



DAILY NEWS BULLETIN

LEADING HEALTH, POPULATION AND FAMILY WELFARE STORIES OF THE DAY
Thursday 20210701

Covid vaccine

India's Zydus Cadila seeks emergency use approval of Covid vaccine (The Tribune: 20210701)

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/nation/indias-zydus-cadila-seeks-emergency-use-approval-of-covid-vaccine-276694>

The candidate, if approved, would become India's second successful home-grown Covid shot and help ease the country's severe vaccine shortage

Indian drugmaker Zydus Cadila said on Thursday that it had applied to the country's drug regulator for emergency use approval of its Covid vaccine, which showed a 66.6 per cent efficacy against positive cases in an interim analysis.

The candidate, if approved, would become India's second successful home-grown Covid shot and help ease the country's severe vaccine shortage.

Coronavirus cases in India have dropped from a devastating peak in April and May; however, experts warned of a third wave and reiterated that widespread vaccination remains one of the best defences against the pandemic.

Zydus said the vaccine, which is a three-course regimen, showed safety and efficacy in a late-stage trial with more than 28,000 volunteers across the country, including about 1,000 subjects in the 12-18-year age group.

The drugmaker said it is also evaluating a two-dose regimen for the shot and the immunogenicity results of the shorter course had been found to be comparable with the three-dose regimen.

"This will further help in reducing the full-course duration of vaccination," the drugmaker said, adding that it planned to manufacture up to 120 million doses of the shot annually.

An approval for the vaccine, ZyCoV-D, would make it the fifth shot authorised for use in India. The country has already approved vaccines from Moderna, AstraZeneca and partner Serum Institute of India, Bharat Biotech, and Russia's Gamaleya Institute.

Zydus said the study was carried out “during the peak of the second wave of Covid” in India and reaffirmed the vaccine’s efficacy against new mutant variants, especially, the Delta variant. However, it did not disclose efficacy rate against those variants. Reuters

Two doses of vaccine 98% effective

Two doses of vaccine 98% effective, finds study on cops in Punjab (The Tribune: 20210701)

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/coronavirus/two-doses-of-vaccine-98-effective-finds-study-on-cops-in-punjab-276439>

Two doses of vaccine 98% effective, finds study on cops in Punjab

A cop gets inoculated at the Civil Hospital, Jalandhar. Malkiat Singh

A recent analysis of deaths among the Punjab Police personnel shows that vaccine seems to be a saviour for those infected with Covid.

Dr Rajesh Kumar, former head of the School of Public Health, PGI, analysed the Covid deaths of the cops between February 3 and June 28 and found that the number of deaths among those who did not get vaccinated was very high as compared to the ones who took the jab.

“The study shows 98 per cent protection among the cops after two doses of vaccine,” Dr Kumar said. So far, around 79,000 cops have been vaccinated of whom 57 per cent have received the second dose.

The study shows that 4,868 cops didn’t get even a single dose of vaccine and the number of casualties among them was 15. It makes 3.08 incidence per 1,000 population. However, among 35,856 who had received just one dose of the vaccine, the number of casualties was nine, bringing down the incidence to 0.25. There were just two deaths among the group of 42,720 fully vaccinated cops, bringing the incidence down to just 0.005.

Second wave burden

Newer strains too aggressive even for healthy, young(The Tribune: 20210701)

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/editorials/second-wave-burden-276073>

The authorities need to tailor the pandemic management plan as per the unfolding scenario.
Representational photo

The receding second wave of Covid-19 has left a shift in the pattern of the disease and its effect. Unlike the first wave when the elderly and those with comorbidities were considered more vulnerable, the calamitous March-June period of 2021 has unfolded a departure that points to the young and healthy also being highly susceptible to contracting the coronavirus. Mortality data from the health departments of many states, including Haryana, shows that patients with no underlying comorbid conditions accounted for nearly 50 per cent of the deaths in the recent couple of months. Also, the fatality figures in the younger age segments were higher than those of last year. It is also observed that Covid-19 leaves a trail of side effects on patients even long after testing negative, such as compromised lungs, fatigue, aches or loss of taste and smell.

