

# As number of fresh Covid cases on rise, BBMP to ramp up testing

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BENGALURU

THE BBMP commissioner N Manjunath Prasad, in a meeting, informed that in the last two days 40 out of 210 students at Manjushree College and 28 flat inmates were infected at SNM Raj Lake View Residency in the Bommanahalli Zone. Prasad said that 500 residents have been tested and there are 1,000 more to be tested. In this regard, six testing camps have been set up.

The commissioner said that most of the students attending Manjushree Nursing College are from Kerala and there is a high incidence of infection from students who come to the city from there.

"There is no restriction on



BBMP Commissioner N Manjunath Prasad addressing the meeting

those coming from Kerala as per the orders of the central government. If a person from Kerala comes to the city, he/she should enrol in the institute only if there is an RT PCR Negative report

within 72 hours. Anyone who violates the law will be prosecuted according to the Disaster Management Act," Prasad said.

The BBMP has said that a party could be a probable reason be-

hind the infection. The authorities have been asked to increase the number of Covid tests. There are a total of 341 testing teams, including 141 primary health care centres.

The Joint Commissioner is directed to review the testing and the Zonal Special Commissioners should hold a biennial review meeting to check for more cases and isolate those who are positive. It has also been instructed to detect and isolate primary and secondary contacts through contact tracing after being positive.

Officials have been instructed to contact Resident Welfare Associations (RWA) in connection with Covid cases in the city. Prasad has asked the officials to meet the RWAs through video conference. The commissioner

noted that in the background of low Covid cases the citizens have lowered the guard. The marshals have been instructed to take appropriate action against those not found to be wearing masks.

Second dose of Covid-19 vaccination has begun. As of Sunday, 4,09,836 healthcare workers and 86,798 frontline workers have been administered the first dose of vaccine across the state with a coverage of 50 per cent and 30 per cent respectively. The state government has set a deadline for health workers to get the vaccine and those who do not get the vaccine must get the vaccine by February 25. Health workers will not be vaccinated after that. Those who received the first dose will be given the second dose.



## IIM-B announces national roll-out of Mahatma Gandhi Fellowship

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BENGALURU

FOLLOWING the success of the pilot cohort, Indian Institute of Management Bangalore (IIMB) has announced the launch of 'Mahatma Gandhi National Fellowship' (MGNF) 2021-23 in collaboration with the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), Government of India and State Skill Development Missions (SSDMs).

The Mahatma Gandhi National Fellowship is a unique opportunity for young, dynamic individuals to combine classroom sessions at IIM with engagement in the district economies to promote skill development and skill planning. Launched last year, the implementation of the programme has been a great success and has garnered huge appreciation from various stakeholders.

IIMB Director Professor Rishiksha T Krishna described MGNF Phase 2 as an opportunity for young dynamic individuals who are looking for opportunities outside the normal. "Based on our Phase 1 experience, we know that many of our past Fellows are having an impact on the District Skill Committee that they have been supporting; some have gone on to create very interesting projects that are creating skills as pre-cursor for employment by integrating ideas from business management, public policy, and development economics learned at IIMB and understanding their district's potential. Some of the initiatives are with SHGs, others are market based interventions strengthening pre-ex-

isting markets in turmeric, sarees, or garlic in an attempt to scale and integrate with new markets," he explained.

The Mahatma Gandhi National Fellowship 2021-23 has been rolled out nationally in more than 660 districts across India. The programme is being hosted by nine IIMs (IIM Ahmedabad, IIM Bangalore, IIM Jammu, IIM Kozhikode, IIM Lucknow, IIM Nagpur, IIM Ranchi, IIM Udaipur and IIM Visakhapatnam) separately, with IIM Bangalore managing the common admission process.

Programme Director and faculty for the Centre for Public Policy at IIMB Professor Arnab Mukherjee said, "In Phase 1, the MGNF had to deal with disruptions due to COVID-19 like every other activity in the country. The MGNF has proved to be institutionally flexible, and, in many districts, has worked with COVID-19 recovery efforts that range from undertaking tracer studies of migrants to undertaking welfare activities for those displaced due to COVID-19. Phase 2 extends the programme nationally to all remaining districts in the country in partnership with various IIMs from across the country. Our Phase 1 experience tells us that the Fellows have been instrumental in supporting the district skill ecosystems in several parts of the country and have been critical to kick starting new initiatives that have strengthened skilling. Expanding this nationally can truly be impactful for the whole country at a time when growth concerns are paramount, and the expansion of formal employment opportunities are limited."



