

Fortnightly Media Analysis Report – 17- 30 June 2024

During the fortnight spanning from **17- 30 June 2024**, media tracking focused on the online editions of mainstream newspapers and various news portals, highlighting a spectrum of health-related topics such as Routine Immunization (RI), vaccine-preventable diseases, Measles and Rubella Elimination, Polio, HPV, Td, and AEFI.

A total of 81 news articles were found across English and Hindi news portals, offering insights from both national and international perspectives. These articles presented a diverse range of viewpoints, encompassing positive, neutral, and multi-perspective stances on RI efforts.

Notably, approximately 56% of the coverage portrayed RI efforts in a positive light. However, in specific cases, a diphtheria outbreak and death toll rise to six in Odisha, and measles around the world, concerns about complications received attention, though comprising only 3.7% of the overall coverage.

On the other hand, 41% of the coverage maintained a neutral or multi-perspective approach. Overall, the news regarding immunization, policy perspectives, and efforts by stakeholders resonated with the general news media landscape.

Reflection of News stories on Immunization during the fortnight (17- 30 June 2024)-at a glance

| Name of Publication | Positive | Mixed (Multi-perspective) | Negative | Remark | Subject Covered |
|-----------------------|----------|---------------------------|----------|---------------------|---|
| Times of India - 11 | 4 | 6 | 1 | Diphtheria outbreak | Diphtheria, HPV, Uwin, Malaria, mpox, polio, adult vaccination, Covid, |
| Hindustan Times - 1 | | 1 | | | polio |
| Indian Express - 5 | 2 | 1 | 2 | Diphtheria outbreak | Diphtheria, Polio, Covid, |
| The Hindu - 4 | 3 | 1 | | | Rota, Covid, Measles, Vaccine |
| Business Standard - 3 | 2 | 1 | | | Polio, Covid, |
| Economic Times - 1 | 1 | | | | Rota vaccine |
| The Print- 1 | 1 | | | | UIP |
| The Week- 1 | | 1 | | | Polio |
| Hindustan Hindi - 1 | 1 | | | | Vaccination |
| Dainik Bhaskar - 8 | 6 | 2 | | | Polio, EPI, BCG, Vaccination |
| Forbes -1 | 1 | | | | Polio |
| BBC - 2 | 2 | | | | MR, Vaccination |
| BBC - 1 | 1 | | | | Covid |
| Mirror-1 | | 1 | | | Measles |
| Gavi- 3 | 1 | 2 | | | National immunization, vaccine, |
| PATH -1 | 1 | | | | Vaccination |
| WHO - 2 | 1 | 1 | | | VPD, Polio |
| UNICEF- 1 | 1 | | | | Vacination |
| Other web portal - 31 | 17 | 16 | | | Measles, AEFI, Covid, Rota, whooping cough, HPV, Polio, TB, Diphtheria, TT, vaccination |

Important stories with highlights

The Times of India reports that a digital intervention is bolstering the state's efforts to achieve 100% vaccine compliance, according to an official spokesperson. “The decline in infant and child mortality rates is largely attributed to the consistent implementation of regular vaccinations, which have eradicated polio and neonatal tetanus in the country. To ensure 100% vaccination compliance,

the government continually introduces new initiatives. Recently, the Indian government launched the U-Win app portal, operational since March 13, marking a significant digital transformation in vaccination services," said Dr. Ajay Gupta, the state immunization officer for Uttar Pradesh.

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<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/lucknow/u-win-app-pushes-ups-vax-compliance/articleshow/111152294.cms>

The Times of India reports in international news that the global vaccine organization Gavi is expected to request approximately \$11.9 billion from governments and foundations to support immunization efforts in the world's poorest countries over the next five years, according to board documents reviewed by Reuters. The final amount will be determined at a meeting in Paris, where donors will make pledges for Gavi's plan for 2026-2030. Additionally, a separately funded \$1 billion initiative to enhance vaccine production in Africa, known as the African Vaccine Manufacturing Accelerator. Gavi aids low-income countries in purchasing vaccines to protect against deadly diseases. Since 2020, Gavi's efforts have led to the immunization of around one billion children.

