

State colleges set to reopen tomorrow after eight months

Bengaluru:

After eight months of Covid-forced closure, professional and degree colleges in Karnataka are gearing up to reopen their doors for regular classes on Tuesday, with faculty and managements busy overseeing sanitising operations.

Colleges are unsure how many students will turn up on Tuesday as students have been given an option of choosing between online and regular classes.

Most expect a low turnout. Bangalore North University, Bangalore University and Visvesvaraya Technological University have decided to open their campus only for final-year students for now. The social welfare department has released SOPs for reopening of hostels as well. TNN **Page 2**

Ahead of opening, colleges scramble to adhere to SOPs

LEAP OF FAITH Institutions Unsure Of Attendance On Day 1; Hostels Allowed Only 50% Occupancy, Preference For Those With Disability

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Faculty and managements were busy overseeing sanitising operations, ensuring Covid-19 tests for students and staff, placing hand sanitisers and thermal scanners at strategic locations and prominently displaying safety protocols on campus as preparations were in full swing on the weekend to reopen colleges from Tuesday.

Colleges closed on March 16 in the wake of the pandemic and have been shut since. Although classes have continued online, this is the first time since then that colleges will have students on campus for classes.

However, colleges are unsure just how many students will actually turn up on Day 1 as students have been given the option of choosing between attending online and regular classes. Most expect a low turnout.

“As of now, we have no idea what the turnout will be like. We will have to wait and see,” said TD Kemparaju, vice-chancellor, Bengaluru North University. “We hope attendance will increase through the week. Colleges have been asked to submit weekly reports on how classes are progressing. We are hoping colleges will not find it difficult to maintain social distancing now as only final year students are allowed on campus.”

Bangalore North University, as also Bangalore University, has said it will resume regular classes only for final year students for now.

Karidappa, vice-chancellor, Visvesvaraya Technological University, said colleges have been instructed to open laboratories for students who have trouble attending online classes. “Colleges have mapped the nearest Covid-19 testing centres for students and faculty. Some centres are seeing long queues. But we have to wait to see how many will actually attend,” he said.

VTU too has decided to hold classes on campus only for final year students.

On the other hand, some colleges have decided to wait and watch. “We will wait and see how many students will come on Tuesday. If the numbers are very low, we will continue with online classes that we have been conducting till now,” said Shanti Rajendra Kumar, principal, Dr Ambedkar Evening College.

KN Subramanya, principal, RV College of Engineering, said: “We do not know how many will come on Day 1 as students have to get Covid negative certificates. We have asked our final year students to come. As and when they come, we will make batches of 10 and start practical classes.”

The social welfare department has released standard operating procedures for reopening of hostels as well. The rules state only 50% of a hostel can be filled at a time. Preference should be given to students with

disability and outstation students. Many hostels had been converted into quarantine centres and these had to be sanitised thoroughly to be turned into hostels again and ensure they were safe for students.

Meanwhile, many students of St Joseph's College, who returned to Bengaluru as the college had announced regular exams, have checked into their PG accommodations. "Nothing has changed here. There are no Covid rules or etiquette that is being followed in my PG. We are on our own. We should take care of ourselves," said a student from Manipur.



CLEAN UP ACT: Faculty direct a worker as he sanitises a PG department classroom at Bangalore University on Sunday

MISSED FRIENDS AND CAMPUS

I'm extremely excited to go back to college. I missed my friends and the campus all these months. I was bored at home and tired of online classes. I will get to be in the lab again. Last week, I resumed my music and dance classes. So I was waiting for college to reopen too. I hope the college is sanitised and Covid rules are in place **Sahana N BSc STUDENT, MAHARANI CLUSTER UNIVERSITY**



VIRUS-IMPOSED RULES: Students being tested for Covid-19 at a college