



# DAILY NEWS BULLETIN

LEADING HEALTH, POPULATION AND FAMILY WELFARE STORIES OF THE DAY  
Tuesday 20220104

## Omicron tally in India

### Omicron tally in India rises to 1,892 as 37K new Covid cases reported (The Tribune: 20220104)

Maharashtra has recorded the maximum number of 568 cases, followed by Delhi (382), Kerala (185), Rajasthan (174), Gujarat (152), and Tamil Nadu (121)

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/nation/omicron-tally-in-india-rises-to-1-892-as-37k-new-covid-cases-reported-358055>

Omicron tally in India rises to 1,892 as 37K new Covid cases reported

Photo for representation purposes. Tribune

A total of 1,892 cases of omicron variant of coronavirus have been detected across 23 states and Union Territories so far, out of which 766 have recovered or migrated, according to the Union health ministry's data updated on Tuesday.

Maharashtra has recorded the maximum number of 568 cases, followed by Delhi (382), Kerala (185), Rajasthan (174), Gujarat (152), and Tamil Nadu (121).

India's Covid tally rose to 3,49,60,261 with 37,379 new cases, while the active cases increased to 1,71,830, according to the data updated at 8 am.

The death toll climbed to 4,82,017 with 124 more fatalities, the data showed.

The active cases comprise 0.49 per cent of the total infections, while the national Covid recovery rate was recorded at 98.13 per cent, the health ministry said.

An increase of 26,248 cases has been recorded in the active Covid caseload in a span of 24 hours.

The daily positivity rate was recorded at 3.24 per cent while the weekly positivity rate was recorded at 2.05 per cent, according to the health ministry.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 3,43,06,414, while the case fatality rate was recorded at 1.38 per cent.

The cumulative doses administered in the country so far under the nationwide Covid vaccination drive has exceeded 146.7 crore.

The 124 new fatalities include 71 from Kerala and 13 from West Bengal.

A total of 4,82,017 deaths have been reported so far in the country, including 1,41,553 from Maharashtra, 48,184 from Kerala, 38,351 from Karnataka, 36,796 from Tamil Nadu, 25,110 from Delhi, 22,916 from Uttar Pradesh and 19,794 from West Bengal. PTI

## **Covid surge**

### **Covid surge: 50% Central staff can work from home (The Tribune: 20220104)**

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/nation/50-central-staff-can-work-from-home-357858>

38 jawans of CRPF unit CoBRA test positive in Sukma

Covid surge: 50% Central staff can work from home

The Centre has allowed 50 per cent of its employees below the level of Under Secretary to work from home amid rising Covid cases, according to a Personnel Ministry order issued on Monday.

Persons with disabilities and pregnant women employees have been exempted from attending the offices, it said.

Central government officers/staff will have to follow staggered timing – 9 am to 5.30 pm and 10 am to 6.30 pm – to avoid overcrowding in the offices, the order said.

Fresh cases 33,750

Total deaths 4,81,893

Active cases 1,45,582

123 deaths in 24 hours

All officers/staff residing in Covid containment zones have also been exempted from coming to office till containment zones are de-notified, it said in the order issued to all central government departments.

“Physical attendance of government servants below the level of Under Secretary shall be restricted to 50 per cent of the actual strength and the remaining 50 per cent shall work from home. A roster may be prepared accordingly by all the departments concerned,” the order said.

All officers of the level of Under Secretary and above are to attend office on a regular basis, it said.

“Meeting, as far as possible, shall be conducted on video-conferencing and personal meetings with visitors, unless absolutely necessary in public interest, are to be avoided,” the order said. All officers/staff have to ensure strict compliance with Covid-appropriate behaviour, it said. — PTI

### **Boosters raise vax effectiveness against Omicron to 88%: Studies**

### **Boosters raise vax effectiveness against Omicron to 88%: Studies (The Tribune: 20220104)**

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/world/boosters-raise-vax-effectiveness-against-omicron-to-88-studies-358013>

Boosters raise vax effectiveness against Omicron to 88%: Studies

A girl receives a Covid vaccine in Karawang, West Java, Indonesia, on Monday. REUTERS

A third dose of Covid-19 vaccine can provide up to 88 per cent protection against hospitalisation from infection by the Omicron variant of coronavirus, according to early results from studies conducted in the UK.

The findings compiled in a report by the UK Health Security Agency (UKSHA) show significantly higher protection provided by third vaccine dose against the highly mutated variant first identified in Botswana and South Africa in November, compared to two doses.

Eric Topol, professor of molecular medicine and director of the Scripps Research Translational Institute in the US, noted that vaccine effectiveness dropped to 52 per cent against Omicron around six months after taking the second shot of a Covid-19 vaccine.

However, a booster dose substantially increased immunity and lowered the odds of being hospitalised with Covid-19 infection.

"That's a big boost of protection. Vaccine effectiveness increased from 52 per cent (due to two dose waning after six months) to 88 per cent after the third dose," Topol tweeted on Sunday.

The UKHSA report cited two studies that examined the association between both variant and vaccination status and risk of hospitalisation.

The first study is based on approximately half a million Omicron cases, and includes all age groups while the second one uses a smaller dataset and is restricted to ages 18 and over.






The first study confirms the previous finding of reduced overall risk of hospitalisation for Omicron compared to the Delta variant. —PTI

Israel to admit foreigners with presumed immunity

Jerusalem: Israel will admit foreigners with presumed Covid-19 immunity from medium-risk countries as of January 9, the Health Ministry said on Monday, moving to reverse a ban on entry by foreigners imposed in late November in response to Omicron surge. Reuters

Omicron milder, putting fewer people into ICU, says UK PM

# TRACKING VIRUS

NATION	DEATHS
 US	8,47,408
 BRAZIL	6,19,171
 INDIA	4,81,893
 RUSSIA	3,11,353
 UK	1,48,851

WORLDOMETER TILL JANUARY 3, 11 PM

## Covid infections

**State of economy amid a surge in Covid infections (Hindustan Times:20220104)**

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

By Roshan Kishore India is clearly witnessing the beginning of a third wave of Covid-19 infections. The seven-day average of daily new cases was 6,780 on December 27 and 18,236 on January 2. This number has been increasing continuously for exactly seven days now. How are economic indicators reacting to this development? What is the state of the Indian economy at the cusp of yet another wave of the pandemic?



