



DAILY NEWS BULLETIN

LEADING HEALTH, POPULATION AND FAMILY WELFARE STORIES OF THE DAY
Thursday 20210408

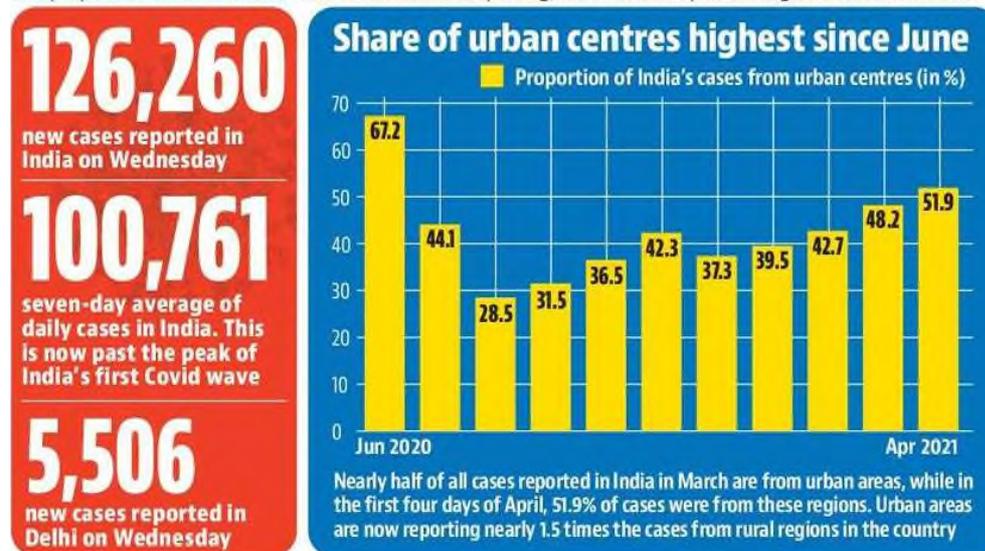
vaccine

Centre, Maha face off over supply of vaccine doses State's stock of vax doses to last 3 more days, shuts down several centres (Hindustan Times: 20210408)

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

Cases soaring in cities again

The proportion of cases from urban centres is steadily rising, and is currently at the highest since June 2020



Maharashtra is facing a shortage of Covid-19 vaccine doses and has shut down several vaccination centres. It has already requested the Centre to provide adequate stock as it has set a target of inoculating 600,000 beneficiaries a day, said Rajesh Tope, state health minister, on Wednesday.

Several states have contended they will run out of coronavirus vaccine doses within days and requested the central government for replenishments, prompting a strong rebuttal from the Union health minister Harsh Vardhan who accused three states – all under Opposition governments – of politicising the issue. But the war of words appeared to be particularly intense with Maharashtra. In his statement, Harsh Vardhan singled out Maharashtra for officials and leaders flagging possible shortage and criticised what he said was “misgovernance and utter

casual approach of Maharashtra government in battling the virus". The state is left with 1,400,000 vaccine doses, which will last only three days.

It has demanded a stock of four million doses a week from the Centre. According to figures analysed from the Co-WIN dashboard, Maharashtra has delivered the highest number of doses among all states at 7.4 million, although in per capita terms, it has delivered 60,788 doses per million people, slightly lower than the national average of 65,329. Among states with large populations, Kerala, Rajasthan, Delhi, West Bengal and Maharashtra are the top five states in terms of doses delivered per million people.

Currently, Maharashtra is covering 450,000 beneficiaries a day and the health minister guaranteed that it will cross the 600,000 mark in the next two-three days, provided it gets adequate stock from the Centre. Tope urged the Union government to prioritise shipments to the state, which is reporting close to 10 times higher number of new infections every day than the region with the next-highest numbers. The demand to the Centre was made in a video conference meeting chaired by Harsh Vardhan. Tope attended the meeting along with the health ministers from six other states on Tuesday evening.

"Union minister Prakash Javadekar had asked us to double the vaccination numbers and had assured to provide adequate stock. We accepted it as a challenge and increased the daily vaccination to 450,000 from 300,000. However, we have started facing shortage of vaccine stock and have to shut down many centres across the state as there is no stock left there," the health minister told reporters later. "We have a stock of 1,400,000 vaccines left, which means the state has a stock of three days only and then vaccination would be stopped if fresh stock is not provided. We need a stock of at least 4,000,000 vaccines per week. As health minister of Maharashtra, I can guarantee we will achieve the target of inoculating 600,000 beneficiaries in the next 2-3 days as we have planned mobilization of the resources in that manner," Tope added.

The Union health minister issued a statement later in the evening, hitting out at what he said was attempts to "divert attention" from the state's slow vaccination drive. "Doesn't it seem evident that these states are trying to divert attention from their poor vaccination efforts by just continuously shifting the goal posts? Politicising such a public health issue is a damning indictment of certain political leaders who should know better," said Harsh Vardhan in the statement that included vaccination figures from Maharashtra, Delhi, and Punjab, which he said were lower than that of several other states.

"Vaccination is the most effective measure to control the pandemic at present," the health minister said, urging the Centre to provide adequate stock and if needed, delay supplies of the stock in other states as the daily cases have breached the 50,000 mark in Maharashtra.

Tope avoided making any allegations of bias against the Centre, but pointed out that there is a difference between what they say and what they do, when it comes to handling the Covid-19 pandemic. "I don't believe the central government doesn't want to provide vaccine stock as they have been doing it regularly, but the pace is slow. Dr Harsh Vardhan (union health minister) is a very soft spoken and helpful minister and urged him to give more attention towards Maharashtra," he commented.

"Why was there no strategy or planning put into the logistics of the vaccine programme? Why is there both extremely high wastage & an acute shortage of vaccines? Perhaps PM (Narendra) Modi should focus more on running the country than running for elections," tweeted Balasaheb Thorat, state revenue minister and former state Congress chief.

