Vaccines

Now, walk-in vaccines for everyone over 18 (The Tribune: 20210525)


Centre allows on-site registration for 18-44 age group on CoWin; feature enabled only for government vaccination centers at present

Now, walk-in vaccines for everyone over 18

A woman takes selfie as she receives a dose of the COVID-19 vaccine at a vaccination centre in Pushkar on May 24, 2021. PTI photo

On-site registration and appointment have now been enabled for the 18-44 years age group on the CoWin platform for Covid-19 vaccination, the Union Health Ministry said on Monday.

However, this feature is being enabled only for government Covid Vaccination Centers (CVCs) at present, it said.

This feature will not be available for private CVCs and they will have to publish their vaccination schedules exclusively with slots for online appointments.

This feature will be used only upon the decision of respective states and UT governments.

States and UT must decide on the opening of onsite registrations/facilitated cohorts' registration and appointments for 18-44 years age group based on the local context just as an additional measure to minimize vaccine wastage and for facilitating vaccination of eligible beneficiaries in the age group of 18-44 years, the ministry said in its statement.

The coverage of vaccination was expanded to people in the age group of 18 to 44 years on May 1 with the implementation of the Liberalised Pricing and Accelerated National Covid-19 Vaccination Strategy.
The facility of only online appointment mode initially to people in the age group of 18 to 44 years helped to avoid overcrowding at vaccination centres, the statement.

Based on various representations given by states and inputs received by ministry for the vaccination of 18-44 years age group, the Union government has now decided to provide facility of on-site registration/facilitated cohort registration on CoWIN digital platform for 18-44 years age group considering that in case of sessions exclusively organised with online slots, towards the end of the day, some doses may still be left unutilised in case the online appointee beneficiaries do not turn up on day of vaccination.

In such cases, on-site registration of a few beneficiaries may be necessary to minimise the vaccine wastage, the statement said. Even though CoWIN provides for features such as registration of up to 4 beneficiaries with a mobile number, facilitated registration and appointments through applications, such as Arogya Setu and Umang and through the Common Service Centres etc., people requiring facilitated cohort's facility and those without access to internet or smart phones or mobile phones may still have limited access for vaccination.

"Therefore, the feature for on-site registration and appointment is now being enabled for the 18-44 years age group on CoWIN.

"However, this feature is being enabled only for Government Covid Vaccination Centers (CVCs), at the present moment in time," the ministry said.

The Union Health Ministry has advised the states and UTs to issue clear instructions to all District Immunization Officers to strictly adhere to the decision of the respective state and UT Government regarding the extent and manner of using the on-site registration and appointment feature for 18 to 44 years age group, the statement said.

Fully reserved sessions can also be organised for providing vaccination services to beneficiaries belonging to facilitated cohorts. Wherever such fully reserved sessions are organized, all efforts must also be made to mobilize such beneficiaries in sufficient numbers.

The ministry has further advised states and UTs that abundant caution should be exercised and extreme due care should be taken while opening up on-site registration and appointment for 18-44 years age group, in order to avoid overcrowding at vaccination centres, the statement
Delhi govt imported 6,000 oxygen cylinders from China, says Kejriwal

CM: Pfizer, Moderna refused to sell vaccines to Delhi govt

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**

**NEW DELHI, MAY 24**

Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal on Monday said US pharmaceutical giants Pfizer and Moderna have declined to sell coronavirus vaccines to the city government as they want to directly deal with the Centre.

"We have had talks with Pfizer and Moderna. They said they won't give us vaccine and will directly talk to the Centre," Kejriwal told reporters.

"I appeal to the central government with folded hands to talk to these firms, import vaccines and distribute them among states," he added.

The Delhi chief minister's remarks came a day after a senior Punjab official said Moderna had refused to send vaccines directly to the state government stating that it only deals with the Centre.

Kejriwal said the second wave of Covid-19 is declining gradually and the city government has started preparations for the third wave.

Kejriwal on Monday said his government has imported 6,000 oxygen cylinders from China which will be stored at three depots and used in case of a third wave of coronavirus.

"Around 6,000 oxygen cylinders have been airlifted from China, of which we have received 4,400. The remaining 1,600 will arrive within two to three days," he told reporters.

