

Mata Amritanandamayi Math to donate Rs 13 crore to help combat, contain COVID-19

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The Math will provide free care to COVID-19 patients at Amrita Institute of Medical Sciences in Kochi

The Mata Amritanandamayi Math recently announced that it is donating Rs 13 crore to help combat and contain COVID-19 as well as to provide relief to those physically, mentally and economically affected by the virus. Moreover, it will provide free care to COVID-19 patients at the Amrita Institute of Medical Sciences (Amrita Hospital) in Kochi. Rs 10 crore will go to the Central Government's PM CARES Fund, and Rs 3 crore will go to the Kerala Government's Chief Minister's Distress Relief Fund.

"Seeing the entire world hurting and crying in pain, my heart is aching deeply," Amma said in the statement issued by the Math. "Let us all pray for the souls who have succumbed to this pandemic, for the mental peace of their families and friends, for the peace of the world, and for God's grace."

At Amma's request Amrita University and Amrita Hospital have set up a mental-health hotline (0476 280 5050), where people who are feeling stressed, anxious or depressed due to the pandemic and its ramifications can call to get free support. Last week, Amma had publicly requested doctors, psychiatrists and psychologists to set aside time to provide counselling.

“Counselling is a service needed at this time,” Amma said. “Please consider this as an appeal from Amma to doctors, psychiatrists and psychologists. Whether you are believers or not, set aside one or two hours every day to provide free counselling for those who need it.”

For decades Amma has stressed the necessity of mankind changing its lifestyle to be more harmonious with nature and warning that failure to do so would result in increased natural disasters and disease. “The selfish things man has done to nature are now coming back in the form of such epidemics,” Amma said. “We need to develop the attitude that we are nothing but nature’s servants. We should practise humility, servitude and respect. At least now let us stop throwing our arrogance in nature’s face. The time has come to bow down before the forces of nature. The time has come to beg nature to forgive all our trespasses. The time has come to abandon the lackadaisical attitude that nature will just forbear, suffer and forgive all the indignities we keep heaping on her. Nature is commanding us to wake up and look around. To awaken humankind, Nature is sounding a loud alarm in the form of COVID-19.”

Through its deemed university, Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham (Amrita University), the Math also has a interdisciplinary team researching ways to produce low-cost scalable medical masks, gowns and face-protection visors, as well as ventilators, rapid-setup isolation wards, units for sterilising medical waste, and IoT means for the remote monitoring of quarantined patients. The team includes more than 60 faculty from the fields of medicine, nano-science, AI, big data, sensor-manufacturing and material sciences.

Through online classes and interactions, Amrita students are also being engaged in Coronavirus-related curriculum and service opportunities. The Math is also in regular communication with the leaders of its 101 adopted Amrita SeRve villages, promoting Coronavirus awareness, ensuring the villagers are aware of all the latest government-assistance programmes available to them, as well as ensuring that fake news and erroneous information regarding the pandemic does not spread within their communities. Some Amrita SeRve villagers have been trained by the Math to tailor medical masks and are fulfilling government contracts for the same.