

Times of Society and Genetics

MODI ANNOUNCES NATIONAL LOCKDOWN DUE TO COVID-19



“A group of migrant workers walk to their villages amid the nationwide complete lockdown, on the NH24 near Delhi-UP Border in Ghaziabad | PTI” obtained from <https://www.theweek.in/news/india/2020/04/13/with-lives-livelihood-at-stake-covid-19-lockdown-enters-final-day-what-will-india-do-next.html>



“New Delhi, was nearly deserted Tuesday, hours before Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a nationwide lockdown to combat the coronavirus.(Jewel Samad / AFP/Getty Images)” Obtained from <https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2020-03-24/indias-prime-minister-decrees-21-day-lockdown-to-curb-virus>

What is Coronavirus?

SARS-Cov-2 virus is a positive, single strand RNA virus that contains four major protein coding genes. The genes are for spike, envelope, membrane and nucleocapsid proteins. The spike proteins bind the ACE receptor, but with a higher affinity than SARS-CoV (Li et al. 2020). The ACE receptor is involved with many processes, including immune response. Individuals with dysregulated immune systems are at greater risk for complications associated with COVID-19. Hyperactivation of the ACE2 receptor via SARS-Cov2 can result in a cytokine storm that can lead to organ failure and subsequent death (Liu et al. 2020).

Migrant workers disproportionately impacted by lockdown

DELHI - Prime Minister Modi announced a national lockdown on March 24. This mandate is in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The lockdown prohibits travel, non-essential business, socializing, and aims to minimize human interactions (PM’s address). Because of the lockdown, many migrant workers no longer have a source of income or a place to stay. For example, many factories and construction sites are shut down and therefore people are unable to work and afford food and shelter. Domestic workers are no longer being called to help out around people’s homes and taxi drivers do not have passengers to drive. These migrant workers therefore cannot afford to stay in the city and are forced to return to their homes or seek shelters provided by the government. Shelters, however, have limited capacity and are available only to individuals with state identification cards, so many migrant workers are choosing to make the long journey back home (Verma 2020).


Some states have offered buses and trains to help migrant workers return to their villages. These buses have also drawn large crowds, which puts them at risk for spreading and contracting COVID-19. Additionally, many workers have been sprayed by harsh chemicals in an attempt to limit exposure to rural areas (Frayer & Pathak 2020). These buses have minimal capacity so many workers are forced to walk many kilometers home. Migrant workers are vulnerable along this journey as they lack adequate food, water and shelter. In many cases, they are also unable to effectively social distance.

As you go along your journey home or to a shelter, you will find yourself with excess and shortages of resources that are necessary for you to successfully get home. Remember to collaborate with those you encounter along the way. Like you, they are also facing great challenges to get home.




Map of India highlighting the city New Delhi and states of UP and Bihar. Image obtained from https://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/india_map.htm


Don'ts ❌

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Have a close contact with anyone, if you're experiencing cough and fever

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Touch your eyes, nose and mouth

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Spit in public

CITATIONS

1. Frayer, L. & Pathak, S. (2020, March 31). *Coronavirus Lockdown Sends Migrant Workers On A Long And Risky Trip Home*. NPR. <https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/03/31/822642382/coronavirus-lockdown-sends-migrant-workers-on-a-long-and-risky-trip-home>
2. Li, H., Liu, Z., & Ge, J. (2020). Scientific research progress of COVID-19/ SARS-CoV-2 in the first five months. *Journal of Cellular and Molecular Medicine*. (early online publication). <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcmm.15364>
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5. Verma, A. (2020, April 23). COVID-19 creates more uncertainty for migrant workers in India · Global Voices. Retrieved from <https://globalvoices.org/2020/04/23/covid-19-creates-more-uncertainty-for-migrant-workers-in-india/>