The chief minister thanked the ministry of external affairs and the Indian Embassy in Beijing for the assistance in importing the oxygen cylinders.

The city government is creating three depots to store the cylinders. These can be given to people in need and can be used to create additional oxygen beds at hospitals, Kejriwal said.

"In case of a third wave of Covid-19, these 6,000 cylinders can be utilised to prepare 3,000 oxygen beds. Perhaps, this is the largest such consignment brought to India since the pandemic began," he said.

He said HCL and Give India Foundation donated for this purpose. "Besides, we are purchasing oxygen concentrators on a large scale. Oxygen concentrator banks have been set up in all the districts to provide them to people in need. We are also going to buy oxygen tanks and are creating oxygen storage space. Whatever problems we faced during this wave are now being resolved," he said.

A medic walks past vacant beds at Shehnai Banquet Hall, converted into a Covid-19 isolation centre, in New Delhi on Monday.

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'500 black fungus cases in Delhi but vaccines in short supply'

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**

**NEW DELHI, MAY 24**

Chief minister Arvind Kejriwal on Monday said there are around 500 cases of black fungus or mucormycosis in Delhi and the city has been grappling with a shortage of Amphotericin-B injection used in its treatment.

"We have set up dedicated centres for the treatment of black fungus at Lok Nayak Hospital, GTB Hospital and Rajiv Gandhi Super Specialty Hospital but we do not have drugs..."

We did not get the injections on Sunday," he told reporters.

Four to five injections per patient per day are used in the treatment of the fungal infection. There are around 500 cases of black fungus in Delhi at present, he said, adding Delhi has been receiving around 400 to 500 injections per day.

The central government has been distributing the injection among states. There is a severe shortage of this drug in the market and its production should be ramped up, the chief minister said.
Tobacco (The Asian Age: 20210525)


People quit tobacco to relapse faster

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, MAY 24

Quitting tobacco is easy but staying quit is difficult! People quit tobacco to relapse faster than they had quit leading to frustration and loss of confidence. It is important to seek help of certified tobacco cessation specialists for successful quitting.

The journey which begins following peer pressure or experimentation and a phase of happy life with tobacco, ultimately leads to frustration and a desire to quit mostly due to health reasons. The only wish is of someone to help quit successfully.

Why is it so difficult to quit? There are two main reasons. One, nicotine affects the brain causing physical dependence, leading to severe cravings. The second is the psychological misconception of tobacco users that they can quit with willpower alone. The World Health Organisation recognises tobacco as a “complex disease” that needs treatment.

The book Win Over Tobacco Made Easy, authored by Dr Pawan Gupta, is a comprehensive guide in this regard.

Dr Gupta is director of surgical oncology at Max Super Speciality Hospital, Vaishali, Patparganj and Noida. He is highly recognised for his work on oral cancer and tobacco cessation.

He is the convener for certified course in tobacco cessation under the Gujarat University. He launched the #SAVEtheyouth campaign and Tobacco MARSHALs in the community.

Thrashing Docs (The Asian Age: 20210525)
Act against those thrashing docs

Since Covid-19 gripped the world last year and caused devastation worldwide, including in India, our doctors — who practise allopathic medicine, the core of scientifically validated therapeutics — and nurses have been in the forefront of the war against the pandemic. Much more than three lakh people may have died in India if it weren’t for their dedication.

And yet yoga teacher Ramdev thought it fit to traduce allopathy and by extension its practitioners, more than a thousand of whom died fighting the virus. He called allopathy “a stupid science”, a “tamasha” (farce). In doing so, he mocked the national effort to fight the disease, which continues to claim thousands of victims daily. Perhaps the “Baba” is miffed that Coronil, made by the drug manufacturing units of his vast commercial empire, didn’t pass the test of science and the false claims around it were exposed.

The Indian Medical Association has demanded action against Ramdev under the law for demoralising the medical community and weakening the national fightback against the disease. Options can be considered under the Epidemiology Act or Disaster Management Act. Is the government up to it? While promoting the ancient Indian discipline of ayurveda, the government regrettably ended up promoting quacks and superstition peddlers hiding behind the rubric “Hindu civilisation”. It may not be easy for it to move against those publicly downgrading science.

