



## **DAILY NEWS BULLETIN**

LEADING HEALTH, POPULATION AND FAMILY WELFARE STORIES OF THE DAY  
Wednesday **20210317**

**COVID-19 tally to 1,14,38,734, according to the Union Health Ministry data**

**Nation sees highest one-day Covid spike this year (The Tribune: 20210317)**

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/nation/nation-sees-highest-one-day-covid-spike-this-year-226496>

As many as 30,254 new infections were recorded in a span of 24 hours on December 13

Nation sees highest one-day Covid spike this year

The 188 new fatalities include 87 from Maharashtra, 38 from Punjab, 15 from Kerala and 12 from Chhattisgarh. — Tribune File Photo

India recorded its highest daily tally of coronavirus cases this year with 28,903 new infections, taking the total COVID-19 tally to 1,14,38,734, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Wednesday.

The death toll increased to 1,59,044 with 188 new fatalities, the highest in around two months, the data updated at 8 am showed. Registering an increase for the seventh day in a row, the total active caseload has increased to 2,34,406 which now comprises 2.05 per cent of the total infections, while the recovery rate has further dropped to 96.56 per cent, the data stated.

As many as 30,254 new infections were recorded in a span of 24 hours on December 13.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 1,10,45,284, while the case fatality rate has dropped to 1.39 per cent, the data stated.

India's COVID-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 30 lakh on August 23, 40 lakh on September 5 and 50 lakh on September 16. It went past 60 lakh on September 28, 70 lakh on October 11, crossed 80 lakh on October 29, 90 lakh on November 20 and surpassed the one-crore mark on December 19.

According to the ICMR, 22,92,49,784 samples have been tested up to March 16 with 9,69,021 samples being tested on Tuesday.

The 188 new fatalities include 87 from Maharashtra, 38 from Punjab, 15 from Kerala and 12 from Chhattisgarh.

A total of 1,59,044 deaths have been reported so far in the country including 52,996 from Maharashtra, 12,556 from Tamil Nadu, 12,403 from Karnataka, 10,945 from Delhi, 10,297 from West Bengal, 8,750 from Uttar Pradesh and 7,185 from Andhra Pradesh.

The health ministry stressed that more than 70 per cent of the deaths occurred due to comorbidities.

"Our figures are being reconciled with the Indian Council of Medical Research," the ministry said on its website, adding that state-wise distribution of figures is subject to further verification and reconciliation. — PTI

## **Vaccination**

### **Over 30 lakh vaccinated against COVID-19 on Monday, highest so far The Tribune: 20210317)**

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/coronavirus/over-30-lakh-vaccinated-against-covid-19-on-monday-highest-so-far-225989>

The vaccination of beneficiaries aged over 60 has touched 1 crore within 15 days

More than 30 lakh people were inoculated against COVID-19 on March 15, the highest in a day so far, taking the total number of vaccine doses administered in the country to 3,29,47,432, the Union Health Ministry said on Tuesday.

The vaccination of beneficiaries aged over 60 has crossed 1 crore within 15 days, the ministry said.

Of the total 30,39,394 doses given in a span of 24 hours on March 15, day-59 of the vaccination drive, 26,27,099 beneficiaries have been administered the 1st dose across 42,919 sessions and 4,12,29 individuals have been given the 2nd dose, according to the data compiled at 7 am.

The 26,27,099 beneficiaries include 19,77,175 beneficiaries aged over 60 and 4,24,713 individuals aged 45-60 years with comorbidities.

A total of 3,29,47,432 vaccine doses have been administered through 5,55,984 sessions, as per the provisional report till Tuesday 7 am.

These include 74,46,983 healthcare workers (HCWs) who were administered the 1st dose, 44,58,616 HCWs who were given the 2nd dose, 74,74,406 FLWs who have received the 1st dose and 14,09,332 FLWs who have taken the 2nd dose.

Besides, 18,88,727 beneficiaries aged more than 45 years with specific co-morbidities and 1,02,69,368 beneficiaries aged more than 60 years have been given the 1st dose.

The ministry also said that Maharashtra, Punjab, Karnataka, Gujarat and Tamil Nadu continue to report a surge in the COVID-19 daily new cases, adding that 79.73 per cent of the new cases are reported from these states in a span of 24 hours.

A total of 24,492 new cases were registered in a span of 24 hours.

Maharashtra has reported the highest daily new cases at 15,051. It is followed by Punjab with 1,818 while Kerala reported 1,054 new cases.

Eight states are displaying an upward trajectory in daily new cases. These are Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Delhi, Gujarat, Karnataka and Haryana, the ministry said.

Kerala is reporting a consistently declining trend over the last one month. India's total active caseload has reached 2,23,432 which comprises 1.96 per cent of total infections.

"Maharashtra, Kerala and Punjab cumulatively account for 76.57 per cent of India's total active cases," the ministry said.

