers immediately.

The public must comply with the above instructions to help control the Covid-19 virus

Rakesh Singh, I.A.S
Administrator, BBMP

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"ಎಲ್ಲಾ ವೈಯಕ್ತಿಕ ಮತ್ತು ಸಾಮೂಹಿಕ ಚಟುವಟಿಕೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಉನ್ನತ ಸಾಧನಗಳು ಪ್ರಯತ್ನಿಸಿ ದೇಶದ ಪ್ರಗತಿಗಾಗಿ ಶ್ರಮಿಸುವುದು ಪ್ರತಿಯೊಬ್ಬ ಭಾರತೀಯನ ನಂಬಿಕಾರನೀಡದ ಮೂಲಭೂತ ಕರ್ತವ್ಯ"

Telangana adopts fresh Covid strategy

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Hyderabad: The Telangana government has issued new operational guidelines to contain the spurt in Covid-19 cases, making it mandatory for patients walking into state-run hospitals and health centres with influenza-like symptoms or severe respiratory complaints to be tested for the virus. This, officials said, would be strictly implemented in the backdrop of a steady rise in Covid cases in Telangana and neighbouring states. The number of tests that hovered between 12,000 and 15,000 was increased to over 22,000 on Tuesday. And testing will be raised further over the next few days, as per plan. Earlier, less than 50% of patients with such symptoms underwent tests.

Issuing the revised surveillance guidelines, the health department stated there was a need to enhance focus on early detection, isolation, testing and timely management



PTI

RISING CASES

of suspected and confirmed cases, while strengthening efforts to detect and contain outbreaks of new SARS-CoV-2 variants.

“The fresh surveillance strategy has been disseminated to the field level. The state has handed out instructions to test all influenza-like illness and SARI (severe acute respiratory infection) symptomatic patients at the outpatient level at all primary health centre, urban primary health centres, basti dawakhana, community health centres, area hospitals, district hospitals and teaching hospitals and send samples for RTPCR testing to rule out Covid infection,” said an official.

New Omicron subvariant in M’rashtra, TN

Mumbai: The fast-spreading Omicron subvariant, BA 2.12.1, which is currently driving the surge in the US, has been detected in some samples in Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu. Though its spread is limited for now, states have been asked to strengthen genome sequencing to keep track of variants.

The Centre in a recent note to state governments has informed that BA.2.12.1, BA.5, and BA.4 are rising in prevalence globally and some have been found in the country. “BA.2.12.1 is driving the surge in North America... few (cases have been) identified in Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu. No increase in fraction has been observed,” the note stated. BA.2.12.1 is a subvariant of BA.2 and both have descended from the original Omicron variant.

Maharashtra’s public health department has confirmed the presence of BA.5 and BA.4 in 15 patients so far, including two cases confirmed from Thane on Tuesday. TNN

In race against time to contain Covid surge, Beijing turns to mass testing

Getty Images

Beijing: Authorities in China's capital warned on Tuesday that a Covid-19 surge in cases linked to a 24-hour bar was critical and the city of 22 million was in a "race against time" to get to grips with its most serious outbreak since the pandemic began.

The flare-up means millions of people are facing mandatory testing and thousands are under targeted lockdowns, just days after the city started to lift widespread curbs that had run for more than a month to tackle a broader outbreak since late April.

Authorities announced on the weekend a "ferocious" Covid outbreak linked to the



TEST & TRACK: A woman gets tested for Covid in Beijing

Heaven Supermarket Bar, which had only just re-opened after coronavirus curbs were eased last week.

The outbreak of at least 287 cases has raised new worries about the outlook for the world's second-largest economy. China is just recovering from a

two-month lockdown in Shanghai that had raised worries about global supply chains.

Drinking and dining in most establishments in Beijing only resumed on June 6, after more than a month of measures such as take-out meals only and working from home, along with the closure of malls and stretches of the transport system. Authorities have refrained from restoring the toughest of the earlier restrictions, but about 10,000 close contacts of the customers of the bar have been identified.