Besides the more aggressive and transmissible newer virus strains hitting the country, this trend is being attributed to people becoming complacent or delaying testing or treatment after getting the symptoms. Compounding the situation was the lack of proper medical care available as the healthcare system collapsed under the overwhelming weight of the second wave. Another significant factor is that the younger lot remained unfortified as vaccination for them was opened much later and the shots were in short supply.

All these are matters of concern and call for a constantly evolving strategy to keep ahead of the mutating variants of the pathogen. Indeed, the unprecedentedly tragic wave has shaken the nation out of its self-congratulatory mode of overcoming the virus. It should alert both the public and healthcare experts to be on their toes in order to keep the virus at bay. Individually, it is incumbent upon each one of us to strictly adhere to Covid-appropriate protocol and consult the doctor immediately in case of suspected symptoms. The authorities need to tailor the pandemic management plan as per the unfolding scenario, along with being prepared in advance for possible eventualities. And, most importantly, ensure that there is no let-up in the vaccination goal. It is the key defence in the battle against the virus.

Covid victims

Must give ex-gratia to Covid victims, says SC (Hindustan Times: 20210701)

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

Come up with guidelines: SC to govt

WHAT THE COURT SAID

6-WEEK DEADLINE: Union govt has to frame within 6 weeks the guidelines on ex-gratia payments to the families of Covid-19 victims

AMOUNT TO BE DECIDED

Ex-gratia will not be fixed by the court; govt and NDMA will use their "wisdom" to determine the amount

ARGUMENTS IN COURT

Centre said it was not bound to provide ex-gratia under Disaster Management Act as Covid-19 is different from "natural disasters".

Govt also said ex-gratia of ₹4 lakh per victim was beyond fiscal affordability

The top court held that since Covid-19 has been notified as a disaster, the ex-gratia scheme was mandatory under DMA

"Not recommending any guidelines for ex-gratia assistance on account of loss of life due to Covid-19... it can be said that the national authority has failed to perform its statutory duty..."



399,507

Total deaths recorded due to Covid-19 in India

The Supreme Court on Wednesday directed the Union government to frame within six weeks uniform guidelines on ex-gratia payments to the families of those who have died of Covid-19, noting that the Prime Minister-headed National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) "failed to perform its statutory duty" by not envisaging a compensation scheme.

The bench of justices Ashok Bhushan and MR Shah, however, clarified that the amount of ex-gratia cannot be fixed by the court, and that the Centre and NDMA should determine the quantum after taking into account their policies and other relief and mitigation measures already put in place.

At present, there is no scheme for payment of ex gratia for Covid-19 deaths due to absence of such provision under the "minimum standards of relief", declared by NDMA for the pandemic. State governments have also been asked by the Centre not to use the disaster relief funds in case they wish to pay compensation to the next of kin of those who died of Covid-19. Some states, such as Bihar, Karnataka and Delhi, have been paying compensation on account of Covid-19 deaths from their chief minister relief funds.

Allowing PILs by advocates Gaurav Kumar Bansal and Reepak Kansal, the bench on Wednesday held that it was a legal duty cast upon NDMA to issue uniform guidelines on ex gratia payment also because it would "avoid any heartburning and discriminatory treatment" for victims residing in different states.

“We direct NDMA to recommend guidelines for ex gratia assistance on account of loss of life to the family members of the persons who died due to Covid-19, as mandated under Section 12(iii) of Disaster Management Act (DMA), 2005 for the minimum standards of relief to be provided to the persons affected by disaster, over and above the guidelines already recommended,” ordered the bench.

In April 2015, the Union government issued the norms of assistance from disaster relief funds, stipulating ₹4 lakh in ex-gratia to the families of deceased persons.

