



# DAILY NEWS BULLETIN

LEADING HEALTH, POPULATION AND FAMILY WELFARE STORIES OF THE DA  
Thursday 20220127

## New Cases

**India records 2.86 lakh new Covid cases, 573 more deaths (The Tribune:20220127)**

**Active Covid cases in country decline to 22,02,472**

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/nation/india-records-2-86-lakh-new-covid-cases-573-more-deaths-364661>

With 2,86,384 people testing positive for coronavirus infection in a day, India's total tally of Covid cases rose to 4,03,71,500, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Thursday.

The death toll has climbed to 4,91,700 with 573 fresh fatalities, the data updated at 8 am stated.

The active cases had decreased to 22,02,472 and comprised 5.46 per cent of the total infections, while the national Covid recovery rate had decreased to 93.33 per cent, the ministry said.

A reduction of 20,546 cases has been recorded in the active Covid caseload in a span of 24 hours.

The 573 new fatalities include 140 from Kerala and 79 from Maharashtra.

A total of 4,91,700 deaths have been reported so far in the country including 1,42,316 from Maharashtra, 52,281 from Kerala, 38,705 from Karnataka, 37,359 from Tamil Nadu, 25,710 from Delhi, 23,106 from Uttar Pradesh and 20,445 from West Bengal.

## **Omicron survives**

### **Omicron survives much longer on plastic, skin than earlier coronavirus variants: Study**

**The alpha, beta, delta and omicron variants exhibit more than two-fold longer survival on plastic and skin surfaces, than the Wuhan strain (The Tribune:20220127)**

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/world/omicron-survives-much-longer-on-plastic-skin-than-earlier-coronavirus-variants-study-364612>

Omicron survives much longer on plastic, skin than earlier coronavirus variants: Study  
Photo for representation only. Reuters

The omicron variant of coronavirus can remain alive on skin for over 21 hours, and more than eight days on plastic surfaces, which may be contributing to its faster spread compared to other strains, according to a study.

The researchers from Kyoto Prefectural University of Medicine in Japan analysed the differences in viral environmental stability between the SARS-CoV-2 Wuhan strain and all variants of concern (VOCs).

The yet-to-be peer-reviewed study, posted recently on the preprint repository BioRxiv, found that the alpha, beta, delta and omicron variants exhibited more than two-fold longer survival on plastic and skin surfaces, than the Wuhan strain.

"The high environmental stability of these VOCs could increase the risk of contact transmission and contribute to their spread," the authors of the study said.

"The study showed that omicron has the highest environmental stability among VOCs, which might be one of the factors that have allowed the variant to replace the delta variant and spread rapidly," they said.

The study shows on plastic surfaces, average survival times of the original strain and the alpha, beta, gamma and delta variants were 56 hours, 191.3 hours, 156.6 hours, 59.3 hours, and 114 hours, respectively.

That compared to 193.5 hours for the omicron variant, according to the researchers.

On skin samples, average virus survival times were 8.6 hours for the original version, 19.6 hours for alpha, 19.1 hours for beta, 11 hours for gamma, 16.8 hours for delta and 21.1 hours for omicron, they said.

There was no significant difference in survival times between alpha and beta variants, and they had similar environmental stability, which is consistent with the results of previous studies, according to the researchers.

Although alpha, beta, delta and omicron variants showed a slight increase in ethanol resistance in response to increased environmental stability, all VOCs on the skin surface were completely inactivated by 15-second exposure to 35 per cent ethanol.

"Therefore, it is highly recommended that current infection control (hand hygiene) practices use disinfectants...as proposed by the World Health Organisation," the researchers added.

The omicron variant is currently a major concern owing to the rapidly increasing number of infected patients worldwide.

## **Vaccination**

### **Chandigarh adult population fully vaccinated Vaccine reduced severity in third wave of Covid-19: Director, Health Services (The Tribune:20220127)**

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/chandigarh/chandigarh-adult-population-fully-jabbed-364485>

Chandigarh adult population fully vaccinated

A woman gets the Covid vaccine at GMSH, Sector 16, Chandigarh on Tuesday. Pradeep

The UT today vaccinated the entire targeted adult population with both doses of the Covid-19 vaccine. The achievement comes in the wake of the highly infectious third wave and experts cited the higher vaccination coverage for lesser hospitalisation and deaths in the city.

