

# Big tech cos, startups boost nation's battle against covid

Companies step up efforts to procure critical medical equipment, augment oxygen supplies

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**B**ig tech and startups are mounting efforts to procure critical oxygen supplies for hospitals while undertaking vaccination for employees amid the worsening healthcare crisis caused by the second covid wave.

Irish multinational Accenture made a fresh pledge of \$25 million to combat the pandemic in India besides providing ventilators, oxygen concentrators and medical kits to frontline workers. The company said it is engaging with the government to provide local language call-centre support for vaccination camps, while setting up continuous telemedicine services for 200,000 individuals and their families.

After importing close to 100 ICU ventilators, Amazon India announced its collaboration with US-India Business Council (USIBC) and US-India Strategic Partnership Forum on Wednesday to bring in another 1,000 Medtronic ICU ventilators into India.

"This is a difficult time for all of us in India. It is reassuring to see the business community come together to help the nation. Together with USIBC, we are working with NITI Aayog and health ministry to identify hospitals in the most urgent need and enable the distribution of ventilators to help those in need," said Amit Agarwal, global senior vice president and country head, Amazon India.

Noida-based payments major Paytm said its order for 21,000 oxygen concentrators is expected to arrive by next week. The concentrators will be sent to government hospitals, covid care facilities, private hospitals, nursing homes as well as residents' welfare associations.

The company is also working with the government to source equipment for setting up oxygen plants in 12-13 cities. Paytm Foundation has collected



Health workers check on patients undergoing treatment at a covid care centre in New Delhi on Wednesday.

more than ₹21 crore in donations to help in India's fight against covid.

Last week, fintech startup CRED allowed members to donate their CRED coins—earned through making credit card payments on its platform—for covid-relief activities.

In an update, the company on Wednesday said more than 7.5 lakh

next 10 days, the company said.

Non-profit Give India said it has collected more than ₹44 crore through donations on its platform, which is currently being routed towards procuring oxygen supplies for hospitals, cash support for families of covid deceased, setting up covid care centres and donating food to families struck by covid.

the premises of a Bengaluru hospital.

Large corporates such as Citi and Samsung have pledged donations of \$10 million and \$5 million respectively on an immediate basis to the government, and to initiate efforts to procure oxygen supplies and critical healthcare equipment.

Over the past week, several Indian startups also joined hands to back the 'Oxygen for Everyone' initiative by ACT Grants, which aims to supply India with 50,000 oxygen concentrators. ACT Grants is an organization founded by more than 40 mainstream VC funds and supported by donations from Indian startups.

Spice Money is also helping rural citizens across 18,000 pin codes to register for covid vaccination through its banking correspondents.

Pharmeasy and HealthifyMe have also opened their platforms to assist individuals in covid vaccination.

## HELPING HAND

**ACCENTURE** has pledged \$25 mn to fight covid besides providing oxygen concentrators, etc

**AFTER** importing 100 ICU ventilators, Amazon India plans to bring in 1,000 more ICU ventilators

**PAYTM** said its order for 21,000 oxygen concentrators is expected to arrive in India by next week

**SEVERAL** startups have joined hands to back the 'Oxygen for Everyone' initiative by ACT Grants

members pledged their CRED coins, helping the platform deploy ₹10 crore to non-profits including Milaap, Hemkunt Foundation and Give India.

Through these donations, close to 450 oxygen concentrators are expected to be deployed within the

Through donations, the platform has already placed orders for 7,500 oxygen concentrators from China and the US with the first shipment of 350 concentrators expected to arrive next week. Give India is also in the process of setting up an oxygen generation plant on