



DAILY NEWS BULLETIN

LEADING HEALTH, POPULATION AND FAMILY WELFARE STORIES OF THE DAY
Friday 20210730

India records 44,230 new Covid cases

India records 44,230 new Covid cases, 555 more deaths (The Tribune: 20210730)

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/nation/india-records-44-230-new-covid-cases-555-more-deaths-290486>

The number of active coronavirus cases in the country registered an increase for the third consecutive day

With a single-day rise of 44,230 cases, India's Covid tally climbed to 3,15,72,344 on Friday, while the death toll due to the viral disease shot up to 4,23,217 with 555 more people succumbing to it, the Union health ministry said.

The number of active coronavirus cases in the country registered an increase for the third consecutive day, according to the ministry's data updated at 8 am.

The number of active cases has gone up to 4,05,155, accounting for 1.28 per cent of the total caseload, while the national Covid recovery rate was recorded at 97.38 per cent, the data showed.

An increase of 1,315 cases was recorded in the active Covid tally in a span of 24 hours.

Also, 18,16,277 tests to detect the infection were carried out on Thursday, taking the total number of such tests conducted so far in the country to 46,46,50,723, while the daily positivity rate was recorded at 2.44 per cent. The weekly positivity rate was recorded at 2.43 per cent, according to the ministry.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease has gone up to 3,07,43,972, while the case fatality rate stands at 1.34 per cent, the data showed.

The cumulative number of Covid vaccine doses administered in the country so far has reached 45.6 crore.

The 555 fresh fatalities include 190 from Maharashtra and 128 from Kerala.

A total of 4,23,217 Covid deaths have been reported in the country so far, including 1,32,335 from Maharashtra, 36,491 from Karnataka, 34,023 from Tamil Nadu, 25,049 from Delhi, 22,755 from Uttar Pradesh, 18,123 from West Bengal and 16,290 from Punjab. PTI

Covid Pandemic

Centre to send high-level team to Kerala to contain Covid surge (The Tribune: 20210730)

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/coronavirus/centre-to-send-high-level-team-to-kerala-to-contain-covid-surge-290001>

The team will work closely with the State Health Department, take a stock of the ground situation and recommend necessary public health interventions to contain the large number of cases

The Ministry of Health has decided to send a high-level multi-disciplinary team to Kerala to collaborate with the state in instituting effective public health measures for Covid management in view of the significantly enhanced number of daily Covid cases being reported by the state.

The six-member Central team to Kerala is headed by Dr SK Singh, Director, National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC).

Covid R-value climbing steadily in country; Kerala, northeastern states top list

The team will reach Kerala on July 30 and visit a few districts.

The team will work closely with the State Health Department, take a stock of the ground situation and recommend necessary public health interventions to contain the large number of cases.

Kerala with an active caseload of 1.54 lakh is contributing 37.1 per cent of the total active cases in the country, with a growth rate of 1.41 per cent in the last seven days.

Average daily cases being reported in the state are above 17,443.

The state has also reported a high case positivity of 12.93 per cent cumulatively and 11.97 per cent weekly.

Six districts are reporting more than 10 per cent weekly positivity.

Women's nutrition in India

Covid lockdown negatively impacted women's nutrition in India: Study (The Tribune: 20210730)

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/coronavirus/covid-lockdown-negatively-impacted-womens-nutrition-in-india-study-289973>

The study was published in the latest issue of *Economia Politica* journal

Covid lockdown negatively impacted women's nutrition in India: Study

The nationwide lockdown in India in 2020 due to the Covid pandemic had a negative impact on women's nutrition in the country, according to a study conducted by a group of researchers in the US.

The study by Tata-Cornell Institute for Agriculture and Nutrition in four economically backward districts of Uttar Pradesh's Maharajganj, Bihar's Munger, and Odisha's Kandhamal and Kalahandi indicate a decline in household food expenditures and women's dietary diversity in May 2020 compared to May 2019, particularly for non-staples like meats, eggs, vegetables and fruits.

It occurred despite the special Public Distribution System (PDS), direct benefit transfer and ration from anganwadis reaching 80 per cent, 50 per cent and 30 per cent of the surveyed households, respectively, said the study published in the latest issue of *Economia Politica* journal.

“Our findings contribute to the growing body of evidence of women's disproportionate vulnerability to economic shocks, the impact of a staple grain focused safety net programme, and restricted markets on the access and availability of diverse nutritious foods,” says the paper which makes a case for policy reforms towards PDS diversification to include nutrition-rich foods and market reforms to remove supply-side bottlenecks and expansion of direct benefit transfers for healthy food access.

“Women's diets were lacking in diverse foods even before the pandemic, but Covid has further exacerbated the situation,” said Soumya Gupta, a research economist at TCI who co-authored the study along with Prabhu Pingali, TCI director; Mathew Abraham, assistant director; and consultant Payal Seth.

“Any policies addressing the impact of the pandemic on nutritional outcomes must do so through a gendered lens that reflects the specific, and often persistent, vulnerabilities faced by women,” she said in a statement issued by the Cornell University.

Researchers said that policymakers should recognise the disproportionate impact of the pandemic and other disruptive events on women's nutrition by bolstering safety-net programmes to ensure that they meet the needs of women and other marginalised groups. PTI

Covaxin

After suspending EUA request, Brazil now shelves import authorisation of Covaxin(The Tribune: 20210730)

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/coronavirus/after-suspending-eua-request-brazil-now-shelves-import-authorisation-of-covaxin-289996>

Bharat Biotech on July 23 said it terminated MoU it entered with Precisa Medicamentos and Envixia Pharmaceuticals LLC for its COVID-19 vaccine Covaxin for Brazilian market

After suspending EUA request, Brazil now shelves import authorisation of Covaxin

Photo for representational purpose only. PTI file

After suspending the proposed clinical trials of Bharat Bioetch’s Covid-19 vaccine Covaxin and a request for Emergency Use Authorisation, Brazil now has suspended its decision to import four million doses of the jab into that country.

