



DAILY NEWS BULLETIN

LEADING HEALTH, POPULATION AND FAMILY WELFARE STORIES OF THE DAY
Monday 20210712

India reports over 37,000 new Covid cases, recoveries cross 3 crore-mark

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(The Tribune: 20210712)**

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/nation/india-reports-over-37-000-new-covid-cases-recoveries-cross-3-crore-mark-282019>

The death toll climbs to 4,08,764 with 724 fresh fatalities

India reports over 37,000 new Covid cases, recoveries cross 3 crore-mark

Photo for representation only. Tribune file

With 37,154 new coronavirus infections, India's total tally of Covid cases rose to 3,08,74,376, while the total recoveries crossed three crore, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Monday.

The death toll climbed to 4,08,764 with 724 fresh fatalities.

The active cases have declined to 4,50,899 and comprise 1.46 per cent of the total infections, while the national Covid recovery rate has increased to 97.22 per cent, the data updated at 8 am showed.

A decrease of 3,219 cases has been recorded in the active Covid caseload in a span of 24 hours.

As many as 14,32,343 tests were conducted on Sunday taking the total cumulative tests conducted so far for detection of Covid in the country to 43,23,17,813, while the daily positivity rate was recorded at 2.59 per cent. It has been less than three per cent for 21 consecutive days, the ministry said.

The weekly positivity rate stands at 2.32 per cent, it said.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 3,00,14,713 and the case fatality rate stands at 1.32 per cent, the data stated.

Cumulative vaccine doses administered so far has reached 37.73 crore under the Nationwide Vaccination Drive.

The 724 new fatalities include 350 from Maharashtra and 97 from Kerala.

A total of 4,08,764 deaths have been reported so far in the country, including 1,25,878 from Maharashtra, 35,835 from Karnataka, 33,418 from Tamil Nadu, 25,015 from Delhi, 22,698 from Uttar Pradesh, 17,916 from West Bengal and 16,186 from Punjab. PTI

Covid affecting kids' psychological development

Covid affecting kids' psychological development: Experts (The Tribune: 20210712)

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/coronavirus/covid-affecting-kids-psychological-development-experts-280982>

Covid-19, consequent lockdowns and no classroom teaching or outdoor games since a year-and-a-half have proved to be a severe blow to the psychological development of children. As per experts, an increase in anxiety and depressive symptoms has been witnessed among children.

During this period, parents need to be calm with their wards. They play an important role in keeping them healthy, both physically and mentally. So, parents should encourage their children to speak up if they are not feeling well or are worried due to the pandemic so that the former can help them.

Dr Manu Sharma, consultant, Pediatrics and Neonatology, Max Hospital, said: "Children are also deprived of outdoor physical activities and playing time. Lack of such activities is leading to health issues such as obesity and future risk of metabolic syndrome. A peculiar rise in screen time and addiction to the Internet has also been observed among children. When these are coupled with inadequate parental surveillance, it exposes the child to an ocean of content that has positive and negative long-lasting impact".

In an attempt to stay connected with their peers, children spend a lot of time on social media. This, in particular, is responsible for increased incidences of cyberbullying. Reports directly relate it to increased anxiety, stress, low self-esteem and even suicidal tendencies in children, he added.

City-based clinical psychologist Suresh Khanna said isolation and lockdowns have been specially challenging for children. As they are deprived of their friends, schoolmates and healthy school environment, one can see drastic behavioral changes in them.

“Aggression and depression are on the rise in kids, especially in teens. Key signs observed are changes in eating and sleep patterns. Parents need to be watchful,” he said.

Vaccination must to avoid third wave, says AIIMS Director Prof Randeep Guleria

Vaccination must to avoid third wave, says AIIMS Director Prof Randeep Galleria (The Tribune: 20210712)

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/coronavirus/vaccination-must-to-avoid-third-wave-says-aiims-director-prof-randeep-guleria-280694>

Prof Randeep Guleria, Director, AIIMS, New Delhi. file photo

The Department of Microbiology, PU, today organised a webinar on “Promotion of Scientific Temper among People of India” to spread awareness among the public about the current pandemic situation.

Prof Randeep Guleria, Director, AIIMS, New Delhi, spoke on “What the pandemic has taught us and where do we go from here?”

He discussed the reasons behind the emergence of the devastating second wave and that there was an urgent requirement to invest in public health services.

Dr Guleria emphasised that Covid-19 appropriate behavior could help prevent a third wave.

Dr Guleria, meanwhile, said the Covid-19 pandemic “is not over nor is it going to end soon”. People should get vaccinated in order to avoid a third wave, he said.

New variants

Step up genome sequencing to identify new variants: Punjab CM (The Tribune: 20210712)

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/coronavirus/step-up-genome-sequencing-to-identify-new-variants-punjab-cm-280773>

Wants lab in Patiala functional this month

CM Capt Amarinder Singh today asked the departments concerned to step up whole genome sequencing (WGS) to expeditiously identify cases of new Covid variant and to fast-track the project for execution of the MoU with ICMR for the Regional Institute of Virology, Mohali.

