



# DAILY NEWS BULLETIN

LEADING HEALTH, POPULATION AND FAMILY WELFARE STORIES OF THE DAY  
Monday 20220228

## India launches National Polio Immunization Drive

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Immunisation drive will be organised across the country on Sunday (The Tribune:20220228)

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/health/india-launches-national-polio-immunization-drive-to-sustain-polio-free-status-373305>

India launches National Polio Immunization Drive to sustain polio-free status

Union Minister for Health & Family Welfare, Chemicals and Fertilizers, Mansukh Mandaviya launches the National Polio Immunization Drive for 2022 by administering Polio drops to children below five years of age in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, in New Delhi on February 26, 2022. PTI

Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Saturday launched the National Polio Immunization Drive for 2022 by administering polio drops to children below five years of age at the health ministry.

The immunisation drive will be organised across the country on Sunday. India conducts one nationwide NID and two Sub-National Immunization Day (SNIDs) for polio every year to maintain population immunity against wild poliovirus and to sustain its polio-free status. During the Polio NID, over 15 crore children will be covered across all 36 states and UTs in 735 districts.

Addressing the occasion, Mandaviya said that the country's strategic fight against polio is a success story of India's public health policy against vaccine preventable diseases. "We need to continue to be vigilant and ensure that every child under five years of age must get polio drops".

"Under the leadership of our Prime Minister, Universal Immunization Programme is focusing to protect children from more diseases than ever before and has introduced several new vaccines like Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV), Rotavirus vaccine, and Measles-Rubella vaccine (MR) in the recent past.

"Further, to provide additional protection to our children, the Centre has also introduced the injectable inactivated Polio vaccine into its routine immunization programme. While we are making efforts to protect our children from more and more diseases, it is important that all vaccines under the programme reach every child of our country", said the minister.

Stressing on the importance of observing National Immunisation Day, he said that the aim of Swastha Bharath can only be achieved if the children are healthy. The objective of Mission Indradhanush or Polio Vaccination Drive is to protect them against such deadly diseases.

"Since our neighbouring countries are still not polio free, we should remain vigilant and continue the vaccination programme. Over 15 crore children under 5 years of age will be vaccinated in the coming months. Door-to-door vaccination campaigns through robust micro-planning will be done to ensure that no one is left," he stated.

During the drive, polio drops will be provided to children through 7 lakh booths across the country. Approximately 23.6 crore houses will be visited for polio drops. Meghalaya has already conducted the drive in the state on January 24, while Mizoram plans to conduct the same on March 1 due to local reasons.

Election-bound states of Uttar Pradesh and Manipur also plan to organise the Polio NID on March 20 and 24, respectively.

## **Medical education in India**

### **No quick fix: On the state of medical education in India (The Hindu:20220228)**

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/no-quick-fix-the-hindu-editorial-on-the-state-of-medical-education-in-india/article65089868.ece>

The war in Ukraine has brought to the fore the plight of Indian students, many of them pursuing medicine. Amidst the turmoil, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, at a webinar on the Union Budget announcements on the health sector, stated that many young Indians were going to "small countries of the world for medical education" and, therefore, the private sector should be encouraged, along with cooperation from States, to set up more medical colleges and hospitals locally so that such aspirants remain in India. His remarks are well-meaning, but the dynamics of India's medical education system are complex. The most sought-after international destinations — traditionally, for medical education the U.S., the U.K. and a few west European countries — are, however, too expensive for most Indians. In the last few decades, Russia, China (countries larger than India) and Ukraine (one of Europe's largest countries), with their historical commitment to public health care have been able to offer more affordable, yet quality, education. India's huge population still continues to be predominantly rural, but most of the trained medical doctors, paramedics and nurses gravitate towards cities for well-known reasons. The very nature of medical education, an empirical field, requires significant infrastructure — land, equipment, and trained faculty at the post graduate level —

all of which are in short supply and uneven in their spread. Without correcting these deficiencies, India cannot expect to dramatically increase the availability of medical personnel. The Government needs to make health care the centrepiece of its economic rebuilding.

The anaemic spending on health is not unique to this government; for several years, India's spend on health care has consistently trailed several countries comparable to its size which is why there is barely one doctor for every 1,000 Indians and specialists often a tenth of what is required. These shortcomings have lubricated the phenomenon of young Indians seeking affordable, quality, health-care education in other countries. But merely having private establishments start medical schools, without a long-term commitment to offer necessary training and post-graduate education, could lead to a repeat of the engineering fiasco after the dotcom boom: a surfeit of engineering colleges without adequately trained faculty or infrastructure that churn out students who need a further skills upgrade to be employable. The Government must instead ease procedures for establishing medical colleges, spend more on infrastructure, and provide incentives for a health-care ecosystem to develop in rural areas. While not a quick-fix, over time this could facilitate the growth of private and public medical colleges that could stem the outflow of students aspiring to be doctors. Private investment in medical education by itself will nowhere be enough.