The total tests conducted in the country have surpassed 22.8 crore (22,82,80,763). The cumulative national Positivity Rate currently stands at 5 per cent, the ministry said. A total of 131 deaths were reported in the last 24 hours.

Seven states account for 82.44 per cent of the new deaths. Maharashtra saw the maximum casualties (48). Punjab follows with 27 daily deaths and Kerala reported 11 deaths in a span of 24 hours.

Sixteen states and UTs have not reported any COVID-19 deaths in the last 24 hours. These are Rajasthan, Chandigarh, Jammu and Kashmir, Odisha, Jharkhand, Lakshadweep, Sikkim, Ladakh (UT), Daman and Diu and Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Meghalaya, Manipur, Tripura, Nagaland, Mizoram, A&N Islands and Arunachal Pradesh. — PTI

## Vaccination

### Coronavirus Vaccine: Do you have full protection immediately after vaccination? And other things you should know (The Times of India: 20210317)

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/life-style/health-fitness/health-news/coronavirus-vaccine-do-you-have-full-protection-immediately-after-vaccination-and-other-things-you-should-know/photostory/81543221.cms>

The COVID vaccine shot can certainly prevent you from the many complications associated by the virus that's still surging across the globe. However, if you think the jab would also suffice complete protection against the newer, deadlier COVID strain, there's something you should know.

Even with the best vaccine shot, there still would be a marginal chance that one can get infected with the virus.

With the newer coronavirus strains in circulation, there still exists a high risk of infection. However, as scientists are observing, there may be a difference in the way you develop symptoms.

Here are some things you need to know before getting prepped up for your vaccination turn.

02/6 Can you get infected after vaccination?

As per the newest findings, people can even get infected with the virus after getting the shot, but the symptoms may not be that severe. This new revelation came to light during the routine testing of healthcare providers at the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), USA.

The healthcare institution found 14 breakthrough cases, where healthcare workers had contracted novel coronavirus after being fully vaccinated. Surprisingly, the workers showed mild or no symptoms at all. The contraction was detected only because they were subjected to routine testing for work.

03/6 Other incidence

Breakthrough cases refer to people who tested positive 14 or more days after their second shot. This is because it takes about two weeks to develop immunity after the second shot.

Similar things were noticed by officials at the Oregon Health Authority (OHA). The authorities later clarified that the clinical trials of vaccines presently in use included breakthrough cases. During the clinical trial it was specified that after getting the shot when the volunteers came in contact with COVID strains, the severity of illness was less.

04/6How effective a vaccine A vaccine's effectiveness and efficacy are two different things. As per experts, efficacy refers to how well a drug works under controlled circumstances such as a clinical trial, while effectiveness refers to how well it works in the real world. A high efficacy rate does not always mean a high level of effectiveness in the real world and vice versa. Most of the time the effectiveness of the vaccine does not match its rate of efficacy due to variables happening in the real world.

As per clinical studies and testing, AstraZeneca's Covishield vaccine has 62 and 72 per cent, while Covaxin has 81 per cent rate of efficacy. In the case of Moderna and Pfizer vaccines, the efficacy rate is 94 and 95 per cent respectively. This simply means that there is still chances that even after getting the dose a person may get.

The risk of infection is higher among those who are already suffering from any kind of illness, have compromised immunity and are above 60 years. The vaccine can prevent severe illness, but as established, experts cannot really guarantee if any of the COVID vaccines could also prevent transmission of the virus to other people.

Even if the vaccination is not 100 per cent effective, it is the best alternative to protect yourself from COVID virus. You should not hesitate about getting the vaccine and should take the one available to you as soon as possible.

Latest findings also indicate that even after getting the COVID vaccine, you need to follow the necessary precautions. If you notice any changes in your health, immediately contact your doctor. Masks and social distancing would still need to be followed, till the time we get to herd immunity level.

## **Medicine**

### **Dissolving your medicine in hot water helps in faster action, claims study (The Times of India: 20210317)**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/life-style/health-fitness/health-news/dissolving-your-medicine-in-hot-water-helps-in-faster-action-claims-study/photostory/81532500.cms>

Nobody wants to fall sick. That's the reason when we are down with fever or cold, we want the medication to work as fast as possible so we can get back on our feet and carry on with our daily activities. Isn't this true? Thankfully, scientists have come up with a method that can speed up the rate at which the medications starts to work faster.

02/5How to take your medication

According to research published in the Journal Pharmaceutical Research, to make your cold and fever medication more effective, you should take it as a hot beverage. This can help your body to absorb the medication faster and you will feel better in less time.

### 03/5The study

A study carried out by a team of researchers specifically to understand how paracetamol is absorbed in different formats found that drinking the medication in the form of a hot beverage rather than swallowing the tablet can ensure its quick absorption by the body. By doing this our body absorbs the medication faster and acts faster in the first one hour after taking the dose.