The confrontation over vaccines comes a day before a meeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi has called with the chief ministers of all states on Thursday. The meeting is meant to take stock of the Covid-19 situation and the vaccination drive, especially at a time when the country is going through its most severe wave of infections yet. Earlier, on Monday, the CM Uddhav Thackeray wrote a letter to the PM asking permission to vaccinate all above the age of 25.

Leader of opposition Devendra Fadnavis said the state government is expected to discuss the issue with the Centre, instead of disclosing them before the media. He stressed that Maharashtra is getting maximum stock of vaccine from the Centre, compared to other states. “The state government should discuss issues with the Centre instead of running away from the situation by speaking about issues in the media. The state government asks the opposition party (Bharatiya Janata Party) not to bring in politics in handling Covid-19 pandemic but its ministers and the chief minister (Uddhav Thackeray) do the same,” Fadnavis told reporters.

He said the state is getting enough stock for the target group on a regular basis for vaccination. “Sometimes it happens that the stock is left for a few days but then fresh stock arrives from the Centre as supplies are going across the states,” Fadnavis clarified.

To increase vaccine production, the state-owned Haffkine Institute has already sought permission from the Centre for transfer of technology from Bharat Biotech that has developed Covid-19 vaccine — ‘Covaxin’. It has also sought permission for fill and finish operations of Covid vaccine in which Haffkine Institute will only fill vaccines in bottles and make them ready as a product. Haffkine is a public sector undertaking owned by the state government and has developed a number of vaccines that include anti-rabies serum, anti-venom serum, oral polio vaccine etc.

This week, Delhi’s chief minister Arvind Kejriwal, too, wrote to the PM seeking the 45 years age bar removed, while his Punjab counterpart Amarinder Singh made similar demands earlier in the month. Harsh Vardhan gave a break-up of vaccination data for the states to suggest they had not delivered adequate doses to health staff, frontline workers, and senior citizens.

Officials in five other states – Rajasthan, Odisha, West Bengal, Bihar, and Uttarakhand – separately told HT that doses were close to running out.

In his statement, Harsh Vardhan singled out Maharashtra, saying, “Today, Maharashtra not only has the highest cases and deaths in the country but also has one of the highest test positivity rates in the world! Their testing is not up to the mark and their contact tracing leaves a lot to be desired... The performance of Maharashtra government in terms of vaccinating healthcare workers and frontline workers is also not great.”

“Maharashtra government needs to do a lot more to control the pandemic and the Central government will help them in all possible ways. But focusing all their energies on playing politics and spreading lies to create panic is not going to help the people of Maharashtra,” he added.

The Union government separately gave a break-up of supplies and said Maharashtra has been sent 10.6 million doses, which 9 million had been used up. The government said another 743,280 were in the “pipeline”, which authorities said meant as being in transit.

Covid lapses

Covid lapses at farm stir may hit 4 states (Hindustan Times: 20210408)

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

The ongoing farmer agitation on the outskirts of Delhi will continue despite a surge in Covid-19 cases in the country, senior leaders of the movement insisted, despite warnings from health experts and government officials that the thousands-strong protest could become a virus superspreader that impacts four states.

Some leaders of the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) said they will ask farmers to adopt precautions such as masks but many farmers at the protest sites of Singhu, Tikri and Ghazipur expressed disbelief about Covid-19 protocols, said farmers have “higher immunity”, and termed the virus a “government conspiracy”.

“Farmers have higher immunity. In our protests since last year, not a single Covid-19 case has happened. Why are only the farmers’ protests seen as a Covid risk? Why are questions never raised over mass election rallies being held in Bengal, Assam and Kerala?” asked Balbir Singh Rajewal, a key member of SKM.

Other leaders of the movement also said that events such as a march to Parliament in May and blocking of highways in April will continue as scheduled. Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) Dakaunda general secretary Sukhdev Singh, however, said that social distancing will be implemented at protest sites.

Hundreds of thousands of farmers have camped outside Delhi since November last year in protest against three controversial central laws that aim to liberalise the farm economy.

When the agitation began, the first wave of Covid-19 cases was on the wane. But over the past two weeks, cases have surged across India, which is firmly in the grip of the second national wave, and experts warn that the farm gatherings – where hundreds of families live in cheek-by-jowl trawlers on the highway and where scores of young men and women huddle together – is potentially an unchecked virus hot spot. “Gatherings are increasing the chance of transmitting the infection and that’s why they need to be avoided,” said Jugal Kishore, head of the community medicine department at Safdarjung Hospital in Delhi.

To be sure, the caution is not limited to farm events and extend to any high-density event such as religious events, or political rallies.

Travelling back and forth

The farm protests are unique because they pose a health risk to four states of Punjab, Haryana, Delhi and Uttar Pradesh as cultivators from all these regions have flocked to the Capital’s borders over the past six months to support the agitation, and keep going back and forth from the protest site to their homes.

“So far we have not encountered any Covid case at the protest site but we are concerned about those who visit Punjab, Haryana, and Delhi these days as they might pick up the virus from places outside the protest site,” said Swaiman Singh, a cardiologist from New Jersey who has been volunteering at the Tikri site. It was not clear, however, what level of testing was happening at the site, and whether asymptomatic cases may be going undetected.

Of particular concern is Punjab, which has recorded a big spike in cases and deaths in the past two weeks.

On Wednesday, the state posted 2,963 cases even as the government clamped night curfew and announced additional curbs, including a ban on political gatherings.

“We have a rotational basis for the protests. Ten fresh protestors come every week to relieve 10 people already taking part in the protests. This will continue,” Rajewal said, describing a system that, experts believe, underscores the heightened risk.

Punjab govt not worried

The Punjab government said it had no plans to check the ongoing stir. “There is hardly any rally being done by the farmers and if they are getting together at any place, they are doing it for the genuine demands against the three black laws. We cannot say anything to them as it’s a matter of their future generations,” said Punjab health and family welfare minister Balbir Singh Sidhu.

The state health department also maintained there was no direct link between the stir and rising Covid-19 cases. “Our analysis reveals that 70% of cases reported this year are from urban areas. Only 30% are from rural areas that are hubs of farmer protests,” said state Covid-19 nodal officer Dr Rajesh Bhaskar.