According to a statement issued by the National Health Surveillance Agency of Brazil, Anvisa its Collegiate Board on Tuesday took a decision to suspend the exceptional and temporary authorisation for import and distribution of Covaxin after Bharat Biotech informed the South America government about the termination of its pact with its Brazilian partners.

“The Collegiate Board of Anvisa unanimously decided, on Tuesday (27/7), to provisionally suspend the exceptional and temporary authorisation for import and distribution of the vaccine against Covid-19-Covaxin, requested by the Ministry of Health,” Anvisa said in statement posted on its website.

Bharat Biotech on July 23 said it terminated the MoU it entered with Precisa Medicamentos and Envixia Pharmaceuticals LLC for its COVID-19 vaccine Covaxin for Brazilian market.

The termination of the MoU came after the deal with the Brazilian government for supply of 20 million doses of Covaxin landed in controversy and attracted investigation by authorities in that country.

“The measure prevails until there is new information that allows us to conclude that the legal and technical security of maintaining the decision that authorised the importation is maintained,” Anvisa further said in a roughly translated version of Portuguese of the statement.

Though the exceptional and temporary importation of the vaccine had been authorized on June 4, at the ninth Extraordinary Meeting of the Collegiate Board of Anvisa, Brazil never imported the jab.

Bharat Biotech will continue to work diligently with Anvisa, to complete the regulatory approval process for Covaxin, Bharat Biotech had said while announcing the termination of its pact with its Brazilian partners. PTI

Coronavirus Third Wave

केरल से आएगी कोरोना की तीसरी लहर? लगातार तीसरे दिन मिले देश के आधे केस (Hindustan: 20210730)

<https://www.livehindustan.com/national/story-now-coronavirus-new-cases-crossed-44000-mark-and-22000-cases-alone-in-kerala-4274278.html>

कोरोना संक्रमण की तीसरी लहर देश में केरल के जरिए दस्तक देगी? यह सवाल इसलिए उठने लगा है कि लगातार तीसरे दिन केरल में 20,000 से ज्यादा नए केस मिले हैं। एक बार फिर से राज्य में 22,064 केस मिले हैं, जो देश भर में मिले 44,230 मामलों का ठीक आधा हैं। शुक्रवार सुबह आए बीते एक दिन के डेटा के मुताबिक देश में 24 घंटों में 42,360 लोग कोरोना से रिकवर हुए हैं, जबकि 44,230 लोग संक्रमित हुए हैं। इसके साथ ही एक्टिव केसों की संख्या बढ़कर 4,05,155 हो गई है। कुल केसों के मुकाबले अब देश में सक्रिय मामले 1.28 फीसदी हो गए हैं। हालांकि अब भी डेली और वीकली पॉजिटिविटी रेट 5 फीसदी से कम पर बना हुआ है।

यह लगातार तीसरा दिन है, जब देश में कोरोना के नए मामले 40,000 से ज्यादा मिले हैं और आज सबसे अधिक 44 हजार केस पाए गए हैं। यही नहीं केरल की बात करें तो वहां लगातार तीन दिनों से 20 हजार से अधिक केस मिल रहे हैं। इसी के चलते देश भर के नए केसों में बड़ा इजाफा देखने को मिल रहा है। हर दिन कोरोना के नए केसों का आंकड़ा 30 से 40 हजार के बीच रहता था, लेकिन केरल में रफ्तार बढ़ने के बाद यह 40 हजार के पार पहुंच गया है। इस बीच केरल में शनिवार और रविवार को कंप्लीट लॉकडाउन

का ऐलान किया गया है। यही नहीं राज्य की हेल्थ मिनिस्टर वीना जॉर्ज ने लोगों से अपील की है कि वे घरों में ही रहें।

वीना जॉर्ज ने कहा कि राज्य के लिए अगले दो से तीन हफ्ते अहम होंगे। हेल्थ मिनिस्टर ने लोगों से अपील की है कि वे एकत्रित होने से बचें और कहीं भी ऐसी जगह पर न जाएं, जहां भीड़ जुटने की संभावना हो। उन्होंने कहा कि राज्य में कोरोना की टेस्टिंग में तेजी लाई गई है और कोई भी मामला आ रहा है तो उसकी रिपोर्टिंग की जा रही है। वीना जॉर्ज ने कहा कि बुधवार को 1,96,902 सैंपल लिए गए थे, जिसमें 11.2 पॉजिटिविटी रेट निकला है। इसके अलावा गुरुवार को 1,63,098 सैंपल लिए गए और पॉजिटिविटी रेट बढ़कर 13.53 फीसदी हो गया।

New Cases

India reports 44,230 Covid-19 cases, 555 deaths in last 24 hours (The Indian Express: 20210730)

<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/coronavirus-india-reports-44230-new-covid-19-cases-555-deaths-7429687/>

The country's overall caseload has risen to more than 3.15 crore, while the death toll stands at over 4.23 lakh.

Mumbai: A BMC health worker collects swab samples of a passenger for COVID-19 test, at Dadar station, in Mumbai, Thursday, July 22, 2021. (PTI Photo)

India reported 44,230 new Covid-19 cases and 555 related deaths in the last 24 hours ending at 8 am on Friday, according to data released by the Union Health Ministry. With this, the country's overall caseload has gone up to over 3.15 crore (3,15,72,344), while the death toll stands at over 4.23 lakh (4,23,217).

