

India Inc Scales the Wall As China Can't Mask Its Pain

BEING A GOOD NEIGHBOUR ITC, HUL, P&G India and BPL among cos that have responded to requests for hygiene products



**Writankar Mukherjee
& Sagar Malviya**

Kolkata | Mumbai: India Inc is sending face masks, sanitisers, soaps and disinfectants as companies do their bit to help China cope with shortages as the world's most populous nation grapples with the Covid-19 outbreak that's claimed about 2,500 victims so far.

Companies across the world have been seeking to assess the impact of

the coronavirus outbreak that has halted manufacturing in China for global supply chains as well as the domestic market. In India, this has come as a business opportunity for some and a chance to help a neighbouring country for others.

"As a goodwill gesture, we have

sent our products to our partners in China," said Sameer Satpathy, chief executive, personal care products business, ITC. The company recently sent a consignment of Savlon hygiene products across the border.

China is the second biggest market for Procter & Gamble, the

world's biggest consumer goods firm. Its India unit has sent 500,000 masks, with another 350,000 in transit. It's preparing to send another 600,000. From its global units, P&G has sent Safeguard sanitisers, Ariel detergents and Oral-B toothpastes to China.

A Hindustan Unilever spokesperson said, "From India, we have sent Lifebuoy sanitisers to the South-east Asian (SEA) countries and have helped the team in China procure masks."

Chinese electronics makers such as TCL and Haier have sought assistance from their Indian units, while Kodak and Thomson have received requests for supplies of masks and disinfectants. BPL India's chief operating officer Manmohan Ganesh said it has sent 20,000 surgical masks to its suppliers in Shenzhen. "These are for the workers in production factories, so that they can also increase production capacity," he said.

Cross Border Trade

India sending face masks, sanitisers, soaps and disinfectants to China

India units have also stepped up production to meet global needs

Some executives have sought to reach out through social media

MEA on Sunday says restrictions on export of some medical equipment to China due to short supply in India



India Units Raise Production >>> 16

India Units Raise Production

►► From Page 1

The Indian government has partially relaxed export norms for some hygiene products such as surgical masks earlier this month. It had previously imposed a blanket ban on the export of all personal protection equipment to avoid domestic shortages.

As per the latest update from China's National Health Commission, 2,442 people have died of the coronavirus outbreak in the country while 76,936 confirmed cases were reported till Saturday. The virus has spread to other countries such as Hong Kong, South Korea, Iran, Italy and elsewhere. Chinese consumers have been rushing to stock up on household essentials and groceries, fearing supply holdups.

With the disruption in China, often called the factory of the world, India units have stepped up production to meet global needs. Global mask manufacturers such as Honeywell have raised output in India and elsewhere. Apart from China, there is a surge in demand from other parts of the world too such as North America and Europe apart from India, the company said.

Domestic mask manufacturers have reportedly expanded their production to export masks to China which is, however, strictly on a commercial basis.

Some executives have sought to reach out through social media.