The court rejected the Centre’s contention that it was not bound to provide for ex-gratia payments since Covid-19 was different from “natural disasters” such as floods and earthquakes, and therefore, the Disaster Management Act will have to be interpreted as a scheme under which ex-gratia was only recommendatory and not mandatory. The Union government’s affidavit also stated that the ex-gratia amount of ₹4 lakh cannot be paid for Covid-19 deaths as it is beyond fiscal affordability, and the finances of central and state governments are under severe strain.

Finding no favour with these submissions, the bench underlined that Section 12 of the DMA has used the word “shall” twice in propounding that the guidelines have to be made “ex-gratia assistance on account of loss of life” as well as for damage to houses and for restoration of means of livelihood.

“Therefore, it is the statutory duty cast upon the national authority to recommend guidelines for the minimum standards of relief to be provided to persons affected by disaster, which shall include the reliefs, as stated hereinabove. The language used in the provision is very plain and unambiguous,” held the bench while shooting down the Centre’s plea that the word “shall” in the provision should be read as “may”.

Emphasising that the beneficial provision of the legislation must be literally construed so as to fulfil the statutory purpose, and not to frustrate it, the bench noted that once Covid-19 had been notified as a “disaster”, it was mandatory to contemplate a scheme for ex-gratia for loss of life due to the infection.

“Not recommending any guidelines for ex-gratia assistance on account of loss of life due to Covid-19 pandemic, while recommending other guidelines for the minimum standards of relief, it can be said that the national authority has failed to perform its statutory duty under Section 12 and therefore a writ of mandamus is to be issued to the national authority to recommend appropriate guidelines for ex gratia assistance,” maintained the bench.

So far, 399,507 people in the country have succumbed to the disease, according to official data.

BJP spokesperson Gopal Agarwal said the government has introduced several schemes as part of Covid relief. “We have so many schemes already like education for the children who lost their parents, compensation scheme for deceased health care workers’ families and a scheme for families that lost their earning members to Covid,” Agarwal said.

The bench also took cognisance that there was no document on record to show that after a recommendation of the Finance Commission against a scheme for ex-gratia, there was any decision made by the PM-led NDMA.

“Ex-gratia assistance on account of loss of life is part of minimum standards of relief, which must be considered by the National Authority while providing for the minimum

standards of relief to be provided to the persons affected by disaster – in the present case, Covid-19 pandemic,” said the court.

At the same time, the bench highlighted that the courts must draw a line when it comes to matters of financial implications, and that it was cognisant of the fact that Covid-19 is different from the other disasters/natural disasters for which ex-gratia assistance is provided.

No state or country has unlimited resources, highlighted the bench as it pointed out that the Centre was also required to take various measures in different sectors such as public health, employment, transportation to migrants, effect of the pandemic on the economy, and so on.

“What reasonable amount to be offered towards ex gratia assistance is left to the wisdom of the national authority,” said the court.

The Opposition Congress said that a government that can’t compensate families of the victims does not “have a right to rule the nation”.

“Not only ₹4 lakh but ₹10 lakh rupees should be given to families of those who have lost a member to Covid,” added Congress spokesperson Gaurav Vallabh.

Covishield or Covaxin (The Asian Age: 20210701)

<http://onlinepaper.asianage.com/article/detailpage.aspx?id=15683069>

India to EU: Accept Covishield, Covaxin or face due quarantine

Poonawalla says European approval for Covishield expected in about a month

AGE CORRESPONDENT
with agency inputs
NEW DELHI, JUNE 30

India has asked European Union member countries to either accept Indian vaccines Covishield and Covaxin or face mandatory quarantine for its citizens upon their arrival in India.

"We have noted that the European Union (EU) Digital Covid Certificate framework, to facilitate free movement during the Covid pandemic, is to come into effect from 1 July 2021. Under this framework, persons vaccinated with vaccines authorised by the European Medicines Agency (EMA) will be exempted from travel restrictions within the EU. Individual member states have the flexibility to also accept vaccines that have been authorised at the national level or by the World Health

► The European Medicines Agency is yet to clear the inclusion of Covishield in the Covid vaccination passport. Until it is approved, anyone who has been fully vaccinated with Covishield won't be able to travel to Europe during the pandemic.

