The effect of Coronavirus lockdown on dogs in Coimbatore



Susan Joe Philip



R Krithika

UPDATED: MARCH 28, 2020 11:45 IST

COIMBATORE. MARCH 27, 2020 14:56 IST



A friend calls frantically. "They say pets will transmit the coronavirus. What do I do about my dogs?" Mini Vasudevan, co-founder of Coimbatore's Humane Animal Society (HAS), sighs, "It's 100% false but there's so much misinformation going around." Admitting that people, including her staff, were

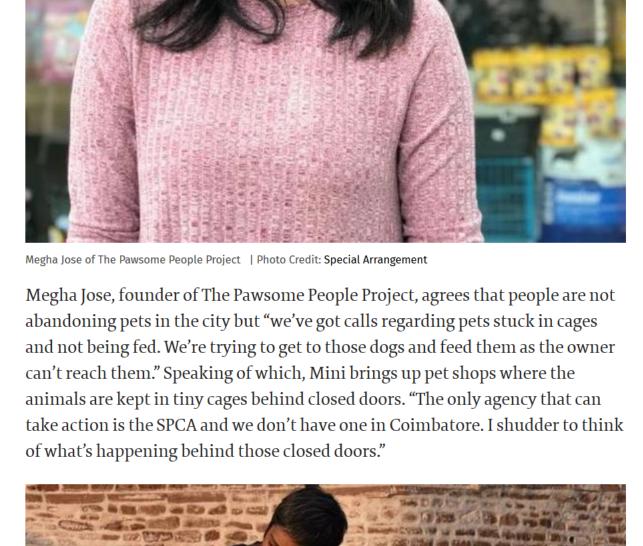
Project say Coimbatoreans have been largely compassionate towards

dogs, both pets and those on the streets

getting scared, she says, "We are working on overcoming that by disseminating correct information."



THE REAL PROPERTY AND ADDRESS OF THE PERSON NAMED IN COLUMN TWO PERSONS AND ADDRESS OF THE PERSON NAMED IN COLUMN TWO PERSON NAMED IN COLUMN TRANSPORT NAMED IN COLUMN TWO PERSON NAMED



Pet owners who are not falling for the fear mongering are coping, says Ahalya Chinnaraj, who owns 14 rescued dogs. She takes them for a walk down her street late at night when no one is around. "And wash them down once we're home." The bigger problem, according to her, is feeding the street dogs. "Some families, including ours, in Sivananda Colony, Tatabad, would leave food before our houses. Suddenly we're noticing that there are more dogs." Megha has an explanation for this. "A few of our volunteers stepped out to feed street dogs and we noticed that they had moved from their original spots. This is probably because they were moving in search of food."

Ahalya is grateful to a veterinary clinic that donated some bags of commercial dog food. "We're keeping that for the street dogs. But even for our dogs we'd only stocked up for around a week to 10 days. We didn't expect a three-week lockdown."

All three make the same point: street dogs usually congregated around meat stalls or small tea shops or restaurants and found a meal there. But now with all these closed, the dogs are struggling. "In some areas, dogs are howling and crying for food and rummaging through trash cans," says Megha. "So we're trying to cover as many areas as possible through our volunteers and feed them. We have appealed to people through our social media handles to feed as many dogs as possible."

Megha says The Pawsome People Project volunteers have not been stopped in

any way — "what's nice is that the cops in the city are letting us do this and

we've faced no issues so far". Ahalya, who is in touch with other volunteers, says they haven't faced any trouble either. However, Mini has another tale to tell. "Our staff coming to work were stopped. Even when they tried explaining that the veterinary sector comes under the exempt category, they wouldn't let them go. Even our ambulance was stopped. The police are not accepting our identity cards, so we're now creating letters with photos for all our staff on the official letterhead. People who are enforcing the law need to be clear about what they are enforcing."

Megha, Mini and Ahalya also emphasise that these are early days but they have a lot of faith in the people of Coimbatore. "Those who feed these dogs regularly will manage," says Ahalya, while Mini narrates a story of someone who created a feeder and a water trough for dogs. "Our people are very kind, they will help," she says confidently.