The city was given the target of vaccinating 8,43,000 persons aged 18 and above. The UT has inoculated 10,70,344 persons with the first dose, which is 127 per cent coverage, and 8,43,000 with the second dose, which is 100 per cent coverage.

Though the city reported 20,904 cases in just 25 days of the third wave, hospitalisation was not more than two to three per cent. Around 24 Covid patients lost their lives during this period.

On the contrary, the UT saw 27,826 cases during the second wave between March 15 and May 10, a period of around two months. The period was marked with 217 fatalities due to Covid-19.

During the second wave, only 7 per cent of the target population was fully immunised, while only 20 per cent of the population had taken the first dose of the vaccine.

Suman Singh, Director, Health Services (DHS), UT, said, "We are experiencing the third wave of Covid. As compared to the first and second waves, there was a sudden surge in the number of cases because of the highly transmissible Omicron variant. In spite of the high positivity rate, we observed that the hospitalisation rate remained at 2-3 per cent. One of the factors for a large number of patients showing mild symptoms could be the high vaccination rate in the city. Among the hospital admissions, it was noticed that some of the patients with severe disease were not vaccinated."

UT Adviser Dharam Pal said, “Even after achieving this milestone of 100 per cent second dose, we will continue the sincere efforts to cover more and more people, even from the adjoining areas. The UT Administration is fully prepared to deal with the ongoing case surge and each aspect is being monitored. There is no issue with regard to availability of beds in hospitals, medical oxygen and critical medicines, etc. The rates of different tests and treatment have also been rationalised in the UT.”

#### Test price cut

The price for rapid antigen test of Covid has been reduced from Rs350 to Rs100 in the UT.

#### UT logs 540 cases

Chandigarh: The city on Tuesday reported 540 new cases of Covid-19, logging a positivity rate of 11.81 per cent. The positivity rate was 14.49 per cent on Monday. The cumulative number of cases has reached 86,800, while the active caseload dropped to 7,033 from 7,768 a day before. A total of 1,275 patients were reportedly cured of the disease in the past 24 hours. With no new death, the toll remained at 1,103. TNS

#### 3 more succumb in Mohali, 916 cases

Mohali: Three more persons succumbed to Covid-19 during the past 24 hours in the district. A 61-year-old woman from Tangori village, an 80-year-old man from Zirakpur and a 58-year-old man Sotal village in Mohali district died of the virus. All of them were suffering from comorbidities. Of the three, only two were vaccinated. A total of 916 fresh cases surfaced on Tuesday, while 1,183 patients were cured. Of the 8,240 active cases, only 26 are hospitalised. Among new cases, 20 were from Lalru, 10 from Banur, 71 from Dera Bassi, 52 from Gharuan, 25 from Kurali, 225 from Dhakoli, 195 from Kharar and 285 from the Mohali urban area. — TNS

#### 2 die, 479 infected in Panchkula

Panchkula: Two women succumbed to Covid-19 during the past 24 hours in the district. The deceased have been identified as a 56-year-old from Berwala village and an 87-year-old from Sector 11. Both of them were comorbid. Meanwhile, 479 fresh cases, including 279 males and 200 females, surfaced during the past 24 hours, pushing the overall tally to 41,106 in the district. Health officials said 10 more healthcare workers were diagnosed with Covid, taking the total number of health workers affected with the virus to 140 in the third wave. There are now 2,135 active cases with 19 of them admitted to hospital. — TNS

# 2 Covid vaccines may cost ₹275 after market nod

*Additional service charge to be ₹150*

**SANJAY KAW**  
with agency inputs  
NEW DELHI, JAN. 26

In a bid to make vaccines against Covid-19 affordable, prices of Covishield and Covaxin jabs are likely to be capped at ₹275 per dose, with an additional service charge of ₹150. A regular market approval is awaited for both the vaccines from India's drug regulator, the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI).

The National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) has already been directed to start working towards capping the price.