Chaoyang, in which the bar is located, began a three-day mass testing campaign on Monday. REUTERS

THE FEAR CLUSTER

31 students from Dasarahalli school test positive in Rapid Antigen Test; school managements say don't force kids to go to school if they're unwell

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After BBMP health staff recently visited several schools to vaccinate students, they found that many students had fever symptoms. When they were subjected to an on-spot Rapid Antigen Test (RAT), 31 students tested positive. This is said to be the biggest school Covid cluster post the third wave, prompting school staff to ask parents not to force their kids to go to school even if they are unwell.

BBMP Special Commissioner (Projects) Ravindra PN said, "Our health staff have been visiting a number of schools for vaccination. On June 9, the staff visited a school in Dasarahalli zone (405 students) and another school (315 students).

"In the first school, the team noticed that 31 students studying in sixth standard were suffering from Covid symptoms. Hence, the staff subjected them to on-the-spot RAT and all of them tested positive. Later, their samples were sent for RT-PCR testing. In the second school, 21



With offline classes in full flow, health experts say maintaining covid protocols on campus are key to battling covid

There are 21 Covid clusters in BBMP limits including 15 in Mahadevapura, four in Yelahanka and two in Dasarahalli

students were subjected to RAT and 10 of them tested positive. The respective classes have been given a holiday and the school premises have been sanitised."

According to a few parents, the schools have stopped online classes and they are worried that kids may miss important classes if they are absent from school. On the other hand, health experts say that a few parents are

unaware of the Covid symptoms of their children due to the very mild nature of the infection.

However, Ravindra said that there was no need to panic as all the kids were fine. The first set of kids (31) have already tested negative for RT-PCR reports while the RT-PCR results of 10 students from the second school were awaited.

"With schools going back to offline mode full-fledged, we have been asking schools to strictly follow the SoP. No student should be allowed inside the premises without a temperature check. The masks are mandatory for the students sitting in the classroom and school prem-

What BBMP says

- Thermal screening mandatory for students, teaching and non-teaching staff everyday
- Mandatory Covid testing for kids if they exhibit symptoms
- Isolate Covid suspects till the results are out
- Mask is must on campus
- Sanitisers should be placed at vantage points
- Vaccination should be provided to all eligible beneficiaries
- Covid vaccine must for all the family members (if eligible)
- If anyone exhibits symptoms, such people should be tested

ises should be sanitised at regular intervals," he added.

Cluster outbreaks on the rise

Though Minister for Health and Family Welfare Dr K Sudhakar said that it was too early to call the current Covid surge as a fourth wave, the city is witnessing many cluster outbreaks. As of now, there are 21 Covid clusters in BBMP limits including 15 in Mahadevapura, four in Yelahanka and two in Dasarahalli. Apart from these two school clusters, 19 Covid clusters have been reported from apartments.

Sudhakar said, "If any kid tested positive, then we will declare a holiday.

Generally, the Covid cases are mild and Covid cases among kids are very mild. I would recommend that every parent should get 12+ kids vaccinated at the earliest."



On June 14, we reported how schools in Bengaluru were doing their best to stay a step ahead of covid

Now, that's what we call a neat job

Civic collaboration as part of CleanStreets500km project transforms Mother Teresa Road

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TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR

A footpath that was once used to dump garbage and avoided by pedestrians like the plague due to the stench, is now unrecognisably transformed.

The lane on Mother Teresa Road is now clean and usable – a feat made possible by a number of good Samaritans ensuring no one dumps waste there or pollutes the place during the day or at night. “We kept vigil for a month at night to prevent people from dumping garbage on the footpath or using the compound wall for urination. We also penalised around 20 people for dumping garbage and creating nuisance. Additionally, we collected Rs 1,000 for dumping garbage and Rs 100 for urination on the footpath,” said Bhakta Seelan, a BBMP marshal.

Meanwhile, hundreds of volunteers from The Ugly Indian and a few companies teamed up with Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) to reclaim and beautify the 1km+ long stretch from Cathedral School on Richmond Road till CMP Gate. The volunteers took time out over the weekends to beautify the footpath and wall.

The entire wall of the Rashtriya Military School has been painted with the trademark TUI red-and-white triangle design to deter defacement and garbage dumping. All the waste dumps have been cleared out, and the

footpath has been repaired and made safe for walking. A ‘wheelchair challenge’ was held on June 11 by volunteers and BBMP Marshals and the entire 1.5km long footpath was tested and certified clean and safe for use by a wheelchair.

