



EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS—JANUARY 16, 2021

TAMIL NADU

- The nation-wide vaccination drive against Covid-19 – to start in 166 centres across the state on January 16
- ✓ At least 11 eminent doctors, including Apollo Hospitals chairman Dr Prathap Reddy, ENT surgeon Dr Mohan Kameshwaran and Dr MGR Medical University vice-chancellor Dr Sudha Seshayyan, will be among the first to take the vaccine
- ✓ After the PM flags off the event in Delhi, Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami will inaugurate the drive from Rajaji Government GH in Madurai.

INDIA NO. 50 TO JOIN VAX DRIVE

<p>➤ The biggest vaccination drive in history has already begun in 49 countries</p> <p>➤ 35.3 million doses administered so far, as per data till Thursday</p> <h4 style="color: blue;">THE TOP 5</h4> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">Country</th> <th style="text-align: left;">Doses Administered (in million)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>US</td> <td style="text-align: right; background-color: #00a0c0; color: white;">11.2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>China</td> <td style="text-align: right; background-color: #00a0c0; color: white;">10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>UK</td> <td style="text-align: right; background-color: #00a0c0; color: white;">3.4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Israel</td> <td style="text-align: right; background-color: #00a0c0; color: white;">2.2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>UAE</td> <td style="text-align: right; background-color: #00a0c0; color: white;">1.5</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> 	Country	Doses Administered (in million)	US	11.2	China	10	UK	3.4	Israel	2.2	UAE	1.5	<h4 style="color: blue;">15 DAYS TO INOCULATE TN HEALTH WORKERS</h4> <p>166 Vaccinating sites</p> <p>12 (including 2 pvt) Centres in city</p> <p>➤ Vax in supply 5.36 lakh doses of Covishield; 20,000 doses of Covaxin</p> <p>➤ Beneficiaries can choose between Covishield or Covaxin</p> <p>➤ Covaxin will be administered from Govt Chengalpet Medical College Hospital, Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital, Govt Pudukottai Medical College Hospital, Govt Thanjavur Medical College Hospital, Govt Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Hospital, Tirunelveli Medical College Hospital</p> <p>28 lakh auto disabling syringes and needles in supply</p> <p>➤ Target for vaccination – Of 6 lakh health workers enlisted, 4.9 lakh registered for so far</p> <p style="font-size: small;">Source: Global vaccination data from Bloomberg and Ourworldindata.org</p>
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- ✓ Healthcare workers will then start inoculating doctors, nurses, medicos, paramedics and other healthcare workers.
- ✓ Tamil Nadu has received 5.56 lakh doses of vaccines – 5.36 lakh doses of Serum Institute’s Covishield and 20,000 doses of Covaxin manufactured by Bharat Biotech.
- ✓ Unlike those getting Covishield, beneficiaries of Covaxin have to sign a consent form
- ✓ Covaxin has been approved for restricted use in emergency situations and is supposed to be given in clinical trial mode
- ✓ Beneficiaries who receive Covaxin will be paid compensation if they suffer a serious adverse event that is proven to be related to the vaccine.
- ✓ The compensation was one of the points highlighted on top of the consent form shared with vaccination centres
- ✓ The form stated that the beneficiaries would be provided care in government-designated and authorised centres or hospitals if they suffered serious after-effects.

JAB OF HOPE		Below are data on roll out of vaccination across the state	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > After inauguration by PM Narendra Modi at 10.30am on Saturday, TN healthcare providers will take the jab > Ten eminent people will take the vaccine to allay fears > Vaccinating centres 166 > Centres in city 12 (2 pvt) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > The target for the state to complete vaccination of health workers is 15 days 	<p>FRONTLINE WORKERS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > The centre is collecting names of frontline workers through ministries and states > Officials estimate that they should be able to begin vaccination for frontline workers by February
<p>IN SUPPLY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > 5.36 lakh doses of Oxford vaccine, Covishield and 20,000 doses of Covaxin > Auto-disabling syringes, needles 28 lakh > Beneficiaries may choose between Covishield & Covaxin only in 6 centres > Those volunteering to take Covaxin must sign a form 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Daily target for vaccination 100 at each centre a day > Vaccinating officers at each centre 5 > Target time for each vaccination 6 min > Dosage per vaccine .5ml 	<p>VULNERABLE GROUPS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > TN has requested the state election commission for names of citizens above 50 as on Jan 1 > The Centre may open CoWin portal for self-registration when the vaccine has to be given to the group by late April > Officials say they will start administering the vaccine to this group by May > For clarifications call state helpline 104 	<p>SCHEDULE FOR THE MARATHON DRIVE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Officials say they don't have a strict schedule but below is an approximate timeline on when the vaccine will reach the common man
<p>THE TARGET</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Of 6 lakh health workers enlisted 4.9 lakh have been registered so far 			

