

# CORONAVIRUS NEWS BRIEF

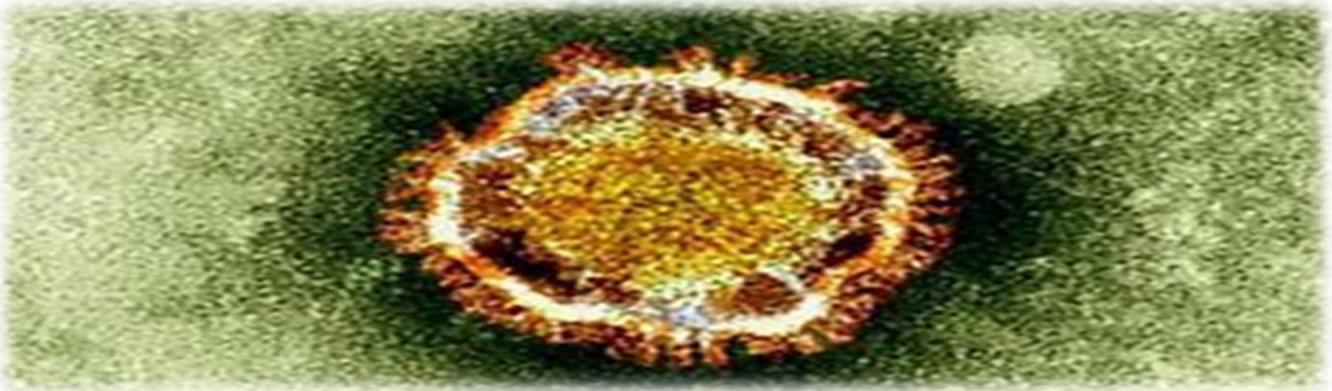
*Compiled Periodically from various sources By:*

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***How India's slow vaccination hurts poor countries***

***(Report on Page: 2)***

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# How India's slow vaccination hurts poor countries

With just over 17 crore adult Indians fully immunized — those who have received two doses of Covid-19 vaccine — the suspension on supply of Covid-19 vaccines to the Covax program will continue till all adult Indians are fully vaccinated.

India has managed to fully vaccinate just 18% of its adult population since the Covid-19 vaccination program started in January this year.

India gave more Covid vaccine doses than G7 combined, Centre says. That's because we are slow on vaccinations.

## Doses per 100



Of the 2 billion doses that Covax needs to supply to low income countries this year, [1.1 billion doses](#) were to be supplied by the Pune-based Serum Institute of India (SII), comprising Covishield and Novavax. However, the Centre had imposed an unofficial ban on export of all vaccines in March as India suffered

from twin blows of low vaccine stocks for its own population and a devastating 2nd wave of Covid-19. According to a report in the Economic Times, quoting a senior government official, India "will continue to pull back supplies to Covax till all its adults are vaccinated."

As a result, Covax has lowered its forecast for the number of doses that it will have this year by 25%, citing "continued export restrictions from India" which "are leading to further supply delays, with the current most likely scenario assuming no SII supply to Covax in 2021."

Covax, which is spearheaded by World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF and Gavi, among others, had targeted a supply of 2 billion doses by 2021 and another 1.8 billion doses in 2022, in order to vaccinate at least 20% of the population in low and middle income countries.

So far, it has only managed to deliver 240 million doses to 139 countries.

The continued hold on vaccine exports comes even as the Centre placed a purchase order for 66 crore doses of Covishield from SII, that are to be supplied by December this year. SII, which now claims to have ramped up its production capacity to 20 crore doses a month, said it will be able to supply 20.29 crore Covishield doses this month.

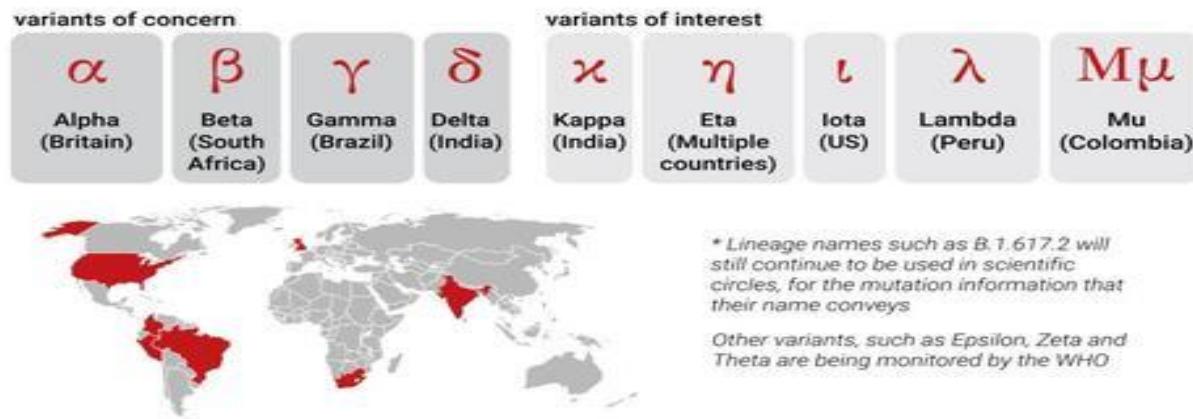
Meanwhile, data on vaccine efficacy observed between the months of April to August has shown that while a single shot of Covid-19 vaccine is 96.6% effective in preventing deaths, a double dose is 97.5% effective in preventing Covid-19 deaths.

The data also showed that while breakthrough infections did happen among the vaccinated, they did not result in any fatality.

