



## **A Historic Milestone of 97 Percent Vaccination Rate: Still Needs to Narrow the Inequality Gap**

**01 March–31 March, 2022**

India has reached a historic milestone by completely vaccinating 80 percent of its adult population, achieving a vaccination rate of more than 97 percent with the first dose and administering over 181 crore doses.

Vaccines had early begun to be introduced into richer countries, but were almost non-existent in poorer countries. High-income countries such as the UK, the US and those in Europe began vaccination rollouts in December 2020. Conversely, more than three-quarters of people aged 12 and older in low-income countries have yet to receive a single dose.

The dispute continues over whether or not mixing Covishield and Covaxin boosts immunity. The government's policy of mixing COVID-19 vaccine doses has been criticised by a senior expert at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), who warns that it will be difficult to determine which vaccine caused an adverse reaction if one occurs.

The nation's 18 million children under 5 are the only age group not yet eligible for vaccination. Pfizer is testing even smaller doses but had to add a third shot to its study when two didn't prove strong enough. Those results are expected by early April.

In this background, this eighth edition of CUTS Occasional News Wrap (ONW) captures various opinions expressed by way of selective write-ups, op-eds, articles, and news, etc. in the month of March, 2022 specifically focused on India Achieved a Historic Milestone by Fully Vaccinated but Still Needs to Narrow the Inequality Gap.

	Article/Op-ed	Key Takeaway
1	<b>Serum Gets SEC Nod on Jabs for Children</b>  By Priyanka Sharma March 05, 2022 <i>Mint</i>	Serum Institute has been developing Covovax through a technology <a href="#">transfer</a> protocol from Novavax, already approved by the European medicines Agency for conditional marketing authorisation.
2	<b>Govt Call on Jabbing Those Aged 12-14 Likely by End of this Month</b>  March 06, 2022 <i>The Times of India</i>	Over 3 crore youngsters between 15-18 age group are now fully <a href="#">vaccinated</a> . Young India is taking the world's largest vaccination drive to the next level.
3	<b>Be More Vocal for Local Covaxin</b>  March 07, 2022 <i>The Economics Times</i>	Four months after the World Health Organisation granted approval for emergency use listing (EUL) to Covaxin, the Bharat Biotech-Indian Council of Medical <a href="#">Research</a> (ICMR) Covid vaccine remains unrecognised in many countries, including in Europe and Japan.
4	<b>Moderna to Trial 15 Jabs as it Gets Ready to Handle Next Pandemic</b>  By Robert Langreth March 08, 2022 <i>Bloomberg</i>	Moderna Inc. plans to start human trials for vaccines against 15 threatening <a href="#">viruses</a> and other pathogens by 2025, part of a strategy to develop shots that could be made quickly in response to a future pandemic.
5	<b>Mixing Covishield &amp; Covaxin Gives Better Immunity: ICMR</b>  By Neha Madaan/ TNN  March 09, 2022 <i>The Times of India</i>	ICMR researchers analysed people in a village in Uttar Pradesh who were inadvertently given Covishield as their <a href="#">first</a> dose and Covaxin as the second. Their immune responses were studied over a period of six months only after the completion of their vaccination schedule.
6	<b>Decision Soon on Mixed Vax Doses Based on Study</b>  By Teena Thacker  March 10, 2022 <i>The Economics Times</i>	CMC Vellore approached the drug regulator's office to share preliminary results of the study on the feasibility of mixing Covishield and <a href="#">Covaxin</a> , Winsley Rose, principal investigator of the study, told.