For the study, the researchers collected the data from 25 healthy male volunteers. The participants were first asked to take the medication in the form of a tablet and then in the form of a beverage. Using both scintigraphic imaging and blood tests methods, they concluded that the body absorbed the same 1,000 mg dosage of medicine better in hot drink sachets versus in the form of tablets.

### READMORE

#### 04/5Why does the medicine work better in the form of hot beverage?

According to the expert, the hot beverage allows rapid gastric emptying, in which the food, especially sugar, moves from your stomach into your small bowel quickly. This reduces the time taken between drug ingestion and the onset of symptom control. In simpler words, hot beverages help to move the drug faster into the small intestines as a result it enters the bloodstream faster and starts to ease your discomfort.

The team of researchers explained that paracetamol is more soluble in hot water as compared to cold water. The temperature of the beverage can help to break the medication faster and help it enter the bloodstream in less amount of time.

#### 05/5How you should take your medication

For the best result, dissolve your paracetamol in a glass of warm water. Water is neutral and does not change the composition of the medication. Taking your medication with milk, caffeine or fruit juice can have some negative side-effects. Even swallowing your meds without fluid can increase the risk of choking and may cause irritation and inflammation in the oesophagus. It can further lead to several health issues like heartburn, chest pain and at times it can even lead to bleeding and holes.

Patients are still reporting symptoms and their effects, months after battling the disease. What exactly causes long COVID, or makes one vulnerable to the ills of the post-COVID-syndrome is yet unclear. However, with evidence from many case studies, researchers have been able to establish a marker of some symptoms which can be common with all long haulers.

According to a recent peer-reviewed study published in the journal, Nature Medicine, COVID patients who end up being long haulers suffer from FIVE specific symptoms of the infection in the initial weeks of infection.

For a condition that is known to impact over 10% of COVID patients globally, the knowledge of symptoms can help people prepare for the eventuality and manage their health better.

Some researchers have also observed that patients suffering from post-COVID syndrome can experience symptoms that come up in regular intervals, say about a week or 10 days, or in some cases, follow up a good two months after making a recovery from the infection, throwing patients into a tizzy. The timeline can be so delayed, some patients might not know the signs they are suffering from are categorized as symptoms of long COVID either.

Broadly, these are the symptoms to check for:

Excruciating fatigue, exhaustion and tiredness are all symptoms associated with a viral disease of magnitude as big as COVID-19.

Unfortunately, symptoms of dreariness and energy loss are also the symptoms of degradation which can take the longest to resolve, and linger on for a months-long time.

Tiredness and fatigue is a natural bodily reaction of the system getting exhausted of fighting a heavy viral disease for a long time. It can also happen that the immune system mistakenly unloads dangerous cytokines, which forces the body to attack itself and cause symptoms like fatigue.

Therefore, the value of rest, hydration and recovery cannot be repeated during the infection days. Eat well, drink plenty of replenishing fluids, and most importantly, take your time to recover instead of forcing your body to exert itself.

Hoarse voice, along with sore throat and cough are some of the symptoms seen in the very early stage of infection and considered to be the means by which the virus attacks the body.

Having a hoarse or changed voice could also mean that you are vulnerable to developing long COVID.

A hoarse voice happens when the virus starts to rapidly attack the throat and the respiratory channels, causing inflammation. COVID patients can also experience long bouts of coughing

which can push vocal cords forcefully together, pushing mucus out and make one experience a difference in their voice.

Headache is one of the common signs of coronavirus infection. People who suffer from COVID headaches report it as an unusual, excruciating, sometimes one-sided headache which can make it difficult to function. It can also be a sign of severe infection if it persists for longer.

If you have a persisting headache that lasts longer than 72 hours, do not get relief even after popping in painkillers, experience unusual neuro and gastrointestinal symptoms and experience throbbing, pulsating pain, get help as soon as possible.

Breathing difficulties right now are one of the most feared consequences of COVID. In some cases, acute breathing problems can result in oxygen deprivation, shortness of breath and impair vital functioning. It can also be a sign of severe infection if it persists for longer.

Experiencing respiratory problems or chronic issues can also damage sensitive air sacs present in the lung, which can be bad for the body. Hence, it is not a sign to be taken lightly. Breathing difficulties are also the prime reason a lot of long COVID patients require the usage of oxygen support machines and respirators for prolonged weeks.

#### 07/7Muscle pain

Muscle and body aches are another way the virus tears down crucial muscle fibres, causes widespread inflammation in the body. It can also be symptom patients can feel for a long, long while

In the case of severe COVID-19, terrible backaches, body aches, muscle pain, soreness and joint inflammation can be experienced for months at a stretch. While there's no one remedy to resolve the problems, long-term care and exercises which improve the body's agility may be required.

