WHAT HAVE WE DONE?

The pandemic has us on the run. It has multiplied at a rate far higher than our best efforts to cope. The most disadvantaged and the poor have been hit the hardest. The circumstances they face are higher than many of us can imagine. They don’t have the option to "work from home" – truth be told we have no work and many have had to give up their homes.

This kind of distress is exemplified by a few stories; whether it is exhausted migrants getting run over by a stray calf resting on a railway track near Aurangabad, a tale of a cyclist pedalling a 200-km journey from Delhi to East Champaran, and being run over by a car as he rested on a divider, people losing their lives crossing a mango truck near Agra or indeed of the 12-year-old girl who worked on a chili farm in Jolaganda and died within a short distance of home in Chattisgarh. Depression, hunger, hopelessness and death have hit us thick and fast.

"What we do now" pays tribute to the 12-year-old girl who went to work on a chili farm in Jolaganda and could not make it back home. Her journey lasted over a hundred kilometres over 5 days and met a sad end. Her shadow hangs over this issue of The Dispatch and beyond.

A cross to bear

AN EDITOR AT LARGE

I picked up an elderly gentleman walking under a scorching sun. He was 78, a Kashmiri Pandit, trying to find his way to an office to pay his hospital’s medical insurance premium.

It was the early days of the Covid lockdown in Bangalore, and I say that to many people navigating the city in things that could not wait – a man buying medicine for his child, a woman carrying a gas stove for repair, a pregnant woman and her husband on their way to the doctor, a man on his way to his newly wedded daughter’s home – most that had turned Ordos.

In that and subsequent days, I saw for the first time, the large number of people leaving the city, the departure of the district, the city’s quiet, the city’s stillness, the city’s cleanliness, the city’s silence, the city’s beauty, the city’s tranquility.

The near-empty outpatient lobbies in some of the city’s busiest hospitals were empty, these moments of uneasy calm foreboding the pandemic that will soon unfurl and consume us.

Deprivation, hunger, hopelessness and death have hit us thick and fast.

Difficult days are ahead. These times will show us that our privilege, our blessing, is but a curse, it is the cross that our forebears and their families carried.

The Dispatch invites all members of the field, philanthropy and University to contribute to the publishing of future issues. We want to tell stories of our COVID-19 response – stories that can inform, educate, enlighten and inspire us. They could be written, photographed, illustrated or oral. You could also send us ideas that we could jointly convert into something that we can print.

Make haste. Write to: thedispatch@azimpremjifoundation.org

Wipro’s Pune IT facility to become 450-bed COVID-19 hospital

Wipro Limited, a leading global information technology, consulting and business process services company, has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Government of Maharashtra under which it will repurpose its information technology campus in Hinjewadi, Pune, to a 450-bed intermediary care COVID-19 hospital in four weeks and hand it over to the state government by May 30. The hospital will be commissioned back to an IT facility after a year.

The 450-bed hospital, to be equipped to treat moderate cases, will also include 12 beds to stabilize critical patients before shifting them to a tertiary care facility. The facility also includes 24 well-appointed rooms to accommodate doctors and medical staff.

Wipro will provide the physical infrastructure, medical furniture and equipment besides appointing an administrator and district representative staff to help operationalize the hospital quickly with the required medical professionals.

"We are completely committed to supporting the country’s response to the pandemic and believe that we must all work together to deal with this crisis and minimize its human impact. We stand firmly with the Government of Maharashtra in its battle against COVID-19,” said Rishad Premji, Chairman, Wipro Limited.

Early April, Wipro Ltd, Wipro Enterprises Ltd and Azim Premji Foundation, together committed an INR 1,527 crore towards tackling the unprecedented health and humanitarian crisis arising from the COVID-19 pandemic’s wrath. These resources will help enable the dedicated medical and service teams in the frontlines of the battle against the pandemic and in mitigating its wide-ranging human impact, particularly on the most disadvantaged of our society.

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A new dedicated 100 bed COVID facility run by IQRAA hospital has just become operational in Kerala. Equipped with a screening kiosk, a 15-bed isolation ward, a 10-bed ICU facility, an isolation room and a diagnostic lab, the facility has just been fitted out and is ready to accept patients.

Kerala has been leading the way in the fight against the virus. All care is being taken by designated government hospitals. For now.

This could change very fast as flights from Muscat, Abu Dhabi, Doha, Riyadh and other Gulf Countries are expected to make a touchdown in Cochin and Calicut this week. This operation today, led by Ummer and Mercy Mission handles around 4 to 5 trains and around 5000 to 7000 passengers per day. The design is commendable. Particularly liked the background shades and font.

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