Currently, each dose of the Bharat Biotech-produced Covaxin is priced at ₹1,200, while Serum Institute's Covishield costs ₹780 in private facilities. A service charge of ₹150 is included in the price.

On January 19, a Subject Expert Committee on Covid-19 of the Central Drugs Standard Control

▶ **CURRENTLY, EACH** dose of the Bharat Biotech-produced Covaxin is priced at ₹1,200, while Serum Institute's Covishield costs ₹780 in private facilities. A service charge of ₹150 is included in the price.

Organisation had recommended granting regular market approval to Covishield and Covaxin for use in the adult population subject to certain conditions.

Serum Institute of India director (government and regulatory affairs) Prakash Kumar Singh had submitted an application to the DCGI on October 25 seeking regular market approval for its Covishield vaccine.

Bharat Biotech director V. Krishna Mohan had also submitted information on the chemistry, manufacturing and controls, along with the pre-clinical and clinical data


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## Pregnancy (The Asian Age:20220127)

<http://onlinepaper.asianage.com/articledetailpage.aspx?id=16125105>



# Surrogacy, a boon when normal pregnancy is medically inadvisable

**SULOGNA MEHTA**

News of Priyanka Chopra and Nick Jonas welcoming a daughter via surrogacy has triggered much discussion on social media. The baby was reportedly premature by 12 weeks.

PeeCee and Nick are part of a long list of Bollywood celebs who have opted for surrogate babies. Karan Johar became the father to twins in 2017 using the same method. His babies were in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) for about two months. Likewise there have been many examples where the babies born through surrogacy have had to be under observation in NICU because they were born premature. This gives rise to questions whether surrogacy holds a higher risk of premature births, and also whether there are more chances of having twins or triplets.

Medical experts clear many misconceptions surrounding surrogacy. Surrogate babies are given neo-natal care just like normal new-borns, they affirm.

**Dr Y Savitha Devi**, consultant obstetrician, gynaecologist and laparoscopic surgeon, Swapna Health Care, Hyderabad, explains that the health of the baby depends on maternal health, just like in a normal pregnancy. "Babies can be premature and sick if the surrogate mother suffers from anaemia, vitamin deficiency, gestational diabetes, high BP or hypertension, Covid, kidney ailments, infections like appendicitis, pneumonia, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), urinary tract infections, even gingivitis or gum disease," she says. "The baby is also affected if there is chorioamnionitis or foetal membrane infection, malformed uterus, antepartum haemorrhage, eclampsia, low lying placenta, premature rupture of membranes and separation of normal placenta."

**OPTING FOR SURROGACY IS A PERSONAL CHOICE**

"Surrogacy is a boon for those couples whose lives can be at risk in case of a normal pregnancy or who are unable to carry the baby in the womb due to medical issues. It allows such couples to become biological parents. It is a purely personal choice of the couple whether or not to opt for surrogacy. There is no stipulated time frame for a couple to opt for this method. If they want to become parents and find through various medical tests that the mother has some medical contraindications, congenital defect of the uterus, or is suffering from some disease where she needs to avoid normal pregnancy then they can proceed with the surrogate method. However, various tests and scans will be done on both the genetic mother and the surrogate mother to verify their medical and family histories before giving the nod for surrogacy."

**Dr PREETHI REDDY**, infertility specialist and IVF consultant, Birth Right by Rainbow Hospital, Hyderabad

## Omicron-specific COVID-19 vaccine trial

## Pfizer starts Omicron-specific COVID-19 vaccine trial (The Hindu:20220127)

<https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/health/pfizer-starts-omicron-specific-covid-19-vaccine-trial/article38324972.ece>

The trial will involve 1,420 people aged 18-55.

Pfizer and its partner BioNTech have begun enrolment for a clinical trial to test the safety and immune response of their Omicron-specific COVID-19 vaccine in adults aged up to 55, the companies said in a statement on January 25.

Pfizer's CEO Albert Bourla has previously said that the pharmaceutical giant could be ready to file for regulatory approval of the shot by March.

