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IMA calls for robust vaccine strategy

Arakkal Shada Amina

The Indian Medical Association (IMA) on Tuesday, April 6, suggested changes to the government's vaccination strategy, including making the Covid-19 vaccine available to citizens above 18 years of age.

The suggestions, made in a statement addressed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, come after the country witnessed its highest daily increase in Covid-19 cases, crossing over 1 lakh on April 4, noted the IMA.

The suggestions also include free-of-cost walk-in accessibility to Covid-19 vaccines, implementation of district-level task forces to enforce mass vaccination as



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well as to monitor adverse drug effects, and production of mandatory vaccine certification prior to entering public places and receiving

products under the public distribution system.

They also include limited but continuous lockdown for non-essential areas such as

cinema and cultural events so as to break the chain, and active participation of private hospitals and family clinics in the vaccination drive.

"Vaccination against Covid-19 stands as a single evidence-based resource for us to restrict the cases by raising the personal immune response and paving way for herd immunity to decrease the severity of the disease," said IMA.

It also said there should be "zero tolerance against the noncompliance of Covid-appropriate behaviours" to curb the fast-spreading virus.

The vaccination is currently available to citizens over the age of 45, besides initially to healthcare workers.

Ashwini Kr Choubey, the Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare, tweeted on April 6 that the "cumulative vaccine coverage" had exceeded the 8-crore mark.

Uncertainty over bus strike in Bidar

Sudarshani

BIDAR: Bidar division's class III and IV level road transport officials (bus drivers, conductors and mechanics) are still waiting for confirmation about the state-wide bus strike called on Wednesday, April 7.

Baburao Vante, an assistant traffic inspector currently stationed at the North Eastern Karnataka Road Transport Corporation (NEKRTC), Bidar Division, told The Beacon on Tuesday, "There will definitely be a bus strike tomorrow, even with state government's Covid-19 restrictions. We will get the confirmation by today evening."

He explained, "Although I will not be involved in the strike, class III and IV level officials will take part. The state's road transport corporation had given the government a period of three months to address our grievances but they have done injustice to our corporation with false promises."

Nathaniel Mareppa, an NEKRTC traffic controller from the Bidar Division, said on Tuesday, "The strike will commence tomorrow in the state capital. Here, in the Bidar district, we are still waiting for the confirmation."

Cops arrest 2 Africans, seize drugs worth Rs 25L

Priyansha

BENGALURU: Drugs worth Rs 25 lakh were seized by the Central Crime Branch (CCB) on Monday evening, April 5 in Ramamurthy Nagar area of Bengaluru.

The CCB's Anti-Narcotics Wing's Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) KC Gautam told The Beacon, "Five drug peddlers were arrested in the east zone of the city at Ramamurthy Nagar. Out of the five arrested, two are from Africa. One is of Nigerian nationality and one is from the Republic of Ghana."

He added, "The seized drugs consist of cocaine, LSD, MDMA and Ecstasy."

On Tuesday morning, Joint Commissioner of Police (Crime) Sandeep Patil tweeted photos of simple-looking blue mints and coloured papers, explaining that they were highly intoxicating drugs seized by the CCB.

This is not the first time alleged drug-peddlers from Africa have been arrested in the city. On March 17, two were arrested in Sampigehalli and Amruthahalli police station limits.

Delhiites prepare for night curfew

Alwin Benjamin Soji

BENGALURU: With the Delhi government imposing night curfew <from when to when?> in the national capital, residents are making sure they stock up all day-to-day essential items so they don't have to head out during the curfew hours.

Molly Chacko, a resident of Dilshad Colony, said, "I will make sure that I buy all the daily essential items before 10 pm. The night curfew won't affect me much as I don't leave home too often."



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Siddharth Chaturvedi, a journalist, said, "Sometimes I come back home after 10 pm when there is a lot of work in the office. I will make sure that I reach home before the

curfew starts. I recently bought a cycle so I started cycling early mornings. Now, I'll make sure that I leave only after 5 am for cycling. I will also make sure that I buy

all the essential grocery items beforehand so I don't head out during the curfew hours."

Aksa Elizabeth Johnson, a student of Jesus and Mary College, said, "I am the one who usually buys grocery items for my home, so I will buy everything before the curfew starts. I also go out to meet my friends, so I will make sure that I come back home before 10 pm."

The night curfew begins from April 6 and will continue till April 30. Operation of essential services will be allowed.

Pandemic hits Vishu firecracker sale

Athul Krishna

THRISSUR: As Vishu — the Malayalam New Year — approaches, the demand for firecrackers has plummeted due to the pandemic, say businessmen and wholesalers.

Vishu is the time of the year that sees a spike in the sales of firecrackers in Kerala.

However, Covid-19 regulations this year have resulted in huge losses both last year sales and this year.

"Vishu season is the best time for us to in Kerala. But last year, the pandemic and

the resulting lockdown hit the seasonal sales and caused a huge loss for us," said Joy CM, a wholesaler from Thrissur in the state.

Ramu, another wholesaler from Thrissur, said the current situation is going to affect small retailers and makers. "We buy from small households during festive seasons. We can't return them if they don't sell. This results in huge loss," he said. He added that the situation was expected, but maybe not to this degree. 14th April is celebrated as Vishu in Kerala.

2nd wave of Covid-19 hits eateries

Megha Bhattacharjee

BENGALURU: Rising coronavirus cases in Bengaluru have threatened the business of cafes, pubs and restaurants in a major way in the city, say owners.

After the temporary relief of dine-in services picking up in January, the second wave has drastically affected business.

"The second wave of Covid-19 has definitely affected business badly. People are not stepping out of their houses to dine in. We are just sitting here with close to no customers. It's a very bad time for businesses like ours," said Harish Kumar, the



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Unsplash

manager of Beijing Bites, a Chinese family restaurant in Richmond Road.

"Yes the number of guests we used to get has obviously reduced after the rise in cases in Bengaluru. But it's still better than last year. Also, all kinds of Covid-19 protocols are being maintained in the cafe. We have reduced the staff, there's adequate social

distancing, sanitisers are provided. So safety is ensured in our cafe," said Nathan, manager at Koramangala's Hole In the Wall cafe.

The manager of Koramangala Social, who wishes to stay anonymous said their marketing team is dealing with the dip in dine-in customers.