Though no fresh cases of Delta Plus variant (apart from two reported earlier based on May sampling) had been identified in the state, the CM directed that the WGS lab at GMCH, Patiala, coming up with the support of PATH, must become functional this month. PATH has informed the authorities that the machine is likely to be installed by July 25. The CM said the state was also starting dry swab testing, with a pilot survey at GMCH, Patiala, next week. — TNS

Covid Recovery (The Asian Age: 20210712)

<http://onlinepaper.asianage.com/article/detailpage.aspx?id=15704699>

IIT-D alumnus scales Everest within 7 weeks of Covid recovery

New Delhi, July 11: Neeraj Chaudhary tested positive for Covid-19 on the day he was to start from Kathmandu for the Mount Everest but that did not deter the IIT Delhi alumnus who returned to the base camp within weeks of his recovery and ultimately managed to hoist the institution's flag in addition to the tricolour atop the summit.

While the country was reeling under the aggressive second wave of Covid-19, Mr Chaudhary's family members in Rajasthan were hooked to their

phones waiting for an update about his well-being.

Mr Chaudhary (37) did his MTech in Environmental Sciences and Management at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) in Delhi during 2009-11 and he is currently working with the Rajasthan government's water resources department.

He took up mountaineering in 2014 and in 2020 got selected as a member of the Indian Mountaineering Foundation (IMF) Everest



Neeraj Chaudhary

Expedition under the ministry of youth affairs and sports. However, the expedition was postponed due to the outbreak of coronavirus.

This year, amid the uncertainty posed by the pandemic, he reached Kathmandu with the team

to begin the expedition.

"But I hit a roadblock when I tested positive for Covid and had to return to Jaipur. I was feeling fatigued for a few days but I had no other symptoms," Mr Chaudhary told a news agency.

"In that moment also I wasn't really thinking of Covid. All I could think of was how much effort I had put in and the preparations I had done to reach there and that this was my chance to complete it. I think that the motivation of not having a second chance anytime soon

helped me push my body harder and there I was," he added.

He tested positive on March 27 and was back in Kathmandu in April itself. He managed to scale the peak on May 31.

Crediting IIT Delhi for shaping his career and the alumni association for helping him start a fundraiser of ₹24 lakh for the expedition, Mr Chaudhary took the IIT flag with him.

A flag ceremony was held at IIT Delhi, on Friday, to mark the achievement. — PTI

Zika Virus (The Asian Age: 20210712)

<http://onlinepaper.asianage.com/articledetailpage.aspx?id=15704720>

Amid Covid, Zika outbreak adds to Kerala woes

State reporting 12K & 15K cases daily with no end in sight to 'prolonged surge'

HARY M. PILLAI
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,
JULY 11

The rising Covid-19 cases in Kerala, coupled with the recent outbreak of the Zika virus, is causing concern to the health authorities here as the southern state battles to bring down the fresh infections.

After winning accolades for its "Kerala model" of combating the contagion about a year ago, the state is now seeing daily fresh cases between 12,000 and 15,000 with no end in sight to the "prolonged surge," as some experts put it.

The state had reported 14,087 fresh Covid infections on Saturday and 109 deaths, taking the total caseload to 30,39,029 and death toll to 14,380. The

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The state had reported 14,087 fresh Covid infections on Saturday and 109 deaths, taking the total caseload to 30,39,029 and death toll to 14,380. The number of active cases is 1,13,115.

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Incidentally, India's first Covid-19 case emerged from the state in January 2020 when a third year medical student from Wuhan, the epicentre of the virus in China, tested positive.

Two other Wuhan returnees from the state had also tested positive and all the three had subsequently recovered.

Dr Amar Patel, the state nodal officer for Covid-19, said that the Kerala government is carrying out extensive testing to ensure no one who is infected is missed out and it is taking measures to ensure that elderly people and children, who would be vulnerable

to the infection, are protected.

On Thursday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had expressed concern over the persistently high number of Covid cases coming from Maharashtra and Kerala.

The Opposition Congress and BJP in Kerala have attacked the ruling dispensation over the Covid-related casualties, alleging a "mismatch" in their numbers while Ms George has maintained that the government has nothing to hide and all deaths are being reported.

To add to its woes, the state now has 14 active Zika virus cases and a Central team would reach here later to assist the government in handling the situation.

—PTI

India sees decline in infection, 41,506 new cases in 24hrs

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JULY 11

India on Friday witnessed a slight decrease in the number of Covid-19 infections and related deaths in the last 24 hours. With 41,506 people testing positive in a day the total tally of the viral infection has gone up to 3,08,37,222. The death toll has now climbed to 4,08,040 with 895 fresh fatalities.

While many countries like the UK, Russia, Australia, and Bangladesh are dealing with the resurgence in daily infections, the cases in India seem to be under control with daily infections being less than 50,000 for the past two weeks.