- ✓ Tamil Nadu is among 11 states to accept the vaccine, which is still undergoing phase III trials and its clinical efficacy is yet to be established.
- ✓ Ophthalmologist Dr Mohan Rajan, MGM director Dr Prasanth Rajagopalan, heads of doctors’ associations and deans of government medical colleges Dr R Jayanthi and Dr E Theranirajan will also be taking the vaccine on the day.

- ✓ Around 4.9 lakh doctors, nurses, medicos, paramedics and other hospital workers in Tamil Nadu have been listed under the CoWin portal for vaccination for the first phase.
 - ✓ Health minister C Vijayabaskar said every beneficiary will receive 0.5ml of the vaccine on his/her left arm.
 - ✓ Everyone who takes the vaccine is allowed to exit only after they spend 30 minutes in the observation room
 - ✓ While Covishield will be available at 160 centres, at least 18,000 doses of Covaxin has been stocked in six centres across the state
 - ✓ The hospitals offering Covaxin includes Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital, Government Chengalpet Medical College Hospital, Government Pudukottai Medical College Hospital, Government Thanjavur Medical College Hospital, Government Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Hospital and Tirunelveli Medical College Hospital.
 - ✓ The list of hospitals offering Covishield includes two in the private sector - MGM Healthcare and Apollo Hospitals in Chennai
- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi - will flag off, through videoconferencing, a new weekly superfast special train from Chennai to Kevadiya in Gujarat on January 17.**
- ✓ The regular services of the train will commence on January 20.
 - ✓ The famous 'Statue of Unity' of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel is situated in Kevadiya district in Gujarat
 - ✓ It is the world's tallest statue with a height of 182 metres (597 feet).
 - ✓ The statue is located on the Narmada River in the Kevadiya colony, facing the Sardar Sarovar Dam, between the Satpura and the Vindhya mountain ranges.
 - ✓ The train will have stops at Renigunta, Kadapa, Guntakal, Raichur, Solapur, Pune, Kalyan, Vasai Road, Surat and Vadodara.

NATIONAL

- **On January 16, Prime Minister Narendra Modi – to flag off the pan-India Covid-19 vaccination drive covering all states and UTs through video conference**
- ✓ The world's largest vaccination programme will begin at a total of 3,006 session sites, which will be connected virtually throughout the exercise.
 - ✓ A dedicated 24x7 call centre — 1075 — has been launched to address queries related to the pandemic and the vaccine roll-out
 - ✓ To scrutinise the implementation of the drive on a real-time basis, the government has set up a control room in Nirman Bhawan, which houses the health ministry
 - ✓ Each site will inoculate an average of 100 beneficiaries on the first day.

- ✓ Healthcare workers, both in the government and private sectors, including Integrated Child Development Services workers, will receive the vaccine in the first phase.