## **Brachial plexus injury**

### **After sustaining brachial plexus injury, youth regains near-normal movement (The Hindu:20220228)**

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/chennai/after-sustaining-brachial-plexus-injury-youth-regains-near-normal-movement/article65087762.ece>

Arumuga Kamalesh, 19, who underwent surgery for brachial plexus injury, with the doctors of the Tamil Nadu Government Multi Super Speciality Hospital in Chennai.

Arumuga Kamalesh, 19, who underwent surgery for brachial plexus injury, with the doctors of the Tamil Nadu Government Multi Super Speciality Hospital in Chennai.

The 19-year-old State-level gymnast from Madurai suffered shoulder dislocation twice

A 19-year-old gymnast, who sustained a left brachial plexus injury, regained near-normal movement in five months after undergoing surgery at the Tamil Nadu Government Multi Super Speciality Hospital (TNGMSSH). Doctors of the Department of Hand and Reconstructive Microsurgery of the hospital performed neurolysis and nerve transfer that was followed by physiotherapy to help him regain full range of motion.

Arumuga Kamalesh, a resident of Madurai, was a State-level gymnastic champion. He sustained a shoulder dislocation during practice in November 2020. Though his coach had reduced the dislocation, he again suffered a dislocation while carrying a pot of water, R. Sridhar, associate professor of the department, said.

Surgery went wrong

He sought treatment at a private hospital where an arthroscopy surgery was performed. “He had sustained nerve injury during the shoulder dislocation. The surgery worsened it. He had a brachial plexus injury. Three nerves in the neck and thoracic spine segment were affected and two were functional. He took up physiotherapy and exercises for eight months but his condition did not improve,” he said.

In August 2021, he came to TNGMSSH where doctors evaluated him and suggested surgery. A surgery for nerve transfer was performed on September 1. “We performed neurolysis and nerve transfer (Oberlin I and Somsak procedure) in which we joined the branches of the two functioning nerves to the three affected nerves,” he said.

There was significant improvement post-surgery, he said. “He followed up on physiotherapy and exercises, and in five months has regained near normal movement. We have advised him to go slowly and not to be hasty, and take up graded exercises,” Dr. Sridhar said.

On follow-up, doctors saw that he had regained near-normal movement. He would require physiotherapy for five to six more months, he said. The entire procedure was covered under the Chief Minister’s Comprehensive Health Insurance Scheme.

Dr. Sridhar along with G. Karthikeyan of the department of Hand and Reconstructive Microsurgery performed the surgery. Apart from them, Magesh and L. Parthasarathy of the Department of Anaesthesiology were part of the team.

Dr. Sridhar said that such brachial plexus injuries were common in two-wheeler accidents and need to be recognised as such properly.

## **Winter health**

### **Winter health: Five reasons why you should eat green peas**

**Check out a tasty snack recipe, too, which will give you a healthy dose of peas (The Indian Express:20220228)**

<https://indianexpress.com/article/lifestyle/health/health-benefits-of-having-green-peas-during-winter-and-a-great-snack-recipe-you-can-try-7703144/>

peas, pea pods, matar, dr harsh vardhan on matar, matar recipes, peas recipes, indianexpress.com, indianexpress, peas benefits, pea pod benefits, Green peas are full of antioxidants. (Photo: Getty Images/Thinkstock

Widely sold as vegetables in fresh, canned or frozen forms, green peas belong to the legume family along with soybeans, chickpeas, and other kinds of beans. They are low in calories (59kcal in half a cup) but pack in a load of nutrients like vitamins A, K, minerals, phytonutrients, antioxidants, protein, and more.

Eyesight

The carotenoids lutein and zeaxanthin in green peas aid in good eyesight and help protect them from chronic diseases like cataract. They protect the eyes from the harmful blue light emanated by computer, TV, and mobile screens which are known to contribute to macular degeneration.

### Digestion

The fiber in peas help the food move through the gut for better digestion while the coumestrol packed in them help lower the risk of stomach cancer.