# 1 Stock markets seem unperturbed at the

The BSE Sensex, India's benchmark stock market index, gained 929 points on January 3 to close at 59,183. This is the highest level since November 18. Among subindices, BSE Bankex that tracks banking stocks, increased at 2.55%. Bajaj Finance was the top gainer at 3.51% among the Sensex stocks.

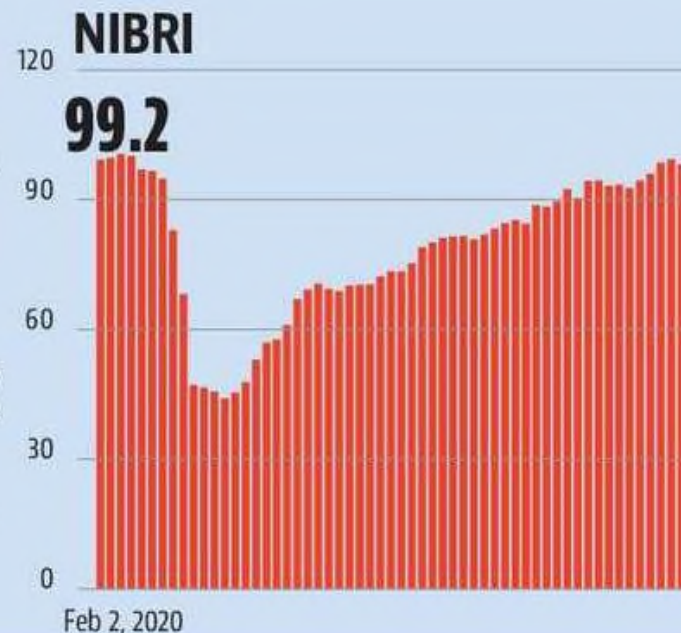
## BSE SENSEX (Closing price)



# 2 NIBRI at an all-time high in the week end

The Nomura India Business Resumption Index (NIBRI) reached an all-time high of 120.3, gaining marginally over the reading of 120.2 in the previous week. To be sure, the rise in NIBRI seems mainly on account of an increase in the Apple driving index, which increased by 10.4 percentage points. Workplace mobility actually fell by six percentage points, and even labour participation rate fell marginally from 40.7% to 40.6%.

"States have announced more restrictions, but elevated mobility and a rising positivity rate suggest a further rise in new cases. While early signs point to a lower mortality rate, it bears close monitoring. The restrictions could derail the recovery in contact-intensive services in Q1, but global experience suggests a smaller impact than previous waves and a swift growth rebound once cases peak," Nomura Global Markets Research said in a research note.



# 3 Manufacturing PMI continued to be in expansion zone in December

The IHS-Markit Purchasing Managers Index (PMI) for manufacturing was 55.5 in December 2021, the sixth consecutive month when it was above 50. However, the



## **kids vaccinated**

### **4.2mn kids vaccinated as next phase kicks off (Hindustan Times:20220104)**

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



More than 4 million teens, or over 5,500 every minute, were given coronavirus vaccines in a mere 12 hours after they became eligible for shots on Monday, sending a perceptible sense of relief among parents and children who queued up at vaccine centres under the shadow of a budding third wave of cases.

Between 8am and 8pm, 4.12 million doses were delivered, data from the Union government's Co-Win dashboard showed. This age-group accounted for 42% of all doses delivered till that time on Monday.

“Well done Young India! Over 40 lakh (four million) between 15-18 age group received their first dose of #COVID19 vaccine on the 1st day of vaccination drive for children, till 8 PM. This is another feather in the cap of India's vaccination drive,” said Union health minister Mansukh Mandaviya in a tweet.

The turnout was encouraging also because, just on the first day of the vaccine drive being expanded, it accounted for 5% of the estimated eligible population in this cohort, and 79% of the 5.1 million who signed up for shots under this age group.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said India has taken an important step in protecting its youth against the disease. “Congrats to all my young friends between the age group of 15-18 who got



vaccinated. Congrats to their parents as well. I would urge more youngsters to get vaccinated in the coming days!” he said on Twitter.

If this rate is maintained – although the opening day of a new phase typically has the highest demand – all of the estimated 74 million children are likely to be covered with the first doses within this month.

The Day 1 excitement was palpable at the vaccination centres at schools, hospitals, and special vaccination sites.

“I was looking forward to the vaccinations being opened for my age group. We have been cooped up inside our houses for nearly two years now, with schools being opened only on-and-off. Offline classes have not been very helpful. I am hoping that with maximum children coming for vaccinations, physical classes will finally resume,” said Rishvi Rajvanshi (16), a resident of south Delhi’s Malviya Nagar.

Parents accompanying their children, too, said getting children at least the first dose was their priority.

“I cannot tell you how anxious we were to get our children vaccinated, especially after the havoc that the second Covid wave wrecked. We lost my father to the virus in May and we have seen what this virus can do. As soon as the vaccination for children was announced, we have been on the lookout for registrations. I am glad that my son and my niece got their first doses,” said Arunima Singh, who was accompanying 15-year-old Niha and 17-year-old Dhruv to the Kautilya Sarvodaya School in Greater Kailash.

Officials at the vaccination centres said the process went smoothly.

“Everything went very smoothly today. Children were excited and parents were also relieved to have their kids protected. Many children were also curious about how the vaccination will protect them,” said Dr Suresh Kumar, medical director, Lok Nayak Hospital.

At present, only Bharat Biotech’s Covaxin is approved to be administered to recipients under the age of 18.

The new phase of the vaccine drive comes at a time of a sharp acceleration in cases, driven largely by the Omicron variant of the coronavirus.

The variant is the most transmissible yet and is more resistant to immunity from past infection or vaccines than other configurations of the virus. But it is linked to significantly lower odds of hospitalisations, especially among those who have some immunity.

Several countries accelerated their vaccination and booster drives last month when the Omicron variant, designated a variant of concern, began spreading after being first detected by South Africa in mid-November.