Pedestrians and motorists described it as an incredible transformation of what was formerly a filthy, dangerous stretch that leads to Anepalya Main Road, which has also been improved considerably. The initiative is part of a larger CleanStreets500km project in which the BBMP and volunteers are targeting to make 500km of main roads in Bengaluru neat, clean and walkable 24x7. This particular 1km stretch was part of the CleanStreet50km project within Shanti Nagar constituency. Surendran M Krishnan, CGI, said that he, as a volunteer, participated in multiple beautification events organised by The Ugly Indian in association with CGI. “I was excited to participate in an event of this sort that can bring a change in the mindset of people to keep the public places tidy. With the support of 40+ volunteers we were able to clean and paint over 1 km of the wall. It was great to see the transformation that we made in four hours. I am looking forward to transforming more public spaces in the city,” he said.

Another volunteer from The Ugly Indian said the project demonstrates what is possible when the BBMP, corporates, citizen volunteers and the military co-operate to solve a common civic problem.

“Today, not only is the place neat and clean, the footpath has been reclaimed for public use. We will reclaim 500 km of city streets and footpaths from garbage, filth and abuse - 1 kilometre at a time, as part of the CleanStreet500kmChallenge,” said the volunteer.

Praveen Pandey, Superintendent (Hostel), Rashtriya Military School, praised the work by The Ugly Indians. “They did a commendable job. I was running pillar to post for the beautification of the compound wall. I am happy with the work done by The Ugly Indian,” said Pandey.



The entire wall of the Rashtriya Military School has been beautified by volunteers of TUI

Pups in need of a home

Animal lovers manage to rescue 14 puppies from the jaws of death



Rapid development has resulted in lack of space for these pups to coexist. Although temporary shelters are made, they are in dire need of a home

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TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR

Sadhana Hegde, a pet parent from Bommanahalli, rescued 14 puppies that were on the verge of dying at Hosapalya near HSR Layout.

For the time being, Hegde has given these pups a temporary shelter and has got them vaccinated with the help of other animal lovers. However, now she wants to find forever homes for them.

After watching the Kannada movie Charlie 777 on Monday, Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai said that his government would launch a special programme for the adoption and care of stray dogs. It is unclear when the state government would announce this programme, but the 14 pups need immediate care and shelter.

Hegde said she was informed about the plight of the puppies through some volunteers. She rushed to the spot to make arrangements for a temporary shelter near an auto garage at Hosapalya.

"Humans, being part of the food chain, maintain a high level of ignorance towards other living beings around them and feel that other living beings don't contribute in any manner to the ecosystem. This callous attitude has been causing havoc on the life of street dogs across the city. Constant misinformation about dogs, intolerance towards coexistence, and rapid development with no space or food is now making the life of dogs a living hell," she said.

She insisted that if these puppies are adopted, their lives can change for the better. "They are

not at fault for the city planning but are only victims," she said. Hegde said she was grateful to the donors, especially a pet parent Ashley, for donating to get the pups vaccinated and for their vet visit.

Ashley told Bangalore Mirror she heard from one of the members of the Bellandur Canine Squad WhatsApp group

“We hear about these things all the time, but it's different when we actually see it

—Ashley, pet parent

that Hegde was looking to build a shelter for 14 pups at HSR and needed help with supplies, medicines and food.

"We hear about these things all the time - pups abandoned on the roadside, injured stray dogs - but it's different when we actually see it. And when we do, it's near impossible for us to not feel affected," she said.

Aniruddh Roy, who played an anchor role in Kannada movie Charlie 777, praised Hegde's work for indie puppies.

Roy said the rescue of the 14 pups was possible due to Hegde's work.

"We fed them, vaccinated them, and had them dewormed, and ensured they get a proper shelter to stay. We have organised food supplies and are keeping a check on them on a timely basis. All this was feasible because of Sadhana's tireless efforts," he said.

He also stressed on the need to adopt indie breeds instead of buying international breeds to stop illegal breeding.

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MIRROR

9591233247

Problems in your area?