Health experts said that farmers may have escaped the scourge of the virus so far because the current surge was driven by urban areas. But they warned that the protest may become a hot spot, especially because testing in the villages was inadequate due to a boycott call given by farmer unions.

In Haryana, additional chief secretary, health, Rajiv Arora said the farmer gatherings were a cause for concern.

“The situation is under control in Jhajjar and Sonapat, the two Delhi bordering districts where the farmers have assembled in big numbers. But it is certainly a cause of concern. Such gatherings can lead to a wider and deeper spread of infection, particularly in light of the fact that a big number of agitating farmers come from Punjab where the infection and mortality rate is very high. The back-and-forth movement of farmers can also contribute to spread of contagion,” he said.

State nodal officer for Covid-19, Dr Dhruva Chaudhary, said any congregation – political, social or religious -- would cause a rise in cases.

“People neither appear for testing nor vaccination. If the virus is so dangerous, why did Haryana chief minister Manohar Lal Khattar address a condolence meet in memory of Rohtak MP Arvind’s father and why did deputy CM Dushyant Chautala hold a rally ahead of Holi in Palwal? Are the rules only for protesting farmers? We will continue our agitation until our demands are met,” said state secretary of the All India Kisan Sabha, Balbir Singh Thakan

‘Higher immunity’

In Uttar Pradesh, where farm unions have organised a number of mahapanchayats – large rallies where tens of thousands of farmers participate – farmers said they were not worried. Large numbers of cultivators from the state’s western districts joined the protests in January after farm leader Rakesh Tikait’s emotional appeal.

At the headquarters of the BKU in Sisauli town of Muzaffarnagar district, also the birthplace of Tikait, farmers said their resolve to continue the protest was unshaken by the Covid-19 surge.

“Our immune system is strong and virus poses no danger to us. The government shouldn’t think of enforcing curbs on us,” said Dheeraj Latoyan, a farm leader.

At the three protest sites on the Capital’s borders, the crowds have thinned from the peaks of December-January but thousands remain camped on the highway, and enthusiastic about the future course of the stir.

The majority of protesters don’t use masks or sanitisers, and the disbelief about the virus still persists. Several farmers said they do not need a Covid-19 testing facility.

“There is no such thing as coronavirus. The government is again doing the same as they did during last year to harass the poor. Their curbs and curfews won’t deter the spirits of protesters,” said Sukhbir Singh, a farmer from Moga.

Delhi government officials said they periodically set up Covid-19 test camps near the protest sites that are open to everyone. “We have also periodically set up help desks in the sites to encourage people to get vaccinated. We have ambulances reserved in the sites to help with any kind of emergency situation,” said a senior official.

Delhi police officials, meanwhile, said they are not taking any chances. Rajiv Ranjan, DCP (outer-north), under which the Singhu border falls, said all personnel deployed at the sites have received at least a single dose of vaccine. “Almost all the police and paramilitary personnel deployed at the border are vaccinated with at least one dose,” he said.

Maha active cases

Maha active cases may cross 1.1mn by April (Hindustan Times: 20210408)

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

Mini lockdown for mega impact

Maharashtra has announced mini lockdown as part of its 'break the chain' programme on Sunday under which several restrictions came into effect at 8pm on Monday



Deserted Juhu chowpatty.

SATISH BATE/HT

 <p>PUBLIC PLACES Weekdays (7am-8pm): Movement of no more than five people in a group is allowed Weekdays (8pm-7am) and Fri to Mon (8pm to 7am): No movement except essential services Beaches: Closed till Apr 30 Gardens/public grounds: Open from 7am-8pm on weekdays. More than five people not allowed in a group Shops/markets/malls: To remain closed (except essential services) Essential Services: Allowed to operate at all times</p>	 <p>PUBLIC TRANSPORT Auto-rickshaw: Driver + 2 Taxi: Driver + 50% capacity Bus: Full seating capacity, no standing</p>	<p>GOVT OFFICES 50% capacity No visitors allowed GOVT OFFICES REQUIRED FOR RESPONSE TO COVID-19, ELECTRICITY, WATER, BANKING & FINANCIAL SERVICES: 100% capacity</p>
 <p>PRIVATE VEHICLES Weekdays (7am-8pm): Allowed Weekdays (8pm-7am) & Fri to Mon (8pm to 7am): Only for essential services Person arriving/departing by train/bus/-flight: Can travel at all times Industrial workers travelling by pvt buses/vehicles: Can travel at all times using a valid ID card Students travelling to attend exam: Can travel with a valid hall ticket</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pvt Offices: To remain closed (except essential services, all asked to work from home) • Film/Tv shooting: Allowed with conditions • Religious/social/cultural/ political functions: Not allowed • Restaurants/bars: To stay closed (except those inside hotels catering to in-house guests) • Take away/parcel/home delivery: 24x7 via online platforms. Takeaway allowed till 8pm during weekdays. Weekends - Takeaways not allowed. • Roadside eatable vendors: Only home delivery from 7am-8pm • Religious places: To stay closed • Recreation/entertainment services (cinema/theatre/ auditorium/arcade/water parks/clubs/swimming pool/gym/sports complexes): To remain closed • Barber shops/spa/salon/ parlours: To remain closed • Schools/colleges/pvt coaching classes: To remain closed (except 10-12 exams) • Weddings: Maximum 50 attendees • Funeral: Maximum 20 people allowed • Weddings/funerals in places of worship: Places of worship are closed to public entirely. Only those engaged in the service shall continue to perform their duties. In case of any wedding/ last rites to be held in the place of worship, it may be allowed only for the said purpose, subject to the adherence to all conditions. With regard to weddings that are scheduled to be held on weekends, the local disaster management authority to decide upon the same based on the local situation subject to adherence to all rules • Newspaper printing & circulation: Home delivery allowed from 7am-8pm • Essential services/manufacturing sector/oxygen producers/e-commerce/-construction: To remain operational with conditions. • Bar and wine shop: Closed (home delivery permitted) 	

The number of active Covid-19 cases in Maharashtra is likely to cross the 1,100,000 mark by April 30, without adequate measures to control the spread of the virus, such as imposing restrictions on movement or business, according to the state health department. These figures are significant because the highest number of active cases in the entire country was around 1,100,000 during the previous wave of Covid-19 in September 2020, Pradeep Vyas, principal secretary of the state health department said on Wednesday. The issue was discussed during a video conference with the central government on Wednesday morning, Vyas said.