“It is day one of children getting jabbed, and just into the new years which usually was going to add to vaccine hesitancy; however, given the circumstances, the response has been good. It could also do with the fact that the numbers have suddenly started to rise again and it has brought people out of their comfort zone that many were in. We should see further rise in vaccination numbers,” said Dr Anupam Sibal, senior paediatrician, and group medical director, Apollo Hospitals.

Overall, the 45-60 age group population has the biggest two-dose vaccine coverage at 73.2%, data from the Co-WIN dashboard analysed by HT showed, followed by people in the 60-plus age group at 68.5%.



Among states, Himachal Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh administered the highest share of doses to children, while Punjab, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh recorded the least turnout in this age group.

On January 10, India's coronavirus vaccination drive will further open up by allowing people above the age of 60 with certain illnesses and those in health care and front-line jobs to take their third doses, which the government has called "precaution doses".

These doses can only be taken if the primary vaccination course was completed more than nine months prior.

According to estimates by HT based on 2021 Census projections, these newly eligible people – including the adolescent age group -- will add demand for another 104 million doses this month.

As on Monday, according to the Union government's daily vaccine supply bulletin, states already have close to 200 million doses at hand, indicating that the number of doses will not be a problem.

Gagandeep Kang, vaccine expert, and senior faculty, Christian Medical College, Vellore, said, "Eventually, we will have to vaccinate everyone, but it makes sense to protect subsets as much as possible and as early as possible such as those who are immunocompromised, elderly, comorbidities."

### **Vaccination Drive (Hindustan Times:20220104)**

<https://epaper.hindustantimes.com/Home/ShareImage?Pictureid=4108ae2d66>

# Flying start to teen vaccination drive

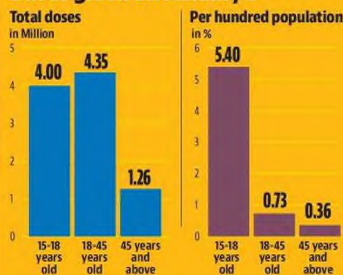
India began vaccinating its under-18 population with Covid-19 vaccines for the first time on January 3, beginning with those in the 15-18 years age group. By 8pm, a little over four million doses were delivered. This age group makes up around 18% of the under-18 population and 5.4% of the total population, according to population projections for 2021. Yet, on the first day of vaccination, this age group received more than a third of the doses administered on Monday. Here is how the first day of vaccination was for children.

By **Abhishek Jha**

## Children got over 40% of doses on January 3

The share of 15-18 years old children, of adults of age 18-45 years old, and those of age 45 and above is 5.4%, 43.7%, and 25.4% in India's population. The dose administration on January 3 was in sharp contrast to their respective share in population. The 15-18 age group received around 42% of the doses administered on the day, while those in the 18-45 age group and the 45 and above age group got around 45% and 13% of doses, according to data from the Co-WIN dashboard. This means that over 5% of the 15-18 age group was given the first dose on the very first day of vaccination. In comparison doses administered on Monday to the latter two age groups amounted to 0.7% and 0.3% of their population.

### Doses given on January 3



Note: Data as of 8 PM on January 3  
Source: Co-WIN dashboard, National Commission on Population

This should not be surprising. A large share of adults have already received at least one dose. As of 7 AM on January 3, 84.2% of the 18-45 age group and 91.7% of the 45 and above age group had received at least one dose. 56.5% and 71.7% of these age groups was also fully vaccinated by this time, according to data from the health ministry.

## The response across the country

While 5% of eligible children were vaccinated nationally, this share varied widely across states: from less than a percent in Punjab to over 20% in Himachal Pradesh. It is not the case that Punjab has more eligible children than Himachal Pradesh. Their projected population is around 2.2 million in Punjab and around 72.1 million in Himachal Pradesh. The share of eligible children vaccinated across states, however, did have some correlation with the adult coverage in these states. States that have covered a smaller share of their adult population were also slow in covering the 15-18 age group on their first day of vaccination.

### Share of 15-18 children vaccinated on Jan 3

Punjab	0.2
Jharkhand	0.8
Uttar Pradesh	1.2
Telangana	1.3
Bihar	2.0
Delhi	2.1
West Bengal	2.1
Kerala	2.5
NE ex Assam	2.8
Jammu and Kashmir	3.2
Maharashtra	3.0
Odisha	3.5
Assam	3.7
Haryana	4.2
Tamil Nadu	5.2
Rajasthan	7.5
Chhattisgarh	10.3
Uttarakhand	11.3
Karnataka	12.7
Gujarat	15.3
Madhya Pradesh	15.7
Andhra Pradesh	18.9
Himachal Pradesh	20.6

### Share of adults given at least one dose by Jan 2

NE excl Assam	69.9
Jharkhand	74.8
Punjab	75.4
Bihar	78.8
Tamil Nadu	86.5
Uttar Pradesh	87.2
Maharashtra	87.7
West Bengal	89.0
Chhattisgarh	89.8
Rajasthan	90.6
Assam	91.9
Odisha	93.5
Madhya Pradesh	94.8
Gujarat	95.9
Uttarakhand	96.6
Karnataka	97.5
Haryana	97.8
Kerala	98.0
Andhra Pradesh	100.5
Telangana	100.8
Delhi	101.2
Jammu and Kashmir	102.9
Himachal Pradesh	106.1

Source: Co-WIN dashboard, National Commission on Population Note: Data as of 8 PM on Jan 3



## India Covid Cases Surge (The Asian Age:20220104)

<http://onlinepaper.asianage.com/article/detailpage.aspx?id=16077300>

# 40 lakh 15-18 kids get jab as India's Covid cases surge: 33,750 in 24 hrs

*Centre issues new rules for employees; Omicron tally up to 1,838*

**SANJAY KAW**  
NEW DELHI, JAN. 3

As India gears up to contain a new Covid-19 surge stoked by the highly infectious Omicron variant, over 40 lakh children in the 15-18 age group got their first dose of the coronavirus vaccine on Monday. The Centre will also decide within the next two to three days which vaccine should be administered as a "precaution" dose to health-care/frontline workers and senior citizens above 60 with co-morbidities from January 10.

