

KARNATAKA CM WRITES ON HOW THE STATE IS FIGHTING THE PANDEMIC**Karnataka's approach to fighting the coronavirus pandemic is on a war-footing**

When the World Health Organization (WHO) Executive Director, WHO Health Emergencies Programme, Dr. Michael Ryan, said, "India has a tremendous capacity to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic", we must prove the assessment right before the international community at all cost. Dr. Ryan also said, "There are no easy answers. It is exceptionally important that countries like India show the way to the world as they have done before."

As India enters the seventh day of a lockdown, 37 deaths and 1,284 COVID-19 positive cases have been reported in India; there are 88 cases in Karnataka (as on March 30, 9.45 pm).

Currently, we have two main challenges at hand. First of all, to curb the spread of the COVID-19 virus and second, to care for people's lives during the 21-day lockdown. I can say, confidently, that we are addressing both the challenges effectively. The Central Government, under the leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is overseeing every step. We extend unflinching support to the Prime Minister.

Friends, we must strictly quarantine ourselves for 21 days until April 14 to contain the spread of the coronavirus. The lockdown, unprecedented in our lifetime, may cause inconvenience to our social life, but the decision is a bold move. We must realise that the lockdown is for our well-being, for our safety.

My government has devised a multi-pronged strategy to win the battle against the scourge of the coronavirus. Technical strategy, humanitarian approach, economic/financial assistance and medical support are in place to handle the crisis.

- **Technical strategy**

We have, in the first of its kind in India, high-tech war rooms to monitor, exchange information, and to keep a tab on the spread of the coronavirus. Officials are engaged in the management of the crisis at Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), Labour Department and Information Department war rooms.

BBMP war room: The BBMP has surveillance data of people in an eight-kilometer radius around a confirmed patient, where he was first found to reside. The BBMP tracks the mobile phones of quarantined people through their GPS location.

If they are going beyond the containment zone, we will call them and ask them to go back home. The police will send the BBMP their names and tracking details. The general control room numbers and WhatsApp numbers are working for COVID-19 too. Also, Karnataka has developed 'Corona Watch App' mobile applications for monitoring people under quarantine and informing their contacts about the same to check the spread of the coronavirus.

Information Department: Friends, being anxious is not a solution to the problem. To clarify your doubts, please join the largest Telegram group in India on the coronavirus – 'COVID-19 Karnataka: Sahaya Group', a team of doctors from the ESI Directorate are working 24x7 in responding to queries from citizens. In a week, about 21,000 people have joined and got answers for every query on COVID-19.

After the coronavirus outbreak, the Janasnehi team of the Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) began getting a huge number of queries from the public on the disease. There was panic, rumours and fake news spreading rapidly. The DIPR realised we needed to kill the fake news and give out the right information so that people will not panic.

The DIPR Janasnehi team started operating like a COVID Awareness and Response centre for the general public giving the right information and spreading awareness to people apart from debunking fake news through its Twitter handle. A team of 3,000 volunteers has been set up, with four volunteers in each taluk on field, monitored by the DIPR and the Red Cross, to stop fake news from the field.

I am in touch with District Collectors through a video conferencing facility, and the highlights of the meetings are updated on my Twitter account @CMofKarnataka for your convenience.

Labour Department: The Labour Department is already running a 24x7 helpline, called the 'Dasoha line' (155214) and a war room, in association with the DIPR which receives the demand for food (both dry ration and cooked food) from all over the State and then channelises that into the other departments, BBMP, etc in real time.

The helpline receives about 3,000 calls per day and is increasing. The calls are attended and the citizens are either directed to the nearest food centre or ration/cooked food is being arranged to reach near them.

Eager to stall migration, Karnataka has launched the hunger helpline. A coordinated 'Dasoha' scheme will ensure that everybody is covered under the scheme and nobody in Karnataka goes to bed without food. Also, the government has directed Deputy Commissioners to take over one convention centre or wedding hall in every ward within municipal corporation limits to house construction labourers and migrant workers.

On Instagram: Of late, the Department of Medical Education and the Government of Karnataka are active on Instagram — 'Karnataka Kills Corona' —to spread awareness on the coronavirus.

- **Medical support**

The State Health Minister B. Sriramulu, Medical Education Minister Dr. K. Sudhakar, and Information Department of the State government are working with exceptional co-ordination throughout the State to fight the menace.

I appeal to you all to cooperate in following the measures announced by the Centre and State governments.