### **Post-vaccine blood clots**

#### **Post-vaccine blood clots a form of rare cerebral thromboses: European Medicines Agency (The Hindu: 20210317)**

<https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/health/post-vaccine-blood-clots-a-form-of-rare-cerebral-thrombosis-european-medicines-agency/article34086296.ece>

Scientists at the Germany-based Paul-Ehrlich-Institut report that the blood clots observed in some of those vaccinated are a “special form of very rare cerebral vein thrombosis”. This corresponds to a deficiency in platelets and bleeding following vaccination with the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine. The recommendations from the institute were the reason

Germany put on hold ongoing vaccinations until a full review by the European Medicines Agency (EMA).

## **NIMHANS - mental health outreach**

### **Govt., NIMHANS tie up for mental health outreach to children (The Hindu: 20210317)**

<https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/health/govt-nimhans-tie-up-for-mental-health-outreach-to-children/article34086431.ece>

The Ministry of Women and Child Development is funding a project led by NIMHANS aimed at mental health outreach for children who are abandoned.

## **Medical colleges**

### **Health Minister Harsh Vardhan: 157 medical colleges under different stages of implementation in India (The Hindu: 20210317)**

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/health-minister-harsh-varadhan-157-medical-colleges-under-different-stages-of-implementation-in-india/article34083506.ece>

He said 58 of these colleges are in the first phase of the implementation, 24 in the second phase and 75 colleges, which were announced recently, in the third phase.

A total of 157 medical colleges are under various stages of implementation across the country, Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan informed the Rajya Sabha on Tuesday.

## **Coronavirus**

### **Coronavirus | 60% of new COVID-19 cases in Maharashtra (The Hindu: 20210317)**

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/six-states-account-for-over-85-of-fresh-covid-19-cases-in-india-health-ministry/article34042940.ece>

126 deaths in the 24 hours ending 8 a.m. on March 11.

Maharashtra reported the highest daily new COVID cases at 13,659 (almost 60% of the daily new cases) with the country reporting 22,854 new cases in the last 24 hours, a release issued by the Health Ministry said on Thursday. Maharashtra

## **Pandemic**

### **The hidden pandemic of single-use plastic (The Indian Express: 20210317)**

<https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/covid-19-pandemic-plastic-pollution-7231459/>

Covid halted, and even reversed, much of our progress against plastic pollution. What are the steps we can take now?

Considering that plastic pollution is a truly society-wide problem, it is important for government, businesses, and civil society to coordinate to find solutions. (AP photo)

2021 offers a hint of hope after a year of gloom. Vaccines are rolling out, and we might permit ourselves visions of normality as the battle against the COVID-19 pandemic at last swings in our favour. While we may soon prevail against COVID-19, we can't ignore an increasing problem that the fight against the virus has worsened. Plastics have been deployed in great quantities as a shield against COVID. But little attention has been paid to where the increased plastic waste will end up. The sad irony is we were on the cusp of real victories against plastic pollution just as the coronavirus pandemic began.

In 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi committed to completely phase out single-use plastics by 2022. The commitment called for better arrangements to collect, store, and recycle single-use plastic. The movement was also international. The UN Environment Programme, with the support of Norway and Japan, undertook a multiyear assessment of how plastic finds its way into riverways, and ultimately the ocean, through projects like CounterMEASURE. And National Geographic's "Sea to Source: Ganges" Expedition brought together four countries, including India and Bangladesh, to holistically study plastic pollution within the Ganges river basin.

The pandemic halted and, in some cases, reversed much of this progress. Plastics, especially single-use plastics, became more ubiquitous. Masks, sanitiser bottles, personal protective equipment, food packaging, water bottles: Life came to be ensconced in a plastic shell.

In time, this plastic will disintegrate into tiny particles of less than five millimetres — known as microplastics — and move through water bodies and farm soil to enter the food we eat and

the air we breathe. We know that only 9 per cent of all plastic ever produced has been recycled, while 79 per cent of all plastic produced can be found in the world's landfills and in our air, water, soil, and other natural systems. Plastic doesn't belong in our bodies and it doesn't belong in nature.

But plastic is still important. Its central role in durable goods, medicine and food safety means that it is not practical to get rid of entirely. Instead, we must be more thoughtful about where, when and how we use it. We need an approach that includes reducing the manufacture of new fossil fuel-based plastics, improving waste collection and disposal, and developing and using alternatives.

There are several steps we can take right now, even during the struggle against COVID-19, keeping in mind that above all we should avoid single-use plastics as much as possible.

Firstly, we should ensure that waste collection operates at the same pace as waste generation. We know from UNEP and National Geographic's work that litter is a large part of the plastic pollution ending up in Indian rivers. Improved planning and frequency of waste disposal operations can alleviate this.

Secondly, we must be able to segregate waste and used plastic early in the waste-to-value cycle so that the plastic remains suitable for treatment and recycling. Some source segregation efforts became more normalised during the pandemic and this is a trend that should continue. It will make recycling much easier and more economically viable.