The active cases in India comprise 1.47 per cent of the total infections, while the national Covid-19 recovery rate has increased to 97.20 per cent. The daily positivity rate, which stands at 2.25 per cent, has been less than three per cent for 20 consecutive days. The weekly positivity rate has also declined to 2.32 per cent.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 2,99,75,064 and the case fatality rate stands at 1.32 per cent. As many as 18,43,500 tests were conducted on Saturday, taking the total cumulative tests conducted so far for detection of Covid-19 in the country to 43,08,85,470. The cumulative number of vaccine doses administered so far has reached 37.60 crore under the nationwide vaccination drive.

The Union health ministry said that over 1.44 crore balance and unutilised Covid-19 vaccine doses are still available with the states, UTs, and private hospitals to be administered. Over 38.60 crore vaccine doses have been provided to the states and UTs so far through all sources and a further 11,25,140 doses are in the pipeline. Of this, the total consumption including wastage is 37,16,47,825 doses. The new phase of universalisation of Covid-19 vaccination is to commence from June 21.

Assam to give ₹2.5L to Covid-19 widows

Guwahati: Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Sunday rolled out a scheme to provide one-time financial assistance of ₹2.5 lakh each to all widows, whose husbands died due to covid, if their annual family income is less than ₹5 lakh. Under the new 'chief minister's Covid Widows Support Scheme', Sarma handed over cheques to 175 eligible beneficiaries from eight districts at a function here. At least 873 beneficiaries have been identified as of now under this scheme, and all the cheques will be given to them by state ministers in districts by the next week, Mr Sarma said. "This is not a happy programme for us. When we invite beneficiaries for some government schemes, we always take pride. But for today's event, we are neither proud nor happy," he said. —PTI

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BJP govt will review 'land to outsiders' issue: Dhani

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JULY 11

Amid growing support and demand for strict land laws and restricting sale of land to "outsiders" in Uttarakhand, the newly appointed chief minister of the poll going state, Pushkar Singh Dhani on Sunday said the ruling BJP will "review" the issue and will "keep in mind the public interest" while taking any decision on it. For the first time, a BJP leader has addressed the issue, which the opposition Congress has claimed to implement if it comes to power. Started by youths of the state as a social media campaign - #Uttarakhand_maanga_bhu_kanoon - the issue is now being amplified by the involvement of seniors in villages, towns and cities and is turning into a major poll issue.

"We will talk to everyone...will review the issue and if required will work on it," said the new CM regarding the demand. Rejecting reports of growing factionalism in the party's state unit, Mr Dhani asserted that the BJP will go to polls as a team and he has "blessings" of the party seniors.

Some seniors in the BJP state unit had objected to the elevation of "third-generation" leader to the CM's post and Union home minister Amit Shah had then intervened. The new chief minister also rubbished the new political entrant in the state. AAP's poll promise of 300 units free electricity, saying Uttarakhand will once again vote for development, which only the BJP can provide.

Kolkata: 37 held for flouting Covid rules, partying in hotel

RAJIB CHOWDHURI
KOLKATA, JULY 11

In a major crackdown, the Kolkata Police raided a five-star hotel in the city after Saturday midnight and arrested 37 persons from there for celebrating a weekend party violating the Covid-19 lockdown with loud music.

37 cellphones, drugs and alcohol were seized from the second and third floors which were booked for the party at The Park on Park Street.

The seized items included two Pioneer DJ discs, an amplifier, two sound boxes, a DJ light, three hookahs, four liquor bottles and a packet of Ganja, according to the police.

Besides, a Mercedes sedan and an SUV, belonging to two among the accused, which were parked at the hotel were

THE COPS, however, faced resistance when they turned up at the two upper floors in plain clothes. Some of the revellers fought with them physically. The 37 arrested and the hotel were booked in a case at the Park Street police station under various sections of the Indian Penal Code and Disaster Management Act.

37 CELLPHONES, drugs and alcohol were seized from the second and third floors which were booked for the party at The Park on Park Street

also impounded. The raid at the posh hotel took place at around 1.15 am following a tip-off.

The cops, however, faced resistance when they turned up at the two

upper floors in plain clothes. Some of the revellers fought with them physically. The 37 arrested and the hotel were booked in a case at the Park Street police station under various sections of the Indian Penal Code and Disaster Management Act. On Sunday they were produced at the Bankhall Court. The police prayed to the judge for the custody of only nine among the 37.

But the court remanded seven of them to police custody and two others to jail custody till July 16 while granting bail to the rest 28 against a personal bond of ₹1,000 for each.

A team of forensic experts inspected the hotel during the day and collected samples for examination. The police meanwhile summoned a hotel official for questioning in the case.

MP: RSS to train cadres to tackle 3rd Covid wave

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY
BHOPAL, JULY 11

R a s t r i y a Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) will train its cadres to tackle the third Covid wave, speculated to hit the country in September-October this year.