### Heart health

Omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids in peas reduce oxidation and inflammation and even help preventing plaques from forming along the blood vessel walls, something that is a result of inflammation and stress caused by free radicals. The magnesium and potassium in peas can also lower high blood pressure.

ALSO KNOW |Youngsters should also worry about heart health; here's why

### Immunity

The vitamin C, E, zinc, catechin and epicatechin present in green peas act as immunity boosting antioxidants.

### Anti-inflammatory

Green peas also contain vitamin A, B, cholesterol, ferulic, and coumestrol help in keeping inflammatory conditions like heart diseases, diabetes, and arthritis in check.

This winter, you can add peas to your diet with the help of this easy, fast, and tasty snack recipe.

## GREEN PEAS or MATAR KE PAKODE

### Ingredients

\*Green peas

\*Garlic, ginger, green chillies

\*Onions

\*Salt

\*Cumin seeds

\*Coriander leaves

\*Chilli flakes

\*Flour

\*Corn flour

\*Unflavoured Eno

\*Vegetable oil

## **Planet Palm' review**

### **Planet Palm' review: The palm oil's curse on life and the environment (The Hindu:20220228)**

<https://www.thehindu.com/books/books-reviews/planet-palm-review-the-palm-oils-curse-on-life-and-the-environment/article65070779.ece>

Plantations have been built on stolen land and harsh labour, sweeping away cultures and devastating Southeast Asia, argues a new book

There are moments in life when we have to hold our assumptions to a deeper scrutiny. That is what award-winning journalist Jocelyn Zuckerman has succeeded through her groundbreaking research, compelling the reader to examine the connections between the choices we make at the grocery store that keeps the planet under siege. That palm oil's overwhelming presence in soap and lipstick to baby formula and dog feed is the cause for persistence of poverty and hunger in other parts of world would unsettle any sane mind.

Having insinuated itself into every facet of our lives over the past few decades, palm oil alone counts for one-third of total global vegetable oil consumption. With annual purchase of 9.2 million metric tonnes in 2019, India is the world's number-one palm oil importer. Far from being a boon to the world economy, the multi-billion dollar palm oil business has been a bane argues Zuckerman. Our growing appetite has worsened the situation — more forests are cleared for new plantations, forcible evictions have escalated human sufferings; and enhanced carbon emissions remain the resultant outcome. Despite its long-term health and environmental implications, the worrisome aspect is how a lesser-known oil suddenly became an indispensable consumer product.

Zuckerman unearths palm oil's troubled colonial legacy to draw a parallel with its current fetishism, promoted by ruthless industrialisation of modern food systems. With multiple uses and an economic life of a quarter century, palm oil's productive potential could not escape the attention of maverick George Goldie, credited for securing Nigeria for the Crown, and quirky businessman William Lever, for establishing oil-palm plantations in the Congo. The story of palm oil is the story of colonialism, which is sinister in its present-day design involving armed gangsters, murderous executives, and corrupt politicians, she writes.

Junk food

Planet Palm is not only a disturbing expose on contemporary ills associated with the palm oil trade but holds unsuspecting consumers complicit in the corporate monopolisation of a \$65 billion global business. Trade liberalisation has contributed to this inconspicuous consumption,

easing crossborder peddling of ultra-processed junk foods by multinational companies. “Part of the problem,” explains Zuckerman, “is the sort of nutrient-deficient, heavily processed junk that all of this cheap oil enables.” And land planted with oil palm across the developing world, an estimated 104,000 square miles, is land which is diverted from growing healthy foods. Having travelled across four continents, from Indonesia to Honduras and from Liberia to India, the author is unsparing in her revelations, providing disturbing evidence on the world’s most environmentally damaging product — something most of us unknowingly use every day.

It is an extraordinary work of investigative journalism that will make the discerning reader rush to look differently at the items stacked in her kitchen and bathroom. The collective power of consumer choices is critical to turning things around as incidences of violence against those opposing the industry has grown — half of 212 eco-defenders reported killed in 2019 were opposing palm oil interests. So intimately linked are national economies (those of Malaysia and Indonesia) to the palm oil industry that even the governments remain obliged to defend the commodity.

### Shocking move

What could be more shocking than the fact that France was diplomatically forced to drop plans for a tax on palm oil in 2016, as the Indonesian government had made it clear that passage of the law might result in the execution of a French citizen then being held in Jakarta on drug-trafficking charges.

Zuckerman provides a compelling account of the darkest underside of late-stage capitalism. While there is no denying that our food systems need overhauling, equally important for consumers is to raise their voices to demand more transparency. She leaves the reader with an optimistic note to wean ourselves away from palm oil by using synthetic versions of the oil and convincing companies to adopt no-deforestation policies in their production codes.