The number of active cases in the country registered an increase for the third consecutive day, data showed. The number of active cases has gone up to 4,05,155, accounting for 1.28 per cent of the total caseload, while the recovery rate stood at 97.38 per cent.

The number of people who have recovered from the disease has gone up to over 3.07 crore, while the case fatality rate stands at 1.34 per cent.

Lok Sabha scheduled to hold discussion on Covid today

A discussion on the Covid-19 pandemic is set to take place in the Lok Sabha on Friday. N K Premchandran and Vinayak Raut are expected to “raise a discussion on the situation arising out of Covid-19 pandemic in the country and various aspects related to it.”, news agency PTI reported.

A discussion on the pandemic was held in the beginning of the Monsoon Session in Rajya Sabha. The government had then strongly defended its strategy to combat Covid.

Two Vaccines

एक ही इंसान को लगेगी 2 अलग वैक्सीन? Covishield और Covaxin के मिक्स डोज के ट्रायल की सिफारिश (Hindustan: 20210730)

<https://www.livehindustan.com/national/story-will-the-same-person-take-2-different-vaccines-recommended-trial-of-mixed-doses-of-covishield-and-covaxin-india-hindi-news-4274245.html>

लगभग दो साल से पूरे विश्व में तांडव मचा रहा कोरोना वायरस अब भी थमने का नाम नहीं ले रहा है। ऐसे में इसके खिलाफ आए दिन नई नई वैक्सीन आ रही हैं। लेकिन ये पहली बार है जब दो अलग-अलग वैक्सीन की खुराकों को मिलाकर ट्रायल देने पर विचार किया जा रहा है। दरअसल, सेंट्रल ड्रग्स स्टैंडर्ड कंट्रोल ऑर्गनाइजेशन (CDSCO) की कोविड-19 पर बनी सब्जेक्ट एक्सपर्ट कमेटी ने गुरुवार को कोविशील्ड और कोवैक्सीन को मिक्स कर उसके ट्रायल की सिफारिश की है।

300 वॉलंटियर्स पर मिक्स डोज का ट्रायल

सूत्रों के अनुसार, तमिलनाडु के वेल्लोर के क्रिश्चियन मेडिकल कॉलेज (सीएमसी) ने कोविशील्ड और कोवैक्सिन के इंटरचेंजबिलिटी स्टडी प्रोटोकॉल की एप्लीकेशन को आगे बढ़ाया था। उन्होंने कहा, "कोवैक्सिन और कोविशील्ड की खुराक के मिक्स के लिए 300 वॉलंटियर्स पर जल्दी ही चार फेज का ट्रायल होना चाहिए।" उन्होंने समझाया कि ट्रायल के पीछे का उद्देश्य यह देखना है कि क्या किसी व्यक्ति को वैक्सीन का कोर्स पूरा करने के लिए कोविशील्ड और कोवैक्सिन के दो अलग-अलग टीके दिए जा सकते हैं।

बच्चों पर वैक्सीन ट्रायल की मंजूरी की सिफारिश

एक्सपर्ट पैनल ने ये भी कहा है कि बायोलॉजिकल ई की वैक्सीन को बच्चों पर ट्रायल की मंजूरी की सिफारिश दी जाए। एक्सपर्ट कमेटी ने सिफारिश की है कि बायोलॉजिकल ई को 5 से 17 साल के बच्चों

पर अपनी वैक्सीन के फेज-2 और फेज-3 के क्लीनिकल ट्रायल करने की मंजूरी की सिफारिश की जाए। हालांकि, कमेटी ने 18 साल से ऊपर के लोगों पर चल रहे ट्रायल का डेटा भी मांगा है।

बता दें कि ये चौथी वैक्सीन है, जिसे बच्चों पर क्लीनिकल ट्रायल की मंजूरी देने की सिफारिश एक्सपर्ट पैनल ने की है। इससे पहले भारत बायोटेक, जायडस कैडिला और नोवावैक्स की ओर से मंजूरी की सिफारिश भी हो चुकी है। भारत बायोटेक और जायडस की वैक्सीन का ट्रायल बच्चों पर चल भी रहा है। जबकि, नोवावैक्स की वैक्सीन कोवोवैक्स को ट्रायल की मंजूरी देने की सिफारिश कमेटी ने कुछ दिन पहले ही की है।

जॉनसन एंड जॉनसन ने वापस लिया ट्रायल का आवेदन

इधर, अमेरिकी कंपनी जॉनसन एंड जॉनसन ने पहले भारत में भी अपनी सिंगल डोज वैक्सीन के क्लीनिकल ट्रायल का आवेदन दिया था। लेकिन, अब उसने अपने इस आवेदन को वापस ले लिया है। एप्लीकेशन के अनुसार जॉनसन एंड जॉनसन भारत में 600 लोगों पर सिंगल डोज वैक्सीन का ट्रायल करना चाहती थी। ये ट्रायल 18 से 59 साल और 60 साल से ऊपर के लोगों पर होना था।

Covishield vaccine

Covishield vaccine study shows breakthrough impact (The Indian Express: 20210730)

<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/covishield-study-shows-breakthrough-impact-7427402/>

Perhaps the largest study on vaccine effectiveness — on 1.59 million armed forces personnel — shows a 93% reduction in breakthrough infections.

Interim results from a study of 1.59 million healthcare and frontline workers of the Indian armed forces — among the largest studies carried out anywhere in the world — have showed a 93 per cent reduction in breakthrough infections after vaccination with Covishield.