The RSS would impart training to its workers across the country on how to cooperate with the local administration to tackle the pandemic and how to help the potential victims during the period. The decision was taken at the ongoing All India 'Prant Pracharak' meeting, being organised at Chitrakoot in Satna district in Madhya Pradesh on Sunday, a spokesman of the organisation said here.

Woman infected with 2 Covid variants highlights next risk

SUZI RING
JULY 11

A 90-year-old woman died after becoming infected with two different strains of Covid-19, revealing another risk in the fight against the disease, Belgian researchers found.

In the first peer-reviewed analysis of an infection with multiple strains, scientists found the woman had contracted both the alpha variant, which first surfaced in the UK, and the beta strain, first found in South Africa. The infections probably came from separate people, according to a report published on Saturday and presented at the European Congress of Clinical Microbiology & Infectious Diseases.

The woman was admitted to a Belgian hospital in March after a number of falls, and tested positive for Covid-19 the same day. She lived alone, receiving nursing care at home, and hadn't been vaccinated. Her respiratory symptoms rapidly worsened and she died five days later. When her respiratory samples were tested for variants of concern, both

strains were found in two tests. The researchers couldn't say whether the co-infection played a role in her rapid deterioration.

The idea of multiple infections isn't completely new. In January, Brazilian scientists reported two cases of Covid-19 co-infection, but the study hasn't

yet been released in a scientific journal. Researchers have also previously found evidence of people becoming infected with multiple strains of influenza. The cases suggest co-infection might be more common than currently known.

— *Bloomberg*

AUSTRALIA-S'PORE TRAVEL BUBBLE TIMING PUSHED BACK TO END 2021

EMILY CADMAN
JULY 11

Sydney's virus outbreak means plans for an Australian-Singapore travel bubble have been delayed until at least the end of the year, the Australian trade minister said on Sunday.

While opening up the travel corridor remains a priority, the scale of the outbreak that has forced the country's largest city into a renewed lockdown means plans are on hold, Dan Tehan told the Sydney Morning Herald.

"It has been put back due to the third wave of

the virus," he said. "The hope might be towards the end of the year that you could look at a travel bubble with Singapore."

Following the initial discussions, the two countries haven't committed to a specific date for the travel bubble.

While Australia was an early success story in the fight against the coronavirus, a sluggish vaccine rollout means even as the rest of the world opens up the country's borders are expected to stay shut until mid-2022. Just 26 per cent of the population have received their first jab.

— *Bloomberg*

BINDU GOPAL RAO

Childhood is a critical stage of development, not only for physical development, but also for cognitive, emotional and social development, which shape one's future mental health. Good mental health helps children develop the resilience to cope with whatever life throws at them, develop healthy relationships and grow into well-rounded, healthy adults.

Vijayalakshmi K, head of student wellness & counselling (Disha), The Narayana Group, says, "Children with mental health issues need early identification and intervention. Parents can be sensitised through orientation programmes by psychologists. The teachers can deal better with deviant behaviour in the children if they're given a checklist of such behaviours to watch out for. Once the identification happens, the counsellor then works with the parent, teacher and the child for the best outcome." Symptoms often start in early childhood although some disorders may develop during the teenage years.

CATCH THEM YOUNG

Dr Jennifer Prabhu, co-founder and CEO of Ciroce Health Pvt Ltd, points out specific symptoms to be on the lookout in kids. "These include avoidance of social activities, difficulty in falling asleep or staying asleep, stomach pain and headache (especially in relation to particular events such as examinations and public presentations), dropping grades in school, eating problems (over or under-eating), explosive anger/outbursts especially towards peers and finally suicidal thoughts/tendencies," elaborates the Dr Prabhu. "Again, keep in mind that (except for suicidal behaviours) any of these symptoms are not concerning in isolation; it is when they become persistent and pervasive that we as clinicians become concerned."

Tapsi Wadhwa, life coach and relationship counsellor, adds that another symptom to watch out for in children is when they become angry or start to cry for petty issues. "This tendency is the reason behind your child's lost smile. In the worst case scenario, a child starts talking about death, not out of curiosity but because of the suicidal thoughts he/she is having every now and then. All these symptoms need to be noticed and treated at the right time either by talking or taking him/her to a therapist," cautions Tapsi.

INFANT WOES

Childhood mental disorders for kids below three years include aspects such as delay in developmental milestones, delays in speech and language, delay in communication and behavioural issues.