Organisation. We have requested EU member states to individually consider extending similar exemption to those persons who have taken Covid-19 vaccines in India, i.e. Covishield and Covaxin, and accept the vaccination certificate issued through the CoWIN portal. The genuineness of such vaccination certification can be authenticated on the CoWIN portal," highly placed sources in the Indian government said on Wednesday.

We have requested EU member states to individually consider extending travel curbs exemption to those persons who have taken Covid-19 vaccines in India, i.e. Covishield and Covaxin, and accept the vaccination certificate issued through the CoWIN portal.

— Indian govt sources

"We have also conveyed to EU member states that India will institute a reciprocal policy for recognition of the EU Digital Covid Certificate. Upon notification of Covishield and Covaxin for inclusion in the EU Digital Covid Certificate and recognition of Indian CoWIN vaccination certificates, Indian health authorities would reciprocally exempt the concerned EU Member State for exemption from mandatory quarantine all

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Covid deaths: SC says ex gratia must, asks govt to fix amount

New Delhi, June 30: The Supreme Court on Wednesday ruled that the Centre must pay compensation to the families of those who succumbed to Covid-19, but said the amount of compensation will be decided by the government. The court directed the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) to issue fresh guidelines for providing minimum standards of financial help to families of those who lost their lives to Covid-19.

A special bench of Justices Ashok Bhushan and M.R. Shah said that the court cannot direct the Centre to fix a particular amount of financial help but the government can fix the minimum standard of amount to be paid as ex-gratia to family members of those who lost their lives due to Covid-19 while keeping various aspects in mind. The bench also rejected the argument of the Centre for reading "shall" in Section 12 of the Disaster Management Act for grant of ex-gratia amount to victims of disaster as "may", and said that the NDMA has failed to perform its statutory duties.

The top court directed the Centre and the NDMA to issue fresh guidelines within six weeks for the minimum standard of relief to be granted to families of victims of Covid-19. It also directs the authorities to issue appropriate guidelines for simplification of the process of issuance of death certificates for Covid

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Brazil suspends \$324m Covaxin order over corruption allegations

Hyderabad, June 30: The Brazilian government on Wednesday announced suspension of its 20 million doses Covid-19 vaccine contract with Bharat Biotech following allegations of irregularities in the deal. The \$324 million contract has become a headache for President Jair Bolsonaro after whistleblowers went public with alleged irregularities. One health ministry official said he alerted the president about his concerns.

Mr Bolsonaro, whose popularity has faded as Brazil's Covid-19 death toll climbed past 500,000, has denied any wrongdoing, saying he was not aware of any irregulari-

ties. But thorny questions refuse to go away, and may pose problems for him ahead of next year's presidential vote.

Brazil health minister Marcelo Queiroga said at a news conference his team would probe the allegations during the suspension. "According to the preliminary analysis of the CGU, there are no irregularities in the contract but, for compliance, the health ministry chose to suspend the contract," the ministry said in a statement.

Brazilian federal prosecutors have opened an investigation into the deal, citing comparatively high prices, quick talks and pending regulatory

approvals as red flags. It is also being probed by a Senate panel investigating the government's handling of the pandemic.

The Hyderabad-based Indian drug maker Bharat Biotech insists that it has not received any advance payments and nor has it supplied any vaccines to Brazil. The company said it has followed a "similar approach" in Brazil towards contracts, regulatory approvals and supplies as in several countries worldwide, where Covaxin is being supplied successfully.

