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WHO concerned over NCD & mental health

Ahana Bagchi

WHO on Thursday expressed concern over the Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD) and mental health conditions particularly at a time when the efforts to tackle these challenges have taken a back seat in the wake of the pandemic.

"We know that people living with NCDs and mental health conditions are more susceptible to COVID-19 and are at greater risk of severe disease," he said. He added that the pandemic has badly disrupted NCD services for diagnosis, rehabilitation, treatment, etc.

He mentioned that over 75% of countries have reported these disruptions and it can be very challenging to meet NCD-related goals, especially in low and middle income countries.

However, the director general had a positive note to his address as he said that the pandemic has given them time to innovate and rethink. "The Task Force members have demonstrated that work on NCDs and mental health can continue online," he said. He further added that it was essential for all countries to cooperate to deal with the challenges against NCD services. He also introduced the multi-support trust fund to help NCD services.

Karnataka govt. all set to hike auto fare

Akshara DM

BENGALURU: In a huge relief to the auto-rickshaw drivers, Karnataka government on Thursday has accepted to consider the proposal of the Auto Rickshaw Drivers Union (ARDU) that minimum fare be revised from existing 25 to 30 rupees. Also, the subsequent cost per km will be revised from Rs. 13 to Rs. 15.

"There's hike in price for every commodity, be it food items, house rent, electricity, or the auto parts; there's increase in price, even in the fines charged by the RTO," said CN Srinivas justifying as to why they demanded a hike in minimum fare.



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"The government went through our demands on thursday and decided to increase the minimum fare to Rs 30 and the price for the subsequent distance will be

increased to Rs 15 per km. They cant announce it today as the session is going on so they might announce it tomorrow or day after," he further added.

The general public, keeping in mind the hardship the auto drivers endure, agreed that this would work in favour of the auto drivers. "There is no fixed salary for

auto drivers. Their income is dependent on the number of trips they undertake everyday. They should make a living out of it. With the increase in gas prices, I think it is necessary for them," says Girish V, a bank employee in Bengaluru.

"I guess its okay even if they increase the price. The fuel price is increasing so you really cannot blame them. I think the government is the one that needs to be blamed," said B. Dhanush Vignesh, a student from Bangalore.

AL Manoj Reddy another student from Bengaluru feels that it's fair on part of the auto-rickshaw drivers as there has been an increase in the fuel prices several times the current year.

Kerala: New transport norms

Anjitha Eldho

KERALA: The government of Kerala issued tighter transportation protocols, touted as the first of its kind, to preempt the challenges that may arise out of opening the schools from November. The transport department has released guidelines to be followed by students, drivers and school management for ensuring safety.

Parents, students and teachers reacted positively to the government's new transportation protocols in

the fight against covid. "This would be an ideal model to protect our kids from spreading the virus, but it is upon the school management and officials to implement this model effectively and make parents feel secure about sending their kids to school," said Shirley Jacob, a school teacher from Kerala.

As students displayed happiness over the resumption of classes, parents are still concerned about the safety aspects. Since everyone is taking chances, the management

and government should take necessary actions to make this process possible, said several parents from Kerala.

While the management and parents express concern, students are excited about meeting each other after a year. Alvia Stanly, a twelfth grader said, "In my opinion, the decision of the government is right for the safety of students and teachers."

She added, "But this would be a new thing to all of us, so we should actually wait and see how it turns out to be."

TN: COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy among public

Iswarya Lakshmi B

TAMIL NADU: Despite the efforts of the government to get the public vaccinated, there are still myths and fears making the rounds around vaccination, thereby fuelling vaccine hesitancy in Tamil Nadu.

"I'm from a village called Apamasamuthiram near Salem and the majority in our village are not vaccinated yet. The government camps, drives happen only in towns. People in my village still think that the vaccination will kill them after 10 years and it is a tool to control the common public," said S.Gopinath, an engineer.

When asked about the fear around the vaccination, G.Vijay Anand from a small village in Tamil Nadu told The Beacon that his neighbour who had blood pressure died an hour after getting vaccinated and because of this event his whole family is scared and none of them are vaccinated

yet. A senior citizen from Salem says that she does not want to get vaccinated since she is diabetic and she believes that the Tamil actor Vivek died because of vaccination.

"As per the government's instructions, we were given training to create awareness among the public. We have conducted two camps as of now. But both were inside the city. So I think the government should concentrate more on rural areas to debunk the myths," said A. Vincilla, a teacher from Salem.

When asked about how Karnataka fought the hesitancy of people, Pallavi, ASHA worker from Palahalli, Karnataka told The Beacon that they usually explain the effects of the vaccination to help the public understand the process better. She added that they also take help from panchayat members and other health officials to motivate the public.

Golfers on Eagleton course closure

Aamir Sohail

BENGALURU: Members of Eagleton Golf Club expressed their shock and disappointment upon hearing that the course will be closed until further notice due to a land encroachment case. The course is an old haunt of both professional and amateur Karnataka golfers such as Olympian Anirban Lahiri and Udayan Mane.

Azeezulla Baig, a member of the club said, "It is quite a great shock because it was a good course and many good golfers played there. Ashok Kumar and his son Kiran



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Kumar had done well to maintain the club and keep the players coming. It is quite shocking."

The closure will also affect the residents of Bidadi who were employed by Eagleton

as caddies and groundskeepers. Indeed, several locals who started out working as caddies later turned into professional golfers, such as Chikkarangappa.

Another member, Mr. Bharath acknowledged that somebody like Chikkarangappa would lose an opportunity to learn the game. "It will affect the game here because it was a good course. It was well maintained and offered coaching, so we will lose that." The course has won the award for Best Course at Global Golf Awards 2020 as well as 8 Asian Golf Awards' Best Course," he said.

"It is quite sad to see it close. I have some good memories of playing there," he added.



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