Covid affects mental health of children

Children can have mental health issues, something that many parents and guardians are unaware of. With schools closed, lack of recreation and play opportunities, economic stress in the household and health-related worries for parents, anxiety among children is on the rise

Child cheer checklist

- Work on creating a safe and conducive environment for the child where they feel comfortable talking with you about their concerns.
- Take an active interest in your child and be aware of changes in their behaviour.
- Be honest when they ask you a question.
- Encourage them to talk about what's happening in their lives; reassure them that it's okay to feel sad/stressed/upset/anxious sometimes and that talking to an adult may help them find solutions.
- Don't judge your kids or over-react when they tell you about their concerns as they may shut down then. Try to remain open-minded.
- Encourage them to get adequate sleep and physical activity and eat healthily.
- Teach your kids positive ways to managing conflict and solving problems.
- Help your kids express their emotions in a productive manner through drawing, storytelling or using toys to enact their feelings.
- Help them set realistic, age-appropriate goals and then work towards achieving them.
- Encourage them to learn from their mistakes.
- Teach them to take slow, deep breaths; you can make this a fun activity by blowing bubbles/balloons or by blowing out candles.
- If you notice any signs and symptoms of mental health concerns, consult with a mental health practitioner at the earliest.

Ritika Aggarwal, consultant psychologist at Jaslok Hospital & Research Centre points out that Autism Spectrum Disorder, a neurodevelopmental disorder, is usually diagnosed at about three years in kids. "You may notice them showing poor eye contact, difficulty in communicating and interacting with others, repeating words and actions, sensory issues, etc."

POSTPARTUM PSYCHIATRY

Children with mental health issues need early identification and intervention. Parents can be sensitised through orientation programmes by psychologists. The teachers can deal better with deviant behaviour in the children if they're given a checklist of such behaviours to watch out for. Once the identification happens, the counsellor then works with the parent, teacher and the child for the best outcome.

With childbirth, new mothers may also need help. And towards this, it is important to distinguish between postpartum blues, postpartum depression and postpartum psychosis. Dr Anjali Chhabria, psychiatrist and psychotherapist, explains that one must understand issues such as postpartum depression arise because of a hormonal imbalance in the brain. "It's crucial to ensure that the mother

seeks professional help, which will bolster the health and development of the baby too," she adds.

HELPING HAND

Children can be helped by focusing on the support system around them — their family, teachers and friends. Parents must enable children to have interactions with their friends, be it having lunch breaks or distanced interactions on online platforms like Zoom.

Specific symptoms to be on the lookout in kids include avoidance of social activities, difficulty in falling asleep or staying asleep, stomach pain and headache (especially in relation to particular events such as examinations and public presentations), dropping grades in school, eating problems (over or under-eating), explosive anger/outbursts especially towards peers.

—Dr JENNIFER PRABHU, co-founder and CEO of Ciroce Health Pvt Ltd.

Parents should remain calm and consistent, and this will protect children and make them thrive well. If there are persistent difficulties, then the parents should seek medical help.

—Dr CHITRA SHANKAR, consultant and developmental paediatrics, Manipal Hospitals in Bangalore

According to Dr Chitra Shankar, consultant and developmental paediatrics, Manipal Hospitals in Bangalore, children need a safe and secure environment, regular routines and schedules, adequate sleep, good nutritious food, regular physical exercise, opportunities to play, outdoor activities and a caring family. As per Prabhat Kumar, Deputy Director, Child Protection, Save the Children, a list of professional and registered counsellors should be shared with parents and caregivers in case they need advance counselling. "Save the Children has developed and widely disseminated materials on self-care mechanisms to overcome stress and anxiety and how the caregiver can engage with children during pandemic times," he adds.

— VIJAYALAKSHMI K, head of student wellness & counselling, the Narayana Group

The smile behind the mask

The smile behind the mask (The Hindu: 20210712)

<https://www.thehindu.com/society/remember-to-smile-behind-your-covid-19-masks/article35212018.ece>

Women ophthalmologists from across Aravind Eye Hospitals in Tamil Nadu are reminding people to wear their smiles as they did during pre-pandemic times

When the second wave of COVID-19 hit hard with many people losing their loved ones, doctors at Aravind Eye Care System (AECS) realised even their conversations at the work place were changing. “We were serious all the time

Pfizer to seek approval for third vaccine dose

Pfizer to seek approval for third vaccine dose; shots still protect (The Hindu: 20210712)

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/pfizer-to-seek-approval-for-third-vaccine-dose-shots-still-protect/article35226654.ece>

Pfizer’s Dr. Mikael Dolsten has said that early data from the company's booster study suggests people’s antibody levels jump five- to 10-fold after a third dose

Pfizer is about to seek U.S. authorization for a third dose of its COVID-19 vaccine, saying Thursday that another shot within 12 months could

Vaccines

Vaccines will help prevent severe disease in pregnant women: expert (The Hindu: 20210712)

<https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/health/vaccines-will-help-prevent-severe-disease-in-pregnant-women-expert/article35208384.ece>

‘Women should use all Covid-appropriate precautions during pregnancy and after childbirth’.