Send us a picture along with specific details. And please, no phone calls or spamming

Littered road

Vasanth Nagar



Garbage being thrown on this footpath at Ward 93, Hare Krishna Road, Vasanth Nagar is troubling residents and pedestrians.

'Death trap'

Bettappa Garden Road



Despite several complaints to BBMP Engineers, no action has been taken to deal with these 'death traps' at Bettappa Garden Road and South Street.

2 schools in Bengaluru report Covid-19 clusters

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

NEARLY a month after schools reopened, two Covid clusters have been found in two schools of Bengaluru's BBMP limits. In all, 31 students tested positive for Covid in rapid antigen tests, but the more-accurate RTPCR test reports of 21 of them returned negative. The schools are located in Rajagopalnagar ward of Dasarahalli zone.

Special Commissioner (Projects) Ravindra PN said, "21 students of Class 6 from New Standard English (NSE) School and 10 students of Class 5 from MES school tested positive for Covid when they were subjected to RAT."

The vaccination team visited the schools on June 9 and found a few students to be symptomatic. When RAT was conducted, they tested positive. Since it was a cluster, the samples were subjected to RTPCR tests. **P3**



A health worker administers the Covid-19 vaccine to a student at a government school in Bengaluru on Tuesday

VINOD KUMART

BBMP guidelines to educational institutions

Compulsory thermal screening of all students and staff at the entrance of institutions

Any symptomatic person should be subjected to a Covid test and isolated till the test report comes out negative

Mandatory wearing of masks

Ensure sanitiser is available at main places

Maintain hygiene

Ensure every eligible child is vaccinated

'Schools can reopen after sanitisation'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

THE RTPCR reports of NSE School students arrived on June 11 and all of them were negative, while RTPCR reports of MES students are still awaited. In the meantime, the samples of all their classmates were tested and they are negative.

BBMP officials asked students of only Class 6 of NSE

school and Class 5 of MES to stay at home.

Palike officials met officials from the education department and private schools association, and directed them to intensify Standard Operating Procedures at all schools and colleges in the city. The Palike has also made wearing of masks mandatory for children.

BBMP Special Commissioner (Health) Dr Trilok Chandra said, "The schools are permitted to reopen once the sanitisation process is complete. Among children between 15 and 18 years, 79 per cent are vaccinated with the first dose and 69 per cent with the second dose. In the 12-14 age category 82 per cent are vaccinated with the first dose and 39 per cent

with the second dose. We plan to complete the vaccination of children by the month-end."

Health Minister Dr K Sudhakar said, "Respective classes where the Covid cases are reported must be suspended, and Covid protocols followed. Since children of this age group are vaccinated and these are the variants of Omicron, parents need not be anxious."

Bommaï inspects infra works in Mahadevapura

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

AHEAD of monsoon rains, Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai undertook a city inspection and covered the Mahadevapura zone on Tuesday afternoon. Bommai was accompanied by BBMP Chief Commissioner Tushar Girinath and other officials during his surprise inspection.

First, Bommai inspected the newly constructed Kundanahalli underpass, the U-turn at Marathahalli bridge, 100 feet Road at Thubarahalli-Balagere junction and Panathur Railway underpass.

There has been a string of complaints from the companies and apartment complexes in Mahadevapura which hosts a number of IT colonies and startups regarding road infrastructure and traffic which led to MLA Arvind Limbavali has demanded for some more projects to be implemented.

The CM sought details of the underpass near Kundanahalli which was completed after delay to tackle the traffic snarls

during peak hours at the junction.

Girinath told TNIE the underpass will be open to public after June 25. There were some minor issues with land acquisition as only two properties are to be cleared from the underpass connection, which was being done on a war-footing.

The CM also inspected the Panathur Railway underpass as the Railway department is making the bridge. Road widening has been undertaken by the BBMP for the motorists.

Then, the CM inspected Balagere Road-Thubarahalli Road as the roads were damaged due to the STP work, which has now been fixed. The CM reportedly directed the official to complete the pending work at the earliest.

"The CM came for a surprise inspection as I had asked for a date from him for inaugurating Kundanahalli underpass. To take a stock of the situation, the CM came in the afternoon. I was away for some other project's bhumi puja. This is to keep the officials on their toes," said Limbavali.