In his testimony before Brazil's Senate committee last week, Luis Ricardo Miranda, the chief of the

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Small doses: On the second COVID-19 wave and the stimulus

Small doses: On the second COVID-19 wave and the stimulus (The Hindu: 20210701)

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/small-doses-the-hindu-editorial-on-the-second-covid-19-wave-and-the-stimulus/article35066459.ece>

The first relief package for the second COVID-19 wave falls short of expectations

After asserting that people should wait for the Union Budget's announcements to trickle down before seeking a fresh stimulus to cope with the second wave of the pandemic, the government finally unveiled a relief package of sorts this Monday. The financial implications of the measures, such as the promise of easy small-ticket loans for 25 lakh micro-entrepreneurs and 11,000 tourist agents and free tourist visas, have been projected at about ₹6.29 lakh crore by the Finance Ministry. Nearly ₹2.68 lakh crore of this is in the form of credit guarantees. A further ₹1.5 lakh crore of guarantees has been promised to add to the ₹3 lakh crore emergency credit scheme, but the scheme's tenure hasn't been extended beyond September 30. Similar backing has been announced for loans worth ₹60,000 crore to COVID-affected sectors, but only tourism has been publicly identified. Enhancing loan guarantees will perhaps give risk-averse lenders more confidence in extending loans when the credit:deposit ratio has hit a multi-year low. But there is little to make such loans viable by stirring demand for goods and services. Free visas are a good idea but are unlikely to gain traction till India has a firmer grip on the pandemic by providing vaccines for all, including for those under 18. Loans of ₹1 lakh to ₹10 lakh for travel agents may help meet some liabilities or expenses but won't make people take holidays. Just like last year's ₹20 lakh crore package, the actual outgo from the exchequer this time is minimal and the direct stimulus to demand abysmal.

Additional spending of ₹15,000 crore to ramp up paediatric healthcare, with guarantees for ₹50,000 crore low-interest loans for health projects in the hinterland, are critical to cope with future pandemic waves. It makes sense to direct resources towards health and faster vaccination. But the inclusion of measures already announced (such as fertilizer subsidies and food grains for the poor), along with spends planned over the next two or five years, and even a ₹77.5 crore bailout plan for an ailing farm marketing firm, gives the package just extra padding. Investing time and resources to figure out some form of income support for the vulnerable sections in rural and urban areas would have been more helpful. Weak demand is a bigger concern for industry this year as high inflation, a propensity to save for future medical bills, and an uncertain job market have led to belt-tightening from consumers. If the government is hesitant about creating new doles for the fear of them becoming permanent features, it could have at least offered some immediate relief for all by addressing the elephant

in the room – high fuel prices. This would dampen inflation, empower RBI to lend greater support to growth and leave a little more money in people's hands to spend. While the effort to maintain fiscal restraint may impress global rating agencies, they would be among the first to acknowledge that there's a tipping point where policy inaction risks hurting the economy's long-term prospects.

Oral hygiene

Prolonged use of masks could affect oral hygiene, say dentists (The Hindu: 20210701)

<https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/health/prolonged-use-of-masks-could-affect-oral-hygiene-say-dentists/article35071244.ece>

The habit of brushing teeth fell significantly, leading to increased incidence of halitosis, according to an online survey conducted on dental treatment during the pandemic

Dentists, probably the most accustomed to wearing masks owing to their profession, say oral health may be compromised if people do not follow simple rules to maintain oral hygiene.

AIDS

Keeping alive conversations about AIDS (The Hindu: 20210701)

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/keeping-alive-conversations-about-aids/article35026483.ece>

We can draw key lessons from chronic epidemics such as HIV/AIDS to stymie the COVID-19 pandemic

Four decades ago, on June 5, 1981, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported an unusual fungal infection of the lungs (pneumocystis

Mental Health

Do you feel mentally exhausted? Try doing these simple things (The Indian Express: 20210701)

<https://indianexpress.com/article/lifestyle/health/do-you-feel-mentally-exhausted-try-doing-these-simple-things-7382885/>

When a person feels mentally exhausted, they may feel emotionally drained, have a hard time getting out of bed in the morning

feeling mentally exhausted, mental exhaustion, tips for mental exhaustion, mental exhaustion in the pandemic, taking a break, feeling mentally healthy, mental health and well-being, indian express news Whenever you feel stressed, it is a good idea to pen down your feelings. (Photo: Pixabay)

It is normal to feel mentally exhausted right now. For more than a year, we have been constantly bombarded with pandemic-related information. And even though we have been working from home, it has led to some anxiety and a lot of stress.

