

Karnataka govt decides to reopen colleges from Nov 17

Students Can Opt For Online, Offline Classes Or Both

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: After more than seven months, the Karnataka government has decided to reopen colleges in the state from November 17. This includes engineering, diploma, and degree colleges.

Students can choose from three options — attend classes physically with written consent from their parents, continue to attend classes online, or attend a mix of offline and online classes, depend-

SOP TASK FORCE IN EACH COLLEGE

► Within 20 days, colleges to **specify number of students** opting for **offline classes**, after which it will be decided if classes will take place in **shifts** or on **alternate days**

► Each institution to **set up task force** to ensure compliance to Covid-19 SOPs in colleges and hostels



► Headed by college **principal** or a head of dept, task force will coordinate with district admin and health officials

► **Hostels to open on November 15** to enable students to get used to the new systems in place to curb the virus spread

ding on their convenience. Government-run hostels will also be opened.

The decision was taken on Friday at a meeting headed by

chief minister BS Yediyurappa, attended by ministers and senior officials of various departments. Deputy chief minister CN Ashwath Narayan,

who holds the higher education portfolio, said colleges are being reopened as students are worried about their future and want classes to resume. The number of batches in each college will be decided depending on the number of students opting for physical classes.

Within 20 days, colleges will have to submit to the government the number of students enrolling for offline classes. "Once we get clarity on how many students have enrolled, we will decide on whether classes will be conducted on shift basis or on alternate days," said the minister.

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Colleges will have to form task force to implement SOPs

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Each college will be asked to form a task force to implement Covid-related SOPs and guidelines issued by the health department and government, the deputy CM said, and safety norms will be enforced strictly in colleges and hostels. The task force will be headed by the college principal or a head of department and it will be required to coordinate with the district administration and health officials.

"We'll rope in all essential departments, including the health department, for testing and health check-ups; transport departments for services; and the district administration for additional requirements," said Narayan. "We presented to the CM the preparations made for opening colleges and he was convinced."

Following UGC guidelines, online classes began in October. The decision on reopening campuses in November was left to the states, based on the Covid situation on the ground. Sources said the decision to reopen colleges was driven by the dwindling number of active cases in the state. It has now

Hostels to be opened

The government has decided to reopen hostels coming under the social welfare department.

"Authorities will have to pay extra attention to ensure safety of hostel inmates.

Hostels will be reopened on November 15 to ensure students get adequate time to get adjusted to the new normal. All necessary arrangements will be made for students who will stay at SC/ST, social welfare and OBC hostels," the deputy CM said.

fallen below the 1-lakh mark with more recoveries recorded than fresh cases for the eighth consecutive day till Thursday.

'Foolish move'

Calling the decision to reopen schools "foolish", opposition leader Siddaramaiah said students may not have the awareness to wear masks and follow distancing norms. "Till vaccine is available, don't open schools or colleges. By promoting all kids this year, the world will not come to an end."