7	<b>Raj 7<sup>th</sup> State to Administer 10cr Covid Doses</b>  March 14, 2022 <i>The Times of India</i>	Out of 33 districts in the state, 20 have achieved 100% target of vaccinating 18+ populations with first dose. So far, 5.06 crore <a href="#">doses</a> have been administered as first dose in 18 + population, while 4.26 crore people have received first and second dose as well, they are fully vaccinated now.
8	<b>State Receives 30 lakh Corbevax Doses for Children Aged 12-14</b>  March 15, 2022 <i>The Times of India</i>	The state has received 30 lakh doses of Biological E's Covid <a href="#">vaccine</a> , Corbevax, for use in children aged between 12 to 14 years during a vaccination drive which will begin from March 16, 2022.
9	<b>Closing the Vaccination Gap</b>  March 15, 2022 <i>Financial Time</i>	A little over a year later, that seed has morphed into a potential high-tech revolution in mRNA vaccines that could transform access to all sorts of <a href="#">medicines</a> , not just for current health emergencies.
10	<b>Let an Open Market for Vaccines Fulfil Demand</b>  March 16, 2022	Our state vaccination drive has covered most adults and met a key public-health <a href="#">objective</a> .
11	<b>12-14 Vax Drive in Raj Off to Good Start, 50k Get 1<sup>st</sup> Dose</b>  March 17, 2022 <i>The Times of India</i>	49,937 children aged 12-14 years got vaccinated for Covid-19 in the state, making Rajasthan the second best performer after Gujarat in the <a href="#">country</a> on Day 1 of the drive in this category on Wednesday.
12	<b>Over 181 Crore Covid Vax Doses Given So Far in India: Govt.</b>  March 20, 2022	The cumulative COVID-19 vaccine doses administered in the country surpassed 181.19 crore, the Union Health ministry said. More than 2.17 crore (2, 17, 30,449) <a href="#">precaution</a> doses have so far been administered to healthcare workers, frontline workers and those aged above 60.
13	<b>Advisory Body for Covishield 2<sup>nd</sup> Dose After 8-16 Weeks</b>  March 21, 2022 <i>Business Standard</i>	The country's top body on vaccination has recommended that a <a href="#">second</a> dose of the Covid-19 vaccine Covishield can be given eight to 16 weeks after the first dose, official sources said on Sunday. Currently, the recommended gap between two doses is 12 to 16 weeks.

14	<b>What's the Status of Covid-19 Vax for U-12 Kids: HC to govt</b>  By Abhinav Garg  March 22, 2022 <i>The Times of India</i>	The Delhi High court asked the centre to inform it on the status of covid-19 vaccination for children below 12 years of age. Anurag Ahluwalia standing counsel of the centre submitted that he will file as status report regarding <a href="#">vaccination</a> for children below 12.
15	<b>Community Medicine Expert Opposes Mixing of Doses of Covid Vaccines</b>  By Priyanka Sharma March 23, 2022	Globally, 33 vaccines have been approved for mix-match doses. In India, Christian <a href="#">Medical</a> College (CMC) Vellore is conducting a trial on mixing of two covid-19 vaccines—Covaxin and Covishield.
16	<b>Moderna's Low-dose Covid Shots Work for Children Under 6</b>  March 24, 2022 <i>The Economics Times</i>	Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine works in babies, toddlers and preschoolers the company <a href="#">announced</a> -- and if regulators agree it could mean a chance to finally start vaccinating the littlest kids by summer.
17	<b>MEA Suggests Booster Doses for Travellers to EU</b>  By Dipanjan Roy Chaudhury  March 28, 2022 <i>The Economics Times</i>	Travellers with long-term EU visa who have exceeded 270 days between the second dose and date of travel are not <a href="#">allowed</a> to board flights to certain EU member states, indicated persons familiar with the issue. The EU made the final vaccine certificate (two doses) valid for 270 days a few months back. It claimed that the validity period has been based on available scientific evidence as well as objective criteria.
18	<b>Adverse Events Negligible in Teens after Jab; Anxiety Found in Many</b>  March 28, 2022 <i>The Economics Times</i>	There have been negligible instances of adverse events among <a href="#">adolescents</a> three months into the Covid-19 vaccination drive. Redness at site of injection, mild fever and headache have also been seen, finds panel.
19	<b>Is it Time for India to Now Relax its Mask Mandates?</b>  By Divya Rajgopal March 30, 2022	Many countries across the world have been working <a href="#">towards</a> doing away with restrictions that were enforced during the pandemic.