CM Basavaraj Bommai with BBMP chief Tushar Girinath (left) during his city rounds | EXPRESS

AAP INVITES PM TO SEE BENGALURU'S POTHOLES

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has organised a movement, demanding that PM Narendra Modi, who is visiting Mysuru for Yoga Day, visit Bengaluru to see the roads full of potholes. Briefing the press, Mohan Dasari, AAP Bengaluru City President, said the party will be organising a post-card movement, demanding that Modi take a look at Bengaluru's potholes.



(Left) The pothole-riddled Mysuru Road; All the potholes have disappeared after BMRCL fixed the road | SHRIRAM BN

MOON FACE GETS A FACELIFT

ENS @ Bengaluru

A week after a video by TNIE of the Bengaluru-Mysuru Road riddled with potholes resembling Mars, the road has undergone a makeover after the officials fixed it.

The video, which went viral, had given sleepless nights to the civic body officials especially BBMP which became the prime target on social media. The Palike was attacked by a flood of memes since the road was under its jurisdiction.

Following a meeting, the Palike officials clarified that the road was under the National Highways Authority of India, and was at present under the ambit of the BMRCL which was working on the stretch for the Metro work. On June 7, TNIE photojournalist Shriram BN made a video of the road from the top angle. Little did he know the 23-second video will send ripples in a day. After a week, the BMRCL has now fixed the road.

BBMP to submit report to HC in two days

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

BBMP special commissioner, projects Ravindra PN on Tuesday said that they will submit a report on the condition of potholes to the High Court in two days. He said that so far over 13,400 potholes have been identified and most of them have been fixed.

Asked why potholes are filled when they are flagged in the media, like in the case of Mysuru Road, he said potholes are fixed as and when they are identified. Also the agencies which have taken over the roads, must ensure that they are maintained, including BMRCL. Also in case of roads being cut open or dug open for various works, notices are being issued, if permission has not been obtained.

On Idgah Maidan, joint commissioner, BBMP, west, Srinivasa said that to dispel doubts and obtain documents, a team has visited the Survey and Settlement Office. "We have taken copies of the records dated 1976, where the property belongs to BBMP. The claims and documents given by others pertaining to land ownership are being verified," he said. Srinivasa also said that VHP and other organisations had approached BBMP seeking permission to host Yoga Day and Independence Day which will be discussed with the police and head office for taking a decision. Until then status quo will remain.

DURATION OF PANDEMIC	CASES REPORTED	DEATHS	DISCHARGES
2 YEARS, 98 DAYS	594	0 0	400 378
	415	POSITIVITY RATE	MORTALITY RATE
TALLY	5.93% 5.94%	1.01% 1.01%	
TODAY	39,57,343	ACTIVE CASES	RECOVERY RATE
YESTERDAY	39,56,749	3,882	98.88%
		3,688	98.89%

B'turu Urban: 582	Chamarajanagar: 0	Dharwad: 0	Kolar: 0	Shivamogga: 1
B'turu Rural: 1	Chikka Ballapur: 0	Gadag: 0	Koppal: 1	Tumakuru: 0
Bagalkot: 0	Chikkamagaluru: 0	Hassan: 0	Mandya: 0	Udupi: 1
Ballari: 2	Chitradurga: 0	Haveri: 0	Mysuru: 0	U Kannada: 1
Belagavi: 1	D Kannada: 4	Kalaburagi: 0	Raichur: 0	Vijayapura: 0
Bidar: 0	Davanagere: 0	Kodagu: 0	Ramanagara: 0	Yadgir: 0

TAC seeks study on Covid transmission from pets

Animals too can contract the virus; Ancovax can protect them

Chetana Belagere @ Bengaluru

THE Technical Advisory Committee intends to collaborate with the Institute of Animal Health & Veterinary Biologicals for a study on the possibility of humans contracting Covid-19 from pets. Experts say though chances are quite low, a few studies found that it is not impossible. Recently, a study showed a veterinarian in Thailand had contracted coronavirus from an infected pet cat last year, which is also the first suspected case of cat-to-human transmission. The study also said cats are far more likely to catch the virus from people, than transmitting it to humans. However, in case a pet is infected, it is necessary to take precautions, experts say.