**(Editor's note: Please use your common sense to donate to the right organization. If possible, give priority to your own family, neighbors and your village/Town or area healthcare systems directly. There are fraudulent organizations be aware of them. Look into the need and response to those priorities. Get some advice from your Doctors or helping organizations. Many time Cash Donations are more effective than kind. I would recommend donating to Red Cross of India, UNICEF, Oxfam India, and Care India. In my personal opinion, do not send any contributions to India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi's PM Care Fund as its not transparent and has no accountability. -Kaushik Amin.)**

# Q&A: HOW CONCERNED SHOULD WE BE ABOUT THE MU VARIANT?

Covid-19 variants are known by letters of the Greek alphabet to avoid stigmatising nations where they were first detected, according to the World Health Organization.



SOURCE: WHO

SCMP

Now that we're halfway through the Greek alphabet for naming coronavirus variants, it is clear that some are more worrisome than others. Only four so far have raised enough alarm to warrant a World Health Organization "variant of concern" designation – Alpha, Beta, Gamma, and Delta.

But now there's a new one to add to the list: Mu, now categorized as a WHO "variant of interest."

Even though information and data on the variant, or B.1.621, is scarce, we asked two experts in virology what it might have in store for us.

Jesse Erasmus, PhD, director of Virology at HDT Bio, and acting assistant professor at the University of Washington, School of Medicine in Seattle, and Pedro Piedra, MD, professor of Molecular Virology and Microbiology at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, make their best predictions below.

The Mu variant was first identified in Columbia in January, so it's been around for 8 or 9 months. Any idea why is it getting more attention now?

Piedra: Like with any new variant, once you see it identified or spreading around parts of the country, it's

something to take notice of. One is seeing Mu, not in any high numbers or high percentages, but we are detecting it in different places throughout the United States. That makes it of interest.

According to the CDC website that tracks the proportion of variants in the United States, Delta still dominates, while the Mu variant accounts for only about 0.1% of cases. Any variant can become a variant of concern, but why do you think Mu is getting attention at the moment?...

Erasmus: What is most likely driving the increased interest is the idea that we are looking at mutations associated with variants that we already know about, like Delta. It looks like Mu has mutations already in Delta but it also has mutations from Alpha or B.1.1.7, which was also known to be highly transmissible.

There's this idea that if you take a mutation from one variant and combine it with a mutation from another, you get a 'super mutant virus' that is going to wreak havoc. When in fact that is not necessarily the case.

I would say at this point – wisely so – it's a variant of interest.

On the other hand Mu has been identified in over 40 countries and 49 states – every one except Nebraska. Does that say something about transmissibility?

Erasmus: That would depend. But these variants can arise via two different pathways. One is a single source of a new variant that gets transmitted globally – and it can be traced to a single, emergent event. In my view that is very unlikely.

The other scenario is 'convergence evolution,' when the variant emerges in multiple, separate instances. They perhaps provide some fitness to the virus. There can be multiple pathways through which a virus can arrive at this combination of mutations, which is probably more likely.

Also, if it does have an enhanced rate of transmission, we would expect to see a higher proportion of cases relative to the Delta variant.

Piedra: I would say at this time it's way too early. We really need to focus now on getting over this fourth wave of COVID, which is really Delta-driven. It will be important, as this slows down or this wave comes to an end, to see which variant will show up next.

Perhaps now that the population is more immune to that [Delta] virus, then another variant may come up. Our population is ever changing, with different proportions of people vaccinated in a city, state or the country. Again, the population immunity changes over time. That immune pressure helps to select a variant for that particular area.

Is there any reliable information on Mu's potential to evade vaccines?

Erasmus: Mu has the E484K and the K417N mutations identified in the Beta variants. The Beta variant is

currently more immune-resistant than even the Delta variant. So it's definitely a valid hypothesis, and we're still waiting on more data to confirm.

A preprint study (not yet peer-reviewed) came out Sept. 7, and indeed demonstrates that Mu is slightly more vaccine resistant than the Beta variant.

When we talk about vaccine escape, we have to be very careful to specify this is escape from infection, not from serious disease. Even against the most vaccine resistant variant out there, the vaccines still protect against disease.

Since Mu has mutations from both the Delta and Beta variants – is that a reason for concern?

Piedra: This raises the question of whether this variant is going to be more resistant to antibodies generated by the vaccine.

That was always a major concern for the Beta lineage. But for whatever reason, it did not seem to be as fit as the Delta variant in the U.S. and worldwide. Delta replaced everything.

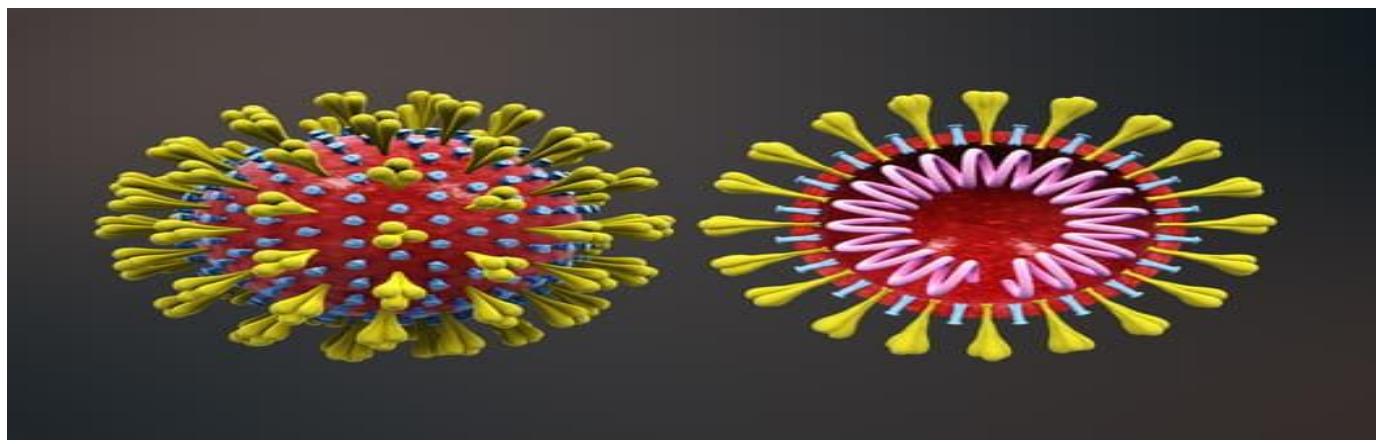
It goes to show you that, at a particular time and at a particular place, there is a variant that seems to be a better fit [that is able to become dominant] because it is the perfect variant at the perfect time.