It may be recalled that Bhopal BJP MP Pragya Thakur, once allegedly associated with a bomb blast in a minority community locality and for embarrassing the government by praising Mahatma Gandhi’s assassin, has claimed she is safe from Covid as she drinks cow urine, which she touted as a cure. As a public servant, she ought to discount modern medicine and science, and backed a wholly untested belief among some Hindus about the medicinal virtues of cow urine — including for Covid — since the cow is an animal they revere. Does the Centre, the BJP or the Madhya Pradesh government propose to act against her?

The MP government, however, appears energetic about booking former CM Kamal Nath for making a reference to the “Indian” variant of Covid, now a subject of discussion in the global scientific community, including here. Mr Nath is accused of weakening the national effort in the anti-Covid fight.

Health Care Services (The Asian Age: 20210525)

https://epaper.hindustantimes.com/Home/ArticleView

Centre allows walk-in vaccines for all adults
The Union government on Monday allowed states to open on-site registration, appointments, and administration of doses for adults below the age of 45 seeking coronavirus vaccines, after repeated calls to abandon the digital-only system that critics said was leaving out people who did not have access to smartphones or the internet.

The feature at present is being enabled only for government vaccination centres, the health ministry said, and it will depend on the state government to decide whether they want to allow on-site registrations and appointments based on the “local context”.

The move comes at a time when vaccines for the younger adult age group became available from May 1 but the demand soon surpassed supplies, exhausting stocks, and halting the drive in several states, including Delhi, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana.

“Based on the various representations given by the states and inputs received by Union health ministry for the vaccination of 18-45 year age group, the Union government has now decided to provide facility of on-site registration/facilitated cohort registration on Co-WIN digital platform for 18-45 years age group,” the statement said.

The statement noted that “even though Co-WIN provides for features such as registration of up to 4 beneficiaries with a mobile number, facilitated registration and appointments through applications, such as AarogyaSetu and Umang and through the Common Service Centres etc, people requiring cohort’s facility and those without access to internet or smart phones or mobile phones may still have limited access for vaccination”.

Beyond Co-WIN platform

- Adults below the age of 45 can register for vaccines at government centres, once state governments adopt this feature. The move will help those who do not have access to devices to access Co-WIN.
- Following the sign-up, people will need an appointment to receive the vaccine doses, which they can also seek at site if there are spare doses.
- To avoid wastage, government centres will be allowed to vaccinate those walking in if they have doses left due to no-show by those with online appointments.

The provision to register on-site will not be available for private vaccination centres, which will need to follow the existing protocol to publish their vaccination schedules in advance.
The move was also meant to reduce vaccine wastage, the government said, suggesting states to open up vaccination centres to walk-in recipients if they have doses left over from appointment no-shows.

“In case of sessions exclusively organised with online slots, towards the end of the day, some doses may still be left unutilized in case the online appointee beneficiaries do not turn up on day of vaccination due to any reason. In such cases, on-site registration of a few beneficiaries may be necessary to minimise the vaccine wastage,” the statement said.

Experts pointed out that while the walk-in option may not immediately alter the pace of vaccination, it is a big policy shift whose impact will be visible when next month’s supplies are available.

“It will help in hastening the pace; care should be taken to prevent super-spreader events at vaccination sites. For meaningful increase in the pace of coverage, comprehensive micro-planning and mobilisation strategies are needed,” said Dr Giridhara R Babu, head, epidemiology, Indian institute Of Public Health.

The government opened vaccinations for the under-45 adult age group on this month, but people need to first register online and book a slot before they can be served at vaccination centres.

The demand has been such that several states have run out of the limited supplies of vaccines they received for the 18-45 age group, including Delhi where deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia said on Monday that the 400 vaccination centres for this group have been shut from this week due to a lack of doses.

Sisodia earlier wrote a strongly worded letter to Union health minister Harsh Vardhan, saying the vaccination for the youth in the country has been “messed” up due to policy “missteps”.

