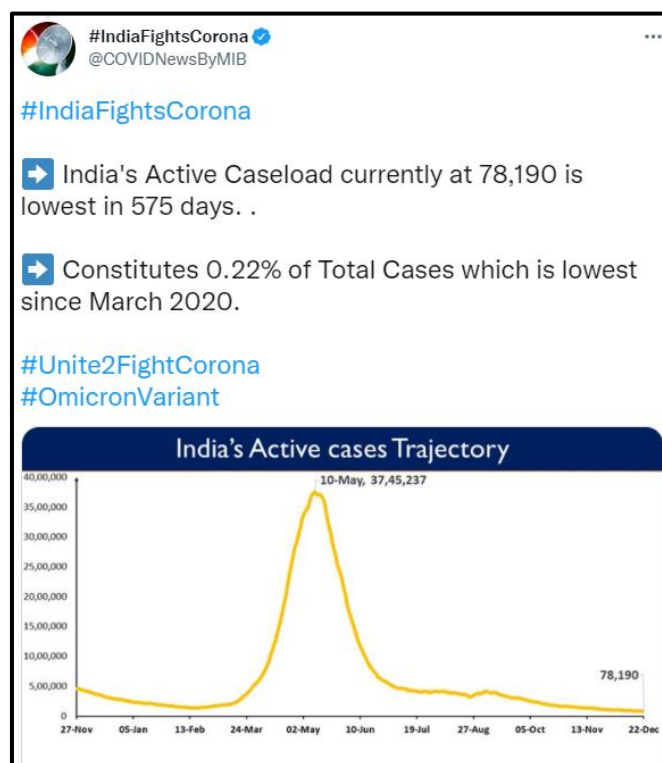


## Effective Response in the face of a Pandemic: Measures Adopted by the Government of India to Combat COVID-19

(Ministry of Health and Family Welfare)

December 24, 2021

The Government of India has consistently been taking proactive steps to respond to the COVID pandemic, and has been bolstering the preparedness of the health system to respond to all aspects of COVID-19 management. India managed to maintain lowest positivity and mortality rates coupled with one of the highest recovery rates globally during the pandemic. The country's public health efforts were strongly supported by its research and development capacity in developing vaccines against COVID-19. The planning of the vaccination drive started well in advance based on scientific evidence and global best practices.



The Government has taken a multi-pronged approach to tackle the onslaught of COVID-19 which resulted in stemming the onslaught of the pandemic in the country. A holistic range of measures have been adopted to counter the challenges posed by the pandemic, encompassing all sections of the population and all possible requirements of the health sector.

- i. The emergence of COVID-19 in the country in early 2020 called **for immediate action**. The Government adopted a pre-emptive, pro-active, whole-of-

government, whole-of-society approach, built around a comprehensive strategy to prevent infections, save lives and minimize impact.

- ii. Focus was given on strengthening medical and healthcare **infrastructure**. Efforts were made to strengthen the core capacities in terms of laboratory, hospital infrastructure, R & D on diagnostics etc., along with the development of indigenous capacities in terms of essential logistics including personal protective equipment, diagnostics, ventilators and oxygen generation plants, among others.
- iii. Measures were taken to keep the **citizens** at the centre of the Government's efforts, ranging from prevention, diagnosis and treatment of COVID-19 to awareness on Covid-Appropriate Behaviour.
- iv. The Government extended logistic and financial **support to the States** in order to enable them to effectively combat the COVID-19 pandemic.
- v. India launched the **world's largest vaccination programme** covering the entire length and breadth of the country.<sup>1</sup>



- vi. Steps taken by the Government to enhance the **manufacturing of Covid-19 Vaccines** in the country.
- vii. Several measures were also adopted to enable **training and capacity building for healthcare professionals** in the face of the pandemic.

## 1. Immediate Response to COVID-19

- The Government of India constituted [11 Empowered Groups](#) on 29 March, 2020 on different aspects of COVID-19 management in the country to take informed decisions on issues such as (i) medical emergency planning, (ii) availability of hospitals,

<sup>1</sup> <https://pib.gov.in/Pressreleaseshare.aspx?PRID=1689021>

isolation and quarantine facility, disease surveillance and testing, (iii) ensuring availability of essential medical equipment, (iv) augmenting human resource and capacity building, (v) supply chain and logistics management, (vi) coordination with private sector, (vii) economic and welfare measures, (viii) information, communications and public awareness, (ix) technology and data management, (x) public grievance and (xi) strategic issues related to lockdown.<sup>2</sup>

- The Government of India, based on its experience of successfully managing pandemics and epidemics in the past, provided the requisite strategy, plans and procedures to the State Governments and UT administrations. This included [containment plans and guidelines](#) on a wide range of subjects related to travel, behavioural & psycho-social health, surveillance, laboratory support, hospital infrastructure, clinical management, rational use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) etc., including inspirational guidance for healthcare personnel.<sup>3</sup>

Ministry of Health & Family Welfare  
Government of India

Help us to help you

## NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

### COVID-19 testing - when and how?

**All individuals need not be tested, because**  
Disease is primarily reported in Individuals with travel history to the affected countries or close contacts of positive cases

### WHOM TO TEST

**ALL symptomatic people who**

- Have history of international travel in last 14 days
- Had come in contact of confirmed cases
- Are healthcare workers
- Are hospitalized patients with Severe Acute Respiratory Illness (SARI) or Influenza Like Illness (ILI) or severe pneumonia.