Manju Puri, head, department of obstetrics and gynaecology, Lady Hardinge Medical College, Delhi, spoke exclusively to The Hindu on the Central

COVID-19 vaccination - Pregnant women

Pregnant women in India now eligible for COVID-19 vaccination (The Hindu: 20210712)

<https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/health/pregnant-women-in-india-now-eligible-for-covid-19-vaccination/article35101824.ece>

Women can now register on CoWIN or walk-in to the nearest Covid vaccination centre to get themselves inoculated

Pregnant women in India are now eligible to get vaccinated against COVID-19 with the union Health Ministry on Friday giving the approval based on recommendations of the National Technical Advisory Group on Immunization

Delta variant - WHO

Delta variant to become dominant strain of COVID-19 in coming months: WHO (The Hindu: 20210712)

<https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/health/delta-variant-to-become-dominant-strain-of-covid-19-in-coming-months-who/article35071265.ece>

The World Health Organization said the Delta variant of COVID-19 is now present in nearly 100 countries.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has said the Delta variant of COVID-19 is now present in nearly 100 countries as per conservative estimates, and

Pandemics

Pandemic's effect on balance sheets of banks is not as bad as expected (The Indian Express: 20210712)

<https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/pandemics-effect-on-balance-sheets-of-banks-is-not-as-bad-as-expected-7399897/>

Radhika Pandey writes: Higher recoveries, improved capital position could help increase credit growth in the economy

A security guard's reflection is seen next to the logo of the Reserve Bank Of India (RBI) at the RBI headquarters in Mumbai (Reuters)

The Reserve Bank of India's latest Financial Stability Report presented an assessment of the health of the banking sector in the pandemic year. There were concerns that the balance sheets of banks would be adversely hit by the pandemic-induced disruption. However, the report shows that banks fared much better as the NPA ratio (non-performing assets of banks as a percentage of loans) was broadly under control at the end of March. A series of regulatory forbearance policies and their timely withdrawal along with deleveraging by firms have helped in ensuring that banks' balance sheets were not adversely impacted by the pandemic. For this year, the RBI has projected that the NPA of banks will rise to 9.8 per cent. The deterioration is projected to be much steeper under various stress scenarios. However, the assumptions behind these stress scenarios seem to be conservative. The quality of banks' assets may not deteriorate to the extent projected in the report.

The NPA ratio for banks for the period ending March 31 stood at 7.5 per cent. This was much better than the earlier projections. There were concerns that NPAs of banks would increase due to the pandemic as borrowers' ability to repay loans was hit. The RBI, in its July 2020 report projected that, in the baseline scenario the NPA ratio could rise from 8.4 per cent to 12.5 per cent by March 2021, while in the severe stress scenario, they were projected to rise to 14.7 per cent. However, the NPAs settled at a much lower figure. In earlier instances also, the RBI is seen to have overestimated the banks' NPA position.

The capital position of banks, measured as the capital to risk-weighted assets ratio (CRAR), was also projected to deteriorate from 14.6 per cent in March 2020 to 13.3 per cent by March 2021 in the baseline scenario presented in the July 2020 report. However, banks were able to raise capital through various modes such as public issues and qualified institutional placements (QIP) and improved their capital positions during 2020-21. Despite the pandemic, the capital position of banks measured by CRAR improved to 16 per cent in March — well above the regulatory threshold of 9 per cent. Even public sector banks were better placed on capital position. Going forward, the capital position of banks is not likely to pose major concerns. Even under a severe stress scenario, RBI doesn't expect any of the 46 banks to fall short of capital.

Another positive feature emerging from the report is that banks have enough capital to cushion against a deterioration in their assets. The proportion of provisions to gross non-performing assets (GNPA) increased from 66.2 per cent in March 2020 to 68.9 per cent in March 2021.

Regulatory support measures including loan moratoriums, facilities to restructure loans, a standstill on NPA classification and their timely withdrawal have ensured that banks' NPAs

remain under control. While banks were incentivised through a number of instruments such as through the Targeted Long Term Repo Operations (TLTROs) to aggressively lend to sectors hit by the pandemic, they adopted a cautious approach. RBI incentivised banks to borrow at a low rate of interest to further lend to specified stressed sectors. But there were not many takers for the cheap loan windows.

For this year, the report projects the NPAs of the banking sector to rise to 9.8 per cent of advances by March 2022 in the baseline scenario. The report also has projections for two stress scenarios: Medium and severe stress scenarios. But these scenarios look unlikely. They involve GDP growth slowing to 6.5 per cent and less than 1 per cent in 2021-22 in the medium and severe stress scenarios respectively.

A key risk highlighted by the report is the weakness in the MSME portfolio of banks. Since 2019, three loan restructuring schemes were announced to help the impaired MSME sector. Despite restructuring, the report notes that the stress in the MSME sector remained elevated as the NPA ratio for public sector banks stood at 15.9 per cent as of March 2021, compared with 13.1 per cent in December 2020. While stress in the MSME sector needs monitoring, it is unlikely to pose a systemic risk. The 15.9 per cent NPA ratio is applicable to small loans of up to Rs 25 crore. Despite a series of measures to boost credit flows to the MSME sector, the share of MSMEs in the outstanding bank credit is less than 5 per cent. The increase in credit flows to this sector is primarily attributed to the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) scheme. The scheme aims to provide 100 per cent guaranteed coverage to banks and other lenders. Thus, banks will be guarded against a possible slippage of loans under this scheme. In addition, the RBI's restructuring schemes and the pre-packaged insolvency resolution process should allow for better handling of stress in the MSME credit.