The question is: Is the Mu variant going to be like that, and the answer is we don't know. So we need to keep track of it and look for the early signs of what will be the next wave when it comes.

A final but very important question – what is the right way to pronounce Mu?

Erasmus: (laughs) The way I pronounce it is m'yoo.

Piedra: M'yoo. It's the Greek letter Mu.



# ***BIDEN ORDERS COMPANIES TO REQUIRE VACCINATION FOR EMPLOYEES***



Declaring that “our patience is wearing thin” with the resistance to vaccination against Covid-19, US President Joe Biden has ordered companies with at least 100 workers to get them all inoculated or test the hold-outs weekly.

Setting an example, Biden said on Thursday that all federal employees and contractors will also be made to get vaccinated or get tested regularly.

As the latest Covid-19 resurgence fueled by the Delta variant is raging among the unvaccinated, Biden announced his far-reaching program to combat the pandemic that reaches into schools and private businesses.

The requirement for vaccinations to be enforced through an emergency rule by the Labor Department will cover over 80 million workers in the private sector, Biden said in his address from the White House. Healthcare workers will also be under orders to get vaccinated or face regular tests, he said.

Although the jabs are available free to all in the US who are over the age of 12, about 26 per cent of the eligible population is not vaccinated, according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) statistics.

At least one dose of the vaccine has been given to 208 million people over 12 years, or 73.4 per cent of them, while 177 million or 62.5 per cent have been fully inoculated.

The economic recovery has been threatened by a new wave of Delta-driven Covid-19 cases, prompting Biden’s stringent actions.

“We cannot let unvaccinated do this progress — undo it, turn it back,” the President added.

From the high hopes he projected on Independence Day in July of conquering the pandemic, there has been a resurgence of Covid-19 with 4.2 million cases reported last month and the number of infections daily are in the 1,500 range.

Biden said: “We’re going to protect vaccinated workers from unvaccinated co-workers. We’re going to reduce the spread of Covid-19 by increasing the share of the workforce that is vaccinated.”

Some large employers in the US like Facebook, Google, Microsoft, United Airlines, Delta Airlines and Goldman Sachs already have mandates for employees returning to the workplaces to be vaccinated.

While 90 per cent of the school staff are vaccinated, Biden said that he wanted to get that to 100 per cent to protect children.

Toward reaching this goal, he said that he will be requiring all those in school programs receiving federal funds to be vaccinated and he asked all governors to mandate vaccination for all teachers and staff.

Biden’s proposal is sure to be opposed by many, including some from his Democratic Party’s base.

Although the opposition to vaccinations is often presented as a political issue, the teachers’ union that mutually backs the Democratic Party has come out against a requirement in New York City schools system for staff to be vaccinated or face regular testing. The alternative to vaccinations of getting tested every week is an inconvenience that could persuade all but those with real medical conditions that preclude getting the shots or the diehard ideologues to get jabbed.

Biden also served notice on some Republican state governors who have prevented schools from following guidelines for masking setting the scene for a showdown.

He accused them of bullying schools and said: “If these governors won’t help us beat the pandemic, I’ll use my power as President to get them out of the way.”

Republican Governors, Greg Abbott of Texas and Ron DeSantis of Florida, issued orders prohibiting schools from compulsorily requiring the wearing of masks, but those edicts have been temporarily blocked by courts allowing schools to enforce mask-wearing.

The Governors have threatened to withhold payments to schools mandating masks and to counter it, Biden said: “Any teacher or school official whose pay is withheld for doing the right thing, we will have that pay restored by the federal government 100 per cent.”

## ***USPS NOT COVERED BY BIDEN’S COVID-19 VACCINE MANDATE***



The United States Postal Service is not one of the agencies compelled to require COVID-19 vaccination under President Joe Biden’s new executive order, a spokesman said Friday.

“The COVID-19 vaccination requirements included in the White House executive order issued on September 9, 2021, for federal employees do not apply to the Postal Service,” a spokesman for the U.S. Postal Service, or USPS, told The Epoch Times in an email.

“Regarding other vaccination rules expected to be issued by the federal government, the Postal Service has no comment until those rules are issued and we have had a chance to review them,” he added.

Biden on Thursday ordered all federal employees to get a COVID-19 vaccine, with limited exceptions for approved medical or religious reasons.

“It is essential that Federal employees take all available steps to protect themselves and avoid spreading COVID-19 to their co-workers and members of the public,” Biden said in the order.

School safety is a critical issue as schools start the new academic year with a return to in-person learning and vaccines are not yet approved for children below the age of 12.

“If schools follow the science and implement the safety measures, like testing, masking, adequate ventilation systems that we provided the money for, social distancing, and vaccinations, then children can be safe from Covid-19 in schools,” Biden said.

