Alleging second-class treatment, nurses up the ante on safety gear and housing

Many nurses complain that they are forced to work in covid-19 wards without adequate protective gear for prolonged hours. (PTI)

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Nurses feel they have been treated unfairly by the government and private entities, when compared to doctors
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BENGALURU: On 9 April, nurses at Delhi’s Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Narayan Hospital, a dedicated covid-19 facility, staged a protest demanding proper accommodation during their posting and provision for quarantine.

Doctors have also been vocal about the lack of personal protective equipment (PPE), including masks, coveralls and face shields, and other facilities to help health workers perform their duties with some degree of safety. The needs of nurses, who do a lot of the hard work of care-giving, are often overlooked.

“Nurses serving in this crisis have not been provided proper PPE or accommodation, transport or food services and quarantine facilities,” said Sujanapal Achuthan, Kerala general secretary of Thrissur-based United Nurses Association.

“Nurses spend 10-12 hours a day in covid-19 wards. Most live in hostels and there is a high probability of other nurses being infected if we do not provide safe accommodation and PPE. Even big hospitals are not able to provide PPE to nurses,” said Achuthan.
The association has moved the Supreme Court for a direction seeking protection for health workers and seeking formulation of a national covid-19 management protocol.

Going back home daily also opens them up to prejudice and abuse. When Suguna R., who works in a covid-19 ward in a hospital in Bengaluru, returned home last week, her neighbours called her “corona nurse”. “Nothing could be more insulting,” said the 32-year-old, who has been clocking 12 hours daily without break for the past 45 days.

A recent World Health Organization report said there is a need for about 6 million more nurses worldwide. Nursing is the largest occupational group in the healthcare sector, accounting for roughly 59% of health professionals. India has a shortage of an estimated 2 million nurses, according to a 2019 report by Center for Disease Dynamics, Economics and Policy in the US.

“If the number of patients surge, we will be short of nurses. We cannot dedicate all nurses to covid-19 care. We need them for patients with other ailments too,” said the chairman of a Bengaluru-based private hospital, on condition of anonymity.
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Nurses feel they have been treated unfairly by the government and private entities, when compared to doctors. Last month, the Delhi government tied up with luxury hotel The Lalit to house all doctors serving in its two covid-19 hospitals, but has been slow to respond to pleas from the Delhi State Hospitals’ Nurses Union for housing during posting as well as quarantine facilities for covid-19 ward nurses of LNJP Hospital.

The LNJP nurses have now been provided separate accommodation. “Nurses have been provided accommodation in Gujarat Bhawan in 72 rooms for 144 nurses,” said Jeemol Shaji, general secretary of the Delhi State Hospitals’ Nurses Union.

In a petition to Karnataka chief minister B.S. Yediyurappa last week, P. Girijamb Devi, secretary of Trained Nurses Association (TNA, Karnataka unit), sought accommodation and transportation for nurses serving in the state’s covid-19 hospitals. TNA has 500,000 registered nurses countrywide, of which 32,670 are in Karnataka.

“We have always been given second-class treatment. We understand that we may not be as important as doctors, but people must realize that we are a critical part of the healthcare system,” said a Bengaluru-based nurse on condition of anonymity.

On average, a nurse in India earns ₹8,000 to ₹12,000 per month, despite working long hours and extra shifts with few days off, said Jibin T.C., UNA’s national working president and Maharashtra secretary. “More nurses are testing positive for coronavirus but nobody seems to care. They cannot be expected to work without basic protection and facilities,” he said.
On 6 April, Mumbai’s Wockhardt Hospital was declared a containment zone after more than 40 nurses tested positive for covid-19. Nurses have alleged that the hospital did not keep a patient suspected of carrying the virus in a separate isolation facility, and the nurses in the general ICU were not provided PPE.

Suganda K., a 32-year-old nurse posted in a covid-19 ward in Karnataka’s Belagavi, has not met her three-year-old daughter for two weeks. “She does not understand why I don’t come home every day. So many nurses have left behind their families to fulfil their responsibilities," she said.

Public health experts say nurses are emotionally drained and psychological counselling sessions must begin. “Nurses in Italy, Ireland and Canada have said that working for weeks in covid wards is starting to take a toll on their mental health. That is dangerous," said an official from the Public Health Association.

TNA has urged the government to commence the second phase of training for nurses. “This will provide some reprieve to the current lot who are overburdened. We have
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4/19/2020

Sensex recovers 23% from March lows but this rally is unsustainable

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The bank said its board will hold a meeting on 22 April to approve a plan to raise equity capital. The stake sale will help the bank’s founder and CEO Uday Kotak to lower his stake to 26% to comply with the RBI’s norms.

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New ITR forms will take into account the extension of deadlines for making tax-saving investments

The income tax department said the ITR filing utility will be made available by May 31

Virus cases on the rise in Delhi, Arvind Kejriwal says restrictions will stay

Prime Minister Narendra Modi last week had said areas that show improvement in reducing the number of cases will see some relaxation

Delhi, at present, has the second-highest number of cases after Maharashtra, with 1,893 people testing positive till date
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The ministry also questioned the supply of non-essential products, their point-to-point pick up and delivery.

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Though migrants will be allowed to return to their places of work in cities, state borders will remain closed for any movement.

The movement of migrant workers and labours is subject to strict screening and checks.

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The mortality rate for Covid-19 cases in India is around 3.2%, the health ministry said

Health insurers have to decide coronavirus treatment claims within 2 hours

Health insurers have to expeditiously decide on authorisation and final discharge claims

Health insurers have been advised to issue appropriate guidelines to their respective Third Party Administrators
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The company, which has almost 300,000 employees, said it was hit by the 'Maze' ransomware group and is engaging law enforcement authorities.

Coronavirus recovery rate in India improves, 1,334 new cases in 24 hours

The mortality rate for COVID-19 cases in India is around 3.2%
Over 80% of the deceased had comorbidities, an health ministry official said
PM Modi urges industry to adopt new business models, work culture
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In a blog post published in networking site Linkedin, PM Narendra Modi said that the world is in pursuit of new business models and India, with its innovative zeal, can take the lead in offering a new work culture

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Over 70% of covid-19 cases asymptomatic: Uddhav Thackeray
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In a video message to the state today, Uddhav Thackeray appealed all residents to not hide but report to the authorities in case anyone shows any symptoms of covid-19

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