## **Stealth Omicron**

**Stealth Omicron: All you need to know about the new 'sub-strain' of the Covid variant**

**The UK Health Service Agency marked the 'stealth Omicron' as a 'variant under investigation' on January 21. (The Indian Express:20220127)**

<https://indianexpress.com/article/lifestyle/health/stealth-omicron-all-you-need-to-know-about-the-new-sub-strain-of-the-covid-variant-7739644/>

While the BA.2 strain is being attributed to faster infection, doctors dismiss the possibility of it being a more severe strain than the present Omicron variant. (Express photo by Vishal Srivastav)

The UK Health Service Agency (UKHSA) has designated a sub-variant of Omicron as a "variant under investigation", saying that it is a level below the status of Omicron, marked a "variant of concern" by the WHO.

The stealth omicron is "a sub-lineage known as BA.2 of the dominant and highly transmissible Omicron coronavirus variant", said Dr Mrinal Sircar, director of Pulmonology and critical care at Fortis Hospital, Noida. "As per UKHSA, 40 countries had reported BA.2 sequences, with the most in Denmark, followed by India, Britain, Sweden and Singapore," the expert added.

While the BA.2 strain is being attributed to faster infection, doctors dismiss the possibility of it being a more severe strain than the present Omicron variant. "So far, there is insufficient evidence to determine whether BA.2 causes more severe illness than Omicron BA.1, but data is limited. For now, what we know is that the BA.2 case severity is comparable to classic variant Omicron cases. Also, there is likely to be minimal differences in vaccine effectiveness against BA.1 and BA.2," Dr Sircar told indianexpress.com.

ALSO READ |From Delta to Omicron: All about Covid-19 and its many variants

Agreed Dr Laxman Jessani, Consultant, Infectious Diseases, Apollo Hospitals Navi Mumbai, said that "In India we are already seeing this substrain in our genomic testing. The symptoms and treatment are same as other substrains, like BA.1. Also, the vaccine efficacy of BA.2 is also same as other sub variants."

Both the experts confirmed that while the sub variant doesn't escape an RT-PCR test, "the way the variant was confirmed was by seeing if there was a S gene drop out for BA.1. In BA.2, there is no S gene drop out, it would be difficult to confirm if it is BA.2 or some other variant without a full genome sequencing," stated Dr Sircar.

Answering if the new variant is of concern, where it has already been detected amidst rising Covid-19 cases, Dr Sircar said, "A greater spread of any virus means potentially more mutations, which holds true for this variant as well."

## **Effective Ayurvedic remedies**

### **Effective Ayurvedic remedies to keep acidity, indigestion at bay (The Indian Express:20220127)**

<https://indianexpress.com/article/lifestyle/health/ayurvedic-remedies-acidity-indigestion-7737881/>

"First step towards treating a disease is to prevent it. As the saying goes 'prevention is better than cure', its always a good idea to try and prevent all the causative factors," said Ayurvedic expert Dr Dixa Bhavsar

indigestion-pexelsRead on to know how you can prevent acidity and indigestion. (Representative photo/Pexels)

Our lifestyle and food habits play a huge role in determining our well-being and keeping issues like acidity and indigestion at bay. But coupled with lack of sleep and stress, things only get aggravated and before we realise, we are popping antacids to get relief.

|7 ways Ayurveda and yoga can help combat winter lethargy

However, regularly consuming antacids have "lots of side effects", said Ayurvedic expert Dr Dixa Bhavsar, who recently took to Instagram to share helpful remedies to prevent acidity and indigestion.

"First step towards treating a disease is to prevent it. As the saying goes 'prevention is better than cure', its always a good idea to try and prevent all the causative factors," she said.

Take a look at the post here:

Here are the Ayurvedic remedies that Dr Bhavsar recommended:

\*Avoid excessive spicy, sour, salty, fermented, fried and fast food in your meals. Try to have a healthy and nutritious diet filled with fresh fruits and vegetables.

\*Do not overeat during meals. Serve yourself small portions and try to regulate the amounts accordingly. Try to stay away from sour fruits.



\*Do not remain hungry for long hours if that causes acidity. Don't skip meals, especially lunch. Avoid untimely and irregular eating and try to have early dinners.