Thirdly, we need to encourage environmentally-friendly alternatives to single-use plastics where they exist and develop alternatives where they do not exist. Business models that avoid plastic waste through alternative product delivery systems, promote circularity, and use plastic waste should be encouraged. We can make a difference with our wallets.

And finally, considering that plastic pollution is a truly society-wide problem, it is important for government, businesses, and civil society to coordinate to find solutions.

UNEP and its partners are working with the Indian government towards these goals, drawing in researchers, enterprises and community groups to address plastic pollution. The science being generated by UNEP and National Geographic is informing policy and decision-making processes at the national, regional and local level. We hope these efforts will contribute to strengthening the existing plastic waste management framework in India and to the development of a National Action Plan for Marine Litter and Plastic Pollution in Rivers.

the title 'A hidden pandemic'. Bagai is head, UN Environment Programme's India Office and Jambeck, National Geographic Fellow and Professor of Environmental Engineering

## **Premature newborn babies,**

### **WHO urges healthworkers to allow lifesaving mother-baby contact? (The Indian Express: 20210317)**

<https://indianexpress.com/article/lifestyle/health/who-urges-healthworkers-to-allow-lifesaving-mother-baby-contact-7230798/>

Newborn babies all over the world have “a right to the life-saving contact they need with their parents”, and this should not be denied due to the COVID-19 pandemic, said Anshu Banerjee, a WHO expert in maternal and newborn health

Newborn, mother-newborn, WHO Mother-baby contact is essential for a newborn's health. (Source: Getty Images/Thinkstock)

The COVID-19 pandemic is severely affecting the care of sick or premature newborn babies, with many being unnecessarily separated from their mothers and put at risk of death or long-term health problems, global health experts said on Tuesday.

Two new studies cited by the World Health Organization (WHO) found that thousands of neonatal healthcare workers are not allowing mothers with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infections to have skin-to-skin contact with their newborns, and nearly a quarter of those surveyed are not allowing breastfeeding.

Yet keeping mothers and babies together and encouraging all babies to have so-called “kangaroo mother care” – which involves early and very close contact between a mother and a newborn – could save more than 125,000 lives, according to a study published in the Lancet EclinicalMedicine journal.

Newborn babies all over the world have “a right to the life-saving contact they need with their parents”, and this should not be denied due to the COVID-19 pandemic, said Anshu Banerjee, a WHO expert in maternal and newborn health.

ALSO READ [National Newborn Week: ‘Covid may have reversed the gains made in state’s maternal and newborn health’

“Decades of progress in reducing child deaths will be jeopardized unless we act now,” he said in a statement.

The WHO says mothers should continue to share a room with their babies from birth and be able to breastfeed and have skin-to-skin contact – even when COVID-19 is suspected or confirmed.

But a study in the BMJ Global Health journal found that two-thirds of 1,120 healthcare workers surveyed worldwide said they would separate mothers and babies with a positive COVID-19 test or if it was not clear whether they might have COVID-19.

More than 85% of those surveyed reported fearing for their own health, with personal protective equipment (PPE) shortages, stress and safety among the key concerns. In some hospitals, the survey found, vital resources including staff and oxygen supplies were being moved from newborn wards to COVID-19 wards.

## **Pollution**

**Air we breathe: Delhi tops list of most polluted capitals for 3rd yr  
(Hindustan Times: 20210317)**

<https://epaper.hindustantimes.com/Home/ArticleView>

# Pollution fight goes up in smoke

Report says seven of the 10 most polluted cities in the world are located in NCR

## Why PM2.5 was picked

- PM2.5 is defined as ambient airborne particulates that measure up to 2.5 microns in size. These include a range of chemical makeups and come from a range of human-made sources, including fossil-fuel powered motor vehicles, power generation, industrial activity, agriculture and biomass burning.
- The microscopic size of PM2.5 allows these particles to enter the bloodstream upon inhalation, potentially causing far-reaching health effects. PM2.5 exposure has also been associated with low birth weight, increased acute respiratory infections and stroke.

**ANNUAL WHO PM2.5 target: 10µg/m<sup>3</sup>**

## The air Delhi breathes

**20-40%** Contribution of farm fires in Punjab to air pollution levels in Delhi

During peak burning season, Delhi experienced average PM2.5 levels of 144 µg/m<sup>3</sup> in November and 157 µg/m<sup>3</sup> in December, crossing the WHO's annual exposure guideline by over 14 times

**7mn**

Premature deaths across the world every year due to air pollution

## Delhi has worst air of all capitals

(Average PM2.5 levels in 2020)

Delhi, India	84.1
Dhaka, Bangladesh	77.1
Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia	46.6
Kabul, Afghanistan	46.5
Doha, Qatar	44.3
Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan	43.5
Sarajevo, Bosnia & Herzegovina	42.5
Manama, Bahrain	39.7
Jakarta, Indonesia	39.6
Kathmandu, Nepal	39.2

