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Market Watch

Covid-19: NHAI makes way for distributing food to migrants at toll plazas

BY NISHTHA SALUJA, ET BUREAU | UPDATED: MAR 28, 2020, 02:08 PM IST

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NEW DELHI: The [National Highways authority of India](#) (NHA) has begun providing food packages at [toll plazas](#) across the country to help people migrating to rural areas, due to a nationwide lockdown announced on Tuesday amid the Covid-19 outbreak.

In a meeting held on Saturday NHAI has asked toll operators to make food arrangements for migrant workers. The move will also benefit truck drivers transporting essential commodities, who are facing issues as food outlets along National [highways](#) remain shut.

"There is a lot of local level migration happening, apart from what we see at Delhi borders," an official aware of the development told ET.

[Contractors](#) have been asked to provide food as part of their corporate social responsibility, the official said.

"We have infrastructure available across the country, there is staff present at toll plazas because they couldn't move out after the lockdown was announced," the official said.

The authority was working in coordination with District-level authorities to ensure there is no instance of overcrowding at these toll plazas. There are around 530 toll plazas across National highways in the country.

While the distribution of fruits, packaged food has begun in toll plazas in Delhi-NCR, it should be made available across the country by tomorrow, the official said.

Union minister of road transport and highways [Nitin Gadkari](#) said in a tweet on Saturday, "I have advised Chairman NHAI and Highway Concessionaires or Toll Operators to consider providing food, water or any kind of support to migrant workers or citizens who are trying to reach to their respective native places."

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday announced a nationwide lockdown till April 14 as Covid-19 cases in the country continue to surge. Migrant labourers have been among the worst affected by the move, as economic activity remains limited to essentials, and they scramble to find their ways back to their homes.



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