Going forward, in the absence of regulatory support measures such as moratoriums and a standstill on NPA classification, there could be fresh additions to NPAs. But repayment of loans by companies, better recoveries and faster credit growth as the economy picks up could help in keeping NPAs under control. With improved capital positions of banks, they would be able to support a recovery in credit demand.

Vaccination (Hindustan: 20210712)

https://epaper.livehindustan.com/imageview_916952_86190806_4_1_12-07-2021_2_i_1_sf.html

दिल्ली की आधी आबादी को भी अब तक कोरोना की वैक्सीन नहीं लग पाई है

घनी आबादी वाले इलाके कम केंद्रों के कारण टीकाकरण में पिछड़े



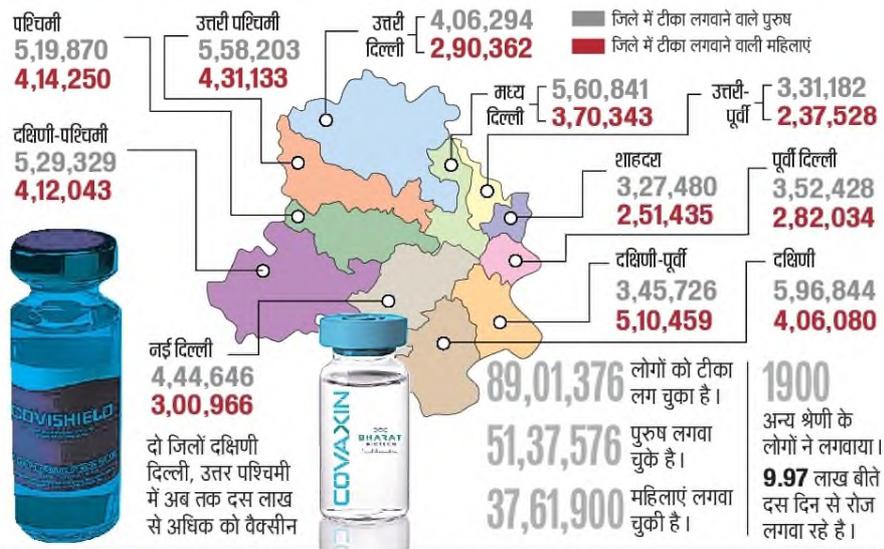
नई दिल्ली | बृजेश सिंह

दिल्ली में 89 लाख से अधिक लोगों ने कोविड टीका लगवा लिया है। दो करोड़ जनसंख्या वाली दिल्ली की आधी आबादी टीकाकरण बस थोड़ी दूर है। लेकिन जिलावार टीका लगवाने वालों की संख्या पर नजर डाले तो पाएंगे कि एशिया का सबसे घनी आबादी वाला उत्तर-पूर्वी जिला टीका लगवाने में सबसे पीछे है। वहीं कम घनी आबादी वाले दक्षिणी दिल्ली, उत्तरी पश्चिमी जिले सबसे आगे हैं। इन दो जिलों में अब तक 10 लाख से अधिक लोग टीका लगवा चुके हैं।

उत्तरी पूर्वी जिला में प्रति एक वर्ग किलोमीटर में 36,155 लोग रहते हैं। लेकिन यहां टीकाकरण करवाने वालों की संख्या 5.68 लाख है। वहीं सबसे कम घनी आबादी वाले दक्षिणी दिल्ली में 10.03 लाख लोगों ने टीका लगवाया है, यहां प्रति वर्ग किलोमीटर की आबादी 9034 है। उत्तरी पश्चिमी जिले में अब तक सबसे अधिक 10.09 लाख लोग टीका लगवा चुके हैं। वहां प्रति एक वर्ग किलोमीटर में 21,490 लोग रहते हैं।

जागरुकता की कमी, टीकाकरण केंद्र की संख्या का असर : उत्तर-पूर्वी जिले में टीकाकरण कम होने के पीछे अधिकारी दो कारण मानते हैं। पहला, यहां अभी लोगों में जागरुकता की कमी है, जिससे लोग टीका लगवाने के लिए आगे कम आ रहे हैं। दूसरा सबसे बड़ा कारण है, यहां टीकाकरण केंद्र की संख्या कम होना। जिले के एक वरिष्ठ अधिकारी ने बताया कि उत्तरी-पूर्वी जिला में जब टीका उपलब्ध होता है तो 145 से लेकर 170 के बीच टीकाकरण केंद्र होते हैं। इसमें ज्यादातर