## Delhi's PM2.5 levels last year



## Most polluted cities in the world

(Average PM2.5 levels in 2020)

Hotan, China	110.2
Ghaziabad	106.6
Bulandshahr	98.4
Bisrakh	96
Bhiwadi	95.5
Noida	94.3
Greater Noida	89.5
Kanpur	89.1
Lucknow	86.2
Delhi	84.1

Source: World Air Quality Report 2020 (This report only includes PM2.5 data that has been reported by ground-based monitoring stations in real time or close to real time. Data is sourced from government monitoring stations and private stations. Historical datasets provided by governments have been selectively added to fill gaps or add locations where available)

New Delhi : Delhi was the most polluted capital city in the world in 2020 for the third consecutive year, according to a report by a Swiss group that ranked cities based on their air quality measured in terms of the levels of ultrafine particulate matter (PM 2.5) that can enter the organs and cause lasting damage.

Delhi was also ranked the 10th most polluted of the 50 cities from where data was analysed. Of the top 30, 22 were located in India. In the overall city ranking, China's Hotan topped the list while Ghaziabad in NCR was ranked second. All cities between rank 2 and 14 were Indian.

The World Air Quality Report, 2020 by IQAir that was released globally on Tuesday showed that Delhi recorded an annual average PM 2.5 concentration of 84.1µg/m<sup>3</sup>. Delhi was followed by Dhaka (Bangladesh) with the annual concentrations of 77.1µg/m<sup>3</sup> and then Ulaanbaatar (Mongolia) recording 46.6µg/m<sup>3</sup> of PM 2.5 levels last year.

The WHO states that while no level of PM2.5 exposure is free from adverse health effects, annual average exposure below 10 µg/m<sup>3</sup> minimises risks. The ambient air quality standards in India prescribes an annual average of 40µg/m<sup>3</sup> as the safer limit for PM 2.5.

According to the report, data was sourced from government monitoring and privately owned stations.

Delhi has been at the centre of India's air pollution crisis for years now, which particularly worsens every winter season. The landlocked demography of the national capital also puts it at a disadvantage, as winds carrying pollutants from neighbouring states also impacts its air. Experts have time and again pointed out that sharing a common air shed with the Indo-Gangetic Plains, the issue of Delhi's pollution cannot be tackled in isolation, and the governments will have to come up with a holistic plan to bring down emissions in the entire region.

According to the region wise analysis for central and south Asia, the report showed that top 14 of the 15 most polluted cities were in India with Ghaziabad ranked one and Delhi ninth. Ten of the top 14 most polluted cities in the region were in Delhi-NCR.

The report said improvement in air quality during the Covid-19 lockdown was only short-lived.

"Cities with higher average PM2.5 levels and denser populations tended to observe the most significant PM2.5 reductions from Covid-19 lockdown measures. Delhi (-60%), Seoul (-54%) and Wuhan (-44%), for example, all observed substantial drops during their respective lockdown periods as compared to the same time frame in 2019," the report that was released on Tuesday said.

"By the end of 2020, rebounds in industry and transport resulted in smaller average annual reductions. In Delhi, the overall reduction after the Covid-19 lockdown reopening was 15%, Seoul (South Korea) it was 16%, in Wuhan it was 18%. In Los Angeles, there was an overall increase was 15%," it said.

Air pollution caused an estimated 54,000 premature deaths in New Delhi in 2020, according to another study by IQAir and Greenpeace Southeast Asia released recently.

The report released Tuesday also highlighted how Delhi's air quality during the onset of winters, starting October, worsens because of external factors such as crop residue burning carried out in the neighbouring states of Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. As the burning of crop stubble peaked last year, Delhi's PM2.5 levels averaged 144 ug/m<sup>3</sup> in November, and 157 ug/m<sup>3</sup> in December, the findings show.

"Delhi's most polluted months correlate with the agricultural burning season, which spans October through December. During these months, the average pollution exposure often exceeds the WHO (World Health Organization) annual target 10 ug/m<sup>3</sup>) by more than 14 times," the report said.

Anumita Roychowdhury, executive director (research and advocacy), Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), said most cities in the world saw an unprecedented reduction in the pollution levels last year because of the global Covid-19 pandemic.

"We are reducing pollution concentrations, but Delhi still has a long way to go. Cities bouncing back from the lockdown is an indicator of the high impacts of local and regional pollution. We need to strengthen our reform strategy to address vehicular pollution, emissions from industry and power plants, etc.," Roychowdhury said.

IQAir is a Swiss air quality technology company that specialises in developing air quality monitoring and air cleaning products. It also operates AirVisual, a real-time air quality information platform.

The report acknowledged contributions by Greenpeace, the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA) and the UN environment programme.