"Well done Young India! Over 40 lakhs between 15-18 age received their first dose of the Covid-19 vaccine on the first day of vaccination drive for children till 8 pm. This is another feather in the cap of India's vaccination drive," health minister Mansukh Mandaviya tweeted.

Amid the rising Covid-19 cases, the Centre has restricted the attendance of its employees below the level of undersecretary at



A student takes a selfie as a health worker administers a Covid-19 vaccine in Thane on Monday. — PTI

**AS MANY** as 1,838 Omicron cases have been detected across 23 states and Union territories so far. Maharashtra has the maximum number of 578 cases, followed by Delhi at 351.

all its departments to 50 per cent, and they have been asked to work from home. It has also directed its officers and staff to follow staggered timings in order to avoid the overcrowding of Central gov-

ernment offices.

Persons with disabilities and pregnant employees have been exempted from attending office. An order by the department of personnel directed the officers and staff residing in Covid-19 containment zones not to come to office until their location is de-notified. Even the biometric attendance of employees has been suspended with immediate effect.

As many as 1,838 Omicron cases have been

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## 'Omicron in 81% of latest samples tested in Delhi

**BHASKAR HARI SHARMA**  
NEW DELHI, JAN. 3

Delhi health minister Satyendar Jain on Monday told the Delhi Assembly that the latest genome sequencing report shows the Omicron variant of coronavirus has been found in 84 per cent of the samples tested. He said though there is a spike in new cases, the situation is under control as not many people are developing severe disease or require hospitalisation.

The Delhi health minister also informed that there was no shortage of medical staff in state-run hospitals and clinics at a time when the national capital is seeing an uptick in coronavirus cases in the last few days. He was responding to a question from BJP MLA O.P. Sharma.

■ More on Page 2

**Positivity Rate (The Asian Age:20220104)**

<http://onlinepaper.asianage.com/articledetailpage.aspx?id=16077307>



# 4,099 Covid cases in Delhi, positivity 6.46%

■ Omicron reason for surge, says health minister Jain ■ DDMA likely to consider more restrictions in today's meeting

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JAN. 3

Delhi on Monday reported 4,099 fresh Covid-19 cases with a positivity rate of 6.46 per cent. According to health minister Satyendar Jain, the Omicron variant of coronavirus is behind the surge in the infections in the city and more restrictions will be implemented if bed occupancy rate goes up. The number of new cases and positivity rate in the city is the highest since May 18.

The Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA), which devises Covid management policies for the national capital, will hold a crucial meeting on Tuesday to discuss the need for more curbs in view of the alarming spike in cases.

A positivity rate of more than 5 per cent for two consecutive days will trigger a 'red alert' under the DDMA-approved Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) leading to a 'total curfew' and halting of most economic activities.

According to the latest government data, only 120 (4.85 per cent) of the 9,029 beds in Delhi hospitals are occupied.

As many as 124 patients need oxygen, while seven are on ventilator support.

With one more fatality, the death toll due to coronavirus in the city has risen to 25,100.

The number of cumulative cases on Monday



A health worker administers a dose of Covid-19 vaccine to a teenager in New Delhi on Monday. — G.N. JHA

stood at 14,58,220. Over 14.22 lakh patients have recovered from the infection.

Nine Covid-19 deaths were reported in the city in December last year and seven in November, according to official data.

A total of 63,477 tests—57,013 RT-PCR tests—were conducted on Sunday, the bulletin said.

Earlier in the day, Mr Jain told the Delhi Assembly that the latest genome sequencing report shows Omicron has been found in 81 per cent of the samples tested and the new variant of concern is the reason behind the surge in coronavirus

cases in the national capital.

Of the latest 187 Covid samples tested, 152 had (81 per cent) Omicron and 8.5 per cent had Delta, he said.

He also told the Assembly that none of the Omicron-infected patients admitted to the city hospitals had required oxygen so far.

Though there is a spike in the number of Covid cases, the situation is under control as not many people are developing severe symptoms or require hospitalisation, he said.

The minister stressed that the home isolation

policy is very effective in Omicron cases as most of the patients do not have any symptoms. A few of them have developed low-grade fever and cold, but there has been no severe case due to Omicron.

"Till Sunday, there were around 8,000 active cases in Delhi and just 3.4 per cent of the total 9,024 Covid beds in the hospitals were occupied. There were around 1,500 to 2,000 patients in the hospitals when Delhi reported an equal number of active cases the last time," Mr Jain said.

Mr Jain said that Delhi is the first state to order a closure of schools and

impose restrictions on gatherings to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, while other states have only imposed a night curfew.

"People ask why Delhi has imposed such stringent curbs when no one else has done it. Delhi is the national capital and most of the international flights come to the city first. So it is better to have more restrictions here than anywhere else," he said.

Delhi reported 3,194 Covid cases with a positivity rate of 4.59 per cent on Sunday and 2,716 cases with a positivity rate of 3.6 per cent on Saturday.

Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday said that though the city is witnessing a sharp spike in the number of daily cases and active cases of coronavirus, there is no need to panic as most patients are asymptomatic or have very mild symptoms and do not need hospitalisation.

On December 28, the DDMA declared a 'yellow alert' under the GRAP amid a spike in Covid cases following the emergence of the Omicron variant.

Schools in Delhi have been directed to play a central role in the vac-

nation of eligible children from Monday, and will have to share the vaccination status of students with the education department every day by 4 pm.

Covid vaccination for children between the ages of 15 and 18 will begin from Monday in 159 government centres and 16 private centres. Around 60 schools run by the MCDs, government, New Delhi Municipal Council and Cantonment board will be functioning as vaccination centres for this age group.

Schools will also be permitted to request temporary vaccination camps to be held on their premises for students. Several school administrators said they would prefer that vaccination of their students be carried out in this manner.

A circular by the education department to the heads of schools said, "Directorate of Education is committed to taking all necessary measures to safeguard students studying in schools of DoE. Keeping in view the recent global surge of Covid cases, and detection of Omicron variant which has been categorised as a variant of concern, it is imperative that DoE ensures all government/ government-aided/private-unaided school students aged 15 to 18 years... get vaccinated on an immediate basis."