**Asymptomatic direct and high-risk contacts of confirmed cases should be tested once between day 5 and day 14 of coming in his/her contact. Direct and high-risk contact include:**

- Those living in same household with a confirmed case
- Healthcare workers who examined a confirmed case without adequate protection as per WHO recommendations

List of labs (Govt. & Private) can be accessed at: [icmr.nic.in](http://icmr.nic.in)

**For further information:**  
Call the State helpline numbers or Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India's 24x7 helpline numbers

**1075 (Toll Free) | 011-23978046**  
Email to: [ncov2019@gov.in](mailto:ncov2019@gov.in), [ncov2019@gmail.com](mailto:ncov2019@gmail.com)

- The Government of India also undertook several other measures to contain/suppress the transmission of COVID. As the situation evolved, the travel advisories were revised in a graded manner. Universal screening was made mandatory for all international passengers arriving in India (till suspension of flights). 14 days of quarantine was made mandatory for people arriving from initially Covid-affected countries.

<sup>2</sup> <http://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1684546>

<sup>3</sup> <http://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1684546>

The Ministry of Health & Family Welfare released [containment plans](#) to contain cluster and large outbreaks, and these plans were updated from time to time. The containment plans envisaged a strategy of breaking the chain of transmission by (i) defining containment and buffer zones, (ii) applying strict perimeter control, (iii) intensive active house to house search for cases and contacts, (iv) isolation and testing of suspect cases and high risk contacts, (v) quarantine of high risk contacts, (vi) intensive risk communication to raise community awareness on simple preventive measures and need for prompt treatment seeking and (vii) strengthening of passive Influenza Like Illness (ILI)/ Severe Acute Respiratory Illness (SARI) surveillance in containment and buffer zones.<sup>4</sup>



- A [three-tier arrangement of health facilities was](#) created for appropriate management of COVID-19 cases, [(i) COVID Care Center with isolation beds for mild or pre-symptomatic cases; (ii) Dedicated COVID Health Centre (DCHC) with oxygen supported isolation beds for moderate cases and (iii) Dedicated COVID Hospital (DCH) with ICU beds for severe cases].
- Guidelines on [Clinical management of COVID-19](#) were issued, regularly updated and widely circulated. These included case definition, prevention of infection control, laboratory diagnosis, early supporting therapy, management of severe cases and complications. In addition, provisions for investigational therapies were also made for using Remdesivir, Convalescent plasma and Tocilizumab for managing severe cases under close medical supervision.<sup>5</sup>
- Location-enabled app [Aarogya Setu](#) was launched to help with monitoring of Covid-19 cases, and contact tracing of people who had tested positive or had been in contact with a Covid-19 positive individual. Individuals were advised to update his/her health status in terms of Covid-19 to make sure he/she was not infected.
- A clinical [Center of Excellence \(CoE\)](#) initiative was also launched by the Ministry with All India Institute of Medical Science (AIIMS), New Delhi as apex nodal institution and State level CoEs to provide guidance on clinical management protocols.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> <http://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1684546>

<sup>5</sup> <http://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1684546>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1684546>



- Various measures were taken by the Central Ministries along with States/UTs in terms of strengthened community surveillance, quarantine facilities, isolation wards, adequate PPEs, trained manpower, rapid response teams for management of COVID-19.

## 2. Bolstering Infrastructure

### 2.1 [Availability of Ventilators across the country](#)<sup>7</sup>

In order to ensure availability of Ventilators across the country for management of COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare ordered procurement of Ventilators centrally for supplying to the States/UTs based on the demand received from the States/UTs.

The States have been provided with extensive training on operation of these ventilators and more than 19,000 doctors and para-medical workers have been trained on them. States have been advised to ensure that the ventilators are kept fully functional at all times. They have also been advised to ensure maintenance and up-keep of ventilators, preparedness of hospital infrastructure including optimum oxygen pressure in medical Gas pipeline Systems and sufficient availability of consumables for ventilators and operation of these ventilators by trained manpower.

