

HONG KONG WEEKEND



Baljinder Singh (left) has sent 100 oxygen concentrators to India; **teacher Urmila Menon (above)** sold her artwork to raise money; and **businessman Kumar Jairam Khairpuri** has also been supplying vital medical equipment. Photos: K.Y. Cheng, Jonathan Wong, Nora Tam



Society



India's coronavirus crisis moves Hong Kong diaspora to raise funds, send medical supplies

- City residents with family living in India especially affected by devastating second wave of infections
- Although Hong Kong has long been home, ethnic Indians rally together to send oxygen concentrators, medical masks and more

Topic | City Weekend



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Hong Kong-based Indian artist Urmila Menon at her home in Tiu Keng Leng. Photo: Jonathan Wong

Tears during video calls

When Indian national Urmila Menon, 36, moved to Hong Kong in 2017 with her 40-year-old husband after he landed an investment banking job, she did not imagine she would be selling her works of art to raise funds for India.

A teacher in a primary school, she is an only child whose parents live in India's southwestern state of Kerala. Menon has been worried about them since the pandemic, and during their regular video calls, all three often end up crying.

When the catastrophic second wave of infections struck, she learned that some of her friends in India lost their family members.

“I wanted to raise awareness and empathy, and do something about it, even though we are far away,” she says.



Relatives carry an elderly woman suffering from shock after learning of the death of a relative at a hospital in Ahmedabad, India. Photo: EPA-EFE

Outside work, she is an artist who started urban sketching in 2015 using digital and traditional media and has held exhibitions in Hong Kong and overseas.

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Within a week, she sold 17 works to 12 buyers who paid between HK\$50 and HK\$2,000. She raised HK\$6,264 in total, which she sent to an Indian NGO helping those affected by Covid-19.

Her buyers were nine Indians and three Hongkongers.

“It was meaningful in so many ways, like it was people from Hong Kong coming together to help people in India,” she says.