

## **Karnataka- Any area with 3 or more Covid-19 cases to be declared as a cluster, says CM Bommai**

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Amid concerns over two cases of the new Covid-19 variant Omicron being detected in Karnataka, the state Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai on Saturday said that any area with three or more cases of Covid-19 in the state would be declared as a cluster.

The state Chief Minister said, "earlier, we had decided to identify a place as cluster with 10 Covid-19 cases, but now we have decided to minimise it to three. People in that area will undergo tests, treatment and vaccination."

He observed that cases are emerging are of two types of clusters in the state, one in schools and colleges and the other, in residential apartments in Bengaluru. Bommai said double dose of vaccine has been made mandatory for parents of students who attend regular classes and that testing is compulsory for all the inmates and staff of student hostels.

The tests would also be mandatory for those with co-morbidities, the Chief Minister said, adding that officials have been instructed to take foolproof measures.

On the Omicron variant, the state Chief Minister said the state has received the preliminary report and the health department has been instructed to submit a detailed report to the government.

Officials have also been directed to get the treatment protocol from the nations where the Omicron is present. "At present we have information that the same treatment for the Delta infected patients is given for Omicron patients. Yet I have asked the officials to get the treatment protocol to give proper treatment to those who contracted the Omicron variant," Bommai said.

He pointed out that experts have opined that Omicron is a fast spreading variant, but has not shown severe implications. "However instructions have been issued to intensify tracing and treatment," Bommai said.

To a query on Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandavia's statement that no state, except Punjab, had submitted reports on deaths caused by oxygen shortage, the CM said "I have no information in what context the statement was made."

Asked about state Health Minister Dr Sudhakar's statement about 10 passengers from South Africa found missing in the state, Bommai said "I have not received official information about it. I will speak to the Health Minister about it."

Meanwhile, earlier this week Bommai dismissed fears in some quarters over any possible lockdown amid Covid-19 cases in some educational institutions and the detection of the Omicron, a variant of Covid virus in some parts of the world. Allaying the apprehensions, he made it clear that there was no proposal to impose lockdown in the state.