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ಇಲಾಖೆ / ವಿಷಯ : DEPARTMENT / SUBJECT: Minister

ಪತ್ರಿಕೆಯ ಹೆಸರು : NAME OF THE NEWS PAPER: Indian Express ದಿನಾಂಕ : DATE: 16/4/21

Lockdown not an option, but stringent measures a must: Health Minister

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

IN the backdrop of the state reporting 14,738 cases on Thursday, Health and Medical Education Minister Dr K Sudhakar said that stringent measures need to be put in place in the coming days to control the surge, but ruled out lockdown as an option.

Speaking at a virtual interactive meeting organised by the Federation of Karnataka Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FKCCI) on Thursday, the minister agreed that the economy had taken a beating during the pandemic lockdown last year. So, lockdown is not an option this time, he said.

"I will definitely consult FKCCI members and the Chief Minister on this, but I also understand that lockdown is not an option considering the economic situation we are in. However, it will be extremely important for us to impose some stringent restrictions to control the rise in number of cases," Sudhakar said.

Gaurav Gupta, Chief Commissioner, Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), said that the trade body should emphasise on repeated testing of employees at workplaces to avoid the spread of Covid-19.

"FKCCI should also provide

us space at factories, industries and apartments to put up swab collection centres. The government has now permitted vaccinations at workplaces and this also should be encouraged. I appeal to industry members to help in organising camps, set up CCCs and donate ambulances," he said.

Pointing at why the second wave will be more lethal than the first, Dr C N Manjunath, Director of Jayadeva Institute of Cardiology and member of Covid's Technical Advisory Committee, said that it is not

the virus that is spreading, but people who are helping the virus spread. The (day's) positivity rate is now in double figures, which was not the case even during the peak of the first wave. The doubling rate has

come down, which means the number of cases is doubling in just four to five days," he said, adding that one cannot think of another lockdown as a solution to contain the spread, but one needs to balance between Covid management and commercial activity.

He requested the FKCCI members that they should send out circulars to workplaces that if any employee or his/her family members complain of fever or body ache, they should be asked to avoid coming to office and get themselves tested for Covid-19.