किस जिले में कितनों को लगा टीका



क्या है वजह

1. जागरुकता की कमी होने से अब भी लोग टीका लगवाने नहीं आ रहे
2. अपेक्षाकृत कम केंद्र का होना भी कम टीकाकरण की बड़ी वजह है।

सरकारी ही होते हैं। दूसरी तरफ दक्षिणी या उत्तरी-पश्चिमी जिले में टीकाकरण केंद्र की संख्या 215 से ऊपर होती है। वहां निजी अस्पतालों में कई केंद्र हैं, जहां लोगों के पास सुविधा है।

रोजाना एक लाख लोग लगवा रहे टीका : दिल्ली में बीते 10 दिनों यानि एक से 10 जुलाई के बीच औसतन रोजाना एक लाख लोग टीका लगवा रहे हैं। बीते दस दिन में दिल्लीभर में 9.97 लाख से अधिक लोगों ने टीका लगवाया है। यह संख्या तब है, जबकि इस दौरान दो दिन दिल्ली में टीका की कमी के चलते महज 22 हजार लोगों ने टीका लगवाया था।

युवाओं को दोनों खुराक देने में दिल्ली पांचवें नंबर पर

नई दिल्ली | हेमंत राजौरा

18 से लेकर 44 वर्ष तक के युवाओं को टीके की दोनों खुराक लगाने में दिल्ली देशभर में पांचवें स्थान पर है। दिल्ली में 1,94,590 युवाओं (18 से 44 साल) को टीके के दोनों खुराक मिल चुकी हैं, यानी उनका टीकाकरण पूरा हो गया है।

युवाओं को दोनों खुराक लगाने में मध्यप्रदेश पहले और महाराष्ट्र दूसरे स्थान पर है। मध्यप्रदेश में अभी तक 4,34,455 युवाओं को दोनों डोज लग चुकी हैं, वहीं महाराष्ट्र में 3,43,913 युवाओं का टीकाकरण पूरा हो चुका है।

20 लाख से ज्यादा को दोनों खुराक दिल्ली में 20,49,318 लोगों को टीके की दोनों खुराक लगाई जा चुकी हैं। इनमें से 1,94,590 ऐसे हैं, जिनकी उम्र 18 से 44 साल के बीच है। राजधानी में वर्तमान समय में 763 स्थानों पर 1374 केंद्रों पर टीकाकरण किया जा रहा है।

इन राज्यों में सबसे अधिक युवाओं को मिली दोनों खुराक

1. मध्यप्रदेश	434455
2. महाराष्ट्र	343913
3. उत्तर प्रदेश	293599
4. गुजरात	243043
5. दिल्ली	194590

पहली खुराक में भी कोवैक्सीन लगावा सकेंगे

राहत

नई दिल्ली | वरिष्ठ संवाददाता

दिल्ली के टीकाकरण केंद्रों पर अब सभी लोग कोवैक्सीन की पहली डोज भी लगवा सकेंगे। यह वैक्सीन अब पहली और दूसरी दोनों खुराकों के लिए लगाई जाएगी। इस बाबत स्वास्थ्य विभाग ने आदेश जारी कर दिए हैं।

स्वास्थ्य विभाग की ओर से जारी

आदेश के मुताबिक, सभी सरकारी और निजी अस्पतालों और टीकाकरण केंद्रों पर पहली खुराक के रूप में कोवैक्सीन भी लग सकेंगी। पहली डोज के स्लॉट के लिए कुल क्षमता का 20 फीसदी स्टॉक ही प्रयोग किया जाएगा।

सभी केंद्र यह ध्यान रखेंगे की वैक्सीन उस हिसाब से लगाई जाए, जिससे दूसरी खुराक वालों के लिए टीके की कमी न हो। इससे पहले जून में दिल्ली सरकार ने आदेश जारी कर कहा था कि कोवैक्सीन को 18-44 के लोगों

व्यवस्था

- पहली डोज के लिए कुल स्लॉट का 20% टीका इस्तेमाल होगा
- जून में सरकार ने कोवैक्सीन की पहली डोज पर रोक लगाई थी

के लिए सिर्फ दूसरी डोज के रूप में इस्तेमाल किया जाएगा। वैक्सीन की कमी के कारण यह फैसला लिया गया था। दिल्ली में अब तक 20 लाख लोगों

को ही वैक्सीन की दूसरी खुराक लग सकी है। इस लिहाज से देखें तो कुल आबादी में से सिर्फ 10 फीसदी आबादी का ही पूर्ण टीकाकरण हुआ है लेकिन अन्य राज्यों की तुलना में यह अधिक है।

दिल्ली में पिछले दिनों की कोरोना के टीके की कमी हो गई थी, जिसके कारण कई केंद्र बंद करने पड़े गए थे। केंद्र के बाहर वैक्सीन खत्म होने का नोटिस चस्पा करना पड़ा था, जिसकी वजह से कई लोग केंद्र पर आकर वापस लौटकर जा रहे थे।