## **Anti-tumour drug promotes**

### **Anti-tumour drug promotes weight loss in mice: Study Camptothecin, a chemical derived from Asian tree, can activate natural hunger-suppressing pathway (The Hindu:20220228)**

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/health/anti-tumour-drug-promotes-weight-loss-in-mice-study-373050>

A study showed that an anti-tumour drug at low doses could help lose weight in mice, offering a promising new way for developing new anti-obesity therapy.

According to the study published on Friday in the open-access journal PLOS Biology, camptothecin, a chemical derived from the Asian tree, can activate a natural hunger-suppressing pathway.

The camptothecin was previously known as an inhibitor of a DNA repair enzyme, and hence its used as an anti-tumour drug, the study noted.

Scientists from Northwest A&F University in China's Shaanxi Province found that cells exposed to camptothecin increased the expression of a hormone that circulates in response to a wide variety of stimuli, including stress.

The elevation of the hormone called GDF15 leads to a drop in body weight, while suppression of it leads to obesity.

The researchers administered camptothecin orally to obese mice, and the GDF15 level rapidly increased in the blood of those rodents.

Thereafter, they observed reduced food intake by about 12 per cent and body weight by about 11 per cent of those obese mice over the course of 30 days. But in lean mice, no changes were observed.

"We believe our results convincingly argue that camptothecin may have therapeutic benefits for obesity and its associated metabolic disorders," said the paper's corresponding author Wu Jianwei with Northwest A&F University.

## **Medical oxygen**

### **Medical oxygen running out in Ukraine as war rages, WHO warns (The Tribune:20220228)**

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/health/medical-oxygen-running-out-in-ukraine-as-war-rages-who-warns-373625>

Critical hospital services were also being jeopardised by electricity and power shortages

Medical oxygen running out in Ukraine as war rages, WHO warns  
Photo for representational purpose only.

Ukraine is running out of oxygen supplies that critically ill people need, the World Health Organization said on Sunday, calling for safe passage for emergency imports as combat rages.

"The oxygen supply situation is nearing a very dangerous point in Ukraine. Trucks are unable to transport oxygen supplies from plants to hospitals across the country, including the capital Kyiv," WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus and WHO Regional Director for Europe Hans Kluge said in a statement.

"The majority of hospitals could exhaust their oxygen reserves within the next 24 hours. Some have already run out.

This puts thousands of lives at risk."

Oxygen is essential for patients with a range of conditions, including the 1,700 in hospital with Covid-19 and those with other critical illnesses stemming from complications of pregnancy, childbirth, sepsis, injuries and trauma.

Critical hospital services were also being jeopardised by electricity and power shortages, while ambulances transporting patients were in danger of getting caught in the crossfire.

The WHO said it was looking to increase supplies, most likely using liquid oxygen and cylinders from regional networks.

These supplies would need safe transit routes after leaving a logistics corridor through Poland.  
Reuters

**Suramin reduces drug resistance in mycobacteria, says study  
Recent reports too say antibiotic persisters (APs) of mycobacteria develop resistance upon treatment with lethal doses of ciprofloxacin or rifampicin  
(The Tribune:20220228)**

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/health/suramin-reduces-drug-resistance-in-mycobacteria-says-study-373623>

Suramin reduces drug resistance in mycobacteria, says study  
Photo for representational purpose only. iStock

Harmful bacteria that cause diseases like TB and leprosy has become resistant to antibiotics warranting novel strategies to control it, says a study by Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Biotechnology (RGCB) here.

The study, published in the journal ‘Antimicrobial Agents and Chemotherapy’ reveals application of antibiotics results in a two-phase killing of bacteria with a significant part of it being killed rapidly while a smaller part endures the antibiotic and persists in the environment for extended periods.

“The persisters also get killed because they remain susceptible to antibiotics, but the killing rate is much slower. Non-compliance with the duration of antibiotic therapy results in a relapse of infection caused by the persisters,” a press release from RGCB said.

Recent reports too say antibiotic persisters (APs) of mycobacteria develop resistance upon treatment with lethal doses of ciprofloxacin or rifampicin.

Research demonstrated that the persister population of *M. smegmatis* generated by antibiotic treatment showed high levels of reactive oxygen species (ROS), which consequently resulted in the rapid emergence of drug resistance to single and multiple antibiotics.