To see the details of Ventilators provided to States/UTs/Central Institutions based on demand projected by States/UTs [click here](#).<sup>8</sup>

### 2.2 [Sanction of PSA Oxygen Generation Plants](#)<sup>9</sup>

- The Government has sanctioned 1563 Pressure Swing Adsorption (PSA) oxygen generation plants of which 1463 have been commissioned. These include 1225 PSA plants which have been installed and commissioned under [PM-CARES Fund](#) in every district of the country. Additionally, 338 PSA Plants are set up by Public Sector Utilities of the [Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas](#), [Ministry of Power](#), [Ministry of Coal](#), [Ministry of Railways](#) etc. till date. To see the details of PSA oxygen generation plants [click here](#).<sup>10</sup>
- Based on the above, these plants can support more than 1,00,000 beds/day<sup>11</sup>.

**PM CARES**  
to Provide PSA Oxygen  
Plants in All States & Districts

myGov  
मेरी सरकार

Installation of PSA Oxygen Plants under PM CARES  
9 July, 2021

- PM Modi reviews Oxygen supply across the country
- More than 1,500 PSA Oxygen Plants are coming up across the nation
- PM asked officials to ensure adequate training of hospital staff on operation and maintenance of Oxygen Plants
- We should deploy advanced technology like IoT to track performance & functioning of Oxygen Plants: PM

2

<sup>7</sup><https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1781271>

<sup>8</sup><https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1781271>

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<sup>10</sup><https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1780145>

<sup>11</sup><https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1780145>

- As on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2021, a total of 3236 PSA plants have been installed in the country from various sources with a total commissioned oxygen capacity of 3783 MT. Moreover, 1,14,000 Oxygen Concentrators are being provided to States under PM CARES (1 lakh) and ECRP-II (14,000).<sup>12</sup>

## 2.3 Testing Labs

The number of testing labs for detection of Covid-19 has been increased to 3062 labs as on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2021.<sup>13</sup>

## 2.4. Role of PM-Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PM-ABHIM) to control COVID-19<sup>14</sup>

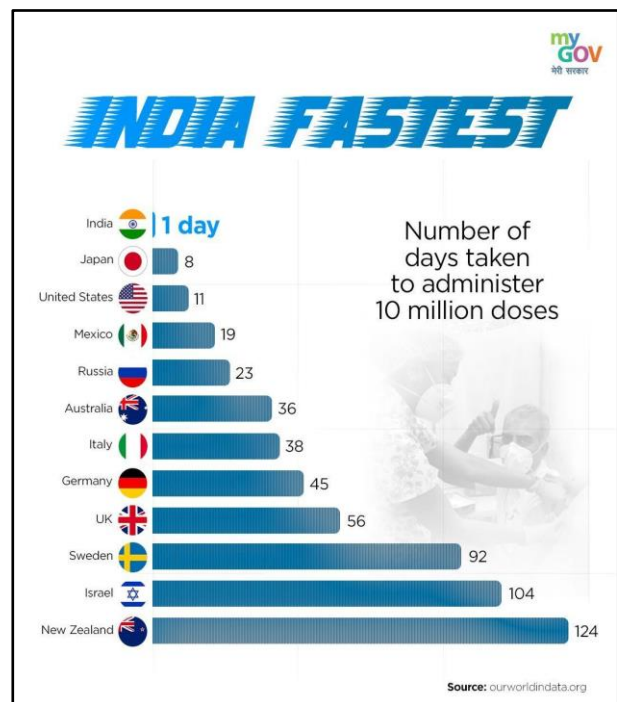
Under PM-Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PM-ABHIM), the setting up of integrated public health laboratories in all districts and strengthening block public health units in 11 high focus states has been provisioned.

Under PM-ABHIM, an outlay of Rs.1347.00 crore has been approved for Department of Health Research/Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) towards Bio-security preparedness and Strengthening Pandemic Research and Multi - Sector National Institutions and Platform for the period 2021-22 to 2025-26.<sup>15</sup>

## 3. Citizen-Centric Measures

### 3.1 Ensuring access to Testing, Treatment and Vaccines<sup>16</sup>

- The Union Government started the National COVID-19 Vaccination Programme on 16 January, 2021. The COVID-19 vaccine is available free of cost for all citizens aged 18 years and above irrespective of their socio-economic status at all Government COVID-19 Vaccination Centres (CVCs). India became the fastest country to administer 10 million doses of COVID vaccine in a day.
- The Government of India has also significantly increased the testing capacity for Covid-19 related tests. As on 14 December 2021, more than 3000 operational laboratories are conducting COVID tests and reporting to Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) on RT-PCR, TruNat, CBNAAT and Other



<sup>12</sup><https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1781722>

<sup>13</sup><https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1778832>

<sup>14</sup><https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1783810>

<sup>15</sup><https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1777641>

<sup>16</sup><https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1783810>

### **3.2 COVID-19 treatment under Ayushman Bharat - Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana**<sup>18</sup>

Treatment of COVID-19 is included under Ayushman Bharat –Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY)<sup>19</sup>.