Since the onset of the pandemic early last year, the US has registered a total of 40,600,763 and 654,576 deaths. The two talies account for the highest in the world, making the US the worst hit country.

## ***USPS NOT COVERED BY BIDEN’S COVID-19 VACCINE MANDATE***

Biden said in remarks from Washington that the order would “require all executive branch federal employees to be vaccinated—all.”

An Executive Branch Agency as defined in 5 U.S. Code § 105 “means an Executive department, a Government corporation, and an independent establishment.”

The Postal Service is an independent agency of the Executive Branch. It was established in 2006, replacing the Cabinet-level U.S. Post Office Department. The head of the Postal Service is chosen by a nine-person Board of Governors; the board members are appointed by the president and require confirmation by the U.S. Senate. Over 630,000 people work for the USPS.

The American Postal Workers Union (APWU) and the White House did not respond to requests for comment. The union in a July statement responded to reports that the White House was mulling mandatory COVID-19 vaccination for federal workers.

“Maintaining the health and safety of our members is of paramount importance. While the APWU leadership continues to encourage postal workers to voluntarily get vaccinated, it is not the role of the federal government to mandate vaccinations for the employees we represent,” the union said.

“Issues related to vaccinations and testing for COVID-19 in the workplace must be negotiated with the APWU. At this time the APWU opposes the mandating of COVID-19 vaccinations in relation to U.S. postal workers,” it added.

# Things That Suppress Your Immune System

13 Things That Weaken Your Immune System, Lack of sleep, low vitamin D, and even certain medications can hamper your immune system's ability to fight infection and illness. See some other surprising things that can have an effect.

## 1. Lack of Sleep:



Not getting enough sleep can make you more likely to catch viruses or germs. And you also may take longer to get better. That's because your body can't make as many infection-fighting cells and proteins called antibodies that help defend against illness. Your body releases certain proteins that help the immune system, called cytokines, only during sleep.

## 2. Anxiety:

Stress and worry aren't great germ fighters. Just having anxious thoughts can weaken your immune response in as little as 30 minutes. Constant stress takes an even bigger toll and makes it harder to fend off the flu, herpes, shingles, and other viruses. Talk to your doctor if you can't shake your worry or if it gets in the way of normal life.

## 3. Low Vitamin D:



You may know you need it for strong bones and healthy blood cells. But vitamin D also helps boost your immune system. You can get it in eggs, fatty fish, and fortified foods like milk and cereal. Sunlight is another key source. In the summer, just 5-15 minutes of rays on your hands, face, and arms 2-3 times a week usually is enough. In the winter, you might need a bit more.

## 4. Certain Medications

They include drugs to treat allergies, arthritis, lupus, IBS, and organ transplant. Corticosteroids are one example, as are TNF inhibitors for inflammation and chemotherapy for cancer. Talk with your doctor before you adjust any prescription medication.

## 5. Too Few Fruits and Veggies:



These foods may help your body make more of the white blood cells you need to fight off infections. Fresh produce and nuts and seeds pack a lot of zinc, beta-carotene, vitamins A, C, and E, and other nutrients you need for a healthy body. Plant-based foods also fill you up with fiber, which helps lower your body fat percentage, which can strengthen your immune response.

## 6. Marijuana:

Smoke from pot can inflame your lungs. If you use it regularly, you may have the same breathing problems you can get from nicotine cigarettes. That means coughing up colored mucus called phlegm and a higher chance of lung infections.

## 7. High-Fat Diet:

Oils can hinder germ-fighting white blood cells. And high fat diets over time can upset the balance of bacteria in your gut that can help immune response. Look for low-fat dairy with no added sugar, along with lean protein like seafood, turkey, and chicken, or lean cuts of beef with any visible fat cut off. Also, being obese seems to make you more likely to get the flu and other infections, like pneumonia.

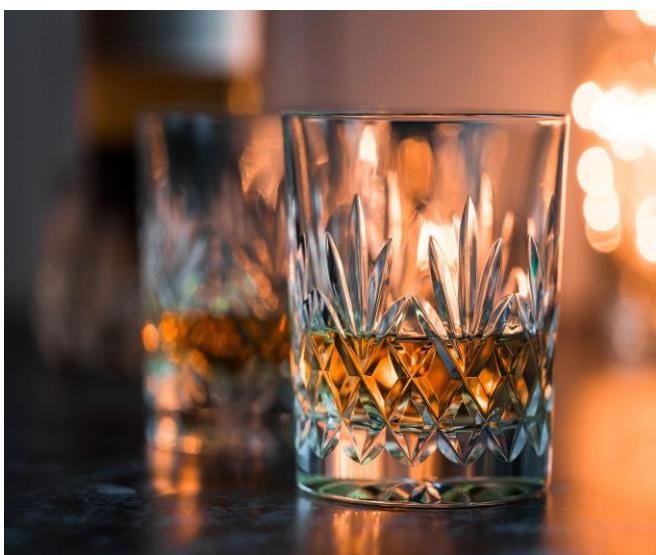
## 8. Too Little Time Outdoors:

Sunlight may energize special cells in your immune system called T-cells that help fight infection. But being outside brings other benefits, too. Many plants in the woods make phytoncides and other substances you breathe in that seem to bolster your immune function.

## 9. Smoking

Nicotine from cigarettes, chewing tobacco, or any other source can weaken your body's ability to fight germs. Yes, vaping counts, too. And it's not just the nicotine. Other chemicals in e-liquids seem to suppress your immune response, especially when you inhale them through vaping.