Maharashtra chief minister Uddhav Thackeray also urged citizens to strictly follow restrictions imposed by the state government during the past few days, wear face masks in public places, and maintain social distancing. During an interaction with the media on Wednesday, Thackeray said, "It is important to create awareness about the real situation of Covid-19 on ground, so citizens can be careful and reduce stepping out. Many businesses are urging the government to allow them to operate as usual. We do not want to hamper any business or inconvenience citizens. We want to reduce non-essential commute and crowding at public places to control the spread of the infection."

According to the state's original projections, Maharashtra would have crossed 472,000 active Covid-19 cases by April 12. However, Maharashtra has already crossed this figure as of Tuesday. "Our second wave began around February 11. Now, we are recording more cases than we predicted. The state has already recorded 50% more active cases during this wave, in comparison to its previous wave in September 2020. If cases increase in this proportion, by April 17, we will have around 568,000 active cases," Vyas said. The maximum number of active Covid-19 cases in September 2020 was around 300,000, as opposed to 472,283 as of Tuesday. To streamline availability of beds for needy Covid-19 patients, health minister Rajesh Tope on Wednesday directed all district collectors and municipal commissioners to adopt Mumbai's model of centralised bed allotment. "We have noticed patients struggle to find beds and approach individual hospitals to check availability. Beds will be allotted to Covid-19 patients through a centralised system at every district and municipal corporation level, so patients don't have to run from one hospital to another," Tope said.

In the state, 80.51% Covid-19 beds, 32.77% oxygen beds and 60.95% ICU beds are occupied. Vyas said, "Overall the state has sufficient beds. However, some cities such as Nagpur, Aurangabad, Jalgaon, Latur and Yavatmal are facing a bed crunch. We will increase infrastructure."

Maharashtra will start purchasing oxygen from neighbouring states in the coming days, to meet its oxygen demands for critical and serious Covid-19 patients. Maharashtra government produces 11,500 metric tonnes (MT) of oxygen per day of which about 850 MT is used per day at present, but is likely to utilise its entire stock per day within a week. Tope also announced that the government is mulling capping retail price of the drug, Remdesivir, which is sold at as high as ₹4,000 per injection at present, while manufacturers sell every unit at ₹800 to stockers. This price is likely to be capped at ₹1,200.

The state has requested the Centre to supply 4,000,000 vaccine shots to be able to meet its target of vaccinating 600,000 beneficiaries per day.

high Covid cases

New Zealand suspends entry for travellers from India due to high Covid cases (The Tribune: 20210408)

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/nation/new-zealand-suspends-entry-for-travellers-from-india-due-to-high-covid-cases-236294>

New Zealand on Thursday temporarily suspended entry for all travellers from India, including its own citizens, for about two weeks following a high number of positive coronavirus cases arriving from the South Asian country.

The move comes after New Zealand recorded 23 new positive coronavirus cases at its border on Thursday, of which 17 were from India.

"We are temporarily suspending entry into New Zealand for travellers from India," Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said in a news conference in Auckland.

India is battling a deadly second wave of COVID-19 with daily infections this week passing the peak of the first wave seen last September.

The suspension will start from 1600 local time on April 11 and will be in place until April 28. During this time the government will look at risk management measures to resume travel.

"I want to emphasize that while arrivals of COVID from India has prompted this measure, we are looking at how we manage high risk points of departure generally. This is not a country specific risk assessment..." Ardern said.

New Zealand has virtually eliminated the virus within its borders, and has not reported any community transmission locally for about 40 days.

But it's been reviewing its border settings as more people with infections arrive in New Zealand recently, majority being from India.

Ardern said the rolling average of positive cases has been steadily rising and hit 7 cases on Wednesday, the highest since last October.

New Zealand on Thursday also reported one new locally infected case in a worker who was employed at a coronavirus managed isolation facility. The 24-year-old was yet to be vaccinated. Reuters

India reports highest daily spike with over 1.26 lakh new Covid cases

India reports highest daily spike with over 1.26 lakh new Covid cases(The Tribune: 20210408)

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/nation/india-reports-highest-daily-spike-with-over-1-26-lakh-new-covid-cases-236297>

The death toll due to the disease in the country increased to 1,66,862, with 685 new fatalities being reported in a day

India reports highest daily spike with over 1.26 lakh new Covid cases

India registered a record single-day spike of 1,26,789 new Covid cases, pushing its infection tally to 1,29,28,574, while the number of active cases also went upwards to breach the nine lakh-mark again, Union Health Ministry data updated on Thursday showed.

The death toll due to the disease in the country increased to 1,66,862, with 685 new fatalities being reported in a day, according to the data updated at 8 am.

Registering a steady increase for the 29th day in row, the count of active cases has gone up to 9,10,319, which is 7.04 per cent of the total infections, while the country's recovery rate has further dropped to 91.67 per cent, it stated.

The active Covid caseload in the country was recorded at its lowest of 1,35,926 on February 12, comprising 1.25 per cent of the total infections.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 1,18,51,393, while the case fatality rate has further dropped to 1.29 per cent, the data stated.

According to the Indian Council of Medical Research, 25,26,77,379 samples have been tested for Covid in the country so far, including 12,37,781 on Wednesday. PTI

Vaccination (The Asian Age: 20210408)

<http://onlinepaper.asianage.com/articledetailpage.aspx?id=15515435>

■ Vardhan slams Maha govt's 'failures' as state claims vaccine shortage

Govt to allow vaccinations at workplaces as cases hit 1.15L

VINEETA PANDEY
NEW DELHI, APRIL 7

In a bid to increase the Covid-19 vaccination coverage, the Centre on Wednesday allowed private companies to vaccinate their employees at workplaces from April 11.