<b>Sl. No.</b>	<b>Package Name</b>	<b>Procedure Name</b>
1	Laboratory Tests for COVID-19 Infection (PCR) (Reimbursement level for this package will be as per the ICMR guidelines, issued from time to time)	Laboratory Tests for COVID-19 Infection (PCR) (Reimbursement level for this package will be as per the ICMR guidelines, issued from time to time)
2	Laboratory Tests for COVID-19 Infection (PCR) (Reimbursement level for this package will be as per the ICMR guidelines, issued from time to time)	Laboratory Tests for COVID-19 Infection (PCR) (Reimbursement level for this package will be as per the ICMR guidelines, issued from time to time)
3	Treatment of COVID-19 Infection	Treatment of COVID-19 Infection

As on 15 November 2021, with respect to transactions recorded on National Health Authority (NHA) IT platform as well as the information shared by the States/UTs using their own IT systems, approximately 8.30 Lakh hospital admissions have been authorized for the treatment of COVID-19<sup>20</sup>. Out of these 8.30 Lakh hospital admissions, approximately 4.70 Lakh have been authorized in empanelled private hospitals under Ayushman Bharat - Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY).

10.74 crore poor and vulnerable families identified on the basis of SECC 2011 data are entitled to receive free treatment under AB-PMJAY.<sup>21</sup> However, treatment is free for all in public hospitals.

## **4. Interventions by the Government to Support States and Union Territories**<sup>22</sup>

### **4.1 Technical Guidance**

- The Ministry of Health & Family Welfare continues to provide technical guidance for managing various aspects of COVID-19. So far more than 150 guidelines/advisories/SoPs/plans have been provided to States/UTs.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>17</sup> <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1783810>

<sup>18</sup> <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1776527>

<sup>19</sup> <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1778839>

<sup>20</sup> <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1776543>

<sup>21</sup> <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1776543>

<sup>22</sup> <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1782603>

- Guidelines on Clinical management of COVID-19 continue to be updated with emerging scientific evidence. The treatment protocol for adults was last updated on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2021 and has been widely circulated.<sup>24</sup>
- Guidelines for management of COVID-19 in children were issued on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2021. The guideline covers guidance on management of acute presentation of COVID-19 as well as Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C) and adolescents found temporally related to COVID-19.<sup>25</sup>
- Comprehensive Guidelines for Management of Post-COVID Sequel were issued by MoHFW on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2021 after expert consultations to guide doctors on post-COVID-19 complications and their management.<sup>26</sup>
- Travel advisories for international travelers have been revised from time to time based on the epidemiological situation of COVID-19 including circulation of Variants of Concern (including Omicron) of SARS-CoV-2. In view of declaration of Omicron variant as a Variant of Concern by the World Health Organization, guidelines for international arrivals were updated on 28 November 2021.



- Union Ministry of Health & Family Welfare has advised all States to (i) ensure rigorous follow up and testing of travelers from ‘At Risk’ countries, (ii) send positive samples for genome sequencing to INSACOG labs in a prompt manner, (iii) ramp up

<sup>23</sup><https://www.mohfw.gov.in/>

<sup>24</sup><https://www.mohfw.gov.in/pdf/UpdatedDetailedClinicalManagementProtocolforCOVID19adultsdated24052021.pdf>

<sup>25</sup><https://www.mohfw.gov.in/pdf/GuidelinesforManagementofCOVID19inCHILDREN18June2021final.pdf>

<sup>26</sup><https://www.mohfw.gov.in/pdf/NationalComprehensiveGuidelinesforManagementofPostCovidSequelae.pdf>



testing for COVID-19, (iv) ensure preparedness of health infrastructure (availability of ICU, Oxygen beds, ventilators, etc.), (v) ramp up COVID-19 vaccination rates and (vi) ensure adherence to COVID appropriate behavior etc.

- Guidelines and checklists on prevention and clinical management of Mucormycosis disseminated to all States/UTs.

#### 4.2 Logistic Support

- To further provide on-field assistance to the States/UTs, a total of 172 Central multi-disciplinary teams comprising of epidemiologists, clinicians, microbiologists and senior officials from the Ministry have been deployed to States/Districts reporting increased trajectory of cases.
- States are supported in terms of supply of logistics which includes PPE Kits, N-95 masks, ventilators and drugs like Hydroxychloroquine, Remdesivir etc.
- States have been supported with supply of oxygen cylinders and oxygen concentrators. States are also being supported in terms of installation of Oxygen concentrator plants/ PSA plants. States have also been advised to undertake oxygen consumption audits in hospitals including private hospitals and to undertake facility-wise/hospital-wise oxygen inventory mapping and advance planning for timely replenishment so that there is no stock out.
- National Health Authority (NHA) has been providing necessary support to States/UTs for ensuring free COVID-19 testing and treatment to all eligible beneficiaries under AB-PMJAY.