Covishield, the made-in-India variant of Oxford-AstraZeneca's AZD-1222 formulation, is the predominant vaccine being used in India's mass immunisation programme against SARS-CoV-2, the Covid-19 virus.

The results of the study ('Covishield (AZD1222) Vaccine effectiveness among healthcare and frontline Workers of Indian Armed Forces: Interim results of VIN-WIN cohort study'), published in a special issue of the peer-reviewed Medical Journal Armed Forces India on

Tuesday, underline the strong benefits of vaccination against breakthrough infections and deaths, and reiterate the message ‘Get Vaccinated, Stay Safe’, the researchers said.

“This is the largest study from India evaluating Covid vaccine effectiveness so far,” the researchers have said. Air Cmde Subramanian Shankar, corresponding author of the study, told The Indian Express: “Other studies have a sample size under 1 million. Hence we believe that VIN-WIN cohort is possibly one of the largest studies worldwide on vaccine effectiveness, if not the largest.”

Study and findings

Healthcare workers and frontline workers of the armed forces were among the first to get their jabs after India started vaccinating on January 16 this year. The study presents an interim analysis of vaccine effectiveness estimates of 1.59 million recipients until May 30.

“Data of 1,595,630 individuals (mean age 27.6 years; 99% male) over 135 days was analysed. Till 30 May, 95.4% and 82.2% were partially and fully vaccinated (respectively),” says the study.

“The UV (unvaccinated), PV (partially vaccinated) and FV (fully vaccinated) compartments comprised 106.6, 46.7 and 58.7 million person-days respectively. The number of breakthrough cases in the UV, PV and FV groups were 10,061, 1,159 and 2,512; while the deaths were 37, 16, and 7 respectively. Corrected VE (vaccine effectiveness) was 91.8-94.9% against infections.”

The study used anonymised data from the existing Armed Forces Health Surveillance system which had been enhanced for monitoring Covid-19. The system had data for daily vaccinations with first and second doses, dates of testing positive for Covid-19, and Covid-related deaths. As the shift occurred from unvaccinated to partially vaccinated and then fully vaccinated, the numbers in each group changed daily. Since each individual stayed in the three groups (UV, PV, and FV) for varying lengths of time, the population at risk was measured in person days (100 person-days could be either one person for 100 days or 10 persons for 10 days each).

The crude rates were calculated by dividing infections/deaths by the population at risk, and corrections were made for the force of the pandemic’s second wave in April-May 2021, which was 600-1,000 times higher than in January, Air Cmde Shankar said.

A study from Scotland published in The Lancet in April this year analysed a cohort of 1.33 million people who were vaccinated between December and February to gauge the “real-world” effectiveness of first doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech and Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccines against hospital admissions. The results showed a vaccine effect of 91 per cent for Pfizer-BioNTech and 88 per cent for Oxford-AZ.

The study concluded that the “mass roll-out of the first doses of the...vaccines was associated with substantial reductions in the risk of hospital admission due to Covid-19”.

The VIN-WIN study mentions results of other Covishield vaccine effectiveness studies as well.

A case control study in the UK among 1.57 lakh people older than 70 years found reduced odds of 73 per cent in cases and 43 per cent in hospital admissions; an RCT study of 11,000-odd individuals older than 18 years in the UK, Brazil, and South Africa reported a reduction of 62% in cases; and an RCT study of 2,026 HIV-negative individuals aged 18-65 in South Africa reported a reduction of 22 per cent cases against the B.1.351 (Beta) variant of the virus.

Earlier this month the Indian Council of Medical Research reported the findings of a study done by the police department of Tamil Nadu, ICMR-National Institute of Epidemiology, and Christian Medical College, Vellore, that showed 82 per cent effectiveness on personnel who had received a single dose, and 95 per cent on those administered both jabs.

In Maharashtra, a study across 20 government Covid centres under the director of medical education and research showed that 87.5 per cent of those hospitalised were not vaccinated.

Challenges and limitations

The VIN-WIN study was carried out at a time when the country was reeling from the second wave of the pandemic. “The study cohort, belonging to the tri services, was spread across the nation. Apart from constraints of terrain and location, data had to be collated at a central facility and updated on a daily basis. This required creating a novel surveillance system,” Air Cmde Shankar said.

“A conventional cohort study incurs significant cost. So the Armed Forces Medical Services team decided to innovatively use results of the natural experiment that was created with 1.59 million individuals moved from unvaccinated to partially to fully vaccinated groups. By tracking them in detail on a daily basis, researchers could use the individuals as their own ‘internal comparison’,” he said. “Researchers had to also take into account the changing dynamics of disease transmission in the form of the pandemic’s second wave.”

Among the limitations of the study, the authors have noted that “the cohort differed from the Indian population”. “While the mean age of this cohort (27.6 years) was similar to that of the Indian population, the confidence interval was much narrower as it did not represent almost 50% of the population (age <18 years ~40% and >60 years~10%).”

Also, it was a “predominantly male cohort comprising individuals with minimal co-morbidities”. Thus, the results “may not generalize across the entire population”, and “vaccine effectiveness may or may not be similar...”

Biggest takeaway

Surg Vice Admiral Rajat Datta, Director General, Armed Forces Medical Services, and co-author of the study, said in a statement: “The study sends a clear message of vaccine efficacy... It would be an important step to help overcome vaccine hesitancy backed by scientific evidence.”

Air Cmde Shankar said the team would now follow this cohort over time to answer other questions; “one of the important ones would be to determine the ideal time for a third/booster dose”.

On Tuesday, Dr V K Paul, Member NITI Aayog (Health), spoke about the importance of the armed Forces study. “While no vaccine can guarantee against infection, it can prevent serious disease,” he said.