“In spite of early advantages given by our scientific community and Indian manufacturers, we have squandered away the great opportunity of timely vaccination of our people. The missed opportunity by the Government of India has resulted in extraordinary loss of lives during the current wave of Covid pandemic,” he wrote to Vardhan.

The rate of vaccinations has fallen gradually in the country, after recording a peak of over 4 million doses that was delivered in a single day in early April. In the week ending May 10, this number was down to 2.15 million doses on average, followed by 1.82 million in the week ending May 17 and 1.48 million in the 7-day period after that.

In addition to Delhi, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana are among states that halted vaccinations for this age group. Many of these have floated tenders to procure doses directly from foreign developers but have not been able to draw much interest.

The Centre has also directed states to issue clear instructions to all district immunisation officers, to strictly adhere to decision regarding the extent and manner of using the on-site registration and appointment feature for this age group.

“State/UT must decide on opening of on-site registrations/facilitated cohorts’ registration and appointments for 18-45 years age group based on the local context just as an additional measure to minimize vaccine wastage and for facilitating
vaccination of eligible beneficiaries in the age group 18-45 years. Also, abundant
cautions should be exercised and extreme due care should be taken while opening up
of on-site registration... in order to avoid overcrowding at vaccination centres,” the
statement further read.

Covid-19: What you need to know today (Hindustan Times: 20210525)

India ended Sunday, May 23, with a total of 222,881 cases. The second wave of the
coronavirus disease (Covid-19) pandemic is definitely waning. The death toll remained
high though (4,451 on May 23), but since deaths lag cases by around two weeks it will
take some time for the number of daily deaths to start declining. What we are seeing
now are deaths resulting from a time when the number of cases was still high (in
absolute terms 220,000+ is high, but compared to the 400,000+ India was seeing not so long ago, it is a definite improvement). Just to put things in context, the seven-day average of daily cases rose from 373,321 on May 2 to 391,819 on May 9 (the highest the average reached) before it started falling (and pretty sharply at that), to 328,947 on May 16 and further to 255,198 on May 23. The corresponding seven-day averages of daily deaths were 3,394, 3,895, 4,037, and 4,190 respectively (the lag effect is evident here). It is likely that states where lockdowns are still in place (pretty much most states), will start removing them as early as next week. That’s much needed – lives and livelihoods will have to return to some degree of normalcy – but it’s important that both the states and the federal government do what needs to be done to prevent a third wave. The wise men in charge of the country’s Covid-19 response likely know all this already, but here’s a quick reminder of five things that will help stave off the third wave (or, at the least, lessen its intensity).

1. **Continue with restrictions on movement and activities.** While variants of the Sars-CoV-2 virus (including B.1.617, first sequenced in India, and which will likely soon be the dominant strain of the virus in most countries) were likely the main cause for the surge in cases India witnessed during the second wave, the fact that most states had completely opened up didn’t help. There were no restrictions on movement; nor were there limits on capacity (either in public transport or restaurants); many offices had reopened; and traffic in most parts of urban India was actually higher than it had been before the pandemic struck in early 2020 (understandable, because people were preferring to use private vehicles). That cannot happen again. The reopening has to be phased and gradual – especially where closed spaces such as malls, multiplexes, and offices are concerned – with limits on capacity that will likely have to continue till at least the beginning of the third quarter of this financial year (October).

2. **Avoid superspreader events.** Another factor behind the second wave was a profusion of superspreader events: weddings, religious functions, and election rallies. Both the states and the Centre would do well to avoid these. For instance, farmers protesting three farm laws passed last September have called for a large nationwide protest on May 26. Many opposition parties have supported this. This is irresponsible – on the part of both the farmers and the parties. Similarly, there’s talk, after a meeting of education ministers on Sunday, of going ahead with the school-leaving exams for Class XII students after the end of the second wave (which means sometime in July). This, too, is reckless (especially because at least half of all Class XII students are under the age of 18, and not eligible for vaccination; and given the shortage of vaccines, there’s no guarantee that even the eligible ones have been vaccinated). Calling off the exams immediately, and grading these students on the basis of a formula that involves Class XI marks and internal assessment will end what has been a 15-month academic term for many, and kick-start the college admission process.

