Team India: Responding to adversity with achievement

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India completed vaccination of 100 crore doses on 21st October 2021, in just about 9 months since starting vaccination. This has been a tremendous journey in dealing with Covid-19, especially when we recall how things stood in early 2020. Humanity was dealing with such a pandemic after 100 years and no-one knew much about the virus. We remember how unpredictable the situation appeared then, as we were faced by an unknown and invisible enemy mutating rapidly. The journey from anxiety to assurance has happened and our nation has

It has been a truly bhagirath effort involving multiple sections of society. To get a sense of the scale, assume that each vaccination took just 2 minutes

for a healthcare worker. At this rate, it took around 41 lakh man days or

various efforts to create mistrust and panic.

emerged stronger, thanks to the world's largest vaccination drive.

approximately 11 thousand man years of effort to reach this landmark. For any effort to attain and sustain speed and scale, trust of all stakeholders is crucial. One of the reasons for the success of the campaign was the trust that people developed in the vaccine and the process followed, despite



India's vaccine drive is an example of what India can achieve if the citizens and the government come together with a common goal in the spirit of Jan Bhagidari. When India started its vaccination program, there were many people who doubted the capabilities of 130 crore Indians. Some said India

would take 3-4 years. Some others said people will not come forward to get

vaccinated. There were those who said there will be gross mismanagement

and chaos in the vaccination process. Some even said that India will not be

subsequent lockdowns, the people of India showed how spectacular the

able to manage sup-ply chains. But just like the Janta Curfew and

results can be, if they are made trusted partners.

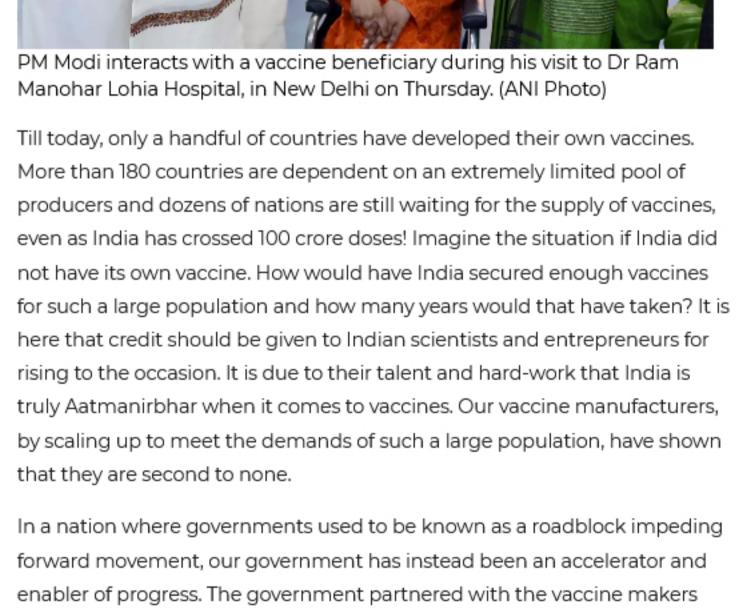
When everyone takes ownership, nothing is impossible. Our healthcare workers traversed hills and crossed rivers across difficult geographies to vaccinate people. Our youth, social workers, healthcare workers, social and religious leaders, all deserve credit for the fact that India faces minimal vaccine hesitancy when compared to even developed nations. There was a lot of pressure from different interest groups to give preferential treatment to them in vaccination. But the Government ensured that, like our other schemes, there is no VIP culture in the vaccination drive either.

In early 2020, when Covid-19 was rampaging across the world, it was clear to

us that this pandemic will have to be eventually fought with the help of

vaccines. We started preparing early. We constituted expert groups and

started preparing a roadmap right from April 2020.



right from day one and gave them support in the form of institutional

assistance, scientific research, funding, as well as accelerated regulatory

vaccine makers and remove any bottlenecks as a result of our 'whole of

Government' approach.

processes. All ministries of the government came together to facilitate the

In a country of the scale of India, it is not enough to just produce. Focus has

to be on last mile delivery and seamless logistics. To understand the challenges involved, imagine the journey taken by one vial of vaccines. From a plant in Pune or Hyderabad, the vial is sent to a hub in any of the states, from where it is transported to the district hub. From there, it reaches a vaccination centre. This entails the deployment of thousands of trips taken by flights and trains. During this entire journey, the temperature has to be maintained in a particular range which is centrally monitored. For this, over 1 lakh cold-chain equipments were utilized. States were given advance notice of the delivery schedule of the vaccines so that they could plan their drives better and vaccines reached them on the pre-decided days. This has been an unprecedented effort in the history of independent India. All these efforts were complemented by a robust tech platform in CoWIN. It ensured that the vaccine drive was equitable, scalable, trackable, and transparent. This ensured that there was no scope for favouritism or jumping

the queue. It also ensured that a poor worker could take first dose in his

transparency, the QR-coded certificates ensured verifiability. There are

village and the second dose of the same vaccine in the city where he works,

after the required time interval. In addition to a real-time dashboard to boost

hardly any examples of such efforts not only in India but also the world.

Nursing staff of a hospital draws a 'rangoli' to celebrate the 1 billion Covid-19 vaccine dose milestone, in Bengaluru. (PTI Photo)

our 130 crore people. People's participation is the biggest strength of democracy. If we run the country through the participation of 130 crore Indians, our country will be moving ahead 130 crore steps every moment. Our vaccination drive has yet again showed the power of this 'Team India'. India's success in its vaccination drive has also demonstrated to the whole world that 'democracy can deliver'. I am optimistic that the success achieved in the world's largest vaccination

drive will further spur our youth, our innovators and all levels of government

to set new benchmarks of public service delivery which will be a model not

In my Independence Day Address in 2015, I had said that our country is

moving ahead because of 'Team India' and this 'Team India' is a big team of