#### 4.3 Financial Assistance to States

- During the F.Y. 2019-20. funds to the tune of Rs.1113.21 crore was released to the States/UTs under [National Health Mission \(NHM\)](#) towards management and containment of COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>27</sup>
- Since September 2020, the Union Government has allowed use of State Disaster Response Funds (SDRF) for various COVID-19 related activities.
- In terms of financial assistance, support has been provided to States under ECRP packages in FY 2020-21 and 2021-22. To see the State/UT wise funds released towards the ECRP during F.Y. 2020-21 and 2021-22 [click here](#).<sup>28</sup>
- The 'India COVID-19 Emergency Response and Health System Preparedness Package-I' (ECRP-I) of Rs.15,000 crore was approved with an objective to prevent, detect and respond to the threat posed by COVID-19.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup><https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1778832>

<sup>28</sup><https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1780144>

<sup>29</sup><https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1782603>

- The 'India COVID-19 Emergency Response & Health System Preparedness Package: Phase-II' has also been approved by the Cabinet with Rs 23,123 crores (with Rs. 15,000 Crore as Central Component and Rs 8,123 Cr as State component) and is being implemented from 1 July 2021. This includes support to State/UT level for ramping up health infrastructure including those in rural, tribal and peri-urban areas closer to the community, providing support for procurement of drugs and diagnostics to enhance service delivery at district and sub district levels for management of COVID-19 cases (including pediatric care) and for maintaining a buffer of drugs, support for IT Interventions such as implementation of Hospital Management Information System (HMIS) and expanding access to tele-consultations in all districts, and support for capacity building and training for all aspects of management of COVID-19.<sup>30</sup>
- In order to ensure implementation of critical activities at the State/District levels to prepare the public healthcare system in response to the evolving pandemic, 50 per cent of Central Share of Resource Envelope of the State/UT, has been released in advance to the States/UTs.<sup>31</sup>

To see State/UT wise Central Allocation, Central Releases and Expenditure under [National Rural Health Mission \(NRHM\)](#) from the FY 2019-20 to 2021-22, [click here](#).<sup>32</sup>

To see State/UT wise Central Allocation, Central Releases and Expenditure under [National Urban Health Mission \(NUHM\)](#) from the FY 2019-20 to 2021-22, [click here](#).<sup>33</sup>

## 5. Vaccination

### 5.1 World's Largest COVID-19 Vaccination Drive

On 16<sup>th</sup> January, 2021, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched India's vaccination programme, which is the largest COVID-19 vaccination drive in the world.<sup>34</sup>

There is provision to facilitate vaccination of persons without prescribed identity cards such as migrants, seers, nomads, refugees, destitute, homeless people, beggars etc. through special sessions where 100% vaccination is done through on-site registration by the vaccinator under a prescribed procedure.<sup>35</sup>

The Government of India has issued advisory to all States/UTs for Near-to-Home COVID-19 Vaccination Centre (NHCVC) for elderly and differently-abled citizens and for vaccination at the place of residence of persons who might be bed-ridden or have extremely



<sup>30</sup> <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1778832>

<sup>31</sup> <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1782603>

<sup>32</sup> <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1782603>

<sup>33</sup> Ibid

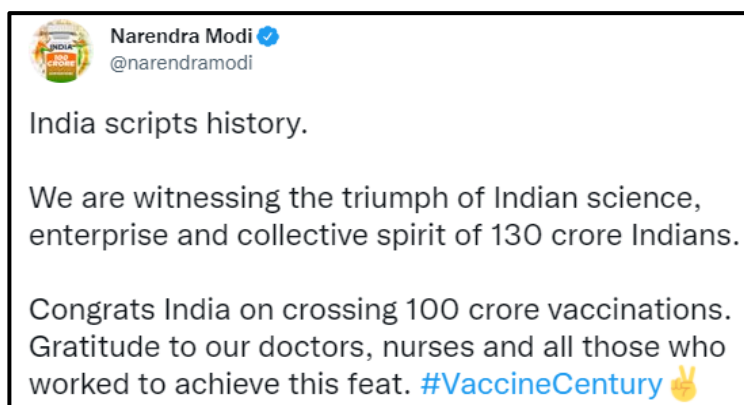
<sup>34</sup> <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1689112>

<sup>35</sup> <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1783810>

restricted mobility or disability and/or special needs that may hamper their accessibility even to NHCVCs.