In a letter to all states/Union territories, Union health secretary Rajesh Bhushan said this was done since a substantial proportion of the 45-plus population are in the organised sector of the economy and work in offices (private or government), or in manufacturing and services. He added that to increase access to vaccines for such people, Covid-19 sessions may be held at workplaces that have 100 or more willing beneficiaries by tagging these workplaces with the existing Covid vaccination centres and asking the states to launch this scheme by Sunday.

This change in the government's plan comes as the desired target for vaccinations is yet to be achieved. The change of strategy comes amid the raging debate on vaccine availability.

On Wednesday, the Maharashtra government claimed it faced a shortage of vaccines and at present had vaccine doses only for the next three days, and some vaccina-



A policeman shifts violators of Covid-19 safety guidelines to a temporary jail in Jabalpur on Wednesday. — PTI

tion centres have to be shut due to this. Maharashtra has the highest number of Covid positive cases in the country.

"Stocks of vaccine in the state and in Mumbai are only for the next three days. Today 14 lakh doses are available, which means there is only three days' stock. Every week we need 40 lakh doses, that is if we vaccinate five lakh people every day. We requested the Centre to send more vaccines as this is the state with the highest number of cases every day," said state health minister Rajesh Tope. He said he had told Union health minister Harsh Vardhan about this during a videoconference on Tuesday evening.

However, Dr Harsh Vardhan said: "I have

seen statements by public representatives in Maharashtra about the shortage of vaccines. This is nothing but an attempt to divert attention from the Maharashtra government's repeated failures to control the spread of the pandemic. The inability of the Maharashtra government to act responsibly is beyond comprehension. To spread panic among people is to compound the folly further. Vaccine supplies are monitored on a real-time basis, and state governments are being apprised regularly about it. Allegations about a vaccine shortage are utterly baseless."

He added: "Throughout last year, as health minister of India, I have been a witness to the misgovernance and utterly casual

Wearing mask a must even while driving alone, rules HC

New Delhi, April 7: Wearing a mask while driving alone in a private vehicle is compulsory as it is a public place in the context of Covid-19, the Delhi high court held on Wednesday and described face covering as a "*suraksha kavach*" or protective shield against the spread of the infection.

Justice Prathiba M. Singh refused to interfere with the Delhi government's decision to impose challans for not wearing a mask while driving a private car alone, saying a vehicle even if occupied by one person would constitute a public place.

"There are several possibilities in which while sitting alone in the car one could be exposed to the outside world. Thus, it cannot be said that merely because the person is travelling alone in a car, the car would not be a public place. Wearing of a mask therein would be compulsory in the context of the pandemic," the court said. Masks are necessary irrespective of whether a person is vaccinated or not, it added.

— PTI

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Vaccinations (The Asian Age: 20210408)

<http://onlinepaper.asianage.com/articledetailpage.aspx?id=15515054>

Govt to allow vaccinations at workplaces

■ Continued from Page 1
approach of the Maharashtra government in battling the virus. The lackadaisical attitude of the state government has singularly bogged down the entire country's efforts to fight the virus. We, in the Central government, have regularly counselled the Maharashtra government, made them available all resources and sent Central teams for help. However, the lack of effort by the state government is now clearly visible and comes to haunt us all. Today, Maharashtra not only has the highest cases and deaths in the country but also has one of the highest test posi-

tivity rates in the world! Their testing is not up to the mark and their contact tracing leaves a lot to be desired. The performance of the Maharashtra government in terms of vaccinating health-care workers and frontline workers is also not great. It is shocking to see how the state government is putting Maharashtra in danger by letting people escape institutional quarantine mandates. As the state lurched from one crisis to another, it seems the state leadership is happily sleeping at the wheel."
He said the Maharashtra government must do a lot more to control the pandem-

ic, adding that the Centre will help in all possible ways. The minister also referred to Chhattisgarh, saying the comments by state leaders were intended to spread misinformation and panic about the vaccinations.
The minister said many other states also need to bring their healthcare systems up to the mark, mentioning Karnataka, Rajasthan and Gujarat, saying they need to improve the quality of testing. In Punjab, he said, the high case fatality rate must be improved by early identification of those needing hospitalisation. Mask-wearing and social distancing compliance are slack

in several states.

The minister also defended the government's stand of vaccinating only 45-plus people as of now.

India on Wednesday had about 1.16 lakh fresh Covid-19 cases, while 630 deaths were reported in the last 24 hours. Due to rising cases, the Punjab government ordered a night curfew in the state from 9 pm till 5 am and a ban on all political, social, cultural and sports gatherings. A cap was also put on the numbers permitted at weddings, funerals and cremations. Only 50 people can attend indoor functions, and 100 outdoors. In Chhattisgarh, a lockdown

has been imposed in Raipur from April 9 to 19.

The Serum Institute of India, that is making the Covishield vaccine in India, has got a legal notice from its partner AstraZeneca over delays in vaccine supplies. India has halted the export of vaccines to other nations in order to first cover its own population.

Serum Institute CEO Adar Poonawala said: "The globe needs this vaccine... We are prioritising the needs of India (but) we are still short of being able to supply every Indian." He added more companies need to manufacture vaccines in India to meet the demand.

Covid -19 Spikes (The Asian Age: 20210408)

<http://onlinepaper.asianage.com/articledetailpage.aspx?id=15514331>

As Covid-19 spikes, the season of fear is back...



Patralekha Chatterjee

Dev 360

Loss comes in many forms in the time of the Covid-19 pandemic. There is the loss of lives and livelihoods; and then there is the loss of words as we understood them once. The “normal” of yesteryear may never return.

And yet, there were flickers of hope as the new year began.

Newspapers were full of stories about the consistent fall in India’s active Covid-19 caseload. Antibody surveys showed that a significant part of the population in major cities — including New Delhi — had already been exposed to the virus, raising hopes of a slowing spread. On January 16 this year, India rolled out the world’s largest vaccination drive against the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which causes the Covid-19 pandemic. In the first phase, the priority was inoculating healthcare and frontline workers. Then it expanded to the public, taking age and co-morbidities into consideration. More than 8.31 crore jabs have been given so far.