Strategies to tackle drug-resistant strains include identification of new antibiotics or targeting the bacterial mechanisms that reduce the rate of evolution of resistance, RGCB said.

“We took the second approach as identifying new and potent antibacterial antibiotics takes time and should pass rigorous safety standards before using human therapy,” Dr. Krishna Kurthkoti, a scientist and researcher at RGCB, said. He conducted the study.

The study tested the efficacy of suramin, a WHO-approved drug, used for treating sleeping sickness and infections.

“It showed that a combination of Suramin during antibiotic therapy reduced the emergence rate of drug resistance in *M. smegmatis* and *M. tuberculosis* under laboratory conditions. Since Suramin is already an approved drug, its repurposing to control the emergence of drug resistance would increase the life expectancy of existing drugs providing valuable time to develop and approve new antibiotics,” the release said.

RGCB director Dr Chandrabhas Narayana said the study highlights novel application of suramin as a broad-spectrum agent in combating the development of drug resistance.

“It will bring into focus the need to discover new antibiotics to counter the emergence of antimicrobial resistance (AMR), which has become a major global health concern compelling the WHO to declare that the crisis needs immediate attention,” Narayana said.

A group of six virulent and drug-resistant pathogens has been identified as the biggest threat to human health.

According to a WHO report, India reported cases of around 2.5 million TB and 124,000 cases of MDR TB.

With the Central government taking up a policy to control TB, developing new therapeutics and understanding the mechanisms that cause drug resistance in mycobacteria become necessary.

## **Computer vision syndrome cases**

### **Computer vision syndrome cases on the rise (The Tribune:20220228)**

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/jalandhar/computer-vision-syndrome-cases-on-the-rise-373770>

Cases see three-fold rise among students, youngsters

Eye specialists have been witnessing a steady rise in the number of cases related to computer vision syndrome (CVS). Doctors said they were expecting the cases to go down after the government announced relaxations in the Covid curbs, however, the situation hasn't improved much.

Majority of OPD cases these days, as far as youngsters are concerned, are those suffering from CVS or those senior citizens suffering from cataract. The craze of social media is a lot amongst people of all ages, thus, they hop from one device to another. — Dr Rohan Bowry, MS Ophthalmology

Talking to The Tribune, Dr Rohan Bowry, MS Ophthalmology at Bowry Hospital in Udham Singh Nagar, said as compared to the pre-pandemic period, the cases of CVS has seen a three-fold rise among students and youngsters.

He said obviously the reason for this increase is the overuse of mobile phones and computers for studies and recreational purposes. “Before the pandemic, the average time spend by students on screen was two or three hours, however, after the pandemic it has increased to seven to eight hours a day on an average,” he said.

He said as per the ‘State of Mobile 2021 Report’, the time spent in front of devices in India has risen to 39.4 per cent i.e. from 3.3 hours per day in 2019 to 4.6 hours in 2020.

“Majority of OPD cases these days, as far as youngsters are concerned, are those suffering from CVS or those senior citizens suffering from cataract. The craze of social media is a lot amongst people of all ages, thus, they hop from one device to another,” Dr Rohan said, adding that the main reason behind CVS is that the people don’t maintain a proper distance from a screen.

He said the signs of CVS must not be ignored and if symptoms like double vision, itching, headache, dry eyes and seeing halos around things persists for a longer period, it is advisable to consult an eye specialist. He also advised students and youngsters to blink often when using mobile or laptops as it reduces the strain in eyes.

Another eye specialist, Dr Jaswinder Singh, said, “This situation may not improve until students get back to their normal routine. The cases are definitely on the rise as everyone is dependent on technology. WFH, online classes have increased the screen time amongst all.”

“Earlier, parents had divided children’s time after coming from school. They went for tuitions, played outside with friends etc, but now even if they are eating, they prefer to do that by watching cartoons or listening to music on YouTube,” he added. He said parents have to work hard, they need to change the routine of their kids and encourage them to get involved in outdoor activities.

## **Niti Aayog**

**Niti Aayog studying proposal to tax foods high in sugar, salt to tackle obesity  
Says in its annual report that it's reviewing the evidence available to  
understand the actions India could take to tackle rising obesity in the  
population (The Tribune:20220228)**

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/nation/niti-aayog-studying-proposal-to-tax-foods-high-in-sugar-salt-to-tackle-obesity-373586>

India can take actions such as taxation of foods high on sugar, fat and salt and front-of-the pack labelling to tackle rising obesity in the population, according to Niti Aayog's annual report.