# Grow smarter with yoga

Yoga specialist Namita Piparaiya suggests few yoga techniques that help supercharge your brain for success

SWATI SHARMA

THE ASIAN AGE

Looking at yogis contorting themselves into unthinkable postures, wrapping their limbs around like they were made of rubber, it is easy to imagine that yoga benefits only if you do the impossible. In reality, though, yoga is a far more inclusive practice that everyone can benefit from. More importantly, it is a practice that can transform and supercharge your brain, making you more productive and efficient in your everyday life.

In fact, regular yoga practice even helps increase your grey matter in areas responsible for memory retention and rational thinking. That is why consistent yoga practice improves focus, helps us control our emotions, reduces impulsive behaviour and improves decision-making.

But to get these benefits, one must incorporate all three pillars of yoga into their practice. These are *asana* (posture), *pranayama* (breathing exercises), and *dhyana* (meditation). Interestingly, though when it comes to the brain, meditation is the biggest influencer.

Namita Piparaiya, yoga and ayurveda lifestyle specialist and founder of Yoganama, lists five yoga techniques that can supercharge your brain for success.

## MEDITATION



This is the crux of yoga: everything you did till now in your practice was to prepare yourself for this step. In this stage, you begin with focusing your mind on one chosen object or subject of meditation, and you repeatedly think about it. The chosen object of meditation can be a mantra, a deity, a spiritual symbol, or your breath. In the beginning, you may be able to keep your focus on the object only for a few seconds before getting distracted again. But there'll be a moment when you remember that you were supposed to be meditating—it

is 'this' moment that you must cherish. Each time you remember, you win and take a step forward in your meditation journey. With regular practice, you will get distracted less and less.

Meditation helps in stress management by reducing hormones such as cortisol; it even helps in reducing blood pressure. Consistent meditators have more brain development in areas related to rational thinking and self-awareness. This is why regular practice makes us less impulsive and more in control of our emotions.

## SINGLE-LEG BALANCES

These are postures such as Tree Pose (*Vrikshasana*), Dancer Pose (*Natirajasana*), Warrior III (*Virabhadrasana III*) and Half-Moon Pose (*Ardha Chandrasana*). The ability to balance on one leg is strongly linked to the health of our brain. Studies show that people who balance on one leg for at least 20 seconds have a lower risk of stroke and Alzheimer's. The good thing is that balance improves with practice. Therefore, you must include at least one such posture in your daily practice.



## PRANAYAMA

All yoga practices are done while being mindful and aware of the breath, but *pranayama* practices is the next stage in which the breath is the exclusive focus. In this stage, we stop moving the body and become completely still. Now, you work on breathing in specific patterns.

Just as you create shapes with the body while doing *asana* practice, you create specific patterns with the breath in *pranayama*. While there are many different breathing patterns, two are particularly good. These are *Sama Vritti Pranayama* (equal breathing) and *Anuloma Viloma Pranayama* (alternate nostril breathing). You can practice these daily after your *asana* practice. Energising and cleansing breathing practices such as *Kapalabhati* (skull shining breath) can be practiced before starting your *asana* practice.



## REST AND RELAXATION



Nowadays, we live more interconnected and hectic lives, in which sleep, rest and recovery often take a backseat. All this has a cumulative effect on our mental health, eventually leading to burnout, slow processing or chronic fatigue. Yoga helps you recharge, de-stress and sleep better. Good, restful sleep equals a smart and sharp brain. Restorative yoga practices that focus on relaxing postures and deep breathing are an excellent addition to counter everyday stress. Practices such as *Yoga Nidra* should be done at least once a week. End your regular daily

yoga practice with some cooling poses such as Child's Pose (*balasana*) or Crocodile Pose (*makarasana*). Finally, don't miss spending at least 5-10 min in the Dead-Body Pose (*shavasana*).

Yoga is a powerful practice that uses movement, stillness, conscious breathing and concentration exercises to strengthen the connection between the body and mind. Consistent yoga practice improves your cognitive function, specifically your memory, rational thinking and emotional processing. To get a balanced practice, include dynamic movements such as the Sun Salutations (*suryanamaskar*), practice single-leg balances daily and conclude your *asana* practice with *pranayama* and *dhyana*.

## VINYASA YOGA

Vinyasa-based yoga practices, which involve moving from one pose to another in rhythm with the breath, are excellent to boost brain development. Traditional *suryanamaskar* is a form of *Vinyasa*.

Dynamic movements help because they improve circulation throughout the body, including the brain. In yoga, you also move your body in many different directions — you connect the body's right and left sides in twists and binds. This improves creativity and is a great booster for the brain. Include *Vinyasa yoga* in your routine at least twice a week to get a balanced practice.