But the season of fear is back.

Infections started to shoot up several few weeks ago, particularly in Maharashtra. Now, the daily rise in Covid-19 cases in the country has crossed 100,000, from 20,000 infections in less than a month. Mumbai, India’s financial capital, is among the 10 districts in the country with the highest number of new Covid-19 cases. Delhi, the national capital, is not as badly hit as Mumbai as of now, but from this week, night curfew has been imposed on the city. Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities

Even the Union health ministry is compelled to admit that the recent spike in coronavirus cases in India is spreading faster in the country compared to last year.

How did we get here?

The short answer: We got here because of complacency, by ignoring early alerts by health experts. Part of the problem has also been mixed messaging, and the government’s reluctance to accept and communicate unpalatable truths.

Even as government health advisories tell ordinary people to observe social distancing, avoid big crowds and wear masks at all times, there is ample evidence of many politicians on the campaign trail doing just the opposite.

One telling example: Assam health minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, who recently said there was no need to wear masks in the state as there was no coronavirus there anymore.

Even as one writes, huge crowds continue to gather at election rallies in many states as well as at religious gatherings.

How did we slip up?

Prof. Bhramar Mukherjee, a biostatistician at the University of Michigan in the United States, who has been tracking India’s coronavirus outbreak, told me she had tweeted about the uptick on February 18. But when she mentioned this to her close family and friends at that time, they thought “I was crying wolf”, she says.

“The public sentiment that Covid is no longer an issue, with even the more cautious people letting their guard down, has certainly contributed to this aftermath,” says Prof. Mukherjee. She also

We need to accept that even in the post-inoculated world, our public health systems have to remain on high alert for the foreseeable future

“Taking advantage of the valley of the virus curve, we needed to accelerate the vaccination drive while case counts were low instead of relying on ephemeral infection immunity.”

Prof. Mukherjee is not the only one who was warning against complacency. In February, many of India’s leading epidemiologists, like Dr Giridhara R. Babu, were flagging the need to keep the focus on detection of Covid cases and clusters in the community. Dr Babu also listed some of the imperatives at primary health centres — testing needed to be available, ditto for notification within 24 hours, quick contact tracing, genomic sequencing of clusters and vulnerability assessment. “The number of deaths occurring in hospitals should be reported daily. The number of Covid-19 deaths occurring in the community should also be reported daily and reviewed regularly at different levels,” Dr Babu tweeted on February 23.

Although it is late, identifying excess deaths earlier can save more lives. Instead of addressing these important but active containment efforts, the tendency is to push often passive mitigation measures such as lockdowns, seal-downs and curfews, he had pointed out.

Now, we are hearing a lot about new variants of the virus, but how closely are we tracking them?

Arguably, the biggest challenge of this pandemic is negotiating the sea of unknowns. But even so, many things could have been done, say experts.

“We could have started

Mukherjee. Ring vaccination is where you vaccinate the surrounding “ring”, or circle of interaction of anyone who is infected or tests positive. This includes people who are not eligible by the age-based criterion.

What is the road ahead?

“Vaccination is one of the strategies, but it is not the only strategy. We should have three-four strategies working in parallel. After we give the vaccine, the adequate antibody response will take a few weeks. Second, along with vaccination, we need an aggressive testing, tracking and isolation policy. Six months ago, it was being done very aggressively by states, but we have now become lax. If a person tests positive, no one really goes and checks who they have come in contact with, and we fail to break the chain of transmission,” Dr Randeep Guleria, director of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, recently told a national newspaper.

There is an obvious need to identify areas where surges are taking place, develop them into containment zones, test everyone in that area, isolate those who are positive, quarantine those who have come in close contact with patients and test them after five to seven days, and not allow people from that area to go to another area, as Dr Guleria suggests.

See-sawing between laxity and lockdown is not a solution. It will destroy both lives and livelihoods. We need to accept that even in the post-inoculated world, our public health systems have to remain on high alert for the foreseeable future. “The history of infectious diseases tells us that outbreaks can happen even after a high degree of vaccination. You have to track each case and contact trace,” as Prof. Mukherjee points out.

Vaccine programme

Falling short: on India's vaccine programme (The Hindu: 20210408)

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/falling-short/article34266990.ece>

India must ensure there is no vaccine shortage and move to accelerate universal access

Remdesivir production

Coronavirus | Government asks drug makers to ramp up remdesivir production to full capacity (The Hindu: 20210408)

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/coronavirus-government-asks-drug-makers-to-ramp-up-remdesivir-production-to-full-capacity/article34265944.ece>

Remdesivir is considered as a key antiviral drug in the fight against COVID-19, especially in adult patients with severe complications

The government on Wednesday said that all seven manufacturers of remdesivir in the country have been asked to ramp up production to full capacity by next week.

Coronavirus updates |

Coronavirus updates | Chhattisgarh Health Minister flags erratic vaccine supply (The Hindu: 20210408)

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/coronavirus-updates-april-6-2021/article34251020.ece>

IMA urges PM Modi to open COVID-19 vaccination for all above 18 years; India records highest single-day vaccination coverage

The daily rise in new coronavirus infections in India remained above 90,000 for the third consecutive day taking the nationwide COVID-19 tally of cases to 1,26,86,049, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Tuesday.

Summer pregnancy

Summer pregnancy: Simple tips to stay cool and comfortable (The Indian Express: 20210408)

<https://indianexpress.com/article/lifestyle/health/summer-pregnancy-tips-on-staying-cool-and-comfortable-7258776/>

In summers, pregnant women go through some challenges, but there are some health tips with which they can feel better

pregnancy, pregnancy tips, summer pregnancy, staying cool and comfortable in summers, pregnancy care, pregnancy care in extreme heat, health, indian express news A doctor advises that routine exercise must be performed either in the early mornings or evenings when the temperatures are lower. (Photo: Pixabay)

Pregnancy is an interesting and exciting journey, which can sometimes become uncomfortable for the expectant mother. In summers, in most parts of the country temperatures soar, which can cause some inconvenience to a pregnant woman.

