

UPF New Delhi, India webinar: COVID-19 Crisis Management in India: Where Do We Stand?

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New Delhi, India -- UPF-India continued its "Peace Talks" webinar series by organizing an online seminar on July 12, 2020, on the theme, "COVID-19 Crisis Management in India: Where Do We Stand?". The event drew around 600 participants, 107 of whom participated through Zoom and nearly 500 of whom participated through Facebook Live.

The distinguished speakers included Dr. Vijay Jolly, a senior leader of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the ruling party of India; Amb. Ashok Sajjanhar, a former ambassador of India to Kazakhstan, Sweden and Latvia and a noted expert on Indian foreign affairs; Dr. Sushma Yadav, the vice chancellor of B.P.S. Mahila Vishwavidyalaya; Dr. S.P. Singh, the vice chancellor of the Royal Global University, Guwahati; Dr. Parmod Kumar of the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU); and Mr. Devsagar Singh, a veteran journalist in India and executive editor of NewsAbode.com.

All the speakers highlighted the steps the government of India, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has taken to contain the spread of the coronavirus in the country. They said the nationwide lockdown declared by the Prime Minister was a commendable and courageous step for preventing an overwhelming outbreak of COVID-19 infections, which was recognized and appreciated by the World Health Organization (WHO).

Amb. Ashok Sajjanhar spoke about the steps the government has taken to support diplomacy and multilateral cooperation. He remarked: "Our Prime Minister took a proactive lead in building regional cooperation and unity to fight the pandemic. Even though few countries in the SAARC region were free of COVID-19 infections, our Prime Minister convened a video conference meeting of heads of state and

government and proposed the establishment of a SAARC COVID-19 Emergency Fund to which he donated U.S. \$10 million, and he appealed to other countries to contribute to it, for use by all SAARC countries."



Academics Dr. S.P. Singh, Dr. Sushma Yadav and Dr. Parmod Kumar, as well as Mr. Devsagar Singh, shared their views on the management of the COVID-19 crisis in the country.

All the speakers expressed similar opinions about where India stands now in its fight against the pandemic. They said that India has yet to reach its peak of infections, but that fatalities will be not very high as the majority of infections, over 85 percent, have been asymptomatic.

Mr. Krishna Adhikari, secretary general of UPF-India, served as the moderator.