



Free Booster Jabs: Government Blessed with Satisfactory Response

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India has once again made history by administering 200 crore doses of COVID-19 vaccination to the citizens of the country. Booster doses, often referred to as precaution doses, are free only to those over the age of 60, but under the Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav, the center announced to be free for all till the next 75 days of announcement, 92% of the population is eligible to take booster doses.

In India, the two vaccinations licenced for kids aged 5 to 12 are not yet accessible for booking on the Co-WIN platform, hence the implementation of COVID immunisation for kids has not yet started.

The shortcomings of the booster plan include the fact that it wasn't initially free for all adults and that demand spiked right away when the Indian government announced free boosters for all. The other may be to avoid heterologous boosting by India despite the CMC Vellore trial's encouraging results. In countries like India with low per capita income, public health must be treated as a crucial public good.

In light of this, the twelfth edition of CUTS Occasional News Wrap (ONW) captures a variety of viewpoints expressed through select write-ups, op-eds, articles, and news etc. in the month of July, 2022, with a focus on the success of India in terms of vaccination coverage, free booster shots and nasal spray that reduce the viral load.

	Article/Op-ed	Key Takeaway
1	<p>NTAGI Could Decide on mRNA Vaccine's Inclusion in National Drive Next Week</p> <p>By Teena Thacker</p> <p>July 02,2022</p> <p><i>The Economic Times</i></p>	The Covid-19 working group of the National Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (NTAGI) will meet to decide on the inclusion of India's first mRNA vaccine in the national vaccination programme for those aged 18 years and above.
2	<p>Current Booster Policy Needs to be Revised</p> <p>By Teena Thacker</p> <p>July 06,2022</p> <p><i>The Economic Times</i></p>	Senior epidemiologist Giridhara Babu opined that it is time to update the policy and make sure that everyone who is eligible receives a booster shot, if they haven't previously. All people over the age of 18 can be offered a booster dose of the coronavirus (Covid-19) vaccine, similar to UK policy.
3	<p>Study: Hybrid Immunity Gives Better Protection from Covid Than Just Vaccines</p> <p>By Preetu Nair</p> <p>July 07, 2022</p> <p><i>The Times of India</i></p>	As India looks at ways to combat the inevitable cyclical resurgence of Covid, a new study from Kerala shows hybrid immunity giving significantly higher protection against breakthrough infection than vaccine immunity alone.
4	<p>NTAGI to Decide on Including Corbevax as a Booster Dose in Inoculation Drive</p> <p>By Teena Thacker</p> <p>July 07, 2022</p> <p><i>The Economic Times</i></p>	In light of the appearance of new sub-lineages in the nation, the National Technical Advisory Group on Immunization (NTAGI) is likely to review the data for Corbevax and may decide to approve its administration to people who have had the entire course of Covishield or Covaxin vaccinations.
5	<p>Vaccination, Testing, Vaccination, Testing...</p> <p>ET Bureau</p> <p>July 11, 2022</p> <p><i>The Economic Times</i></p>	More infectious strains are driving up numbers. Aggressive vaccination has ensured that, by and large, even when contracted, Covid manifests as a milder disease. However, considering its long-term effects that are still being studied, limiting spread is the best option.