Antibodies

कोविड का घातक स्वरूप भी हो सकेगा निष्क्रिय, वैज्ञानिकों ने बनाई भेड़ के खून से शक्तिशाली एंटीबॉडी (Hindustan: 20210730)

<https://www.livehindustan.com/lifestyle/story-scientists-made-powerful-antibodies-from-sheep-blood-to-neutralize-deadly-forms-of-covid-4274280.html>

वैज्ञानिकों ने भेड़ के रक्त से एक शक्तिशाली एंटीबॉडी विकसित की है। इससे कोविड-19 के लिए जिम्मेदार कोरोना वायरस (सार्स-कोव-2) और इसके नए घातक स्वरूपों को प्रभावी ढंग से निष्क्रिय किया जा सकता है।

जर्मनी स्थित मैक्स प्लैंक इंस्टीट्यूट (एमपीआई) फॉर बायोफिजिकल केमिस्ट्री के शोधकर्ताओं ने उल्लेख किया कि ये सूक्ष्म एंटीबॉडी पूर्व में विकसित की गई इस तरह की एंटीबॉडी की तुलना में कोरोना वायरस को एक हजार गुना अधिक निष्क्रिय कर सकती है।

इस अनुसंधान से संबंधित रिपोर्ट एम्बो पत्रिका में प्रकाशित हुई है। शोधकर्ताओं ने कहा कि वर्तमान में इन एंटीबॉडी का चिकित्सीय परीक्षण किए जाने की तैयारी चल रही है। कम दाम में इन एंटीबॉडी का उत्पादन बड़ी मात्रा में किया जा सकता है।

ये कोविड-19 उपचार से संबंधित वैश्विक मांग को पूरा कर सकती है। उल्लेखनीय है कि एंटीबॉडी शरीर की रोग प्रतिरोधक क्षमता में मदद करती है। ये वायरस से चिपककर उसे निष्क्रिय कर देती है।

Vaccination

Vaccinating the young: On priority groups (Hindustan: 20210730)

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/vaccinating-the-young-the-hindu-editorial-on-need-to-prioritise-inoculation-of-adult-population/article35616294.ece?homepage=true>

India must continue to prioritise vaccination of the adult population

As India's vaccination drive chugs along with sporadic bursts of frenetic inoculation, there are possibilities of administering vaccines to children soon — as early as next month. At present, two Indian vaccines may be eligible for administration to children. Zydus Cadilla's ZycoV-D, a three-dose plasmid DNA vaccine, with a 66.6% efficacy in phase-3 trials, has also been tested in adolescents (12-18 years), data for which has been submitted to the regulator. The company has also requested permission to test in children over five. Covaxin's Bharat Biotech is also testing the vaccine in a cohort of children below 12. Though none of these studies has been completed, the expectations are that these vaccines may be ready by September. Pfizer's mRNA vaccine has been authorised in those above 12 and Moderna's too may be similarly approved in the U.S. Both companies are reportedly in discussions with the Indian government. Young children are at the least risk of hospitalisation and death from COVID-19 but are capable of being infection carriers and putting older caregivers at risk. This undergirds the difficult decision by governments to continue with school closures that has brought forth unprecedented challenges such as denying many Indian children access to quality education.

From the global experience so far, the broad principle is that if an effective vaccine is available, it must be administered irrespective of age. However, it is also true that the vaccines are far more effective at protecting from disease than infection. Because children and adults respond to the virus differently, it still remains to be seen whether vaccinating children as a pre-requisite to opening schools actually brings down overall rates of infection. Countries that have vaccinated those above 12 and have fully opened up are also those boasting high rates of adult vaccination. In India, only around 10% of all adults have been fully vaccinated. India already has a challenging target of fully inoculating all adults — 94.4 crore — by the end of the year. A key constraint has been Covaxin; its manufacturer has been unable to ramp up monthly production to its stated nearly six crore doses. Put together, this implies that if the aim of universal vaccination is to protect from disease, then the thrust must be on prioritising adults over children. Government and independent experts have advised that schools can open in a staggered fashion. This again underlines that reopening should not be contingent on vaccination alone. There is also the worry that prioritising vaccines for children would mean diverting already limited stocks. Rather than blindly emulate the West, India must decide on what policy works best for its entire population, including children.

Food and Nutrition

दिमागी सेहत को दुरुस्त रखेगा फलों का सेवन, रोजाना सिर्फ आधी मौसमी खाने से दिखने लगेगा फर्क (Hindustan:20210730)

<https://www.livehindustan.com/lifestyle/story-health-benefits-of-eating-fruits-consumption-of-fruits-will-keep-mental-health-healthy-mosambi-fruit-benefits-4274263.html>

आहार में तीन हिस्सा रंग-बिरंगे फल और सब्जियों का सेवन बुजुर्गवस्था में याददाश्त की कमी से बचा सकता है। इतना ही नहीं रोजाना सिर्फ आधी मौसमी खाने से भी मस्तिष्क स्वस्थ रहता है।

अमेरिकी शोधकर्ताओं का कहना है कि निश्चित फल का सेवन मानसिक सेहत को बरकरार रखता है।

अध्ययन के दौरान दिमाग पर मौसमी के सेवन से होने वाले असर की जांच की। पाया गया कि मौसमी में मौजूद एंटीऑक्सिडेंट मस्तिष्क की सेहत में सुधार करने में कारगर हैं। हर रोज सिर्फ आधी मौसमी खाने से मानसिक सेहत में गिरावट 30 फीसदी तक कम करने में सफलता मिली। उन्होंने कहा कि सिर्फ मौसमी ही नहीं बल्कि गाजर, नारंगी, अंगूर जैसे फलों के सेवन से भी मानसिक सेहत में गिरावट का जोखिम कम हो जाता है।

