



India achieves major milestone: One Billion Vaccinations

- India's Covid-19 vaccination drive has achieved a historic milestone of administering 1 billion vaccine doses. Around 75% of the eligible population (18+) has been given the first dose, while around 30% has been given both doses.
- India has achieved this mark of 1 billion vaccine doses in less than 40 weeks. This milestone exemplifies India's prowess in various elements in the vaccination journey – development of new vaccines, production of vaccines, deployment, and technology.
- India's Covid-19 vaccination drive was launched on 16 January 2021. But preparations had begun way back in April 2020 with the establishment of the National Task Force for Focused Research on Corona Vaccine. Indeed, a hallmark of India's vaccination drive has been the high level oversight and coordination, particularly by the Prime Minister himself.
- India prioritized vaccine development and launched 'Mission Covid Suraksha' to provide financial and technical support to indigenous vaccine manufacturers. This Mission is the force behind the world's first DNA-based COVID vaccine Zycov-D, developed by Zydus Cadila, which will facilitate vaccination of children above 12 years. The Mission also supported the capacity development of

Bharat Biotech and provided support for infrastructure and technology development for other public sector manufacturers.

- Today, India is the only country that has developed multiple vaccines across multiple platforms (Bharat Biotech's COVAXIN uses an inactivated virus platform, Zycov-D is a DNA vaccine, Covishield a viral vector vaccine, Gennova is in the running for being India's first mRNA vaccine).
- The National Covid Vaccination Programme initially targeted the healthcare and frontline workers as well as senior citizens, due to their higher risk perception. Subsequently, the Programme was rolled out to include people above 45 years of age and with co-morbidities and later, all citizens above 45 years were included. In the ongoing phase, all adults above 18 years have been included and vaccination is being provided for free at public vaccination facilities. This implies about 940 million people have to be vaccinated with two doses each.
- On the approval of Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI), three vaccines have been utilized in the Programme (COVISHIELD developed by Serum Institute of India in collaboration with Astra Zeneca of the United Kingdom, COVAXIN of Bharat Biotech International Limited and SPUTNIK V of Russia).
- India also developed a unique digital platform of CoWIN. The digital platform has made it possible to register beneficiaries, schedule their vaccination, generate QR Code based vaccine certificates and capture their vaccination history. In addition, it has also kept track of the entire implementation process including daily coverage and vaccine requirement across various Indian States.
- By the end of 2021, we are looking at an increased monthly production of Covid-19 vaccines, a larger basket of vaccine options and a larger proportion of our population fully vaccinated. This would translate to a larger potential to share vaccines with the world, contributing toward realization of the Prime Minister's vision of "One Earth, One Health".
