

Corporates lend a helping hand in fight against Covid

BEYOND BUSINESS DLF, Maruti, MakeMyTrip, Zomato among firms at the forefront of the battle

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GURUGRAM: The corporate community in Gurugram, a bustling city that serves as the headquarters for several thriving businesses, has actively responded to the challenge thrown up by the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) outbreak.

Multiple companies headquartered in the city – from real-estate major DLF to food delivery firm Zomato and travel portal MakeMyTrip – are playing a key role in providing aid and essential services, promoting social distancing, and working with the state authorities to set up task-management solutions and call centres.

Some manufacturing units are even being re-purposed to produce medical equipment in this hour of crisis.

On Monday, when the problem of stranded migrant workers with nowhere to go threatened to defeat the entire purpose of the 21-day lockdown imposed on March 25, DLF donated ₹5 crore to the Haryana Corona Relief Fund, and in coordination with district administration, is providing cooked meals to 60,000 migrant labourers in Gurugram and Manesar, and another 25,000 across NCR.

DLF donated 75,000 masks and three lakh examination gloves to the district administration, along with donating dry ration packs to 15,000 families in Gurugram and Manesar, containing five kgs of atta, two kgs of rice, pulses, spices, cooking oil and salt.

"We have gone to the ground and working with administration, not just in Gurugram, but also in Panchkula and Noida. We are providing meals and dry ration to over 1 lakh distressed workers daily. Medical supplies, masks, sanitizers are also being distributed with the government's help. The work being done to help our own residents and distressed workers is on an unprecedented scale and if need arises it would be scaled up," said Akash Ohri, senior executive director, DLF.

DLF chairman KP Singh said, "DLF is committed to wholeheartedly contribute to this



■ Migrant workers and homeless people adhere to social distancing norms while eating food in a lawn in Khandsa village near Hero Honda Chowk. Some 2 lakh migrants live on rent in Khandsa. Of these, 50% have moved to their home states after the lockdown. YOGENDRA KUMAR/HT

national movement. We should rise as an entity to meet and emerge victorious over this unforeseen challenge that we face today."

Auto major Maruti Suzuki has entered into an arrangement with AgVa Healthcare, an approved manufacturer of ventilators, to rapidly scale up their production to 10,000 units per month. Ventilators are essential in the Covid-19 fight because they are the final frontier that can help patients who are severely affected combat the disease. A Maruti spokesperson said, "Our joint ventures Krishna Maruti and Bharat Seats will be involved in manufacturing masks and personal protective equipment (PPE), of which there is a dire shortage across India for health care and front-line workers."

MakeMyTrip is assisting both the state and district administration in streamlining relief efforts. The company's CEO Deep Kalra said that MakeMyTrip has committed ₹1 crore to ensure food for daily-wage earners.

"That's our main focus right now, to keep those at the bottom of the pyramid from starving. We are also building a software solution for city authorities to help them manage the supply of essential services," Kalra said, adding that he was also involved in talks with Medanta – the Medicity founder Naresh Trehan, and 16 other firms, to scale up health care infrastructure using corporate funds.

Manas Fuloria, the CEO of IT firm Nagarro, said that the company is raising money internally, exhorting senior members to contribute as much as possible for the PM-CARES and Prime Minister's National Disaster Relief Fund. "We expect the amount to run into tens of lakhs, perhaps close to a crore," said Fuloria. Nagarro also helped set up the district administration's web portal allowing citizens to apply for curfew passes online within 24 hours, Fuloria said.

Delivery services and e-commerce retailers, such as Zomato, Grofers and 1MG, are playing a key part in ensuring social dis-

tancing, and also hiring additional staff in a market where opportunities for unskilled and even semi-skilled labour are diminishing, with the country in the midst of a 21-day lockdown.

Zomato launched the 'Feed the Daily Wager' initiative to provide food support to the daily wage communities that are currently unable to support their family's food requirement.

Deepinder Goyal, the company's CEO, on Monday announced on Twitter that they have raised ₹30 crore as part of the campaign, with essential supplies kits being provided to daily wage earners in Gurugram and four other cities.

Zomato has doubled its collection target to ₹50 crore to provide food packages to the needy.

National Real Estate Development Council (NAREDCO), an industry lobby group has also coordinated a charity effort among Haryana's real estate players, to provide food to over 100,000 labourers in the state. "We are joining hands to provide food, shelter, sanitation and med-

ical facilities to all site and maintenance workers," said Praveen Jain, MD, Tulip Infratech. Spokespersons for M3M and Elan Group also said they were contributing money and resources to help workers across NCR.

Some industrialists and industry associations based in Gurugram and Manesar, however, said that they would prefer to donate money to government, because of the restricted movement during the lockdown.

"Some of the developers, corporates and businessmen have come forward and are assisting the administration in meeting this challenge but still a lot more needs to be done. I request all who have the ability to make a contribution and help people in distress," said Amit Khatri, deputy commissioner, Gurugram.

One of the beneficiaries Geeta, who works at a construction site said, "We are thankful to the developer for helping our families during this difficult time. Basic food is of utmost importance and by providing this they have made our lives easier."