

AIR Spotlight - Measures Announced by the Prime Minister in Address to the Nation

AIR Spotlight is an insightful programme featured daily on the All India Radio Newsonair. In this program, many eminent panelists discuss issues of importance which can be quite helpful in [IAS exam](#) preparation. In this article, the topic of discussion is the measures announced by Prime Minister Modi in his address to the nation.

Participants:

1. Amitabh Sinha, Political Analyst
2. Nilabh Srivastava, Journalist

Context:

In an address to the nation, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi announced many policy measures to fight the COVID pandemic.

Introduction:

The Prime Minister spoke on many issues in his address to the nation:

- Universalization of vaccination: Now there will be a centralized [Covid-19](#) vaccine policy. All citizens above the age of 18 years will get free vaccines. As per government data, 23.59 crore coronavirus vaccines have been administered.
- The vaccination process will start from 21st June on [International Yoga Day](#).
- Under the centralised vaccination policy, 25% of the vaccination work with states will now be handled by the Centre.
- He also said free food grains will be available in fixed quantity every month for over 800 million citizens till Diwali under the [Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana \(PMGKY\)](#).
- He has also announced the trial of a nasal vaccine for children.

Also, recently, the NITI Aayog and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare have also announced that 25 cr covidsheild and 15 cr covaxin vaccines have been ordered from their respective manufacturers.

Universal vaccination:

- The Prime Minister announced that 25% of the lot will be available to private hospitals. However, private hospitals can charge a maximum of Rs.150 as a service charge per dose above the fixed price of the vaccine.
- 75% will be purchased by the central government to be supplied to states to be administered freely.

Steps taken by the government to fight the Pandemic:

- Last year, India had to face various challenges in containing the pandemic. India was not even able to produce quality masks, resulting in the flooding of duplicate masks in the market.

- Now, India is well prepared with a sufficient supply of masks, oxygen concentrators, and other medical equipment.
- The Prime Minister stated that the vaccine task force was constituted last year. India provided support for the trial for vaccines, research and development and vaccine production.
- Currently, India is administering covisheild, covaxin and sputnik. Also, the basket of vaccines is going to be increased as the approval of other vaccines is in the pipeline.
- A decade back, India didn't produce enough vaccines. India had to wait for two decades to get vaccines for smallpox from western countries.
- Now, this has changed. India has emerged as one of the largest producers of vaccines.
- At present, seven companies have licenses to manufacture the Covid-19 vaccine in India.
- If the third wave strikes, the country will be prepared, with almost the whole population having a single dose of vaccine administered, the PM said.

Issues:

- There are logistic issues in the supply of vaccines.
- Along with this, there is vaccine hesitancy in both rural and urban areas as people are turning away from vaccination due to misinformation about the vaccines.

What can be done?

- The Government cannot do everything. It can provide free medicines and vaccines. However, it finally comes to the people to get vaccinated.
- No one is safe until everyone is vaccinated.
- In rural areas, Panchayats are playing a very important role in administering vaccines.
- Along with it, the provision of providing 5kg food grains per person till Diwali under PMGKY will help the poor and migrants. More than 80 cr people will benefit.

Way forward:

- The unlocking process has started. The Prime Minister emphasized on micro containment zones to contain the pandemic and to also ensure that the livelihood of the people does not get impacted.
- He further emphasized '*Dawai bhi, Kadai bhi*' meaning apart from vaccination, focus must be on preventive measures such as wearing masks.
- The vaccination process will continue, and the people have to be disciplined to defeat the pandemic.