6	<p>COVIFIELD Demand Down Under COVAX</p> <p>By Teena Thacker</p> <p>July 12, 2022</p> <p><i>The Economic Times</i></p>	<p>The demand for Serum Institute of India's Covishield has gone down significantly from countries served by the Covax programme, according to a document on the World Health Organization supported global Covid vaccine facility.</p>
7	<p>Boosters Free for All Adults for 75 days in Azadi Ka Amrut Mahotsav</p> <p>July 13, 2022</p> <p><i>Hindustan Times</i></p>	<p>Booster doses, also known as precaution doses, are currently exclusively provided free of charge to those over the age of 60, while several state governments have independently stated they will cover third doses for those under the age of 60.</p>
8	<p>Nasal spray Lowers Covid Load by 94% in 24 Hrs: Lancet</p> <p>July 14, 2022</p> <p>Business Standard</p>	<p>A nasal spray administered in high-risk adult COVID-19 patients in India reduced viral load by 94 per cent within 24 hours and 99 per cent in 48 hours, according to the results of phase 3 trial of the drug published in The Lancet Regional Health Southeast Asia journal.</p>
9	<p>Day One of Free Booster Drive Sees 16-Fold Jump in Pace</p> <p>July 16, 2022</p> <p><i>Healthworld.com from The Economic Times</i></p>	<p>On the first day of the Center's 75-day campaign to offer Covid vaccine booster shots to the 18-59 age range nationwide, 13.2 lakh doses of the precaution dose were administered, a 16-fold increase over the previous pace.</p>
10	<p>Study: Vaccines Protection Against COVID-19 Short Lived, Booster Shots Essential</p> <p>July 16, 2022</p> <p><i>Healthworld.com from The Economic Times</i></p>	<p>According to a new study, vaccination against the SARS-CoV-2 virus provides only temporary protection, and reliable protection against reinfection necessitates regular booster shots with vaccines that have been modified to address changes in the virus that occur as part of its natural evolution over time.</p>
11	<p>The Two Covid Vaccines That Saved More Lives Than Any Other</p> <p>July 17, 2022</p> <p><i>The Economist</i></p>	<p>Covid vaccines saved around 20m lives in their first year. But when Airfinity, a life-sciences data firm, analysed the figures, it found two had an outsized impact: those produced by AstraZeneca-Oxford and Pfizer-BioNTech. Each averted between 5m and 7m deaths; combined they accounted for more than half the lives saved by vaccines.</p>

12	<p>High Vaccination, Natural Infection Protected India from Omicron Wave</p> <p>By Teena Thacker</p> <p>July 19, 2022</p> <p><i>The Economic Times</i></p>	<p>In India both the BA.4 and BA.5 variants have not been able to spread rapidly as vaccination coverage was high and worked well. Omicron BA.5 sub-lineage is driving the surge in the US and Europe. However, in India, it is less than 10%.</p>
13	<p>India's Covid Vaccination Coverage Reaches 201.3 Crore</p> <p>ET Online</p> <p>July 21, 2022</p> <p><i>The Economic Times</i></p>	<p>India's total Covid-19 vaccination coverage has reached 201.30 crore, stated Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.</p> <p>The government data said that the weekly Positivity Rate is 4.51 per cent and daily positivity rate is 4.42 per cent. The ministry also stated that India's active Covid caseload stands at 1,49,482 with a recovery rate of 98.46 per cent.</p>
14	<p>Nasal Sprays Will Be Essential to Tackle Covid-19 Variants, Study Says</p> <p>July 22, 2022</p> <p><i>The Times of India</i></p>	<p>Intranasal vaccines for COVID-19 will be critical to protect people against the emerging variants of concern of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, according to a study.</p>
15	<p>Covid Shots for 5-12 Year Kids Not Yet Included in Vaccine Drive</p> <p>By Viswanath Pilla & Teena Thacker</p> <p>July 26, 2022</p> <p><i>The Economic Times</i></p>	<p>The rollout of vaccination against Covid for children aged 5-12 years has yet to begin in India, as the two vaccines approved for this age group aren't available for booking on the government's Co-WIN platform.</p>
16	<p>Only 11% of 69 Crore Beneficiaries Have Taken Covid Precaution Doses; Officials Blame Complacency</p> <p>PTI</p> <p>July 26, 2022</p> <p><i>The Economic Times</i></p>	<p>Only 11 per cent of the nearly 69 crore eligible beneficiaries aged 18 years and above taking the precaution dose of COVID-19 vaccine till July 25, has become a cause of concern for the Centre, with officials attributing the slow uptake of the third shot to complacency and waning of coronavirus fear.</p>