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<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/international-business/vaccine-group-gavi-seeks-11-9-billion-to-immunize-worlds-poorest-children/articleshow/111129507.cms>

Economic Times reports in policy news that Union Health Minister JP Nadda launched a two-month STOP Diarrhoea campaign, aiming to achieve zero deaths from childhood diarrhoea. The previous strategy involved a two-week campaign focusing on pre-positioning Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS) for children under five and limited Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) efforts. The new strategy extends the campaign to two months, with the pre-positioning of two ORS packets and a stronger emphasis on preventing childhood diarrhoea deaths. Nadda highlighted the connection between the STOP Diarrhoea Campaign, Mission Indradhanush, and the rotavirus vaccine, noting that all were among the first initiatives launched during his earlier tenure as health minister.

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<https://health.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/policy/nadda-launches-stop-diarrhoea-campaign-says-aim-to-attain-zero-deaths-due-to-childhood-diarrhoea/111252745>

The Print reports that during a pre-budget meeting with Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in Delhi on Thursday, health experts stressed the urgent need to increase the number of hospital beds in India. They highlighted that the current availability of beds is significantly below World Health Organization (WHO) standards. "We have provided the government with data showing that there are fewer than two beds per thousand population in our country, whereas the WHO recommends 3.5 beds per thousand population. Additionally, we emphasized the considerable disparity in bed density," stated Dr. Girdhar Gyani, Director General of the Association of Healthcare Providers.

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<https://theprint.in/economy/pre-budget-meeting-with-finance-minister-health-experts-urge-govt-to-increase-bed-availability-provide-subsidized-vaccines/2150566/>

Business Standard, in its Budget watch section, writes that in the Union Budget for FY25, experts anticipate expanded coverage and increased funding for major health initiatives. India's health sector may see a higher allocation, with expected increases in outlay for the Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY), vaccination, and disease control programmes in the upcoming Union Budget for 2025. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare had seen a 13 per cent increase in the proposed outlay to Rs 87,657 crore for FY25 during the interim Budget in February. This followed a 10 percent rise in outlay for the Ayushman Bharat scheme to Rs 7,500 crore, with the Finance Ministry proposing to bring Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA) and Anganwadi workers under its ambit.

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https://www.business-standard.com/budget/news/budget-watch-ayushman-bharat-vaccination-programme-top-agenda-for-health-124070100092_1.html

Indian Express reports from Odisha that in response to a diphtheria outbreak in Rayagada district, where five samples recently tested positive, raising the total to 15, the state health government has intensified measures. These include restricting travel and increasing vaccination coverage. The outbreak has been concentrated in Manushpadar village of Kashipur block, where the disease has claimed five lives over the past month, according to official sources. State health secretary Shalini Pandit, in a letter to Rayagada district collector Manoj Satyawar Mahajan, emphasized the importance of enhanced surveillance, post-exposure prophylaxis, and strengthened vaccination efforts.

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<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/odisha-health-dept-steps-up-vigil-after-5-new-diphtheria-cases-9400845/>

Mirrors report a significant breakthrough in the fight against measles by scientists developing new vaccines. Researchers have uncovered how a neutralizing antibody effectively blocks the highly contagious virus. They detailed that when the measles virus encounters a human cell, its viral machinery unfolds in a way that exposes crucial components, allowing it to fuse with the host cell membrane. Once fusion is complete, the host cell is overtaken by the virus. Scientists at the La Jolla Institute for Immunology (LJI) in California are now working on new measles vaccines and therapeutics designed to halt this fusion process.

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<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/health/measles-vaccine-breakthrough-sees-scientists-33123716>

BBC reports that the UK is at a "tipping point," with low uptake of routine vaccinations putting children at risk of severe diseases, according to health officials. Stagnant vaccination rates for illnesses like whooping cough and measles have led to population immunity dropping below the threshold needed to prevent outbreaks. Latest data from the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) for January to March show a slight increase in some vaccinations, including a 0.3% rise in pre-school booster shots for under-fives. However, vaccination targets are still not being met.

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<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c3ggge56x1qo>