When a person feels mentally exhausted, they may feel emotionally drained, have a hard time getting out of bed in the morning, and also experience extreme physical fatigue, says Deeksha GC, an emotional well-being and mental health coach.

“Any kind of mental stress can lead to physical discomfort as well. This state of mind is called mental exhaustion. Where you feel tired and overworked all the time. There are several causes that lead to such a state of burnout: exposure to long-term stress, unresolved issues in love life, long working hours, or financial pressure. Health-related anxiety, such as prolonged illness can also cause mental exhaustion. A tragic event in the family such as a death or divorce can also trigger burnout,” she says.

ALSO READ | Can working long hours affect your heart? Here’s what doctors say

The symptoms

Each person is different, and hence, the symptoms are different, too. A major change in appetite, irrational anger, and constant irritability are some of them, Deeksha says.

What can a person do to feel better?

The mental health coach shares some simple tips:

* Make small lifestyle changes. Get an ample amount of sleep, which is healthy for both body and mind.

* Other relaxing techniques include listening to music, cooking, gardening, or painting. Exploring your inner self can also be one of the best ways to feel more relaxed and calmer.

* Pen down your feelings, go for a walk in nature, go for a trip, start painting, try solo travelling, start reading.

* Keeping yourself physically fit also helps in achieving a calm state of mind. With Pranayama, yoga, and meditation, you can achieve mindfulness and also have a healthier body.

ALSO READ |My Covid diary: 'First it was the infection; then it turned into stress and anxiety'

“We control our brain, and not the other way around. How you feel is up to you. You just have to recognise your triggers and learn to manage them. Remember, happiness and peace are a state of mind and can be achieved through consistent and honest efforts.

“It is also important to know it is okay not to feel okay. You don't have to struggle all the time. Give yourself, your mind, and your body a break,” she concludes.

National Doctors' Day 2021

National Doctors' Day 2021: Date, history and significance (The Indian Express: 20210701)

<https://indianexpress.com/article/lifestyle/life-style/national-doctors-day-2021-date-history-and-significance-7383905/>

National Doctor's Day is observed to acknowledge the role doctors play in saving numerous lives

National doctors' day National Doctors' Day 2021: Here's why July 1 is commemorated as National Doctors' Day. (Source: Express Photo by Amit Chakravarty)

Every year, July 1 is observed as National Doctors' Day in the memory of Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy, who had his birth and death anniversary on the same day. The day, commemorated by Indian Medical Association (IMA), is dedicated to all the doctors and healthcare workers who have been serving people by risking their lives. Dr Roy, former Chief Minister of Bengal, was known for his selfless service.

History

Dr Roy was born on July 1, 1882, and passed away on July 1, 1962. Since 1991, National Doctor's Day, also called Doctors' Day, has been celebrated across the nation every year. This day is celebrated on different dates across the world.

He played a great role in establishing medical institutions like Jadavpur TB Hospital, Chittaranjan Seva Sadan, Victoria Institution (college), Chittaranjan Cancer Hospital and the Chittaranjan Seva Sadan for women and children. He was also referred to as the first medical consultant in the subcontinent of India and was more successful and dedicated than his contemporaries in several fields, mentioned British Medical Journal. For his outstanding contributions, he was also awarded the Bharat Ratna, on February 4, 1961.

ALSO READ |National Doctor's Day: Wishes, images, quotes, messages, status, photos, and cards

Significance

National Doctor's Day is observed to acknowledge the role doctors play in saving numerous lives.

Amid the pandemic, the role of frontline workers has been even more emphasised. Cheers to the spirit and dedication of our frontline workers who immensely contributed in the hour of crisis

ALSO READ |Frontline health workers battle anxiety, burnout, PTSD and other issues in pandemic

To honour them, many noted personalities took to Twitter.

How are you observing the day?

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Get the latest updates on the coronavirus pandemic and the race for a vaccine, in your inbox