## **Coronavirus Infection (Hindustan: 20210317)**

[https://epaper.livehindustan.com/imageview\\_705256\\_84131300\\_4\\_1\\_17-03-2021\\_3\\_i\\_1\\_sf.html](https://epaper.livehindustan.com/imageview_705256_84131300_4_1_17-03-2021_3_i_1_sf.html)

**एहतियात:** प्रधानमंत्री मोदी आज मुख्यमंत्रियों से चर्चा करेंगे

# कोरोना की वापसी से राज्यों में सख्ती

नई दिल्ली | हिन्दुस्तान ब्यूरो

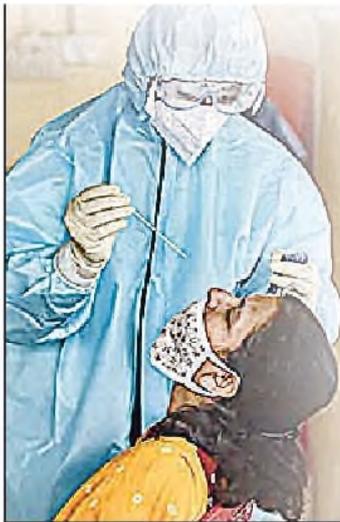
कोरोना वायरस की वापसी से कई राज्यों ने फिर कड़े प्रतिबंध लगाने शुरू कर दिए हैं। महाराष्ट्र, केरल के बाद अब पंजाब, गुजरात और मध्य प्रदेश के शहर में रात्रि कर्फ्यू लगा दिया गया है। दिल्ली में भी सोमवार के मुकाबले मामले बढ़े हैं। बढ़ते मामलों से चिंतित प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी बुधवार को मुख्यमंत्रियों के साथ वर्चुअल बैठक में हालात पर चर्चा करेंगे।

**महाराष्ट्र में दूसरी लहर:** केंद्रीय स्वास्थ्य सचिव राजेश भूषण ने महाराष्ट्र के मुख्य सचिव को भेजे पत्र में लिखा कि राज्य दूसरी लहर की शुरुआत का सामना कर रहा है। कंटेनमेंट रणनीति पर फोकस करें और जांच बढ़ाएं। बता दें कि विशेषज्ञ पहले ही देश में दूसरी लहर का दावा कर चुके हैं।

**रात्रि कर्फ्यू:** मध्यप्रदेश की राजधानी भोपाल व इंदौर में बुधवार से रात्रि कर्फ्यू लगाने का फैसला किया गया है। वहीं, गुजरात में अहमदाबाद, वडोदरा, सूरत व राजकोट में रात्रि कर्फ्यू को 31 मार्च तक बढ़ा दिया गया है। रात्रि कर्फ्यू रात 12 बजे से सुबह छह बजे तक कर दिया।

**सुखबीर संक्रमित:** पंजाब के रूपनगर जिले में रात 11 से सुबह पांच तक कर्फ्यू रहेगा। इस बीच, शिअद प्रमुख सुखबीर बादल संक्रमित पाए गए हैं।

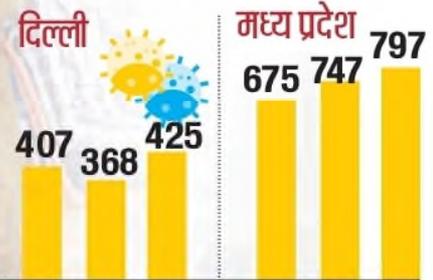
➤ **औसत मामले बढ़े** पेज 19



**15** दिन में दोगुने हो गए रोजाना कोरोना के मामले देश में

**24492** नए मामले सामने आए मंगलवार को देश में

दिल्ली-एमपी-गुजरात में केस बढ़े



**तीन राज्यों में 65% मौतें**

24 घंटों में जिन 131 लोगों की वायरस से मौत हुई, उनमें से महाराष्ट्र के 48, पंजाब के 27 और केरल के 11 लोग थे। इस लिहाज से देश में कोरोना से 65 फीसदी से अधिक मौतें केवल तीन राज्यों में हुई हैं।

14 | 15 | 16 मार्च | 13 | 14 | 15 मार्च

**गुजरात**



**वजह**

- विशेषज्ञ मानते हैं कि हर्ड इम्युनिटी खत्म होने से कोरोना संक्रमण बढ़ने लगा
- संक्रमण के मामले जैसे-जैसे घटे कोरोना से जुड़ी ज्यादातर पाबंदी हटा दी गई
- कोरोनारोधी टीकाकरण शुरू होने से लोग और भी लापरवाह होते चले गए

**यूपी: फिलहाल पाबंदी नहीं**

यूपी में अभी लॉकडाउन या रात्रि कर्फ्यू लगाने पर कोई विचार नहीं है। प्रदेश सरकार के मुताबिक, प्रदेश में कोरोना जांच की संख्या बढ़ाई गई है।

**देश में रिकॉर्ड टीकाकरण**

देश में सोमवार को सबसे अधिक करीब 30 लाख लोगों को टीके लगाए गए। अब तक 3.29 करोड़ को टीके लग चुके हैं। ➤ **ब्योरा** पेज 19