## 10. Alcohol:



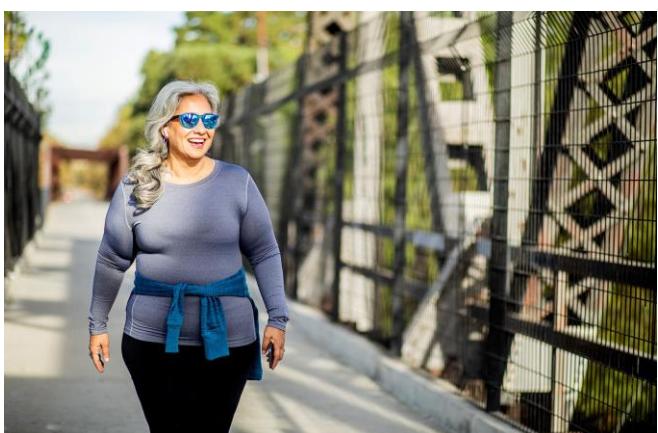
Just overdoing it once slows your body's ability to fight germs for up to 24 hours. Over time, drinking too much blunts your body's ability repair itself. That may be part of the reason you're more likely to get illnesses like liver disease, pneumonia, tuberculosis, and certain cancers. If you use alcohol, try to keep it to one drink a day for women and two drinks for men.

## 11. Grief:



There is some evidence that sorrow, especially if lasts a long time, can depress your body's immunity. The effect can linger for 6 months, but may go on longer if your grief is deep or doesn't ease. Talk to your doctor or a mental health professional if you need help with a loss or traumatic event.

## 12. Lack of Exercise:

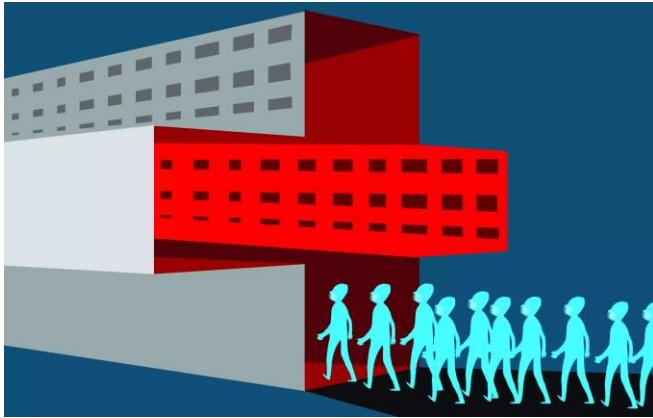


Regular aerobic exercise appears to help your body fight illness caused by viruses and bacteria. That's in part because it helps blood get around your body more efficiently, which means germ-fighting substances get where they need to go. Scientists continue to study exactly how exercise helps boost your immune system.

## 13. No Sex:

Good news! Weekly intimacy seems to help boost your immune system compared to those who have it less often. Sex raises levels of a germ-fighting substance called Immunoglobulin A, or IgA. But more may not always better. Couples who had sex more than twice a week had lower levels of IgA than those who had no sex at all.

# Covid-19 "here to stay with us", says WHO



The WHO was heavily criticised for its slow response to the emergence of Covid-19 last year, with WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus declaring it a pandemic only in March, despite learning of the outbreak of a mysterious form of pneumonia in Wuhan, China, on December 31, 2019. The WHO itself was a house divided over the declaration of Covid-19 as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC), which is the highest level of alarm. The world health body has earlier said

that vaccines will not ensure eradication of Covid-19 — a view seconded by public health experts like White House chief medical advisor Dr Anthony Fauci and vested parties like Stephane Bancel, CEO of Covid vaccine maker Moderna who have cautioned that the pandemic may be here to stay like influenza. Dashing hopes of an eradication of Covid-19, the World Health Organisation (WHO) said that the "virus is here to stay with us and it will evolve like influenza pandemic viruses." Predicting that "it will evolve to become one of the other viruses that affects us," the executive director of the WHO's Health Emergencies Programme, Dr Mike Ryan said it was "very, very unlikely" that the world is "going to eliminate or eradicate the virus."

The WHO now puts the blame on the spread of Covid-19 on countries not taking due precautions in time. According to Maria Van Kerkhove, the WHO's technical lead on Covid-19, there was "a chance in the beginning of this pandemic" to control it and the "pandemic did not need to be this bad."

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## **CORONAVIRUS: NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD:**

### **\* *CDC studies highlight vaccine effectiveness amid Delta***

Three major studies released Friday by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention highlighted the available COVID-19 vaccines' effectiveness against serious illness, even during the latest Delta variant-fueled wave of cases. The first study found that people who were not fully vaccinated against the coronavirus this spring and summer were 10 times more likely to be hospitalized and 11 times more likely to die of COVID-19. The second indicated that the vaccine produced by Moderna was the most effective of the three shots in circulation, showing 95 percent effectiveness against hospitalization compared to Pfizer-BioNTech (80 percent) and Johnson & Johnson (60 percent), although all three combined for a collective 86 percent rate. The final study looked at the use of the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines at five Veterans Affairs hospitals in major U.S. cities. They were found to be 87 percent percent effective in preventing hospitalizations.

### **\**New York City Teacher's Union Wins Battle Over COVID-19 Vaccine Mandate***

New York City's largest teacher's union has won a battle to keep teachers and other educators employed if they suffer from certain medical conditions and don't want to comply as a result with the Big Apple's COVID-19 vaccine mandate.

An arbitrator ruled late Friday that teachers with certain documented medical afflictions must be offered assignments outside of classrooms and be kept on the city's payroll. Other educators who don't want a COVID-19 vaccine must be offered unpaid leave that keeps in place their health coverage or a severance package. City officials announced last month that all 148,000 Department of Education employees would have to get a COVID-19 vaccine, with limited exemptions. The city planned to remove people who were granted an exemption from the payroll, infuriating the United Federation of Teachers (UFT), the city's largest teacher's union.