50,000 महिलाओं और पुरुषों पर किया गया अध्ययन

अध्ययन में देखा गया कि जिन लोगों ने जीवन में देर से इन फलों का सेवन शुरू किया, उनकी याददाश्त को भी लाभ हुआ। हार्वर्ड विश्वविद्यालय के शोधकर्ताओं ने 20 सालों तक 50 हजार महिलाओं और पुरुषों पर अध्ययन किया। प्रतिभागियों से पूछा गया कि वह कितनी बार विभिन्न फलों का सेवन करते हैं और इसके बाद उनकी याददाश्त संबंधी योग्यता से जुड़े प्रश्न पूछे गए।

Yoga and Physical Fitness

बहुत ही कम समय में बॉडी से बैड कोलेस्ट्रॉल आउट करती हैं ये 4 एक्सरसाइजेस (Hindustan: 20210730)

<https://www.jagran.com/lifestyle/health-these-4-exercises-reduce-bad-cholesterol-from-the-body-in-a-very-short-time-21878237.html>

बैड कोलेस्ट्रॉल को आसान भाषा में समझें तो मोटापा और दिल से जुड़ी बीमारियों की वजह। इसलिए इसे जितना हो सके एक्सरसाइज़ और खानपान की मदद से कम रखें। तो आज उन्हीं एक्सरसाइजेस के बारे में बताएंगे जो हैं इसे कम करने में हेल्पफुल।

बॉडी में बैड कोलेस्ट्रॉल जमने पर मोटापे के अलावा हार्ट रिलेटेड प्रॉब्लम्स जैसी सिचुएशन का सामना करना पड़ सकता है। हालांकि, अगर आप डेली रूटीन में एक्सरसाइज़ को शामिल करते हैं, तो बैड कोलेस्ट्रॉल को बॉडी में जमा होने से रोक सकते हैं। आइए जानते हैं कि किन एक्सरसाइजेस से मिल सकता है ज्यादा फायदा..

करें रनिंग और जॉगिंग

रनिंग और जॉगिंग को कोलेस्ट्रॉल कम करने में असरदार माना गया है। रनिंग करने में आपके गुड कोलेस्ट्रॉल यानि एचडीएल में बढ़ोत्तरी होती है और एलडीएल यानि बैड कोलेस्ट्रॉल तेजी से घटता है। साथ ही, कैलोरीज़ बर्न करने में भी रनिंग और जॉगिंग करना बहुत फायदेमंद होता है। खाना खाने के बाद अगर आप टहलते हैं तो इससे भी काफी हद तक कोलेस्ट्रॉल कंट्रोल होता है।

स्विमिंग है बहुत फायदेमंद

स्विमिंग कैलोरीज़ बर्न करने और कोलेस्ट्रॉल घटाने में बहुत हेल्पफुल साबित होती है। इसे रनिंग और जॉगिंग से भी बेहतर माना जाता है। स्विमिंग एक कार्डियोवैस्कुलर वर्कआउट है। इसे करने से बॉडी फैट बर्न होता है। अगर आप रोज स्विमिंग करते हैं, तो अपना बैड कोलेस्ट्रॉल आसानी से कम कर सकते हैं। स्विमिंग में आपकी पूरी बॉडी मूव होती है, जो उसे हेल्दी रखने में मदद करता है।

एरोबिक्स भी हो रूटीन में

हफ्ते में कम से कम 5 दिन कुल 30 मिनट तक एरोबिक्स करने से बॉडी में बैड कोलेस्ट्रॉल की क्वांटिटी कम होती है। इतना ही नहीं, एरोबिक्स करने से आप हाई ब्लड प्रेशर की प्रॉब्लम से भी छुटकारा पा सकते

हैं। इससे आपका वजन कंट्रोल में रहता है और कार्डियोवैस्कुलर प्रॉब्लम्स होने का रिस्क कम हो जाता है।

पुश-अप्स हैं बहुत काम के

बाँडी के कोर को मजबूत बनाने के साथ ही पुश-अप्स कोलेस्ट्रॉल कम करने में भी मददगार है। वॉर्म-अप के तौर पर इसे रोज करने से कैलोरीज़ बर्न होती है। जिससे वजन कम होता है और कोलेस्ट्रॉल भी घटता है।

नोट: अगर आप हार्ट रिलेटेड किसी प्रॉब्लम का सामना कर रहे हैं तो एक्सरसाइज शुरू करने से पहले अपने डॉक्टर की सलाह जरूर लें।

Acute malnourished children

9.27 lakh severely acute malnourished children in the country: Govt (The Hindu: 20210730)

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/927-lakh-severely-acute-malnourished-children-in-the-country-govt/article35619948.ece?homepage=true>

‘Over 40% of such children were found in Uttar Pradesh alone’, Minister Smriti Irani tekks Rajya Sabha

A total of 9.27 lakh severely acute malnourished children between the age of six months and six years have been identified in the country till November 2020, the government told Parliament.

Over 40% of such children were found in Uttar Pradesh alone.

"As per ICDS-RRS (Rapid Reporting System) Portal, as on 30th November, 2020, 9,27,606 severely acute malnourished (SAM) children (6 months - 6 years) have been identified in the country, out of which 3,98,359 are from the State of Uttar Pradesh," Minister for Women and Child Development Smriti Irani told Rajya Sabha in response to a question.

Despite the staggering numbers more than 40% of funds released to State governments since the launch of Poshan Abhiyaan in 2017 remains unutilised, government data shows.