According to sources, at a meeting last week, TAC experts requested the state health department to send out a reminder to seek the status of the project re-

port on the demand for animal surveillance. The TAC had in March sought the IAH&VB, Hebbal, to conduct a study and surveillance for Covid-19 in animals in zoos, national parks, game sanctuaries and others having close interaction with humans.

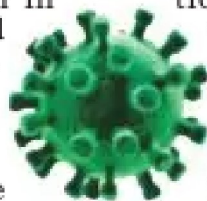
"TAC recommends a health joint risk assessment for Covid-19, involving IAH&VB, NCBS, NIV and other institutions. To begin with, a workshop or meeting is to be convened in the DoHFW as soon as possible," the earlier recommendation had said in March.

Recently, there was a study from Thailand, post which experts from TAC apparently sought that animal surveillance be taken up to rule out the possibility of pets spreading Covid-19. "Though it is rare, there have been a few studies where minks, cats, lions and a few other animals have contracted Covid-19. In this background, we

had sought a study by the institute to see if animals can be a source of infection. We are waiting for the report to be submitted to TAC," said Dr Sudarshan MK, Chairman, TAC.

Interestingly, Hisar-based National Research Centre on Equines has come up with a vaccine called Ancovax, which can protect animals against Delta and Omicron variants of SARS-CoV-2. This can be used for dogs, lions, leopards, mice and rabbits, and is the first Covid vaccine for animals developed in India. Scientists from the Indian Council of Agricultural Research had earlier told the media, "The vaccine can protect animals in a zoo. It can also prevent transmission from companion animals to humans."

Last year, one Asiatic lion in Chennai had contracted the virus, and it was suspected that another had died due to it. A leopard cub and three wild Asiatic lions were also found dead, and then tested positive for Covid-19.



UPBEAT MOOD

After clinching RS, BJP starts spadework for BBMP polls

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

UPBEAT over its victory in the Rajya Sabha polls, the BJP is all set to make preparations for the BBMP election which is likely to be held either in the last week of September or the first week of October.

After Prime Minister Narendra Modi's scheduled visit to the state for the Yoga Day celebrations in Mysuru, the party leadership is expected to hold a series of meetings with MLAs, defeated candidates and leaders of all the 28 assembly seats that fall under BBMP limits.

Besides ministers who represent constituencies in the city party leaders will be appointed in charge of segments with an as-

signment to identify the ideal candidates and ensure their victory. The party, which could not win a simple majority last time, has a plan to cross the mark by winning over half the 243 seats to form the ruling party in the BBMP on its own which is crucial ahead of the 2023 assembly polls, sources said.

As the prestige of Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai will be at stake, ministers R Ashok, V Somanna, K Gopalaiah and S T Somashekar will be given the task to ensure more seats from their respective assembly segments, they added.

Meanwhile, the Justice Bhaktavatsalam commission has to give its report to the court to fix the OBC quota and without which the polls are unlikely, according to sources.





Hong Kong Sees No Change in Covid Curbs Before July 1

Hong Kong: Hong Kong won't tighten virus curbs before July 1 despite rising Covid cases because hospitals aren't overwhelmed, the city's outgoing Chief Executive Carrie Lam said.

"The increase in number of positive cases has not brought unbearable pressure on the health care system and that's attributable to the nature of omicron," Lam said.

Hong Kong reported 737 new infections Monday, down from more than



Hong Kong reported 737 new infections Monday, down from more than 800 on Saturday and Sunday, but more than double the figures from May

800 on Saturday and Sunday, but more than double the figures from May. Of the 371 people hospitalized with Covid, only three were in intensive care, with most other patients either asymptomatic or reporting mild infections, Lam said.

Based on that situation, "until the end of June, we will not make any significant adjustments or relaxations" to virus curbs, she said, adding that the city still needed to be "cautious" about imported cases and maintain measures such as mask wearing and limitations on large gatherings. Lam also said Hong Kong needs to find a balance between the "dual objectives" of relaxing the international border controls that are key to its reputation as a financial hub and creating the right conditions to resume quarantine-free travel with the mainland. **Bloomberg**