That prompted pushback, which ultimately resulted in the arbitration decision, even after New York City

Mayor Bill de Blasio seemed to publicly reverse the stance in a press conference on Wednesday.

De Blasio said that few cases of medical or religious exemptions being granted are expected, "but they will be honored" if approved.

"Those folks will continue to work for us in some capacity, in some location. We got to work that through," he added, referring to the arbitration.

Mulgrew said the pushback from the union resulted in the reversal.

"After our demand for independent arbitration, the city backed off its initial position that all unvaccinated personnel be removed from payroll, and will offer out-of-classroom work for those with certified medical or other conditions," he said in a statement after the arbitrator's decision was released.

Educators with a documented "contraindication," as defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), for the vaccines are now able to refuse complying with the mandate, and will be assigned to work outside of the classroom.

Temporary exemptions will also be granted if a person has received a monoclonal antibody treatment within the previous 90 days, is being treated for conditions as delineated by the CDC, or has suffered heart inflammation, a condition seen in some people after they get a vaccine.

Religious exemptions must also be approved, but not if the leader of the religious group has spoken publicly in favor of the vaccine, and not if the request is deemed "personal, political, or philosophical in nature."

The vaccine mandate takes effect on Sept. 27.

Over 80 percent of the city's teachers have already been vaccinated, according to the UFT. Schools Chancellor Meisha Porter pegged the number as 72 percent on Wednesday.

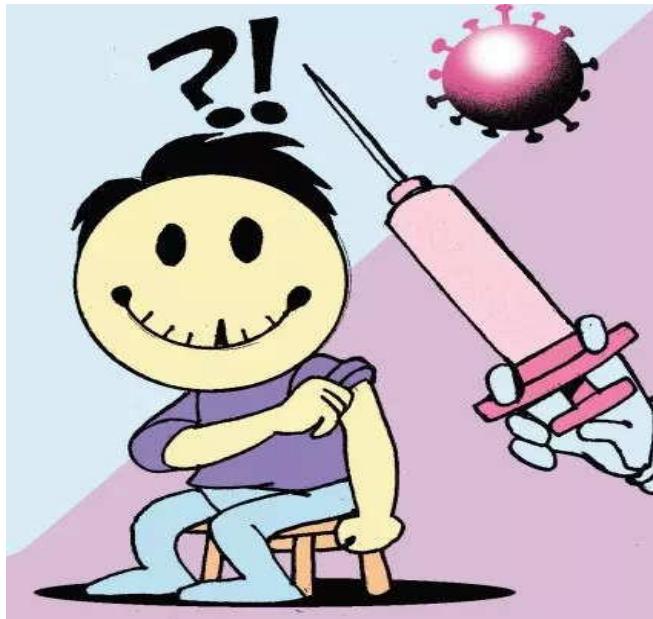
De Blasio's office and the New York City Department of Education did not respond to requests for comment.

"Our vaccine mandate was put into place for the health and safety of our children, and the protection of our employees," Porter told NBC New York in a statement. "We're pleased that the binding Arbitration was issued before the first day of school and we will swiftly implement the terms."

### \* **West Virginia governor slams COVID vaccine conspiracy theories**

West Virginia's Gov. Jim Justice (R) rebuked COVID-19 vaccine conspiracy theorists on Thursday, asking in a televised address "why in the world do we have to come up with these crazy ideas? And they're crazy ideas." He singled out a well-known but baseless theory that the vaccines contain microchips that allow the government to track people. "The same very people that are saying that are carrying their cell phones around," he noted. "I mean, come on." Justice has dismissed such conspiracy theories before. His comments came after another high-ranking Republican, Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), repeatedly urged his constituents to get vaccinated. "The fact is, it works," McConnell said Wednesday. "Opinions that you may hear from others, frequently are nonsense, honestly."

### \* **India's getting ready to vaccinate children**



#### **The final evaluation**

The country's top paediatricians will review international data on children vaccinated against Covid-19 and present it to the National Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (NTAGI) early next week, reports The Economic Times.

"The paediatricians will present evidence, risk of mortality, risk of severity based on the global and national literature," NTAGI Covid working group

chairman NK Arora told ET. "The experts will deliberate over the risk-benefit ratio — potential risk of vaccinating children, if any. This will all be reviewed before we start vaccinating children."

The recommendations will be sent to the high-powered National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration for Covid-19 (NEGVEC), which will take a final call on the rollout.

#### **Around the world**

The government proposes to start inoculating children against Covid-19 next month, the report says.

Many countries across the globe have started vaccinating those 12 and above, while trials are underway in others on younger children.

In Europe, at least 29 nations have started vaccinating children aged 12 and above or are planning to do so. Singapore, Japan, UAE, Israel, US, China, Canada and the Philippines have decided to give jabs to all aged 12 and above. The UK is not offering vax to all kids between 12 and 15.

#### **The priority**

"The group of paediatricians will also give their recommendations on the priority group," Arora said. In India, children of 12 and above with underlying medical conditions are likely to be vaccinated first, while healthy ones are unlikely to get jabs this year, as discussions are underway in the government regarding reopening of schools.

Government experts are of the view that there is no need for every child to be vaccinated in order to attend school.

#### **The vaccine**

India's drug regulator has granted emergency use authorisation to Zydus Cadila's DNA vaccine for all above 12. The vaccine is likely to be launched in October. The company aims to produce 10 million doses in the first month.