## New age unified learning experience platform to drive learner engagement

BENGALURU

TECHADEMY has been making inroads as a unified learning experience platform that is poised to address the challenges in Learning and Development (L&D) programs in post-Covid 19 workplace environments. By incorporating features of both an LMS and LXP, the digital platform unifies various learning interventions to solve critical challenges, from addressing learning drop-offs and inculcating a culture of continuous learning, to virtual employee onboarding, compliance and customer training, cross-skilling, reskilling and deploying virtual training environments with ease.

Outlining the need for companies to stay on top of their L&D strategies in an era where technologies and its applications continue to change and evolve at a rapid pace, Techademy Founder, N Keshava Raju states "Unprecedented events such as the one we're in continues to create daunting challenges for an organisation's L&D strategy in a time where they need it more than ever. While we noticed that most organisations have not axed their development programs, our internal data and surveys indicate that metrics such as engagement rates, and course completion rates are taking a significant hit."

By integrating various learning platforms that focus on various learning metrics into a singular digital solution, TECHADEMY aims to solve this very challenge, and make professional training more relevant, personalised and engaging by putting learner experiences

at the heart of an L&D strategy. Given that most companies today have a distributed workforce it becomes very important for organisations to deliver meaningful learning experiences that is consumed as intended.

Commenting on the same, Techademy Founder N Keshava Raju added, "To drive employee engagement and improve ones returns on learning (ROL) organisations need to curate and nurture an outcome-oriented learning culture. One can do this only by equipping their workforce with the right set of tools, be it assessments that evaluate core traits and acquired skills, or letting them learn in a sphere that mimics the organisations production environment."

Apart from the plethora of features the platform offers, TECHADEMY also plans on adding to about 50 new courses every month to their content library, which currently hosts over 2500 tech-based courses. The company's main goal currently is to ensure that organisations continue to deliver and improve upon their L&D programs without any interruptions.

Sharing its heritage and promoters with IIHT, Techademy is poised to be a truly one of its kind platform with a mission statement that Founder N Keshava Raju signs off with "Since our inception in 1993, we have had a strong bond with the IT & IT-enabled industries and have been a preferred L&D partner for some of the tech giants today. We have an obligation to ensure that the industry does not face any negative disruption by future-proofing talent transformation."

## Own a TV, fridge or 2-wheeler? Surrender BPL cards or face action

BELAGAVI

THE Karnataka government on Monday asked people possessing Below Poverty Line (BPL) ration cards, despite being ineligible on account of owning either a two wheeler, TV, fridge or over five acres of land, to surrender them before March 31 or face legal action.

"There are parameters for possessing a BPL card. They should not have more than five acres of land, motorcycle, TV or fridge. Those who don't qualify on these parameters should return the cards or else we will do it," Food and Civil Supplies Minister Umesh Katti said at a press conference in Belagavi.

He said anyone earning more than Rs 1.20 lakh annually should not use BPL cards and has to return it before March 31. Congress flayed the remarks and party workers staged protests in front of various ration shops in Bengaluru.

Party workers also protested in Dharwad, Mysuru and Tumakuru, a Congress leader said.

Congress MLA U T Khader said



the issue had come up before him when he was the Food and Civil Supplies Minister in the Siddaramaiah government and he had decided not to relax the norms as many poor people would be affected.

He opined that when there are

offers like interest free loans to purchase all these items, it was obvious that people would buy it. The government is 'anti-poor', he charged and asked them to focus on identifying more beneficiaries instead of 'snatching away' their BPL cards. (PTI)

## Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra account for 77 pc of 1.39 lakh active Covid cases

BENGALURU

INDIA'S total COVID-19 active cases currently stand at 1.39 lakh with 33 states and union territories having reported less than 5,000 active cases in a span of 24 hours, the Health Ministry said on Monday. Three states -- Kerala, Maharashtra and Karnataka -- cumulatively account for 77 per cent (76.5 per cent) of India's total active cases. Kerala, Maharashtra together account for 74.72 per cent of the total active cases. Tripura and Daman and Diu and Dadra and Nagar Haveli currently have only two active cases each.