The government think-tank is reviewing the evidence available to understand the actions India can take to tackle rising obesity in the population, the annual report 2021-22 stated.

The Aayog in the report mentioned that the incidences of overweight and obesity are increasing among children, adolescents and women in India.

"A national consultation on the prevention of maternal, adolescent and childhood obesity was organised under the Chairmanship of Member (Health), Niti Aayog, on June 24, 2021, to discuss policy options to tackle the issue.

"Niti Aayog, in collaboration with IEG and PHFI, is reviewing the evidence available to understand the actions India can take, such as front-of-pack labelling, marketing and advertising of HFSS foods and taxation of foods high in fats, sugar and salt, " it said.

Non-branded namkeens, bhujias, vegetable chips and snack foods attract 5 per cent GST while for branded and packaged items, the GST rate is 12 per cent.

According to the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) 2019-20, the percentage of obese women increased to 24 per cent from 20.6 per cent in 2015-16, while the percentage for men rose to 22.9 per cent from 18.4 per cent four years earlier.

The government think tank in its annual report also said that an expert committee under Niti Aayog member V K Saraswat to study the technological and commercial viability of the hyperloop system held four meetings so far and sub-committees were constituted.

The sub-committees suggested that hyperloop system be permitted to be built, owned and operated by the private sector and the government act as a facilitator by providing certification, permissions, tax benefits and land (if possible), etc," it said.

The report said a blueprint will be prepared to develop indigenously built hyperloop technology.

According to the annual report, the sub-committees also said that the government will not invest its fund and private players will take the full business risks.

Hyperloop is a technology proposed by inventor and businessman Elon Musk, who is behind the electric car company Tesla and the commercial space transport company SpaceX.

The Virgin Hyperloop test run was conducted on November 9, 2020, on a 500-metre track in Las Vegas in the US with a pod, as the hyperloop vehicles are called, travelling with passengers, including an Indian, inside an enclosed tube at more than 100 mph or 161 kmph.

The Virgin Hyperloop is among a handful of companies that are currently trying to build such a system for passenger travel.

Maharashtra has approved the Virgin Hyperloop-DP World Consortium as the original project proponent for the Mumbai-Pune hyperloop project.

## **Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission**

### **Cabinet approves Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission rollout for 5 years National Health Authority will be the implementing agency of Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (The Tribune:20220228)**

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/health/cabinet-approves-ayushman-bharat-digital-mission-rollout-for-5-years-373323>

Cabinet approves Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission rollout for 5 years

Sh. Rajesh Bhushan, Secretary, MoHFW addressing the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission session during Webinar on Strengthening Telemedicine and IT Enabled Services for Inclusive and Equitable Healthcare Diversity. Pic credit- @MoHFW\_INDIA/Twitter

New Delhi, February 26

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday approved the national rollout of Central Sector Scheme, Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM) of health ministry with a budget of Rs 1,600 crore for five years.

The National Health Authority (NHA) will be the implementing agency of Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM).

The digital health solutions across healthcare ecosystem have proven to be of immense benefit over the years, with CoWIN, Arogya Setu and eSanjeevani further demonstrating the role technology can play in enabling access to healthcare.

Based on the foundations laid down in the form of Jan Dhan, Aadhaar and Mobile (JAM) trinity and other digital initiatives of the government, Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM) is creating an online platform through the provision of a wide-range of data, information and infrastructure services, duly leveraging open, interoperable, standard-based digital systems, while ensuring the security, confidentiality and privacy of health-related personal information.

Under the ABDM, citizens will be able to create their Ayushman Bharat Health Account numbers, to which their digital health records can be linked. The mission is expected to improve equitable access to quality healthcare by encouraging use of technologies such as telemedicine and enabling national portability of health services.

The pilot of ABDM was completed in the six Union Territories of Ladakh, Chandigarh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Puducherry, Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep with the technology platform developed by the NHA. During the pilot, digital sandbox was created in which more than 774 partner solutions are undergoing integration.

A total 17,33,69,087 Ayushman Bharat Health Accounts have been created and 10,114 doctors and 17,319 health facilities have been registered in ABDM as on February 24.

## **Covid vax effectiveness**

### **Covid vax effectiveness declines after 6 months without boosters: Study (The Tribune:20220228)**

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/health/covid-vax-effectiveness-declines-after-6-months-without-boosters-study-373293>

Covid vax effectiveness declines after 6 months without boosters: Study  
Photo for representation only.

The effectiveness of the Covid-19 vaccine may substantially decline after six months if booster shots are not taken, according to a new study published in The Lancet Respiratory Medicine.