### \* **Novavax begins trial for combined influenza-Covid vaccine**

Vaccine developer Novavax Inc said it has initiated an early-stage study to test its combined flu and Covid-19 vaccine.

The trial, to be conducted in Australia, will enroll 640 healthy adults between the ages of 50 and 70 years and

who have either been previously infected with the coronavirus or given an authorised Covid vaccine at least eight weeks prior to the study.

Participants will receive a combination of the company's Covid vaccine candidate, NVX-CoV2373, and its influenza shot NanoFlu along with an adjuvant or vaccine booster.

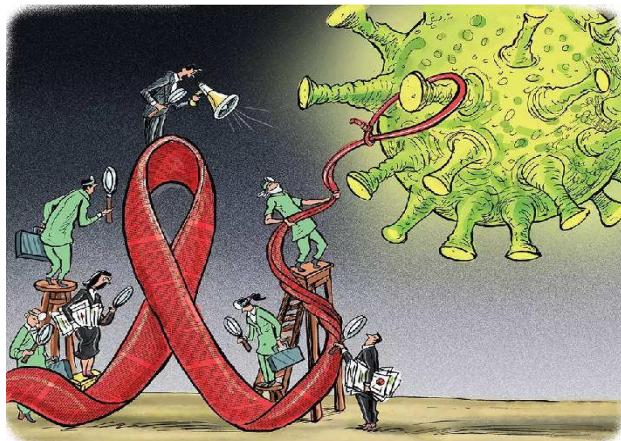


"Combination of these two vaccines...may lead to greater efficiencies for the healthcare system and achieve high levels of protection against Covid-19 and influenza with a single regimen," said Gregory Glenn, president of Novavax's Research and Development at Novavax.

The Gaithersburg, Maryland, USA-based pharma company had said in May it expects seasonal influenza and Covid combination vaccines to likely be critical in combating emerging Covid variants. Its vaccine NanoFlu/NVX-CoV2373 had elicited robust responses to both influenza A and B and protected against the coronavirus in pre-clinical studies.

Novavax expects the trial results in the first half of 2022.

#### **\*Covid disrupts fight against HIV, TB & malaria**



The Covid-19 pandemic had a "devastating" impact on the fight against HIV, tuberculosis and malaria in 2020, per a report released by the Global Fund. "For the first time in the history of the global fund, key programmatic results have gone backwards," pointed out executive director Peter Sands.

**HIV:** Compared with 2019, the number of people reached with HIV prevention and treatment dropped by 11% last year, while HIV testing dropped by 22%, holding back new treatment in most countries. Nevertheless, the number of people who received life-saving antiretroviral therapy for HIV in 2020, rose 8.8% to 21.9 million "despite Covid-19".

**TB:** The number of people treated for drug-resistant TB in the countries where the Global Fund invests dropped by "a staggering" 19%, with those on treatment for extensively drug-resistant TB registering an even bigger drop of 37%, it said. The fund calculated that around 4.7 million people were treated for TB in 2020 — that's around one million fewer than in 2019.

**Malaria:** Interventions to combat malaria "appear to have been less badly affected by Covid-19 than the other two diseases," the report found. "Prevention activities remained stable or increased compared to 2019." The number of mosquito nets distributed increased by 17% to 188 million and structures covered by indoor residual spraying increased by 3%. However, suspected cases of malaria tested fell by 4.3% and progress against the disease stalled.

#### **\*Sputnik V supply resumes**



Dr Reddy's Laboratories has resumed the supply of the first dose of the Sputnik V vaccine to hospitals following confirmation that Panacea Biotec has produced and shipped the second component of the two-dose vaccine.

Unlike other vaccines, Sputnik V uses two different components — adenovirus-26 as the vector in the first dose and adenovirus-5 in the second — in its vaccine. This ensures that the immune system does not confuse the second dose to be an infection..

But an irregular supply of the second component had forced Dr Reddy's, which is to distribute 125 million doses of the vaccine, to suspend the distribution. Now, Panacea Biotec, one of the Indian firms the Russian Direct Investment Fund has a deal to produce the doses, said it has produced a batch of the second component of the vaccine at its facility in Himachal Pradesh.

"As announced by our partners, the RDIF and Panacea Biotec, supply of the second dose component manufactured by Panacea Biotec has now commenced. Dr. Reddy's has initiated supply of the first dose component to partner hospitals all over India followed by equivalent quantities of the second dose component," Dr Reddy's said.

Neither Panacea nor Dr Reddy's stated the number of doses immediately available for distribution. Panacea's MD Rajesh Jain said "more batches are currently under production" at its facility. In total, over 850 million doses of the vaccine are slated to be produced in India annually, RDIF had earlier said.

#### **\*The impact on child adoptions.**

Months of Covid lockdown last year have brought down India's total in-country adoptions of children to a five-year low in 2020-21, data from the Central Adoption Resource Authority Data (CARA) revealed. Around 3,351 in-country adoptions took place in 2019-20, which dropped to 3,142 in 2020-21. The pandemic year also recorded the lowest in-country child adoption numbers after 2015-16 (3,011). A source from a Pune-based adoption agency told *TOI* that Covid lockdowns and financial stress worsened the situation, increasing incidence of illegal adoptions as well as forcing agencies to reduce the number of children they accept for adoption.

The source added: "Last year after the pandemic struck, the Supreme Court had directed state authorities to provide adoption centres with Covid safety paraphernalia, such as masks and sanitisers. But these were not provided to us. The pandemic year has been hard to survive due to the financial burdens. This is one reason why we have also reduced taking in more

children, especially when they have to wait at the agency for months for adoption clearance."