Dr Prathima Reddy, director, senior obstetrician and gynaecologist at Fortis La Femme Hospital, Richmond Road, Bengaluru says that when a woman is pregnant, her body goes through unique changes to accommodate the baby, and “some of these changes can cause discomfort to the pregnant mother. Increasing temperatures can only worsen the situation.”

Physiological changes that take place during pregnancy

- * Nausea and vomiting in early pregnancy
- * Indigestion, ‘gas’, bloating sensation and reduced appetite
- * Increase in weight by 10-12 kg throughout pregnancy
- * Oedema — fluid collection in the feet and legs after the first three months of pregnancy
- * Shortness of breath due to the growing womb
- * ‘Feeling hot’

ALSO READ | 'Didn't know about haemorrhoids during pregnancy': Kishwer Merchant opens up about her journey

The doctor says that in summers, particularly, pregnant women go through some challenges, adding that there are some tips with which they can feel better.

1. Hydration: Drink at least 3 litres of water per day. Top it up with tender coconut and fresh fruit juices (avoid if you have gestational diabetes) with minimal or no sugar. Inadequate hydration may lead to a heat stroke.

2. Diet: Remember to include plenty of vegetables, greens, sprouted salads, fruits (especially watermelon) to your diet. Curd (live yogurt) and buttermilk are especially cooling. Avoid excessive oil, ghee and masalas in food preparation and cut down on the salt intake.

3. Swimming/exercising: This is a great way of cooling off and if you have access to a pool you must make use of it. Routine exercise must be performed either in the early mornings or evenings when the temperatures are lower.

4. Elevated feet: Remember to elevate your feet by placing them on pillows or cushions as this reduces the water retention in your feet and legs.

5. Clothes and footwear: Wear loose cotton clothes in white or pastel shades. Also, wear comfortable footwear to accommodate the swelling.

6. Sunglasses/sunscreen/umbrella: Invest in a good pair of sunglasses and use sunscreen whenever you are out for longer periods. Carry an umbrella or wear a broad hat to protect yourself.

7. Sleep: Try to get a nap for at least 30 minutes in the afternoon, since it is the hottest part of the day.

Coronavirus: 8 signs

Coronavirus: 8 signs you may have already had COVID-19 without knowing (The Times of India: 20210408)

Coronavirus continues to rapidly surge across India and the world. With the global deaths having crossed the 3-million-mark, the COVID-19 pandemic is nowhere close to coming to a near end.

By this point, with high seropositivity levels, experts believe that there is a sizable population who may have already contracted the virus one way or the other, without actually having tested positive for the viral infection. There could also be many who may have gotten infected before COVID-19 was actually declared a pandemic and brought the world to a complete standstill.

Many also believe that while the infection is increasingly turning out to be symptomatic, with unusual signs and severe complications, a lot of cases in the last year, at the peak of the pandemic's spread were asymptomatic. These people could also have some level of natural immunity against the virus.

02/10How can you check if you have already had COVID-19?

A prior history of testing positive for the virus is guaranteed proof of contracting the virus.

However, it could also happen that a patient could be asymptomatic and go through no symptoms. While there are antibody tests that can confirm the same, experts say there are better ways, or signs to check for the same.

If researches are to be believed, there are as many as 8 tell-tale signs that you have already had COVID without knowing about the same. Doctors also believe that some of these signs could also come up in the form of long COVID, or be present months after the initial bout of infection. Here are the broad signs to look for:

03/10Having bloodshot or red eyes

Red eyes and conjunctivitis are commonly seen with many viral infections. A number of optometrists have now raised growing concern that red, runny eyes with discharge could also be seen in cases of COVID-19 and be easily missed since it's not a classic sign.

What puts red eyes with COVID different from other viral infections is that in the case of COVID-19, the eye infection can happen secondary to other signs, including a fever or a headache. Hence, if you have happened to experience an eye infection or red eyes in the past with a fever, it might have been a case of COVID.

04/10Brain fog

COVID is known to cause memory and cognitive implications. Some even report experiencing memory loss and difficulty carrying out routine chores.

Now, as many recall, experiencing confusion, imbalance, difficulty in concentrating or simply remembering things could also be a COVID complication.

While brain fog can also arise out of other medical issues, if you recount being unable to focus sharp, remember things or do simple everyday tasks, without any cause, COVID might be a reason to suspect. Again, it may be different for everyone, but it's worth checking for.

05/10Unusual cough which sounded different

Cough is one of the most prominent signs of coronavirus infection since the virus is suspected to primarily attack the upper respiratory tract.

While a 'dry' cough is more common, COVID survivors also recount that the coughing bout experienced with the infection could be different than the one you usually get- be more persistent, change your voice and harder to control. It can also be a lingering symptom that could spin around for weeks or some months.

Another sign of a COVID cough? It could last likely for more than half a day, unlike a regular cough which can come and go.

READMORE

06/10Experiencing a high temperature that keeps wavering

While fever is not a prominent sign with ALL COVID cases, those who do recount suffering from a fever with the infection usually have a high temperature that could last between 99-103 degrees Fahrenheit. The temperature could also come and go, persist for more than 4-5 days at a stretch and more likely be accompanied by chills and shivers.

If a person feels hot to touch, especially on the back or the chest, it could be taken as a sign of COVID, some experts also suggest.

07/10Sudden loss of smell, taste or impairment

Sudden loss of smell, taste or impairment

It is now a widely-known fact that the SARS-COV-2 virus can disturb your primary olfactory senses and put off how food or certain scents smell or taste.

Now, from what is increasingly seen, some people can also suffer from a sensory impairment much before other classic COVID symptoms strike, and therefore, be unaware of their diagnosis.

Doctors now also warn patients to be on the lookout for impaired or phantom smells. If you have probably experienced distorted smell, i.e. smelled something odd and unusual with your routine foods/ scents without a prior reason, it could also be a mark of COVID.