The study indicated that vaccines were 94 per cent effective at preventing hospitalisation 50-100 days after receiving the shot but fell to 80.4 per cent 200-250 days later, with even more rapid declines after 250 days.

"This data helps us understand differences in waning protection by vaccine type and identify the key risk factors for severe breakthrough infections to help inform the targeting of potential vaccine booster programmes," said Amy Compton-Phillips, Providence chief clinical officer.

"Unlike most other studies, our data stretched beyond six months, where we found evidence of rapidly waning protection, especially for patients 80 or older," Compton-Phillips added.

In addition to examining the effectiveness of vaccines over time, the Providence study was also able to identify factors associated with reduced vaccine effectiveness.

Key risk factors for a severe "breakthrough" infection included advanced age (80+), comorbidities such as cancer, transplants, chronic kidney disease, hypertension, or heart

failure, the amount of time that had elapsed since being vaccinated, and the type of vaccine one received.

For the latter factor, the study found that the Moderna vaccine offered the best overall protection over time, while the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine offered initial protection equivalent to Moderna's but declined more rapidly over time.

Persons receiving the Janssen vaccine also had higher odds of experiencing a severe breakthrough infection compared to Moderna.

For the study, the research team examined data from nearly 50,000 hospital admissions between April and November of 2021.

### **India records 11,499 fresh Covid cases, 255 more deaths The country records its daily Covid cases under one lakh for the 20th consecutive day (The Tribune:20220228)**

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/nation/india-records-11-499-fresh-covid-cases-255-more-deaths-373271>

With 11,499 people testing positive for coronavirus infection in a day, India's total tally of Covid cases rose to 4,29,05,844, while the active cases further declined to 1,21,881, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Saturday.

The death toll climbed to 5,13,481 with 255 daily fatalities, the data updated at 8 am stated.

With this, the country recorded its daily Covid cases under one lakh for the 20th consecutive day.

The active cases comprised 0.28 per cent of the total infections, while the national Covid recovery rate had further improved to 98.52 per cent, the health ministry said.

A reduction of 12,354 cases has been recorded in the active Covid caseload in a span of 24 hours.

The daily positivity rate was recorded at 1.01 per cent, while the weekly positivity rate was 1.36 per cent, according to the health ministry.

The number of recoveries surged to 4,22,70,482, while the case fatality rate was recorded at 1.2 per cent.

The cumulative doses administered in the country so far under the nationwide Covid vaccination drive exceeded 177.13 crore.

The 255 new fatalities include 177 from Kerala and 15 from Karnataka.

A total of 5,13,481 deaths have been reported so far in the country, including 1,43,687 from Maharashtra, 64,980 from Kerala, 39,900 from Karnataka, 38,000 from Tamil Nadu, 26,117 from Delhi, 23,447 from Uttar Pradesh and 21,169 from West Bengal.

## Healthy eating

**Healthy eating: What Ayurveda says about consuming bathua or goosefoot**  
**Bathua, also known as chenopodium album, lamb's quarters, melde, goosefoot and fat-hen, is a powerhouse of Ayurvedic health benefits (The Tribune:20220228)**

<https://indianexpress.com/article/lifestyle/food-wine/did-you-know-about-bathua-or-goosefoot-here-are-a-few-ayurvedic-benefits-7770887/>

Leafy vegetable - White goose foot. Scientific name - Chenopodium album. It is extensively cultivated and consumed in North and Northeast India as a food crop known as bathua. It grows during winter. Bathua or goosefoot is popular as a saag in North India. (Representative image/Getty/Thinkstock)

Winters are synonymous with festivities and merrymaking and no occasion is complete without a plethora of delicious, seasonal food. Keep in mind that your tastebuds need a respite from indulgence. Consider eating winter greens like spinach, mustard greens, radish greens etc., to get the most out of this season.

[Most nutritious vegetables to be included in your diet

Ayurvedic expert Dr Nitika Kohli took to Instagram to share the benefits of a popular winter green. Bathua, also known as chenopodium album, lamb's quarters, melde, goosefoot and fat-hen, is a powerhouse of Ayurvedic health benefits.

Take a look at the post here:

“Bathua, also known as pigweed, is a very nutritious winter vegetable that has multiple health benefits. Methi, palak, sarson ka saag and bathua flood the vegetable market and help you make your meal plates more green. Out of these, one can't deny that bathua is lesser-known and often ignored in spite of it being super nutritious [sic],” the Ayurvedic expert captioned the post.