## Coverage of 15-17 yrs age group Status as on 03-01-2022, 6 PM

District	Total Vaccinated
<b>State Total</b>	<b>20,998</b>
Central Delhi	739
East Delhi	2,268
New Delhi	2,034
North Delhi	1,394
North East Delhi	3,687
North West Delhi	1,210
Shahdara	1,532
South Delhi	1,806
South East Delhi	1,705
South West Delhi	2,667
West Delhi	1,956

## Omicron Challenges (The Asian Age:20220104)

<http://onlinepaper.asianage.com/articledetailpage.aspx?id=16077335>



# Global friction, Omicron: Challenges for govt rising



K.C. Singh

**A**s the new year 2022 dawns, the far more transmissible Covid-19 strain christened Omicron is lurking in India and ravaging several nations in the West. Alongside this persisting challenge, with global economic consequences, a number of geopolitical friction points are also looming. What then does the new year really augur?

The geopolitical friction points are — the Russian threat to Ukraine, the Iranian nuclear programme and Israeli “red lines” and Chinese jingoism over Taiwan and its territorial claims. But the more immediate danger is from the new Covid variant Omicron. The medical consensus is building around a few points. Data from nations already hit by it constitutes the initial evidence. For one, it is highly transmissible. Also, so far it appears to be less lethal than the Delta variant. Further, according to several experts, being exposed to Omicron builds up antibodies that counter the Delta or other past strains. Finally, the storm of infection, as distinct from the waves in the past, comes quickly, runs through a community and drops off equally fast. In India, we are at the beginning of this possible steep up and down infection curve.

The effect of this new tsunami will vary from one nation to another. China presents an interesting example. In Xi'an, 13 million people have been forced indoors and restricted to their homes. This kind of draconian methodology China has so far used to very effectively contain Covid breakouts. But this time the foe is different. Many experts feel that Omicron will escape any quarantine as it is highly trans-

missible. If that happens, China will face a very serious problem as its vaccines are not very effective and the population has not been exposed to any wide surge. Thus, community level immunity may not have developed.

China faces two additional problems. At the beginning of February its annual spring vacation begins, when normally there is a huge movement of people internally. Also, the 2022 Winter Olympics is due to kick off on February 4. Already the United States and a number of Western nations have announced a boycott due to the gross breach of human rights in Xinjiang and Hong Kong. Quarantining athletes for a fortnight on arrival would not work as it hampers their fitness. Other nations like Australia and New Zealand also face similar challenges as they used quarantine to stymie the pandemic, and not vaccines and community exposure. India is better prepared this time and a combination of increased testing, home quarantine of asymptomatic or non-seriously symptomatic infected should help get over the surge. But the dislocation of normal life and a recovering economy is inevitable.

The other major issue will be the fate of liberal democracies in 2022. The Summit for Democracy called by US President Joe Biden on December 9-10 last year received mixed reviews. First was the controversy over the list of invitees. With Poland in and Hungary out, the question asked was — how do you grade regressing democracies?

Moreover, after the damage done to America's global image by former President Donald Trump and the ongoing tinkering with electoral rules and campaigning in

**This twin attack on Islam and Christianity can alienate opinion in a wide swathe of nations, even if the governments largely ignore it for political and diplomatic reasons.**

Republican-controlled states casts further aspersions on US democracy. That is why it was easier for China and Russia to debunk the summit and even question the quality of US democracy. The ambassadors of both nations penned a joint op-ed in a major US publication to decry the “Cold War” thinking. The Chinese foreign ministry even alleged that the US was turning democracy into a “weapon of mass destruction” to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries. China convened a rival gathering of 120 nations, that it named the International Forum on Democracy.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi attended Mr Biden's virtual summit and described it as a “timely platform” for furthering cooperation among democracies. Pakistan, which was invited but Sri Lanka was not, decided to skip it to make common cause with China.

The Chinese foreign ministry spokesman instantly described Pakistan as a “real iron brother”. But the issue before India will be the growing gap between the actions of the BJP at home and the government's liberal posturing abroad. This may not continue to be ignored by the US as President Biden is planning an in-person summit to follow up on the cause of democracy later this year.

Even if one discounts the BJP's electoral need to polarise when facing extremely vital state elections in Uttar Pradesh and four other states, the attack on churches and the fulminations by religious leaders to eliminate Islam at Haridwar, including by the use of violence, are condemnable. This twin

attack on Islam and Christianity can alienate opinion in a wide swathe of nations, even if the governments largely ignore it for political and diplomatic reasons.

This bid by the BJP to systematically implement its Hindutva agenda will face resistance at home as the Opposition consolidates around issues of poor governance. Supplanting a constitutional model on which the nation has been governed for 75 years will not be easy. It is a reminder of Rome in AD 384 when supporters of surging Christianity removed the pagan Altar of Victory from the Roman Senate, after four centuries of it being there. The *New York Times*, in a piece on Christianity's decline as an organising principle for Western civilisation, notes the views of pagan Roman philosopher Symmachus. He rejected the dogmatic claims of the new religion to truth with the injunction that there “cannot be only one path toward such great mystery”. This is the question before proponents of Hindutva as they try to constrict the Ganga-like openness and flow of traditional Hinduism.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa, who provided the moral moorings for his nation during and after the apartheid era, has just passed away. He argued that anger at apartheid was natural, but it must not be allowed to turn into hatred. He correctly noted that “Whites, in being those who oppress others, dehumanised themselves”. This is a lesson that Mahatma Gandhi also espoused. Can the BJP also abide by it and neutralise elements, aligned to it, that feed on real and imagined historical hurts and religious prejudices. Hopefully, the people of the five states would vote sensibly and endorse the thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi and Archbishop Tutu.

*The writer is a former secretary in the external affairs ministry. He tweets at @gunkhish.*



## **Medical Education (The Asian Age:20220104)**

<http://onlinepaper.asianage.com/articledetailpage.aspx?id=16077340>

# Medico admissions: Get cracking

**T**he government has told the Supreme Court that it has decided to accept the recommendation of the committee it had set up last year to revise the income limit for availing reservation in admissions for the economically weaker sections (EWS) to post-graduate medical courses this year. The committee has recommended that the ceiling of annual family income of ₹8 lakh may be retained.