08/10Shortness of breath

Shortness of breath

Breathing difficulties, shortness of breath are common complication associated with the viral infection. Suffering from this could also be a sign that you may unknowingly have had COVID. Dyspnea, as it is medically known can also be accompanied by a sudden tightness in the chest, palpitations and rapid breathing. It is a tell-tale sign that you might have had COVID before. However, it is more common in older adults and ones who may have one or more comorbidities.

09/10Gastrointestinal problems

Gastrointestinal problems

There is now an emerging link of SARS-COV-2 causing COVID-19 and stomach problems. According to research, there could be a definite section of people who simply undergo gastrointestinal symptoms of COVID, such as diarrhoea, nausea, abdominal cramps, appetite loss in the absence of other symptoms and go undiagnosed. To put into numbers, as many as 48% of patients based out of China accounted for stomach pain and problems during the early weeks of the pandemic's spread. Click here to know more signs of COVID-19 impacting your digestion and gut.

10/10 Tiredness and fatigue

Tiredness and fatigue

Fatigue and exhaustion experienced due to COVID-19 is unlike no other, as per many COVID survivors. This has also been the basis of many case studies and researchers over the past months as scientists try and find out how, and why exactly does SARS-COV-2 cause such unnerving, excruciating fatigue.

If you recount experiencing bad fatigue which made you unable to carry out tasks, had bad body ache and pain that may have lasted for 3-4 days, it could be taken as a probable COVID-19 sign.

Vaccines Distributions (Hindustan: 20210408)

https://epaper.livehindustan.com/imageview_750834_85499548_4_1_08-04-2021_3_i_1_sf.html

Hospitals (Hindustan: 20210408)

https://epaper.livehindustan.com/imageview_750835_85436478_4_1_08-04-2021_4_i_1_sf.html

उत्साह

टीके के लिए सरकारी अस्पतालों पर भरोसा

दिल्ली में कोविड का टीका लगवाने के लिए ज्यादातर दिल्लीवाले सरकारी अस्पतालों पर भरोसा कर रहे हैं। दिल्ली में 16 जनवरी से टीकाकरण की शुरुआत के बाद से पांच अप्रैल तक करीब 12 लाख लोगों को टीका लगाया जा चुका है। सरकारी आंकड़ों के मुताबिक 73 फीसदी टीका सरकारी अस्पतालों में लगाए गए हैं। दिल्ली सरकार का मानना है कि सरकारी अस्पतालों में बेहतर सुविधा, सटीक टाइम स्लॉट, मेडिकल स्टाफ का अच्छा व्यवहार और मुफ्त टीका मिलने की वजह से लोग सरकारी अस्पतालों में टीका लगवाना पसंद कर रहे हैं।

600 से अधिक केंद्र चल रहे

एक अप्रैल से दिल्ली समेत देशभर में 45 वर्ष से ऊपर के सभी लोगों को टीके लगाए जा रहे हैं। दिल्ली सरकार द्वारा राजधानी के सरकारी और निजी अस्पतालों में कोरोना टीकाकरण के लिए 600 से अधिक केंद्र बनवाए गए हैं। आंकड़ों के मुताबिक, अप्रैल माह में रोजाना औसतन 80 हजार लोगों को टीका लगाया जा रहा है। सोमवार को दिल्ली में 87673 लोगों को कोरोना का टीका लगाया गया, जिनमें से 63936 लोगों ने सरकारी अस्पतालों और 23737 ने निजी अस्पतालों में टीका लगवाया।



63936

लोगों ने सरकारी अस्पतालों और 23737 ने निजी अस्पतालों में टीका लगवाया

95 प्रतिशत टाइम स्लॉट का उपयोग

हर तीसरे केंद्र में 24 घंटे टीकाकरण

Infection (Hindustan: 20210408)

https://epaper.livehindustan.com/imageview_750835_85436168_4_1_08-04-2021_4_i_1_sf.html

कोरोना संक्रमण की दर छह फीसदी के पार पहुंची

रिपोर्ट

नई दिल्ली | वरिष्ठ संवाददाता

दिल्ली में संक्रमण दर छह फीसदी के पार पहुंच गई है। दिल्ली के स्वास्थ्य विभाग के अनुसार बुधवार को दिल्ली में कोरोना के 5506 नए मामले सामने आए। वहीं स्वस्थ होने पर 3363 मरीजों को छुट्टी दी गई, जबकि 20 मरीजों ने कोरोना के कारण दम तोड़ दिया।

दिल्ली में अभी तक 690568 मरीज कोरोना से संक्रमित हो चुके हैं, 659980 लोग कोरोना से जंग जीत चुके हैं। दिल्ली में कोरोना के कारण अभी तक 11133 मरीज दम तोड़ चुके हैं। दिल्ली में कोरोना से मृत्युदर घटकर 1.61 फीसदी हो गई है।

सक्रिय मरीज 19 हजार से अधिक: कोरोना से सक्रिय मरीज बढ़कर 19455 हो गए हैं। इनमें से दिल्ली के अस्पतालों में 3763 मरीज भर्ती हैं। वहीं कोविड केयर सेंटर में 84 और कोविड हेल्थ सेंटर में 54 मरीज भर्ती हैं।

दिल्ली में ऐसे आ रहे हैं संक्रमण के मामले

तारीख	संक्रमण दर	मामले
7 अप्रैल	6.10%	5506
6 अप्रैल	4.93%	5100
5 अप्रैल	5.54%	3548
4 अप्रैल	4.64%	4033
3 अप्रैल	4.48%	3567
2 अप्रैल	4.11%	3594
1 अप्रैल	3.57%	2790
31 मार्च	2.71%	1819

होम आइसोलेशन में 10048 मरीज हो गई है। वंदेभारत मिशन के तहत आए आठ मरीज आइसोलेशन में हैं। कोरोना जांच के लिए मंगलवार को 90201 टेस्ट हुए, जिसमें 6.10 फीसदी मरीज संक्रमित पाए गए। आरटीपीसीआर से 52477 और रैपिड एंटीजन से 37724 टेस्ट हुए। हॉटस्पॉट की संख्या बढ़कर 3708 हो गई है।