\*Avoid foods containing an excess amount of garlic, salt, oil, chillies, etc. very often. It's best to avoid non-vegetarian food too.

\*Avoid lying down immediately after having food, and in a supine position. The best-recommended position is left lateral.

\*Avoid, smoking, alcohol, tea, coffee and Aspirin-type drugs.

\*Staying away from stress.

Dr Bhavsar also suggested some Ayurvedic foods habits to prevent indigestion and acidity. They are:

\*Drink coriander water (infusion).

\*Chew half a teaspoon of fennel seeds after meals.

\*Drink coconut water first thing in the morning.

\*Drink fennel sharbat (juice) in the afternoon. You can add rock sugar or misri for sweetness.

\*Soak raisins overnight and drink water the next morning on an empty stomach.

\*Have lukewarm milk at bedtime with 1 teaspoon of cow's ghee.

IN PREMIUM NOW |The 5:2 diet: A popular way of intermittent fasting to lose weight

\*Drink rosewater and mint water as they are cooling and also help in digestion.

\*Eat seasonal fruits such as sweet pomegranates, bananas, stewed apples, plums, raisins, apricots, coconuts etc.

## **Diet**

### **Vegan diet for athletes: Expert shares healthy sources of protein (The Indian Express:20220127)**

There are many myths around a vegan diet; one of the biggest being that it does not provide one with enough protein, calcium, iron, and vitamin D. However, nutritionists believe otherwise.

vegan diet, athleteHere are all the myths you shouldn't believe, and all the facts you should know about a vegan diet if you are an athlete. (Photo: Pexels)

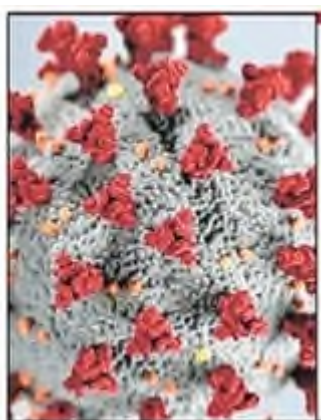
There are many myths around a vegan diet; one of the biggest being that it does not provide one with enough protein, calcium, iron, and vitamin D. However, nutritionists believe otherwise. “If you are a vegan and an aspiring athlete, or an athlete who wants to adopt a vegan diet, here are some things for you to keep in mind when designing your diet,” said Haripriya N., executive nutritionist at the Cloudnine Group of Hospitals, Chennai.



## Antibodies (Hindustan:20220127)

आईसीएमआर के अध्ययन में खुलासा : डेल्टा के पुनः संक्रमण की संभावना कम, ओमीक्रोन अनुरूप टीका नीति की जरूरत ओमीक्रोन से पैदा हुई एंटीबॉडी सभी स्वरूपों पर कारगर

**02** खुराक टीके की लेने के बाद एंटीबॉडी निष्क्रिय करने का आकलन



### प्रतिरक्षा तंत्र से बचने की क्षमता गंभीर चिंता का विषय

ओमीक्रोन की प्रतिरक्षा तंत्र से बचने की क्षमता एक गंभीर चिंता का विषय है। अध्ययन में ओमीक्रोन संक्रमित लोगों में एंटीबॉडी प्रतिक्रिया का मूल्यांकन किया गया था। इस अध्ययन में विदेशों के वयस्क और भारत के किशोर शामिल थे।

### कोविशील्ड-कोवैक्सीन की एक डोज 425 रुपये की हो सकती है

कोविड-रोधी टीके कोविशील्ड और कोवैक्सीन की एक खुराक 425 रुपये की हो सकती है। इसमें इसकी कीमत प्रति खुराक 275 रुपये और अतिरिक्त सेवा शुल्क 150 रुपये तक सीमित रखने की संभावना है। **ब्योरा**

अध्ययन में टीके की दोनों खुराक ले चुके व्यक्ति में आईजीजी और एंटीबॉडी निष्क्रिय करने की प्रक्रिया का आकलन किया है। अध्ययन में शामिल प्रतिभागी ओमीक्रोन से संक्रमित हो चुके थे।