It was for the first time that the Union government had in July last year decided to implement reservation for the economically weaker sessions as well as the other backward classes in post-graduate medical courses for this academic year. The government's decision to put a cap of ₹8 lakh as family income to avail the quota under EWS was questioned in the Supreme Court. Once the court is seized of the matter, it will have to go through the routine processes, and there is no wonder in that the issue gets dragged on, torpedoing the counselling process for the admissions which were to be done in October.

A fact that is little known to the public is that it is the post-graduate students who are the workhorses in most medical colleges. Their duty time extends up to 72 hours non-stop, which could sound inhuman and improbable but true. They ensure proper services and care to the patients. With the threat of the pandemic Covid-19 taking the form of a wave and overwhelming the hospital infrastructure in the country looming, the government has little leeway to play around with arguments and counter-arguments.

It must convince the Supreme Court on the urgency of the matter and procure the permission to go ahead with the admissions. The legal points could be argued and the court can come to a conclusion on the sustainability of the criterion for the quota at a later stage. The nation cannot afford to miss the services of the young crop of doctors in these critical times.

## **New Omicron symptoms**

## **Ongoing study reports two new Omicron symptoms; all you need to know (The Indian Express:20220104)**

<https://indianexpress.com/article/lifestyle/health/omicron-new-symptoms-covid-nausea-loss-of-appetite-experts-covid-7703094/>

As per Tim Spector, Professor of Genetic Epidemiology at King's College London, who is leading the study, these symptoms are common in those who are double-jabbed or even boosted.

nauseaHere's what to keep in mind about Omicron (Source: Getty Images/Thinkstock)

The Omicron variant — or B.1.1.529 — which has been designated as a variant of concern by the World Health Organization (WHO) has been spreading faster, even though the symptoms have been mild. Now, shedding more light on the same, a Covid-19 fitness tracking app in the United Kingdom, called ZOE Covid study app, has reported two new symptoms that have been seen in Omicron patients — nausea and loss of appetite.

Also Read |Covid-19: Your complete guide to caring for someone at home

As per Tim Spector, Professor of Genetic Epidemiology at King's College London, who is leading the study, these symptoms are common in those who are double-jabbed or even boosted.

“Quite a few of them had nausea (and therefore lack of appetite), slight temperature, sore throats and headaches,” he said in a YouTube video.

Using recent data from London, where Omicron prevalence is higher than other region of the UK, ZOE data scientists analysed symptom data from positive cases recorded in the study and compared with data from early October when Delta was dominant. They found that only 50 per cent of the patients have experienced the classic three symptoms of fever, cough, or loss of sense of smell or taste. They also found that there was no significant difference in the symptom profile of Delta and Omicron variants.

“These findings come from a very small batch of data who have reported their RT-PCR to be positive and includes but suspected and confirmed Omicron cases. We need to look into a larger data to confirm the same,” said Dr Chetan Rao Vaddepally, consultant pulmonologist, Yashoda Hospitals Hyderabad.

“Omicron-related infections are very mild, and include throat issues, loss of appetite, and generalised weakness. The conventional symptoms like cough, cold, breathlessness, loss of sense of smell and taste are not seen in majority of cases, as per national and international data,” Dr Gopi Krishna Yedlapati, consultant interventional pulmonologist, Yashoda Hospitals, Hyderabad told indianexpress.com in an earlier interview.

Agreed Dr Sanket Jain, pulmonologist Consultant, Masina Hospital who also shared that “one of my patients, just five days back, got admitted with a complaint of loss of appetite, nausea, and vomiting. As per protocol, we conducted RT-PCR, and it came positive. Such symptoms are commonly being observed nowadays especially in infections of Omicron”.

Should you get tested if you have nausea and loss of appetite?

As per the study, people infected are between 40 and 70 per cent less likely to be admitted to hospitals. “While Omicron and Delta may feel like a cold to many of us, it can kill and leave 1 in 50 with long-term symptoms that disrupt their day-to-day lives,” warns the study app.

What can you do to protect yourself and others from Omicron?

Delhi Minister Satyendar Jain noted that people with no travel history found infected with Omicron means “it’s gradually spreading in community”.

As per ZOE app, it is important to

- \*Recognise “all of the symptoms of Omicron, get tested and isolate when you experience them”

- \*If you live in an area experiencing high rates of infection, consider staying home and reducing social contact

- \*Get fully vaccinated

- \*Wear a mask in crowded places

- \*Improve your immune health with small changes to your diet

As per MoHFW, it is essential to mask yourself properly, take both doses of vaccines (if not yet vaccinated), maintain social distancing and maintain good ventilation.

## **Children’s vaccination begins**

**Children’s vaccination begins: 41 lakh get first shot on Day 1(The Indian Express:20220104)**

MP, Gujarat top list; Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Bihar, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu record just over 1 lakh each.

Beneficiaries aged 15 to 18 years await Covid vaccination at the BKC jumbo centre in Mumbai. (Express Photo by Amit Chakravarty)

OVER 41 lakh children received the first dose of Covid-19 vaccines on Monday, the first day of the vaccination drive for those in the age group of 15-18 years, according to provisional data.

While 41,27,468 doses of Covaxin were administered to the 15-18 years age group, the total vaccination figure touched 146.71 crore, according to provisional data. With 33,750 new cases

being reported in the last 24 hours, the active caseload has touched 1,45,582; the daily positivity rate is 3.84 per cent.

“Today we have taken an important step forward in protecting our youth against Covid-19. Congrats to all my young friends between the age group of 15-18 who got vaccinated. Congrats to their parents as well. I would urge more youngsters to get vaccinated in the coming days,” Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted.

According to official data, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat topped the list of vaccinations (15-18 years group) on Monday. Madhya Pradesh reported 7,71,615 doses and Gujarat 5,55,312 doses. Three states reported over 3 lakh doses in this age group: Andhra Pradesh (4,87,269), Karnataka (4,14,723), and Rajasthan (3,57,018).