## 5.2 COVID-19 Vaccination Coverage<sup>36</sup>

As on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2021, India's COVID-19 vaccination coverage has reached nearly 140 Crore. Of these, 83.12 crore beneficiaries (nearly 88 %) aged 18 years and above have received at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine and 56.49 crore (nearly 60 %) have received both the doses. India crossed the 100 crore vaccination milestone on 21<sup>st</sup> October, 2021.



To see State/Union Territory-wise details of vaccination coverage, [click here](#).<sup>37</sup>

## 5.3 “Har Ghar Dastak” campaign<sup>38</sup>

- The COVID-19 vaccination campaign ‘Har Ghar Dastak’, launched on 3 November 2021, aims at awareness, mobilization and vaccination of all eligible beneficiaries with 1<sup>st</sup> dose and all due beneficiaries with 2<sup>nd</sup> dose of COVID-19 vaccines through House-to-House visits in all States/UTs.
- The ‘Har GharDastak’ nation-wide COVID-19 vaccination campaign has resulted in a hike of 5.9 per cent in the 1st dose coverage (till 30 Nov), and an appreciable jump of 11.7 per cent in 2nd dose COVID-19 vaccination coverage during the campaign.<sup>39</sup>



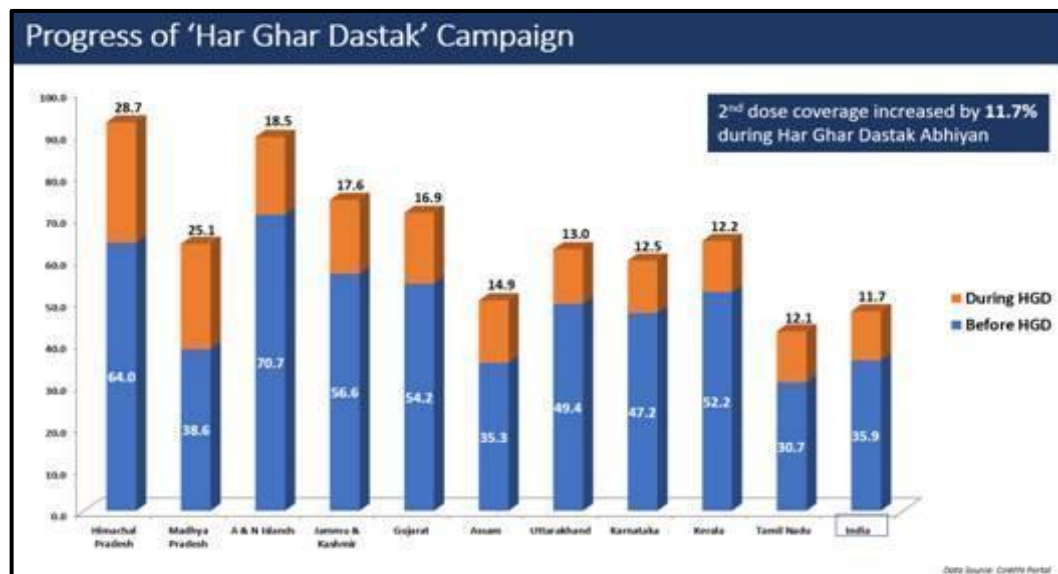
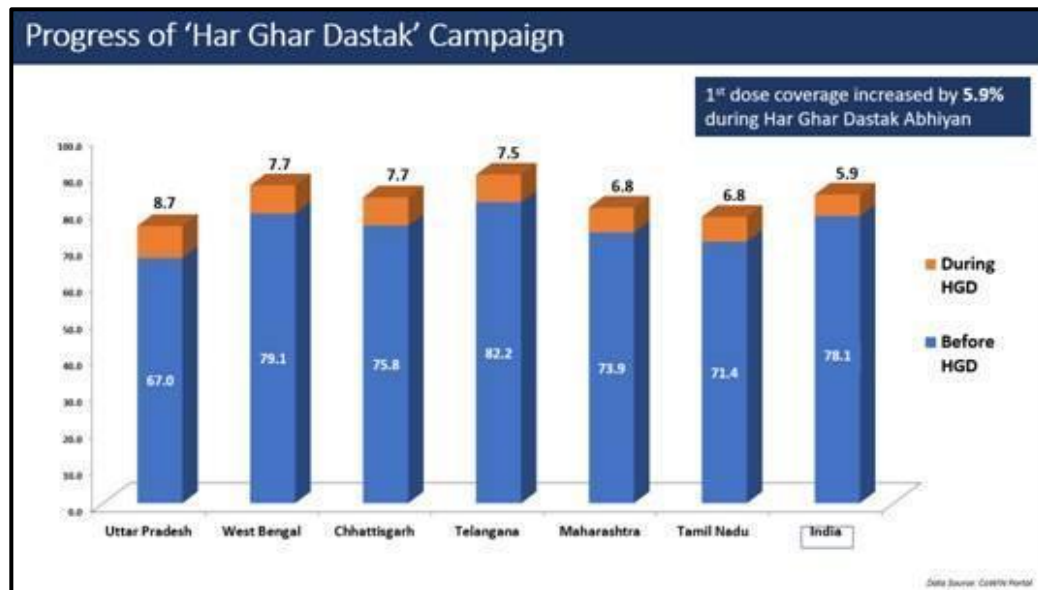
<sup>36</sup><https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1780150>

