

After three cats die in shelter, Madurai MLA intervenes to supply food

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CORONAVIRUS WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15, 2020 - 17:07

For Devika Khazvini, the Founder of Cattitude, a shelter for aged cats, the last two weeks have been nothing short of a nightmare. Since the lockdown began, three of her cats in the Madurai shelter died due to the shortage of kibble (cat-food) that they were accustomed to. With most pet shops closed in the locality and even raw fish unavailable, the caretakers of the shelter watched helplessly as the aged cats struggled, unable to eat any new food that they attempted to introduce.

Finally, unable to withstand their pain, Devika took to Facebook on April 13, appealing to people

to help her transport kibble to the shelter from Chennai, where she lived and already had the necessary supplies. Cattitude has a similar shelter in Chennai as well where there are 5 cats and 3 dogs. In Madurai, there were 19 cats of which 3 died.

"Our cat shelter functions alongside a home for semi orphaned girls and the whole idea is to create an environment of love and trust where the girls can take care of the animals," says Devika. "It was heartbreaking to have buried three cats. The day after the third cat died, I took to Facebook to ask for help. I couldn't figure out the logistics of sending cat food to Madurai, in the midst of a lockdown because it does not qualify as an emergency as per the given guidelines," she adds.

Soon after Devika put up the post however, her fortunes turned. The post was seen by Margaret, the wife of Madurai Central MLA P. T. R. Palanivel Thiagarajan. And as soon as the MLA heard of the predicament of the cats from his wife, he made necessary arrangements.

"Based on a recent Kerala judgement which stated that cat food is essential, I had a lawyer collect the relevant documents. I then spoke to the authorities in Chennai and they told me that an application can be sent in for permission to carry the food. Meanwhile, I also spoke to a friend in Dindigul district who was able to source cat food and we had the DMK IT wing members help transport it," says the MLA. He also paid for the food that was transported. "I also found someone in Chennai who could transport the food to Madurai," he adds.

Within two hours of the matter coming to his notice, the MLA had managed to get cat food delivered to the shelter in Madurai from Dindigul. He also sourced more bags from Madurai and gave the shelter over 25 kg of cat food.



In addition to this with the stock from Chennai coming in, Devika says the cats will be well fed till the lockdown ends.

"We are so thankful for this intervention. The caretaker from the Madurai shelter called and told me that the cats were so pleased to see the kibble and had eaten well after so many days. I cannot even begin to express my gratitude," she says. "And what more, the food came to us on the 15th anniversary of our shelter. And it was a beautiful memory to mark the day."