In Bengaluru, several hospitals have been listed as 'designated first response hospitals' for COVID-19. For instance, in Victoria Hospital alone, around 1,700 beds have been set up.

I sincerely request you all to please not to pay heed to fake news doing the rounds on social media platforms. The government will be updating the relevant numbers, measures, and instructions every day about the issue.

Also, new COVID-19 helpline numbers (080-46848600 and 080-66692000) are now functional apart from the existing helpline number 104. In both these helpline numbers, a senior doctor and two post-graduate medical students are available throughout the day to assist volunteers in answering the queries of citizens more knowledgeably. I have appealed to people not to rush to hospitals; call the helpline if symptoms aggravate. The best medical care and isolation facilities are just one call away.

It is at this moment that only sick and patients requiring emergency care might visit hospitals for treatment at medical college hospitals/district hospitals/super-speciality hospitals and autonomous institutions. To avoid overcrowding and halt the spread of COVID-19, private hospitals have been instructed to take similar steps.

Economic assistance

During the crisis, it is the utmost duty of the government to take care of the vulnerable sections of society. In this direction, the Prime Minister and the Finance Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman, have made a timely intervention to address the problems of the livelihood of labourers. The rolling out of the Garib Kalyan Yojana scheme, of ₹1.7-lakh crore, when the country is struggling hard to fight the coronavirus menace has brought relief in this hour of crisis. The most striking feature of the Garib Kalyan Yojana is a supply of five kilogram rice or wheat and one kilogram pulses to 80 crore people. People living below the poverty line will not be hungry when they remain indoors during the lockdown period.

Likewise, the Karnataka government will release social security pension of two months in advance for the poor, additional working days amount will be released in advance under the Mahatma Gandhi Employment Guarantee Act scheme and two months ration will be supplied immediately. Also, 21 lakh construction workers will be paid ₹1,000 per person. Under the Badavara

Bandhu (interest-free loan to roadside vendors) scheme, we have decided to waive ₹13.20 crore loans. This includes ₹9.10 crore in 2018-19 benefiting 15,120 people, and ₹5.16 crore in 2019-20, benefiting 6,500 people. Also, my Cabinet has already earmarked a corpus fund of ₹200 crore as “immediate expenses” to fight the outbreak.

- **Humanitarian approach**

As a part of the humane approach, the State-run Indira Canteens will provide food packets free of cost to the poor and needy in the wake of the lockdown. The canteens will operate in three schedules: from 7.30 a.m. to 10 a.m., 12.30 p.m. to 3 p.m. and 7.30 p.m. to 9 p.m. Streetside vendors, labourers and poor will get food free of cost.

I have directed officials to popularise “vicinity marketing” and make the people purchase essential items from shops, vendors and hawkers in their area and surroundings.

I hope you are convinced that our approach to fighting the coronavirus pandemic is on a war-footing. I request the ever generous people of the State to contribute to the Chief Minister’s Relief Fund Covid-19. Or you can send your cheque or DD to Chief Minister’s Relief Fund, Vidhana Soudha.

Leaders across the political spectrum are with the people of Karnataka in these testing times. I acknowledge and appreciate the relentless service of the ‘health warriors’ who are attending the call of duty round the clock. I am overwhelmed by your messages on social media expressing gratitude to our health warriors. Similarly, please do cooperate with police personnel in your area. Our ‘Khaki warriors’ are discharging their duty in every corner of the State to ensure a stringent lockdown.

Friends, your patience, and cooperation are crucial to fight the COVID-19 menace. With concerted efforts, we will overcome the challenge.

Meanings of Difficult Words:

- ❖ **pandemic** (noun) – the worldwide spread of a new disease; The illness spreads around the world and typically affects a large number of people across a wide area.
- ❖ **war-footing** (noun) – a state of preparedness (for war).
- ❖ **tremendous** (adjective) – massive, huge, immense.
- ❖ **COVID-19** (noun) – coronavirus disease 2019.
- ❖ **at all cost** (phrase) – regardless of the effort needed.
- ❖ **exceptionally** (adverb) – to a greater degree; extraordinarily, remarkably, especially.
- ❖ **lockdown** (noun) – a state of isolation; confinement, restraint, encirclement.
- ❖ **at hand** (phrase) – nearby, around, close by, not far off.
- ❖ **curb** (verb) – restrain, control, contain, stifle, check.
- ❖ **address** (verb) – tackle, deal with, attend to, try to sort out.
- ❖ **oversee** (verb) – supervise, administer, manage.
- ❖ **extend** (verb) – offer, give, hold out.
- ❖ **unflinching** (adjective) – resolute, firm, determined, committed, single-minded.
- ❖ **quarantine** (verb) – separate, set apart, segregate, detach (people, animals and things (such as plants) from others for a period of time in order to control/restrict the spread of a contagious disease).
- ❖ **unprecedented** (adjective) – not done or experienced before.
- ❖ **well-being** (noun) – healthy state, comfort/happiness, prosperity.
- ❖ **devise** (verb) – formulate, create, think up, come up with, develop.
- ❖ **multi-pronged** (adjective) – having different aspects/elements.
- ❖ **scourge** (noun) – plague, affliction, misfortune, suffering.
- ❖ **humanitarian** (adjective) – compassionate, humane, socially concerned.
- ❖ **in place** (phrase) – established, arranged, set up/ready.
- ❖ **war room (approach)** (noun) – a place (such as a business headquarters) where all the vital information are gathered and brainstormed with all the key people involved in it (to solve a difficult problem).