The health ministry’s guidelines said children could be registered onsite by the verifier/vaccinator in facilitated registration mode; appointments can also be booked online or onsite (walk-in). (Express photo by Nirmal Harindran)

However, five big states administered just over 1 lakh doses in this age group: Uttar Pradesh (1,66,996); Maharashtra (1,81,561); West Bengal (1,03,564); Bihar (1,70,603); and Tamil Nadu (1,87,710). Five other states administered just over 50,000 doses: Odisha (82,756); Himachal Pradesh (72,808); Assam (77,124); Uttarakhand (72,075); and Haryana (66,217).

On December 25, less than a year after India rolled out one of the world’s largest adult Covid-19 vaccination drives, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced vaccination for children in the age group of 15-18 years. The decision came in the backdrop of rising cases of the highly transmissible Omicron variant across various pockets in the country, and schools and colleges re-opening in a phased manner.

A day before the rollout, Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya held a meeting with the states on Sunday and asked them to ensure orientation of vaccination team members for the 15-18 years age group, and identification of dedicated session sites.

The states were asked to plan for distribution of Covaxin to the earmarked sites well in advance, as it is the only vaccine cleared for this age group. “To avoid the mixing-up of vaccines during administration, separate CVCs (Covid vaccination centres), session sites, queues (if at same session site where adult vaccination is ongoing) and separate vaccination team (if at same session site) are to be strived for,” Mandaviya told the states.

The covid-19 vaccination of children in the 15-18 age group began on Monday as centres across the country started administering the shots to the younger population. (Express photo by Nirmal Harindran)

On Monday, just hours after some media reports alleged that expired vaccines were being administered, the Union Health Ministry issued a clarification stating that the reports were “false and misleading and based on incomplete information.” The ministry underlined that the shelf life of vaccines “is extended by the national regulator based on comprehensive analysis and examination of stability study data furnished by the vaccine manufacturers”.

“The Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) on 25th October 2021, in response to M/s Bharat Biotech International Limited’s letter no: BBIL/RA/21/567 has approved the extension of shelf life of Covaxin (Whole Virion, Inactivated Coronavirus Vaccine) from 9 months to 12 months. Similarly, the shelf life of Covishield has been extended by the National Regulator from 6 months to 9 months on 22nd February 2021,” the ministry said.

## **Omicron variant**

### **How heavily mutated Omicron variant is spreading so fast, sparing lungs (New Kerala:20220104)**

New Delhi, Jan 3: As India braces for the peak of the third Covid wave with Omicron taking over all other existing variants, scientists are scrambling to find how this heavily-m-> View it-> <https://www.newkerala.com/news/2022/1351.htm>

## **Alzheimer's disease**

### **Study finds sildenafil as candidate drug for Alzheimer's disease (New Kerala:20220104)**

Washington, January 3: A new study by the Cleveland Clinic has found that sildenafil, an FDA-approved therapy for erectile dysfunction and pulmonary hypertension, is a promising drug ca-> View it-> <https://www.newkerala.com/news/2022/1186.htm>

## **Top infectious disease**

### **Long Covid still a risk with Omicron despite mild illness (New Kerala:20220104)**

Even after causing mild illness, people infected with Omicron are likely to suffer from long Covid, top infectious disease expert Dr. Anthony Fauci has said.->-> View it-> <https://www.newkerala.com/news/2022/995.htm>



## MRI

### Study finds MRIs may help in CTE diagnosis(New Kerala:20220104)

A new study has found evidence to date that MRIs might help in the diagnosis of chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE). ->-> View it-->

<https://www.newkerala.com/news/2022/1173.htm>

## Omisure Kit

### Omisure Kit : ओमीक्रोन संक्रमण के RT-PCR टेस्ट किट ओमीस्योर को ICMR की मंजूरी, जानें क्या है यह ( Navbharat Times:20220104)

<https://navbharattimes.indiatimes.com/india/icmr-approved-tatas-omicron-rt-pcr-test-kit-omisure-know-about-it/articleshow/88681171.cms>

Omicron Test Kit : कोरोना से संक्रमित मरीज में वायरस के ओमीक्रोन वेरियंट का संक्रमण है या नहीं, इसका पता लगाने के लिए देश में बने टेस्ट किट ओमीस्योर को आईसीएमआर की मंजूरी मिल गई है।

Omicron Variant India : वरदान बन सकता है ओमीक्रोन वेरिएंट! ये क्या बोल रहे एक्सपर्ट?

हाइलाइट्स

ओमीक्रोन वेरियंट से संक्रमण की पुष्टि के लिए पहले स्वदेशी टेस्ट किट को मंजूरी

ICMR ने टाटा के आरटी-पीसीआर टेस्ट किट ओमीस्योर को दी मंजूरी

ओमीक्रोन टेस्ट के लिए भारत में एकमात्र अमेरिकी किट का उपयोग हो रहा था

चिकित्सा क्षेत्र के अनुसंधानों की राष्ट्रीय विनियामक संस्था भारतीय आयुर्विज्ञान अनुसंधान परिषद (ICMR) ने कोरोना वायरस के नए वेरियंट ओमीक्रोन से संक्रमण की जांच के लिए निर्मित स्वदेशी किट ओमीस्योर (Omisure) को मंजूरी दे दी है। ओमीस्योर को देश की बहुदेशीय कंपनी टाटा ने तैयार किया है। देश की आर्थिक राजधानी मुंबई स्थित टाटा मेडिकल एंड डायग्नोस्टिक्स लि. ने आरटी-पीसीआर किट ओमीस्योर बनाया है जिसे आईसीएमआर से मंजूरी मिल गई है।

कैसे करेगा जांच, कितनी देर में रिपोर्ट

ओमीस्योर टेस्ट किट अन्य आरटी-पीसीआर टेस्ट किट की तरह ही काम करेगा। इस किट से जांच के लिए भी नाक या मुंह से स्वाब लिया जाएगा। फिर 10 से 15 मिनट में जांच रिपोर्ट आ जाएगी जैसा कि अन्य आरटी-पीसीआर टेस्ट में होता है। ओमीस्योर से जांच का तरीका अन्य आरटी-पीसीआर टेस्ट से कुछ भी अलग नहीं होगा।