Calling the shots

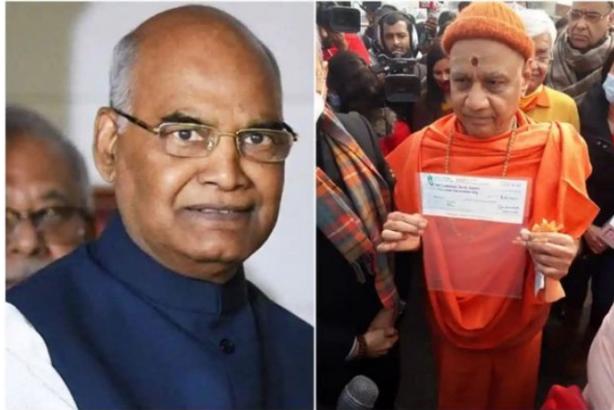
The Health Ministry has ruled out certain population groups from the administration of the COVID-19 vaccine. A lowdown:



WHO SHOULD NOT BE VACCINATED	WHO ARE PERMITTED (apart from the general population)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Those aged 18 or below ■ Pregnant and lactating women ■ People with a history of allergic reaction to COVID-19 vaccine or to vaccines in general or injectable therapies, pharmaceutical products and food items 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ People with a history of COVID-19 infection ■ Those with a history of chronic diseases and co-morbidities ■ People who have immunodeficiency or HIV, and patients on immunosuppression drugs

- ✓ Co-WIN, the digital platform will drive the mega vaccination programme across the country.
- ✓ It will enable conduct vaccination sessions and facilitate real-time monitoring of information of vaccine stocks, storage temperature and individualised tracking of vaccine beneficiaries.
- ✓ The Centre has urged states to strictly adhere to the operational guidelines for vaccination.
- **On January 15, the Election Commission - said any disciplinary action against the election officials would require its clearance.**
- ✓ The move is aimed in protecting chief electoral officers (CEOs) of states and Union Territories from “motivated harassment” for having acted in a free, fair, impartial and fearless manner during polls for political reasons
- ✓ As per the order issued by EC, states and UTs should “invariably” obtain its approval before initiating any disciplinary action against CEOs and senior officers during their tenure and also up to one year after they have completed their terms as poll officials.
- ✓ In this regard, the EC has referred the Supreme Court order of September 21, 2000
- ✓ The apex court had held that neither can any action be initiated by a state government against officers on election duty nor can the government refuse to act on the EC’s advice to act against errant officials
- ✓ The EC has communicated the order to the cabinet secretary, state chief secretaries, personnel secretary and state CEOs

- ✓ It has also directed that state and UT governments shall not reduce facilities like vehicle, security and other amenities provided to the office of CEO for proper discharge of his/her duties.
- **On January 15, President Ram Nath Kovind - donated ₹5,01,000 for construction of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya, marking the first contribution to the trust**



- ✓ The day marks the launch of a massive countrywide campaign seeking funds for the construction of the temple by various temple-related bodies, including RSS and its subsidiary organizations
- ✓ Kovind made the donation to a delegation of Shree Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust, which visited him on the day.
- ✓ Trust treasurer Govind Dev Giri, VHP working president Alok Kumar, construction committee chairperson Nripendra Misra and Delhi region RSS chief Kulbhushan Ahuja were part of the delegation.
- ✓ Kovind's gesture of offering donation is similar to first President Rajendra Prasad, who had joined hands with the then home minister Sardar Patel and others to support restoration of Somnath Temple in Gujarat.
- ✓ Earlier, PM Narendra Modi performed the ground-breaking rituals on August 4 to mark the reconstruction of Ram Mandir at Ayodhya.
- ✓ Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu, several state governors, chief ministers of BJP-governed states also made contributions to the temple construction.
- ✓ Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan handed over a cheque for ₹1 lakh to the VHP delegation
- ✓ The target was to reach 65 crore people across the country for seeking the funds
- **Hyderabad-based Dr. Reddy's Laboratories - has received the approval of the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) to conduct Phase-III clinical trial for Russia's COVID-19 vaccine candidate, Sputnik V, in the country.**
- ✓ The Phase-III trial will be conducted on 1,500 subjects as part of the randomised, double blind, parallel group, placebo controlled study in India
- ✓ Dr. Reddy's and Russian Direct Investment Fund had announced a partnership in September on clinical trials for Sputnik V and its distribution rights in India.

