

India PM Modi orders one-day nationwide curfew to combat virus

March 19 2020

India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday appealed to the 1.3 billion population to follow a one-day curfew alongside a ban on international flight arrivals to combat the coronavirus pandemic.

Modi said in an address to the nation that the curfew on Sunday from 7:00am to 9:00pm would test the giant country's ability to take tough measures against what he called a growing "crisis".

The measure would be "in the interest of the country to follow and prepare us for future challenges."

The [government](#) says there have been 173 infections and four deaths from the virus. But the public is increasingly anxious and there has been a rush on food stores and essential supplies.

Modi said most people, except those in essential services, would have to stay home for several weeks, without giving a timeframe.

"If you feel you won't be affected or infected, you are wrong," Modi said.

"You will be endangering your family and the community and I request every citizen to stay home for the next few weeks."

India must fight to avoid the "explosion" in deaths seen in other countries.

The 29-minute address came hours after the government said no [international flights](#) would be allowed to land in India for one week starting Sunday.

All citizens above 65 and children under 10 were advised to remain at home, Modi said.

States were also directed by the government to force companies and department to make staff work from home.

Some government employees are set to stagger their shifts and alternate working in the office.

New Delhi has already suspended the visas of all foreign tourists and barred passengers of flights from the worst-hit European nations.

Travellers from several countries are also subject to a 14-day quarantine when they arrive in India.

Most schools and entertainment facilities, including cinemas, have already been shut across India, the world's second-most populous country.

The Taj Mahal and other monuments have also been closed to visitors.

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