

They help counsel world in multiple languages

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Kochi: Coronacare.life, a web-based telemedicine and counselling platform developed by a Kochi-based startup Billionlives, has come as a huge help to people in countries hit by Covid-19 by helping them access volunteers across the world.

After the calls from Italy, which is seeing hundreds of deaths every day, spiked a week ago, they added Italian language support. Swahili was added a day ago.

“Think of it as a multi-lingual call centre in the web. It’s a hunting line where if a call is not picked up it gets transferred to the next volunteer,” said John Santhosh, founder and CEO of Billionlives. The website currently lists 13 languages, including Spanish and French and two Chinese dialects — Mandarin and Cantonese. In India, the support is available in Malayalam and Hindi apart from English.

Santhosh said the project began as a telemedicine platform on the cloud, connecting hospitals under Catholic Health Association of India (CHAI) nearly three weeks ago. But soon IT evolved to embrace hospitals outside the CHAI fold and provide mental health support to general public.

Medical professionals looking for specialist advice on Covid-19 can speak to a panel of virologists, pulmonologists and microbiologists through the platform which has



KEEPING A CHECK: A health official screens a passenger who deboarded at Kottayam railway station using infrared thermometer

embedded audio, video and chat facilities.

“People are tensed and living in fear and so they might like to speak to someone. That is what we are trying to fulfil through this forum. We have around 40 volunteers in the group. For Italian language support, we have help from Cadis International, an organization of Camillan priests. We have around 10 of them,” said Fr George Kannanthanam, secretary, CHAI, who also leads the task force of volunteers. The specialist panel comprises entirely of doctors from Rajagiri Hospital. They also roped in Kerala Association of Professional Social Workers (KAPS) since they had lot of volunteer counsellors.