INTERNATIONAL

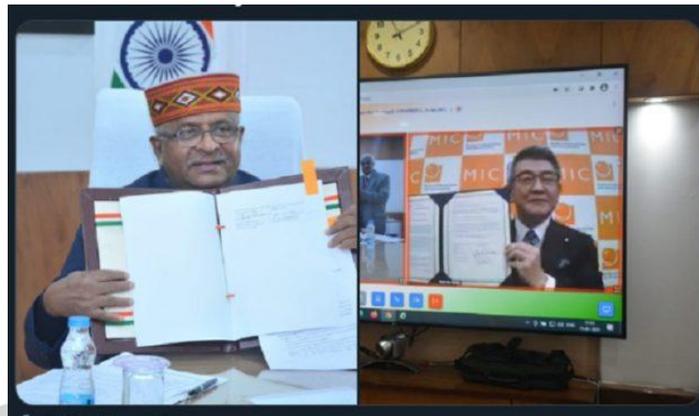
- **On January 14, US President elect Joe Biden - unveiled a \$1.9 trillion Covid-19 rescue plan**
 - ✓ Called the “American Rescue Plan,” the proposal would meet Biden’s goal of administering 100 million vaccines by the 100th day of his administration
 - ✓ This is his first major stimulus package initiative to address the pandemic and economic crisis crippling the country.
 - ✓ The proposal, which has to be passed by lawmakers, includes a \$1,400 payout to qualifying individuals, in addition to the \$600 passed by the outgoing Congress.
 - ✓ The incoming President’s proposals also includes \$20 billion for a national vaccine plan and \$50 billion for expanding coronavirus testing with plans to hire an army of 100,000 public health workers.
 - ✓ In all, nearly \$400 billion of the \$1.9 trillion is to be spent in combating the virus.
 - ✓ There will also be unemployment benefits, rental assistance, aid to small businesses, and money to help schools reopen.
 - ✓ The plan will provide \$130 billion to help the schools in the United States to reopen safely within the first hundred days of the presidency of Biden.
 - ✓ The package includes \$1 trillion direct relief to households.
 - ✓ Further, it will also provide \$440 billion to develop the small businesses and communities particularly to those that are hardly hit by the covid-19 pandemic.
 - ✓ An unemployment insurance of \$400 per week is to be provided, as against \$300 provided per week earlier.
 - ✓ Recently the United States Food and Drug Administration issued the first emergency use authorisation of Pfizer Covid-19 vaccine.
 - ✓ The moderna vaccine was the second vaccine to receive emergency use authorisation in the country.
 - ✓ The United States had launched ‘Operation Warp Speed’ in May 2020 to facilitate and accelerate the development, manufacturing and distribution of covid-19 vaccine
 - ✓ The public private partnership was initially funded with 10 billion USD from the CARES Act.
 - ✓ CARES Act is the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act.
 - ✓ It was a 2.2 trillion USD economic stimulus Bill passed by the US Congress in March 2020 to tackle the effects of pandemic in the US

- **On January 15, Russia - announced it was pulling out of the Open Skies treaty, which allows unarmed surveillance flights over member countries**
 - ✓ The move, announced by Russia’s Foreign Ministry, is necessitated as the pact had been seriously compromised by the recent withdrawal of the United States.
 - ✓ The United States left the Open Skies arms control and verification treaty in November, accusing Russia of violating it, which was denied by Moscow.

- ✓ Moscow will formally notify other member states about its exit once it has completed unspecified withdrawal procedures at home
- ✓ The exit process usually takes months to be finalised.
- ✓ New START, the last remaining major nuclear arms control treaty between both the countries, is set to expire in February.

INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES

- **India and Japan - recently signed Memorandum of Understanding to enhance cooperation in the field of Information and Communications Technology.**



- ✓ The MoU was signed by Minister for Communications, Electronics and IT Ravi Shankar Prasad and the Japanese Minister for Internal Affairs and Communications Takeda Ryota.
- ✓ The agreement will promote cooperation in the field of telecom security, 5G technologies, submarine optical fiber cable system to islands of India, smart cities, spectrum management, high altitude platform for broadband in unconnected areas, public safety and disaster management.
- ✓ In September 2020, India and Japan signed Military Logistics Agreement.
- ✓ The agreement allowed the countries to exchange supplies and services on a reciprocal basis.
- ✓ Japan was the sixth country with which India signed the agreement after US, France, Singapore, South Korea and Australia.
- ✓ India and Japan signed the nuclear deal in 2015.
- ✓ Under the agreement, Japan can supply nuclear reactors, fuel and technology to India.
- ✓ India is the only non-NPT (Non-Proliferation Treaty) signatory with which Japan has entered into a civil nuclear deal.