- ❖ **keep a tab on** (phrase) – to watch/monitor something carefully.
- ❖ **surveillance** (noun) – observation, scrutiny, inspection/examination.
- ❖ **containment zone** (noun) – infected zone; a defined area surrounding the initial cases (of a pandemic) to restrict the virus from spreading beyond its limits.
- ❖ **check** (verb) – restrain, contain, control.
- ❖ **anxious** (adjective) – worried, concerned, distressed.
- ❖ **outbreak** (noun) – sudden appearance/occurrence (of a disease); outburst, epidemic.
- ❖ **give out** (phrasal verb) – communicate, broadcast, report/publish, distribute.
- ❖ **debunk** (verb) – negate, invalidate, prove to be false, expose.
- ❖ **handle** (noun) – someone’s username on a social media.
- ❖ **channelise** (verb) – transfer, channel, transport, transmit.
- ❖ **eager** (adjective) – dedicated, committed, diligent, keen.
- ❖ **stall** (verb) – check, stop, halt, restrict.
- ❖ **of late** (phrase) – recently, lately, in recent times.
- ❖ **menace** (noun) – threat/danger, risk/peril, hazard.
- ❖ **pay heed to** (phrase) – pay attention to, take notice of, take into account.
- ❖ **do the rounds** (phrase) – spread, be passed around, get around.
- ❖ **aggravate** (verb) – made serious/severe, worsen, compound, exacerbate.
- ❖ **autonomous** (adjective) – self-governing, independent.
- ❖ **utmost** (adjective) – greatest, maximum, most extreme.
- ❖ **vulnerable** (adjective) – relating to a weak/neglected person who is in need of special care/support.
- ❖ **livelihood** (noun) – source of income, means of support, living, subsistence.
- ❖ **rolling out/roll-out** (noun) – the official launch or introduction of a new service/policy.
- ❖ **striking** (adjective) – noticeable, obvious/evident, distinctive, notable.
- ❖ **Below Poverty Line** (BPL) (noun) – an benchmark used by the government of India to indicate economic disadvantage and to identify individuals and households in need of government assistance and aid.
- ❖ **waive** (verb) – dispense, drop, scrap, relinquish.
- ❖ **earmark** (verb) – designate, reserve, set aside.
- ❖ **corpus fund** (noun) – The term “Corpus” literally means main part or organ of the body. It is also known as the capital of the organization. The funds generated and kept for the existence and sustenance of the organization. Normally a corpus fund denotes a permanent fund kept for the basic expenditures needed for the administration and survival of the organization.
- ❖ **in the wake of** (phrase) – as a result of, in the aftermath of, as a consequence of.
- ❖ **vicinity** (noun) – surrounding area, neighbourhood, locality.
- ❖ **generous** (adjective) – kind, big-hearted, philanthropic, unselfish.
- ❖ **spectrum** (noun) – wide range, gamut, ambit.
- ❖ **testing** (adjective) – challenging, difficult.
- ❖ **relentless** (adjective) – persistent, continuing, non-stop.
- ❖ **call of duty** (phrase) – the feeling that you must do something because it is your duty.
- ❖ **round the clock** (phrase) – all day and all night (without stopping).
- ❖ **be overwhelmed** (verb) – impress, stun, move, make emotional, spellbind.
- ❖ **gratitude** (noun) – thankfulness, appreciation, recognition, regard.
- ❖ **stringent** (adjective) – strict/stern, severe, tough/rigorous.
- ❖ **concerted** (adjective) – coordinated, united, joint, collaborative