The ministry said that 18 states and UTs have not reported any deaths in a span of 24 hours. These are Assam, Rajasthan, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Jharkhand, Uttarakhhand, Manipur, Nagaland, Lakshadweep, Meghalaya, Sikkim, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Ladakh, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Tripura and Daman and Diu and Dadra and Nagar Haveli. Also, ten states and UTs have reported no deaths in the last week. These are Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Arunachal Pradesh, Daman and Diu and Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Ladakh, Lakshadweep, Manipur, Nagaland, Sikkim, and



Tripura. Till 8 am on February 15, the cumulative number of healthcare workers (HCW) and frontline workers (FLW) vaccinated against COVID-19 in the country has reached nearly 83 lakh. A total 82,85,295 beneficiaries have been vaccinated through 1,73,729 sessions, as per the provisional report till 8 am. These include 59,88,113 HCWs (1st dose), 24,561 HCWs (2nd dose) and 22,72,621 FLWs (1st dose). The 2nd dose of COVID-19 vaccination

started on February 13 for those beneficiaries who have completed 28 days after receipt of the 1st dose. As on Day 30 of the vaccination drive (14th February, 2021), a total of 21,437 beneficiaries received vaccination across 877 sessions.

Out of which, 20,504 beneficiaries were vaccinated for 1st dose and 933 HCWs received 2nd dose of vaccine, the ministry said. The country is witnessing a progressive increase in the vaccination day by day,

it stressed. Ten states account for 69 per cent of the total beneficiaries vaccinated in India. Uttar Pradesh alone accounts for 10.4 per cent (8,58,602) beneficiaries. India's cumulative recoveries have surged to 1,06,21,220 with 9,489 patients having recuperated in a span of 24 hours. The ministry said 79.5 per cent of the new recovered cases are observed to be concentrated in six states. Kerala has reported the maximum number of single-day recoveries with 4,692 newly recovered cases (nearly 50 per cent).

As many as 1,355 people recovered in Maharashtra in the past 24 hours followed by 486 in Karnataka. Ninety fatalities have been recorded in a span of 24 hours. Six states account for 80 per cent of the daily deaths. Maharashtra saw the maximum casualties (40), accounting for nearly 44.44 per cent of the daily deaths. Kerala follows with 15 daily deaths and Tamil Nadu reported six casualties.

A total of 1,649 new daily cases have been recorded in a day. The ministry 86.4 per cent of the daily new cases are from six states. Kerala reports the highest daily new cases at 4,612. It is followed by Maharashtra with 4,092, while Tamil Nadu reported 470 new cases. (PTI)

## INDIA-SA WOMEN'S SERIES

# Bengaluru emerges front-runner after Kerala's withdrawal

BHARAT SHARMA  
BENGALURU

THE Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru has emerged as the front-runner to host next month's limited overs series between India and South Africa women's sides after Kerala Cricket Association (KCA) expressed its inability to stage the matches at the Greenfield Sports Hub Stadium in Thiruvananthapuram. KCA secretary Sreejith V Nair told PTI that they were supposed to host eight games (three ODIs and five T20Is) from the

first week of March and a 14-day training camp before that but the owners of the stadium -- IL & FS -- have booked the facility for an army recruitment drive for two weeks.

"IL & FS did not even inform us while booking the stadium on dates clashing with the women's series. It is a violation of our MoU with them. We have written to the BCCI expressing our inability to host the games," said Nair. KCA has an agreement with the owners to manage the ground. In the wake of KCA's withdrawal, the BCCI is looking at Bengaluru

as an alternate option. "Bengaluru is a good option but again with the COVID-19 still very much around, we are dependent on government permission and the logistics too need to be worked out. We are still targeting the first week of March to start the series," a BCCI source told PTI.

However, both BCCI and Cricket South Africa are yet to announce the series though the Indian players have been intimated about it. The team has not played international cricket since the T20 World Cup final in

March last year. Their only outing since that final was during the exhibition Women's T20 Challenge in Sharjah in November last. Since the series will have to be played in a bio-bubble, the team needs to assemble at least two weeks before the first game with six days reserved for quarantine. "The players have been training at their respective centres but of course they will need at least 10 days to train together before the series. They have been away from the game for a long time now," the source added. (PTI)