Prajakta Kulkarni, member of CARA steering committee and director of Snehankur Adoption Centre, told *TOI*: "Inter-district and inter-state travel restrictions had caused many adoptions to be put on hold. It is anyway very complicated to have a child adopted due to the complex paperwork. The pandemic restrictions further extended the waitlist." Inter-country adoptions too were affected during the pandemic. "Two children with us were ready with passports to be sent to another country with their prospective parents. But they had to wait in the adoption agency for several months, as they were not getting their visas because of the curbs on foreign travel," added a representative from another adoption agency. Per a CARA official, when the pandemic began in March last year, the April-June quarter recorded just 100 adoptions in India against an average of 900 in a quarter. The following quarter also recorded relatively fewer adoptions. Adoptions picked up significantly in the last quarter of 2020. Extra efforts such as expedited home visits were put in the subsequent quarters starting from July 2020, which helped adoptions pick up.

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# COVID19: Weekly Update.

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# The numbers below are from  
Saturday 09-11-2021 \* 12pm US East coast Time...

Compiled Periodically By:

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*There are likely false data & variations in data most of the time, so,  
Please use the data wisely.*

*Details are compiled from various sources.*

*Marked "\*" are not reliable data.*

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## **World:**

224,872,441. Cases. / 4,634,493. Deaths.

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## **Recovered till today:**

201,444,824.

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## **01. U.S. A.:**

41,743,069. Cases. / 677,037. Deaths.

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## **02. India\*\*(???)**

33,231,403. Cases. / 442,669. Deaths.

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## **03. Brazil:**

20,974,850 Cases. / 585,923. Deaths.

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## **05. UK:**

7,197,662. Cases. / 134,144. Deaths.

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## **27. Canada.**

1,538,093. Cases. / 27,170. Deaths.

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## **00 (India): Gujarat\* :(???)**

825,600.(???) Cases. / 10,082. (???) Deaths.

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## **USA States:**

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### **01. California:**

4,474,673. Cases. / 67,100. Deaths

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### **02. Texas\*:**

3,811,941. Cases. / 58,239. Deaths.

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## **03. Florida:**

3,454,632. Cases / 48,772. Deaths.

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## **04. New York:\***

2,398,911. Cases / 55,157. Deaths.

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## **05. Illinois:**

1,564,386. Cases. / 26,845. Deaths.

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## **06. Georgia:**

1,484,274. Cases. / 23,741. Deaths.

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## **07: Pennsylvania:**

1,338,313. Cases / 28,609. Deaths.

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## **08. Ohio**

1,285,757 Cases / 21,154. Deaths.

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## **11. New Jersey\*.:**

1,113,165. Cases. / 27,039. Deaths.

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## **18. Massachusetts:**

777,022. Cases. / 18,350. Deaths.

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## **34. Connecticut:**

378,933. Cases / 8,416. Deaths.



## COVID19: DOS AND DON'TS.

\***More than 4** Covid19 vaccines are available now nationwide in the US. Find out how to get yours.

*Be prepared for a third booster dose (for Pfizer and Moderna, and may be a second booster for Jhonsons'.) More serious Delta and Delta Plus (Indian), Lambda and now Kappa variants are around & can create an another pandemic, so be careful & follow religiously the Guidelines given by the Medical Authorities of your country.*

\* Finally Vaccine is available all time in the US; India and many parts of world, many of us got both the doses, or single dose in case of Jhonson & Jhonson's vaccine. Yet post vaccination results/effects are not known to the research/medico community fully. We are still in a Pandemic Period, of Phase 2 and 3, also possible invasion of new 4 or more strains of UK, Brazil, South Africa, and now India Coronavirus.

\* Entering the new wave of Delta and Delta Plus and three other virus variants, the number of cases are still on a higher side, yet to achieve the flat curve, world over most of us are just ignoring the pandemic do's & don'ts, particularly when we are with festivity mode in Summer days of 2021, so please take Extreme Care, Stay Safe & Stay Home. Yet not an easy time for every one! \* Corona is still around, & may remain lifelong! It's not as simple as viral flu. It's as dangerous as like a contest of survival of the fittest.

\* Vaccine is available now, first to the frontline medico fraternity, patients in need, & nursing home/long term care facilities residents on a priority, so be careful & protect yourself & your loved ones for

good. Mask, frequent hand wash with soap & social distancing only is the option for now

\* **Now Mask is not needed in the USA, if you are vaccinated.** But it is advised one must use Mask, even if you have taken Covid shots, Vaccine is just protection, it's not a cure! Also wear Gloves, Sunglasses & the most important: keep safe distance, keep washing your hands frequently with soap or use reliable sanitizer either one at least for 30 seconds.

\* *In India nasal steam (Naas) is recommended by the Government authorities, Ayurvedic practitioners, & also is a traditional remedy, but the US CDC and other Western Health Authorities doesn't recommend it due to a probable risk to the brain.*

\* *If you can, use Mouth Rinse, twice a day, will help to boost your oral health.*

\* *If you have young kids/minors attending the school or college, it's advised to put on the mask for everyone inside the home.*

\* We are passing through a tough time of Life & Death. Follow Social Distancing, but stay in for Social Contacts. If you know any one suffering with Corona, your nearer or dearer, call and talk to them frequently, we don't know whether they will return safely with us. Call other relatives/friends, at least ten persons a week. We are social & want to take care of those who are cut off due to Corona self-imposed lockdowns. Also keep busy yourself & family members with plenty of daily activities like yog, exercise & Stay Physically Fit, Pursue Your Hobby, Get Adequate, at least 6 to 8 hrs. of Sleep, & Eat Healthy Balance Diet.

\* **Yet it's a long march to finish, no one knows when we will...!!!!**

**Take care, & Stay Safe.**