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Engineering college closes for a week, 300 turn up for tests at RGICD

City records 9 more cases

Bangalore, DHNS:

Notwithstanding the State government's assurances that the situation arising out of the increasing number of swine flu cases was under control, nine more persons joined the list of H1N1 positive cases in the City on Wednesday.



Over the past three days, several schools closed down for periods ranging from three days to a week. This forced the State administration to declare that there was no need to panic.

However, on Wednesday, the panic grew to such proportions that even colleges declared closures.

The first college to issue temporary shutdown orders is the City-based Amritha Engineering Institute of Technology. The swine flu panic continued to spread as rapidly as the dreaded virus.

Over 300 patients, suspected with swine flu-like symptoms, lined up for examination and gave swab samples at the government-designated Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Chest Diseases (RGICD). The total number of H1N1 positive cases in the State touched 104 on Wednesday. Schools, which preferred temporary closures for a week, have proposed compensating for the lost days by taking extra classes during weekends and cutting down on the number of vacation days.

The State Government stepped in to stem the panic with Primary and Secondary Education Minister Visvesvara Hegde Kageri appealing to schools not to over-react to the situation.

"The H1N1 situation is not as dire as it is made out to be and there is no need to panic and declare holidays," he observed. Chief Secretary Sudhakar Rao too felt the situation was not worrisome. "The government has taken all measures to ensure all treatment facilities are in place," he stated.

But Rao's statement belied the fact that some of the government hospitals lacked basic life-saving equipment, making his claims sound hollow. Health Commissioner P N Srinivasachari stated that the 29-year-old pregnant woman, who died in Davangere, was not a victim of the H1N1 virus. The government, meanwhile, has decided to rope in NGOs to aid in its awareness campaign. According to figures furnished by the government 522 tests were conducted for suspected swine flu. Of these 97 tested positive for the H1N1 virus.

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