While ₹5,312.79 crores have been released to States and UTs from 2017-18 to 2020-21, only 56% of the funds ₹2,985.56 crores have been utilised upto 31st March, 2021.

The government launched POSHAN Abhiyaan (Nutrition Mission) in March, 2018, with an objective to reduce malnutrition in the country and achieve improvement in nutritional status of children in the age group of 0-6 years.

The Mission aims to reduce stunting, underweight, and low birth weight, each by 2% per year; and anaemia among young children, adolescents and women each by 3% per year until 2022. The government has also announced Mission Poshan 2.0 during the Budget 2021-2022, which has been approved for 5 years - from 2021-2022 to 2025-2026.

A NITI Aayog drafted last year before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic warned that there is a need to step up efforts to achieve the targets laid down under the POSHAN Abhiyaan.

Covid- 19 Fatality (The Asian Age: 20210730)

<http://onlinepaper.asianage.com/articledetailpage.aspx?id=15739493>

■ About 9,000 corona vaccine doses administered in 3 city jails

Delhi records zero Covid-19 fatality

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JULY 29

The national capital recorded not a single fatality due to Covid-19 on Thursday, according to data shared by the city health department. This is the third time since the start of the second wave of the pandemic in Delhi that zero Covid deaths have been logged in a day.

Meanwhile, 51 fresh coronavirus cases were reported in Delhi in the last 24 hours with a positivity rate of 0.08 per cent. On July 18 and July 24, no death due to Covid-19 was recorded, as per

▶ MEANWHILE, 51 fresh coronavirus cases were reported in Delhi in the last 24 hours with a positivity rate of 0.08 per cent. On July 18 and July 24, no death due to Covid-19 was recorded, as per official data.

The Delhi Prisons Department, on Thursday, said that almost 9,000 Covid vaccine doses have been administered in three jails of the national capital so far.

According to the officials, a total of 8,939 doses have been adminis-

tered in Tihar, Rohini, and Mandoli jails. As on Wednesday, 1,264 inmates above 45 years and 4,384 below 45 years in Tihar jail were vaccinated.

In Rohini jail, 132 inmates above 45 years and 600 below 45 years were administered the vaccine while in Mandoli jail 483 inmates above 45 years and 2,076 below 45 years have been vaccinated, according to the data.

The prisons department launched a Covid vaccination drive for the inmates in the 45-plus age category on March 18, while the inoculation of the inmates in the 18-44 age

group began on May 18.

Since March, around 383 coronavirus cases have been reported among the inmates of the jails in the national capital and eight of them have succumbed to the disease.

Among the prison staff members, 225 have been infected with the virus since March and one is still under treatment. The jail authorities are taking all precautions and Covid-appropriate behaviour, including social distancing among the inmates, is being strictly followed, a senior jail official said.

National Education Policy (The Asian Age: 20210730)

<http://onlinepaper.asianage.com/article/detailpage.aspx?id=15738882>



C. Raj Kumar

New education panel will help implement NEP more effectively

It has been a year since the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 was announced by the Government of India. It was indeed a red-letter day in the history and evolution of education as the NEP sought fundamental transformation of India's education system. The vision of the NEP 2020 was crystallised in these words: "This National Education Policy envisions an education system rooted in Indian ethos that contributes directly to transforming India, that is Bharat, sustainably into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society, by providing high-quality education to all, and thereby making India a global knowledge superpower." Few would argue on the aspiration embedded in these words. Even before the NEP was announced, it had undergone a comprehensive consultation process with all stakeholders that was reflected in the policy. The NEP captured the collective consciousness of India's education fraternity. It is important to establish a National Education Policy Commission (NEPC) as a nodal institution that will be responsible for implementing the NEP. This could be within the education ministry, but it should have separate institutional apparatus and identity.

ASSESSING NEP'S ONE-YEAR JOURNEY

In the run-up to the launch of the NEP, wide ranging consultative exercises were held. However, the complexity of the education sector requires internalising the vision of the NEP by all stakeholders. The two major initiatives promoted during the last year include strengthening online education and establishing an Academic Bank of Credit. We witnessed extraordinary innovations in the use of technological platforms. While our digital divide is a continuing challenge, it is also the only mode of education that is possible and democratic during a pandemic. The seriousness with which the government has approached the formulation of the NEP was equally matched with the impetus provided by the highest echelons of the government, including discussions led by the Prime Minister and the education minister.

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

An important aspect of policy implementation is the level of institutional preparedness within all the relevant organisations. Michael Hill and Peter Hays, scholars in social policy and governance, in their influential book, *Implementing Public Policy: An Introduction to the Study of Operational Governance*, have observed that "(...) designing institutions is an important public task. Implementation, then, refers to that part of governance that involves activities in relation to public tasks that follow the legitimate, directive decisions on those tasks. In the beginning of the third millennium, the "implementation of public policy" takes various forms, but they all can be approached as concerned with the operational part of governance. In short, implementation can be seen as operational governance."

The NEP expects the highest degree of operational governance as far as its implementation is concerned. It is important that we put in place the following five institutional mechanisms under the aegis of the proposed National Education Policy Commission (NEPC) that will help in the implementation of the NEP:

- 1. Inter-ministerial coordination for implementing the NEP:** There are many aspects of the NEP that requires participation and involvement of other ministries and departments within the Government of India. This requires a continuous coordination and monitoring mechanism.
- 2. Inter-regulatory body coordination for implementing the NEP:** The higher education sector has more than 15 discipline-based regulatory bodies, all of whose functioning impinges on the vision articulated in the NEP. There is an urgent need for a strong and substantive engagement with all these regulatory bodies.
- 3. Intra-government coordination for implementing the NEP:** It is important that any effective institutional mechanism is designed to connect higher education departments and the state higher education councils of state governments. Removing duplication while delineating roles and responsibilities of institutions that are involved within a state government will be the key.
- 4. Funding and resource allocation for implementing the NEP:** The issue of funding and resource allocation is almost central to the successful implementation of the NEP. The NEPC should be empowered to ensure that it is able to work with all government departments to ensure that the necessary funds are available.
- 5. Statutory legal reforms for implementing the NEP:** Certain areas of the NEP require legal and statutory support. The NEPC should be working to identify these aspects of the NEP to initiate reforms at the earliest.