While bathua is extensively cultivated and consumed in Northern India as a food crop, it grows as a weed as well. Inexpensive and rich in micronutrients such as “iron, calcium, potassium, magnesium and Vitamins A, C and B6, Bathua is an incredibly nutritious winter food.”

Bathua also works as a ‘rakta shodhak’ or blood purifier and ‘yakrit utejak’ or liver activator, according to Dr Kohli. It helps to curb “winter toxins” as well.

According to her, bathua is best consumed in the “form of raita, parantha, sabzi or even raw.”  
“Ayurveda also recommends it’s topical application at the site of pain.”

In Ayurveda, bathua is considered “sattvic aahar“, which means “it’s one of the most nutritious and essential food.”

ALSO READ |Winter special: Consume these five foods to keep yourself warm and healthy  
“It contains great shotha har (anti inflammatory) and vedana shamak (pain relieving properties), considered best of seasonal joint pain.”

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## Healthy lifestyle habits

### Healthy lifestyle habits that can help avoid obstructive sleep apnea (The Indian Express:20220228)

OSA can take a toll on the body and lead to a number of negative physical, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral effects, said Dr HP Bharathi

<https://indianexpress.com/article/lifestyle/health/healthy-lifestyle-habits-avoid-obstructive-sleep-apnea-7786051/>

OBA Know why obstructive sleep apnea occurs (Source: Pexels)

Obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) is a common sleep-related breathing disorder that causes people to repeatedly start and stop breathing.

It occurs when the throat muscles intermittently relax and block the airway during sleep. A noticeable sign of obstructive sleep apnea is snoring.

Can it be lethal?

“Obstructive sleep apnea is closely linked to different life-threatening conditions. It may cause or worsen chronic illnesses such as high blood pressure. OSA can also lead to sudden cardiac death.

Even though a person with sleep apnea does not necessarily pass away while sleeping, the risk of death significantly increases if the condition is left untreated.

Also Read |Sleep apnea among kids: Things to know

People who accumulate fat in the neck, tongue and upper belly are especially vulnerable to getting sleep apnea.

This weight reduces the diameter of the throat and pushes against the lungs, contributing to airway collapse during sleep,” said Dr HP Bharathi, Deputy Chief Medical Officer, Jindal Naturecure Institute.

### Precautions and treatment

In some cases, sleep apnea can be managed with lifestyle changes.

**Exercise and good diet:** It is important to fill the plate with heart-healthy options like vegetables, fruits, and whole grains and get plenty of exercise.

Sleep apnea can be managed with lifestyle changes. (Source: Getty Images/Thinkstock)  
Adopting these healthy habits can help people maintain a healthy weight, which is important because obesity can increase the risk for sleep apnea.

**Avoid smoking and alcohol:** Smoking and alcohol may increase upper airway inflammation and reduce function.

**Don't sleep on the back:** Sleeping on the back can increase the likelihood that the tongue and soft palate will fall back into the airway, causing airway obstruction, snoring, and sleep apnea.

Also Read |How to make your diet more sustainable, healthy or cheap — without giving up nutrients

**Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP):** A CPAP machine happens to be the most common treatment, which is a device that can be used at home.

It gently forces pressurised air through a mask worn over the nose and mouth (or just the nose) into your airway to keep it open while a person sleeps at night. If breathing machines don't work, a doctor may suggest an oral device as well.

Is it neglected and overlooked?

As the primary symptoms of sleep apnea — the pauses in breathing and the gasping and snoring that can accompany them — occur during sleep, many people with sleep apnea may not even realize it's happening.

OSA can take a toll on the body and lead to a number of negative physical, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral effects. (Source: Getty Images/Thinkstock)

It's a big public challenge. OSA can take a toll on the body and lead to a number of negative physical, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral effects.

Because sleep apnea prevents people from having normal, restorative sleep, it can lead to problems, such as:

Daytime sleepiness and fatigue

Attention problems

Inability to concentrate

Problems with memory

Irritability

Depression

Such complaints are ignored assuming it to be a manifestation of improper sleep hygiene rather than the real culprit being OSA.

Also Read |Five things that can ensure a good night's sleep  
Healthy lifestyle to be adopted to avoid OSA

Lose weight

Obesity is a major risk factor for sleep apnea. A person can lower the number of apnea episodes they have each night by maintaining a healthy weight.

Stop consuming alcohol and sedative medicines

Alcohol and sedative medicines are nervous system depressants. They cause problems with how the brain works. They also increase the frequency and number of sleep apnea episodes that occur each night.