DEFENCE

- **The Indian Army - has signed a \$20-million contract with ideaForge to procure high-altitude variant of SWITCH UAV, an indigenous system used in surveillance operations.**

- ✓ ideaForge is one of the leading player in unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) technology
- ✓ The quantity of the UAVs to be bought is yet to be disclosed
- ✓ SWITCH UAV is an indigenous system that is designed to withstand most demanding surveillance operations of the Indian forces.
- ✓ This fixed-wing vertical take-off and landing UAV can be deployed at high altitudes and under harsh environments for day and night surveillance
- ✓ UAV player ideaForge has been awarded this one-year contract after it qualified the operational requirements in an evaluation done in real-world conditions.

APPOINTMENTS

- **On January 15, the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHCR) – elected Fiji's ambassador as its 2021 president in an unprecedented secret ballot process**
- ✓ This is the first-ever presidential voting that has chosen Ambassador Nazhat Shameem Khan, Permanent Representative of Fiji to the United Nations Office at Geneva



- ✓ All 47 members of the Geneva-based human rights body cast their vote to appoint its president for 2021 – the Council's 15th annual cycle
- ✓ Ambassadors Keva Lorraine Bain of the Bahamas, Ali Ibn Abi Talib Abdelrahman Mahmoud of the Sudan and Monique T.G. van Daalen of the Netherlands were elected as Council vice-presidents
- ✓ The election of the fourth vice-president, from the Eastern European Group, will take place following negotiations within the Group.
- ✓ Nazhat Shameem Khan, who served as the council's Vice-President in 2020 and is considered a rights champion, won with 29 out of 47 votes.
- ✓ The other two candidates for the position of President of the Human Rights Council, coming from the Asia-Pacific Group of States, were Yusuf Abdulkarim Bucheeri, Permanent Representative of Bahrain (secured 14 votes), and Ulugbek Lapasov, Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan (secured 4 votes)
- ✓ Nazhat Shameem Khan has been serving as the Permanent Representative of Fiji to the United Nations Office at Geneva since 2014.

- ✓ Prior to her appointment to Geneva, Nazhat was a legal practitioner and legal consultant, training judges in Fiji on human rights, sentencing, and criminal justice.
- ✓ She worked for 16 years as a prosecutor in Fiji, and during that time was appointed Director of Public Prosecutions of Fiji in 1994.
- ✓ In 1999, she was appointed Fiji's first woman High Court judge.

SPORTS

- **On January 15, France's Stephane Peterhansel - won the Dakar Rally for the 14th time, 30 years after his initial success in the most gruelling event on the motorsport calendar.**



- ✓ Peterhansel, nicknamed 'Mr Dakar', has now won the car category eight times, having also won the motorbike category six times.
- ✓ His first victory came 30 years back in the year 1991
- ✓ The 55-year-old Mini driver was assisted by co-pilot Edouard Boulanger
- ✓ The duo finished 14min 51sec ahead of Qatari Nasser al-Attiyah (Toyota), while Spain's Carlos Sainz finished third in the race
- ✓ Earlier, French motorcyclist Pierre Cherpin had died from injuries sustained in a crash on the seventh stage, becoming the race's first fatality this year.
- ✓ Cherpin's death takes to 27, including 22 motorcyclists, the number of competitors who have lost their lives since the inaugural Dakar Rally in 1979.
- ✓ Argentina's Kevin Benavides won the motorbike category, ahead of defending champion Ricky Brabec of the United States, for the first Honda 1-2 finish since 1987.
- ✓ Briton Sam Sunderland, the 2017 champion, finished third.
- ✓ Benavides, who broke his nose in a crash on the fifth stage that saw his helmet shattered, became the first South American to win the category.