3. **Get the vaccine drive back on track:** Enough has been written on this. As of May 23, around 43 million Indians have been fully vaccinated and another 108 million have received one dose. That’s just around 16% of the eligible population (those over the age of 18 years). The government needs to approve more vaccines, work with vaccine makers to enhance supplies, and together with the states, arrive at a schedule of supply (by months) accurate to few hundred doses. This will allow states to plan (and prioritise) better.

4. **Ensure accurate reporting of cases and deaths:** There’s a simple rule to remember – if a state’s Covid-19 numbers look too good to be true, they probably are.
Not recording positive cases (so as to show a low number of cases), and passing off Covid deaths as those from other diseases does not help anyone. Instead, by providing an inaccurate picture of the pandemic’s trajectory, it prevents epidemiologists and health experts from coming up with the right strategies.

5. **Build stockpiles of key medicines; adopt triage:** Even as they work on everything else, the federal government and the states will have to build stockpiles of key medicines (and oxygen). Unavailability of (or inaccessibility to) these were responsible for many of the deaths seen over the past month. It’s also becoming clear that states that used triage centres (Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, for example) managed to handle a high number of cases. States that didn’t use these during the second wave should use the lull in cases to create triage centres.

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**Covid-19 Recove**

*Sharp fall in cases, but most Covid ICU beds remain full (Hindustan Times: 20210525)*
Even as Delhi continues to witness a steady decline of daily new Covid-19 cases, the number of seriously ill patients has remained nearly stagnant, with most ICU beds in big private hospitals remaining almost full.

The number of Covid-19 cases has reduced from a 7-day average of 18,374 (May 3-9) in the first week of May to 3,285 (May 17-23) in the third week of the month, and the number of hospitalisations declined by 33% in this period, but the ICU occupancy has declined by only 5.6%.

Doctors and government officials said this is because of extremely critical patients reaching hospitals during the peak and long recovery time in ICUs.
HT analysed government data between May 10 and May 22 and found that while the number of active cases in Delhi has seen a decline of 67%, and the number of non-ICU patients by 59%, the number of ICU-patients has remained almost stagnant. Indeed, some days including May 12, 13 and 14, the number of ICU patients were even higher than May 10. From May 10 to May 22, the number of ICU patients has declined by 11% -- indicating that the pace of recovery of serious Covid-19 patients is way longer than those with milder symptoms.

During the entire 13-day period, the number of ICU patients in Delhi remained above 5,000 till May 20. It was only from May 21 that it went down below 5000.

At the worst of this crisis, only 13.6% of Delhi’s Covid-19 beds were empty (16,942 occupied and 2,666 vacant) on April 20, while six days after that the city had completely run out of ICU beds for the general public, according to government data. Currently, of the total 28,485 beds across the Capital, 8,791 are occupied and 19,694 are vacant.

Dr SCL Gupta, medical superintendent of Batra hospital said, “The numbers have started coming down over the last two or three days. But it will take another two weeks for the ICUs to empty out. These are still patients who were admitted during the peak.”

The number of cases in Delhi peaked on April 20, with 28,395; the hospital occupancy on May 6, with 20,117; and the number of people in ICUs at 5,813 on May 12.

The longer ICU stay led to a clogging up of the system at the peak, said Dr Sumit Ray, critical care specialist and medical superintendent of Holy Family hospital.

“That is the timeline of Covid-19. Those who get critically ill, tend to have a long hospital stay. In the ICU, those who are not on ventilators take about two to three weeks to recover and those who are on ventilators could take up to a month. During the peak, the beds in ICU were completely full and that is the reason people were running from hospital to hospital,” he added.

However, the availability of ICU beds has improved markedly. But if the current occupancy of ICU beds is just over 62%, it is largely because of ICU capacity added in the city over the last three weeks. The Delhi government created two makeshift 500-bed ICU-only facilities on vacant grounds and attached them to Lok Nayak and GTB hospitals. Another 200 were added at the Radha Saomi facility in Chhatarpur.

