

NEW DELHI, TUESDAY, 24 MARCH 2020

PM TO INDIA INC

Keep key output lines intact, not resort to pay cuts, lay-offs

FE BUREAU

New Delhi, March 23

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi on Monday asked Corporate India to maintain production lines of essential commodities and ensure there is no hoarding or black-marketing in the wake of the outbreak of coronavirus.

Interacting with industry representatives via video-conferencing, Modi said the impact of the pandemic on the economy will be felt for some time to come, with several sectors such as tourism, construction and hospitality likely to be hit.

The PM asked India Inc to allow employees to work from home and not to cut down on workforce in spite of the pandemic's negative impact on their businesses.

INDUSTRY INPUT

■ India Inc ready to offer medical equipment including ventilators, assist in creation of isolation wards, utilise CSR funds

■ Industry leaders raise specific issues being faced by sectors like banking, finance, hospitality, tourism, infrastructure and seeks financial and fiscal assistance cash into bank accounts of people below the I-T threshold

■ Uday Kotak, president-designate of CII, calls for a rate cut of 50-100 bps by RBI



"He said it is imperative that production of essential items should not be impacted at this time, and black marketing and hoarding be prevented," an official statement quoted him as saying.

The industry members thanked the PM for leading from the front and taking swift, front-footed action to counter the threat.

They informed the Prime

Minister about the steps being taken by them to maintain supply lines of essential items and medical equipment including ventilators, assistance in creation of isolation wards, utilisation of CSR funds for combating Covid-19 and provision of assistance to migrant labour.

THEY DISCUSSED the specific issues being faced by sectors like banking, finance, hospitality, tourism, infrastructure and requested for help to overcome these challenges through financial and fiscal assistance.

Industry representatives also appreciated the importance of instituting a lockdown, irrespective of economic losses, to prevent the spread of the virus.

The industry members assured the PM that they would not retrench any worker including blue collar and contract workers.

"We announced our initiatives at the interactive meeting with Prime Minister Modi earlier on Monday. Our initiatives to help the economically deprived people particularly our commitment to not retrench any worker including blue collar and contract workers resonated well with PM Modi who appreciated industry's efforts," CII president, Vikram Kirloskar said.

Uday Kotak, president-designate of CII pointed towards some of the major interventions required from RBI. He said that it is important that a rate cut of 50 to 100 basis points is announced immediately. Kotak also called for dollar liquidity swap as the country was in a comfortable position as far as its dollar reserves are concerned.

Given the need to help people at the bottom of the pyramid, CII has called for cash into the bank accounts of all Indian citizens whose earnings are below Rs 5 lakh (those who are exempted from income tax). All Indian citizens should be given cash in their accounts through the direct benefit transfer; While those below 25