The establishment of the National Education Policy Commission (NEPC) within the education ministry of the Government of India is a step in the right direction that will provide new impetus to the efforts that are needed for the implementation of the NEP. The first anniversary of the launch of the NEP should create a certain degree of expediency to focus on our collective efforts towards the effective implementation of the National Education Policy.

Prof. C. Raj Kumar is the founding vice-chancellor of O.P. Jindal Global University, Sonapat

Vaccinating the young: On priority groups (The Hindu:20210730)

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/vaccinating-the-young-the-hindu-editorial-on-need-to-prioritise-inoculation-of-adult-population/article35616294.ece>

India must continue to prioritise vaccination of the adult population

As India's vaccination drive chugs along with sporadic bursts of frenetic inoculation, there are possibilities of administering vaccines to children soon — as early as next month. At present, two Indian vaccines may be eligible for administration to children. Zydus Cadilla's ZycoV-D, a three-dose plasmid DNA vaccine, with a 66.6% efficacy in phase-3 trials, has also been tested in adolescents (12-18 years), data for which has been submitted to the regulator. The company has also requested permission to test in children over five. Covaxin's Bharat Biotech is also testing the vaccine in a cohort of children below 12. Though none of these studies has been completed, the expectations are that these vaccines may be ready by September. Pfizer's mRNA vaccine has been authorised in those above 12 and Moderna's too may be similarly approved in the U.S. Both companies are reportedly in discussions with the Indian government. Young children are at the least risk of hospitalisation and death from COVID-19 but are capable of being infection carriers and putting older caregivers at risk. This undergirds the difficult decision by governments to continue with school closures that has brought forth unprecedented challenges such as denying many Indian children access to quality education.

From the global experience so far, the broad principle is that if an effective vaccine is available, it must be administered irrespective of age. However, it is also true that the vaccines are far more effective at protecting from disease than infection. Because children and adults respond to the virus differently, it still remains to be seen whether vaccinating children as a pre-requisite to opening schools actually brings down overall rates of infection. Countries that have vaccinated those above 12 and have fully opened up are also those boasting high rates of adult vaccination. In India, only around 10% of all adults have been fully vaccinated. India already has a challenging target of fully inoculating all adults — 94.4 crore — by the end of the year. A key constraint has been Covaxin; its manufacturer has been unable to ramp up monthly production to its stated nearly six crore doses. Put together, this implies that if the aim of universal vaccination is to protect from disease, then the thrust must be on prioritising adults over children. Government and independent experts have advised that schools can open in a staggered fashion. This again underlines that reopening should not be contingent on vaccination alone. There is also the worry that prioritising vaccines for children would mean diverting already limited stocks. Rather than blindly emulate the West, India must decide on what policy works best for its entire population, including children.

Nasal vaccine

Significant data on nasal vaccine likely in 2.5 months: Bharat Biotech founder Krishna Ella (The Hindu: 20210730)

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/significant-data-on-nasal-vaccine-likely-in-25-months-krishna-ella/article35605714.ece>

File photo of Chairman and Managing Director of Bharat Biotech Dr. Krishna Ella | Photo Credit: Nagara Gopal

Clinical trial to pair Covaxin, nasal vaccine doses on cards, Mr. Ella says.

Bharat Biotech founder Krishna Ella on July 29 said the company was expecting significant data on its intranasal COVID-19 vaccine to be available in the next two and half months.

“In another two to two and a half months, we are going to have significant data,” he said, without committing to a timeline by which the nasal vaccine, whose clinical trials are underway, is likely to be rolled out.

Perceived as a game changer in the battle against the virus, the vaccine from the makers of Covaxin promises to deliver multiple benefits, from being more effective, since it is expected to generate immune responses at the site of infection (respiratory mucosa) to ease of administration and production. “It is also easy to scale it up... can produce 100 million doses a month,” Mr. Ella told a FICCI Capital Markets Conference.

The company is also awaiting permission to conduct clinical trials using a combination of Covaxin and the nasal vaccine doses to vaccinate. “We have applied for clinical [trial] permission,” he said, adding once the combination gets approved it could be a game changer. In September, Bharat Biotech had announced a licensing agreement with Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis for the ‘novel chimp adenovirus’, single dose intranasal vaccine for COVID-19.

On Covaxin, Mr. Ella said manufacturing of the inactivated vaccine, unlike the vector or mRNA vaccines, was challenging. However, Bharat Biotech’s existing BSL-3 production facilities -- which are required to make inactivated vaccines helped it overcome the challenge. Noting that safety profile of Covaxin was the best, Mr. Ella said clinical trial of the vaccine for children between the age of 2-18 years was nearing completion.

He asserted the possibility of a third wave of COVID-19 in India will be determined by the people’s behaviour or in other words their conforming to COVID-19 appropriate guidelines. “My feeling is until Deepavali if no epidemic comes we are through as a country. Also with different vaccines coming, we can take care of the society at large. We are well geared up now... there was a little delay but now we have caught up...,” he said, expecting everyone in India to be vaccinated by March next year.