**Omicron News :** हफ्ताभर में ठीक हो रहे हैं ओमीक्रोन के 99% मरीज फिर डॉक्टर कर रहे सतर्क, जानें क्यों

अब तक अमेरिकी टेस्ट किट से हो रही थी जांच

अभी देश में ओमीक्रोन वेरियंट से संक्रमण की जांच के लिए अमेरिकी कंपनी थर्मो फिशर की मल्टिप्लेक्स किट का इस्तेमाल हो रहा है। यह किट एस-जीन टारगेट फेल्टोर (SGTF) स्ट्रेटिजी पर आधारित है। चूंकि ओमीक्रोन वेरियंट एस-जीन में कई म्यूटेशन कर चुका है, इसलिए एसजीटीएफ स्ट्रेटिजी से ओमीक्रोन मरीजों में एस-जीन की गैर-मौजूदगी दिखती है। सरकारी एजेंसियां स्टैंडर्ड आरटी-पीसीआर किट 20 से 30 रुपये की दर से खरीद रही हैं। हालांकि, थर्मो फिशर किट की कीमत 240 रुपये पड़ती है। टाटा के ओमीस्योर किट की कीमत क्या है, इसका पता अभी नहीं चला है।

## ICMR

पिछले महीने ICMR ने मांगे थे आवेदन

ध्यान रहे कि आईसीएमआर ने 17 दिसंबर को ओमीक्रोन संक्रमण की रीयल टाइम आरटी-पीसीआर टेस्ट किट के विकास और निर्माण के लिए टेक्नॉलजी ट्रांसफर में दिलचस्पी रखने वाली कंपनियों से आवेदन मांगाया गया था। इसकी आखिरी तारीख 22 दिसंबर रखी गई थी। आईसीएमआर के डिब्रूगढ़ स्थित रीजनल मेडिकल रिसर्च सेंटर ने ओमीक्रोन संक्रमण की रीयल टाइम जांच के लिए आरटी-पीसीआर टेस्ट की टेक्नॉलजी विकसित की थी और कंपनियों से कहा गया था कि जिन्हें किट बनाने में दिलचस्पी हो वो आवेदन देकर यह टेक्नॉलजी मांग सकती हैं। अंग्रेजी अखबार द इंडियन एक्सप्रेस ने आईसीएमआर के सूत्रों के हवाले से खबर दी है कि संस्था को 22 दिसंबर तक 9 कंपनियों से आवेदन मिले थे।

अविश्वसनीय: कोरोना के चलते 28 दिनों तक कोमा में रही नर्स, फिर वियाग्रा ने किया चमत्कार

प्रश्न- भारतीय व्यंजन काठी रोल की शुरुआत किस राज्य से हुई थी?

## RT-PCR

ओमीक्रोन की आरटी-पीसीआर टेस्ट के लिए ओमीस्योर किट को मंजूरी (सांकेतिक तस्वीर)

**Navbharat Times News App:** देश-दुनिया की खबरें, आपके शहर का हाल, एजुकेशन और बिज़नेस अपडेट्स, फिल्म और खेल की दुनिया की हलचल, वायरल न्यूज़ और धर्म-कर्म... पाएँ हिंदी की ताज़ा खबरें डाउनलोड करें NBT ऐप

लेटेस्ट न्यूज़ से अपडेट रहने के लिए NBT फेसबुकपेज लाइक करें

कॉमेंट लिखें

## Health Insurance

### Health Insurance: आपके स्वास्थ्य बीमा से Omicron का इलाज होगा या नहीं? IRDAI ने दी जानकारी ( Dainik Gagan:20220104)

[https://www.jagran.com/business/biz-covid-health-insurance-policies-will-cover-omicron-infection-treatment-costs-irdai-22351587.html?itm\\_source=website&itm\\_medium=homepage&itm\\_campaign=pl\\_component](https://www.jagran.com/business/biz-covid-health-insurance-policies-will-cover-omicron-infection-treatment-costs-irdai-22351587.html?itm_source=website&itm_medium=homepage&itm_campaign=pl_component)

बीमा नियामक IRDAI ने कहा है कि स्वास्थ्य बीमा पॉलिसियां जो COVID उपचार की लागत को कवर करती हैं वह ओमिक्रॉन के कारण होने वाले संक्रमण के इलाज के खर्च को भी कवर करेंगी। इसके साथ ही IRDAI ने बीमा कंपनियों को निर्देश भी दिया है।

नई दिल्ली, पीटीआइ। देश में तेजी से कोरोना वायरस संक्रमण के नए वेरिएंट ओमिक्रॉन के केस मिल रहे हैं। ऐसे पेशानी भरे समय में अगर आप इस चिंता में डूबे हैं कि अगर आप ओमिक्रॉन वेरिएंट से संक्रमित हो गए, उस स्थिति में आपकी स्वास्थ्य बीमा कंपनी आपको कवर देगी या नहीं, तो अब इस चिंता से मुक्त हो जाएगा। क्योंकि, बीमा नियामक IRDAI ने कहा है कि स्वास्थ्य बीमा पॉलिसियां, जो COVID उपचार की लागत को कवर करती हैं, वह ओमिक्रॉन के कारण होने वाले संक्रमण के इलाज के खर्च को भी कवर करेंगी।

भारतीय बीमा नियामक और विकास प्राधिकरण ने (IRDAI) ने एक विज्ञप्ति में कहा, "सभी सामान्य और स्वास्थ्य बीमा कंपनियों द्वारा जारी सभी स्वास्थ्य बीमा पॉलिसियां, जो COVID-19 के उपचार की लागत को कवर करती हैं, पॉलिसी अनुबंध के नियमों और शर्तों के अनुसार कोरोना वायरस के ओमिक्रॉन वेरिएंट के उपचार की लागत को भी कवर करती हैं।" नियामक ने ओमिक्रॉन वेरिएंट के मामलों की बढ़ती संख्या को देखते हुए सामान्य और स्वास्थ्य बीमा कंपनियों को निर्देश जारी किया है।