<sup>37</sup>Ibid

<sup>38</sup><https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1777164>

<sup>39</sup>Ibid

- The graphs below show the progress of 'Har Ghar Dastak' Campaign for first and second dose of COVID-19 Vaccine.<sup>40</sup>



#### 5.4 Vaccination Programme for Children and Under-18 Population<sup>41</sup>

National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration for COVID (NEGVAC) and National Technical Advisory Group on Immunization (NTAGI) are deliberating and considering scientific evidence related to vaccination of beneficiaries aged less than 18 years.

- ZyCoV-D vaccine manufactured by M/s Cadila Healthcare has received the approval for Restricted Use in Emergency Setting by the National Regulator i.e. Drug

<sup>40</sup> <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1777164>

<sup>41</sup> <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1778842>



Controller General of India (DCGI) for the age group of 12 years and above based on the interim clinical data of Phase II and Phase III clinical trials conducted in the country.

The following COVID-19 vaccines are under clinical trials in the country for age-group of less than 18 years:

- M/s Bharat Biotech is conducting Phase II/III clinical trial of COVAXIN on Healthy Volunteers aged between 02 to 18 years & the firm has submitted interim safety and immunogenicity data to the National Regulator.
- M/s Serum institute of India is conducting Phase II/III clinical trial of Nanoparticle Vaccine (Liquid) (COVOVAX) in 920 subjects of 02-17 years age group.
- M/s [Biological E Ltd.](#) is conducting Phase II/III clinical trial of RBD of SARS-CoV-2 gene in 624 subjects of 05-18 years age group.
- M/s [Johnson & Johnson Pvt. Ltd.](#) is conducting Phase II/III clinical trial of Ad.26COV.2S vaccine in age group of 12-17 years (Global Clinical trial wherein India is one of the clinical trial sites).
- The approval of aforementioned COVID-19 vaccines is dependent on the successful completion of clinical trials and submission of requisite data to the National Regulator i.e., Drug Controller General of India as per the requirements of New Drugs and Clinical Trials Rules, 2019 under Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940.

## 6. [COVID-19 Vaccine Manufacturing Capacity](#)<sup>42</sup>

ChAdOx1 nCoV- 19 Coronavirus Vaccine (Recombinant) (COVISHIELD) is manufactured by M/s [Serum Institute of India Pvt., Ltd.](#), Pune, while the Whole Virion Inactivated Coronavirus Vaccine (COVAXIN) is manufactured by M/s [Bharat Biotech International Limited](#), Hyderabad.

- As communicated by the M/s Serum Institute of India, the current monthly vaccine production capacity of Covishield is approx. 250-275 Million doses per month.
- Further, as communicated by M/s Bharat Biotech International Limited, Hyderabad, the current monthly vaccine production capacity of Covaxin is approx. 50-60 Million doses per month.

Both companies have achieved close to 90 per cent of present production capacity.

Moreover, as per the provisions of New Drugs and Clinical Trials Rules, 2019 under Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 and in light of urgent need due to COVID pandemic in the country, [Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation \(CDSCO\)](#) has granted permissions to [certain other](#) COVID-19 vaccines other than COVAXIN & COVISHIELD for prevention of COVID-19 for restricted use in emergency situation.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup><https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1781267>

<sup>43</sup><https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1781267>

## 7. Training of Healthcare Professionals<sup>44</sup>

The Government has taken several measures to enable training and capacity building in COVID-19. Training, including virtual training, has been provided to doctors, nurses and allied healthcare professionals and volunteers regarding the relevant aspects of COVID-19. The Government of India has utilized the iGOT (Integrated Government Online Training) platform to train various personnel.

- Since the beginning of COVID-19, close to 14 lakh unique users across the country have registered on this platform, recording enrollment of 29.29 lakh for different courses.<sup>45</sup>
- Additionally, more than 80 lakh health workforces have been trained in COVID related topics through the State Governments. Webinars and tutorials on various COVID related subjects were also uploaded by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and reputed institutes like [AIIMS \(New Delhi\)](#), [NIMHANS](#), PGIMER, [JIPMER](#), etc. that recorded a viewership of 2.23 crore.<sup>46</sup>

As informed by [National Medical Commission \(NMC\)](#), a competency-based module was introduced by the erstwhile Board of Governors, Medical Council of India (BoG-MCI) on management of pandemics in the MBBS curriculum in August, 2020.