“Now, we are getting only three to four patients a day and not all of them need ICU care. So, most of the patients currently admitted to the ICU are those who were taken in during the peak. Patients in ICU, especially those on ventilators, need a long time to recover. The numbers are likely to start coming down over the next couple of weeks,” said a senior doctor from Rajeev Gandhi super speciality hospital who asked not to be named.

Delhi on Monday reported 1,550 new cases of Covid-19, the lowest since March 30 this year, when the city saw 992 cases. The positivity rate rose marginally on Monday to 2.52%, from 2.42% on Sunday.

The city however reported 207 more deaths due to Covid-19 on Monday, taking the total toll of the infection to 23,409 in the city.

“The number of deaths will start coming down only 15 to 20 days after the number of cases peaked. There are several patients still admitted to the intensive care units and
these are the sickest patients so some of them will die,” said Dr SCL Gupta, medical superintendent of Batra hospital.

Experts warned against anybody letting their guard up, and said the government must focus on aggressive vaccination while the caseload is low.

However, the number of Covid-19 vaccinations have halved in Delhi due to a shortage of doses for those between the ages of 18 and 45.

“There is likely to be another surge in cases in Delhi – there have been three distinct surges in the city three to four months apart. This period has to be utilised to give at least the first dose of the vaccine to as many as possible. It looks like that the number of doses available will go up from July. After that, there is a need for aggressive vaccination. That is the only hope for preventing another surge,” said Dr Amit Singh, associate professor at Indian Institute of Science – Bengaluru.
लांचत: पंजाब के बाद दिल्ली सरकार को भी मना किया, कहा- केंद्र से ही करार करेंगे विदेशी कंपनियों राज्यों को सीधे टिके देने को राजी नहीं

विदेशी कंपनियों के भारत में राज्यों को सीधे टिके देने के लिए राजस्व लगातार में तथा इसांतर करता है। दिल्ली और महाराष्ट्र के अंतर्गत विदेशी राज्यों के लिए टिके की सुविधा प्रदान करने वाले एक नया प्रणाली विकसित कर रहा है।

टिके का टेंडर: कई राज राज्यों के पास टिकेट बिल्डिंग सम्पन्न करने वाले टिके सेवाओं के हिसाब से जुड़ा रहा है। दिल्ली और महाराष्ट्र में 18-44 वर्षीय यात्रियों को टिकट प्रदान करने के लिए टिके देने का आदेश भी मिला है।

दिल्ली में 2023 तक की तारीख तक 2023 में टिकेट प्रदान करने का आदेश भी मिला है।

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केंद्रीय प्रादेश
2023 में तक को करेंगे टिके देने वाले राज्यों को राजस्व लगातार में तथा केंद्र से ही करार करेंगे विदेशी कंपनियों राज्यों को सीधे टिके देने को राजी नहीं करेंगे।

टिके पर ताला:

- टिके की मात्रा से दिल्ली में टिकट प्रदान करने का आदेश भी मिला है।
- दिल्ली, उत्तर प्रदेश, तमिलनाडु और राजस्थान में 18-44 वर्षीय यात्रियों को टिकट प्रदान करने का आदेश भी मिला है।

टिकेट लगभग 3.5 करोड़ के लिए आदेश भी मिला है।

केंद्र ने कहा कि: केंद्रीय सरकार के अनुसार, भारत की राजधानी के महानगर के रेलवे स्टेशंस के संगमरमर से ही राजस्व लगातार में तथा केंद्र से ही टिकेट प्रदान करने वाले राज्यों को राजस्व लगातार में तथा केंद्र से ही करार करेंगे विदेशी कंपनियों राज्यों को सीधे टिके देने को राजी नहीं करेंगे। दिल्ली में 2023 में तक को करेंगे टिके देने वाले राज्यों को राजस्व लगातार में तथा केंद्र से ही करार करेंगे विदेशी कंपनियों राज्यों को सीधे टिके देने को राजी नहीं करेंगे।

टिके का आयात कर राज्यों को दे केंद्र : केंद्रीय वाली

दिल्ली के मुख्यमंत्री अशविनी के केंद्रीय वाली के लिए इस्तेमाल करने वाले कम के लिए जारी है। आदेश कहता है कि इस्तेमाल करने वाले कम के लिए जारी है।