## 8. COVID 19-Omicron Variant<sup>47</sup>

Omicron is a new variant of SARS-CoV-2 that has recently been reported from South Africa on 24 November 2021, called B.1.1.529 or Omicron. This variant has shown a very large number of mutations, especially more than 30 on the viral spike protein, which is the key target of the immune response.

In view of new COVID-19 Variant (OMICRON) being classified as Variant of Concern (VoC) by the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#), the Government [issued guidelines](#) to the State, laying emphasis on the **Test-Track-Treat-Vaccinate strategy**.<sup>48</sup>

The following [five-fold strategy](#) for tackling the recent ‘Omicron’ threat has been re-emphasised:<sup>49</sup>

### (1) Containment

States have been advised to:

- Impose night curfews and ensure strict regulation of large gatherings, especially ahead of the forthcoming festivities.

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<sup>44</sup> <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1778830>

<sup>45</sup> Ibid

<sup>46</sup> Ibid

<sup>47</sup> <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1777594>

<sup>48</sup>

<sup>49</sup> <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1784559>

- Promptly notify “Containment Zones”, “Buffer Zones” in case in new clusters of Covid positive cases.
- Ensure strict perimeter control of Containment Zone as per extant guidelines.
- Send all cluster samples to INSACOG Labs for Genome Sequencing without delay.

## **(2) Testing and Surveillance**

States are to keep a close and strict watch on number of Delta and Omicron cases in all districts; case positivity on a day-on-day and week-on-week basis; the doubling rate; and new emerging clusters and initiate containment in these areas.

In addition, States have been advised to do the following:

- Conduct tests as per extant ICMR and MoHFW guidelines
- Ensure door-to-door case search in the containment areas
- Test all SARI/ILI and vulnerable/co-morbid people
- Ensure right proportion of RT-PCR: RAT (at least 60:40) tests in total tests being conducted daily. This can be ramped up to 70:30 ratio.
- Ensure contact tracing of all COVID positive persons & their timely testing, especially in clusters reporting high numbers
- Utilize the access to “AIR SUVIDHA” Portal to monitor the international passengers

## **(3) Clinical management**

States have been asked to:

- Increase bed capacity, ensure logistics like ambulances and enforce mechanism for seamless shifting of patients.
- Ensure operational readiness of oxygen equipment
- Maintain buffer stock of essential medicines of at least 30 days
- Utilize funds sanctioned under Emergency COVID Response Package (ECRP-II) to ensure that the requisite capacity of health systems is developed at/near hotspots to respond to any emergency.
- Ensure stringent enforcement of home quarantine/ isolation as per extant guidelines
- States are required to keep an action plan ready for making decommissioned COVID-19 facilities operational along with adequate availability of doctors and ambulance on call, in case of a rise in COVID cases.

## **(4) COVID Safe Behaviour, s**

The guidelines require States to:

- Ensure advance engagement and information so that there is no misinformation or panic,
- Communicate transparently on hospital and testing infrastructure availability,
- Conduct regular press briefings.
- Encourage community participation and strict enforcement of Covid Appropriate Behaviour.

## **(5) Vaccination;**

States have been advised to:

- Ensure 100% coverage of all eligible beneficiaries in an accelerated manner
- Give special focus to be given to those districts where the first & second dose coverage is less than the national average
- Strengthen door-to-door vaccination campaign especially in States/UTs where vaccination coverage is below the national average
- Ramp up vaccination in pockets with low vaccination coverage and those with low COVID exposure, which may be more vulnerable to the new Omicron variant.

## 9. Measures to minimize threat of any resurgence of Covid-19 pandemic<sup>50</sup>

- ☐ The Government of India continues to keep a close watch over COVID-19 situation in the country to prevent and mitigate the impact of any resurgence of COVID-19 trajectory in the country.
- ☐ The Government has established an Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomic Surveillance Consortium (INSACOG) for genomic sequencing and tracking the evolution of variant strains of SARS-CoV-2.
- ☐ The [Department of Biotechnology \(DBT\)](#) is supporting the implementation of two key programmes, the [National Biopharma Mission \(NBM\)](#) and the [Ind-CEPI Mission](#), which have enabled the strengthening of the national vaccine development ecosystem, so as to effectively respond to pandemics.
- ☐ 'Mission COVID Suraksha - the Indian COVID-19 Vaccine Development Mission', was launched as part of the third stimulus package, Aatmanirbhar Bharat 3.0, for promoting research and development of Indian COVID-19 vaccines. The Mission is led by the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) and is implemented by [Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council \(BIRAC\)](#).

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