

Fortnightly Media Analysis Report – 17- 31 May 2024

During the fortnight spanning from **17 - 31 May 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 123 news articles were found across English, Hindi, and regional 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 54% of the coverage portrayed RI efforts in a positive light. However, in specific cases, A two-month-old baby died after taking the BCG vaccine, and Mumps cases surged, raising concerns about complications that received attention, though comprising only 1.6% of the overall coverage.

On the other hand, 44% 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- 31 May 2024)-at a glance

Name of Publication	Positive	Mixed (Multi-perspective)	Negative	Remark	Subject Covered
Times of India -9	4	4	1	Mumps cases surge,	HPV, Measles, Malaria, Uwin, Vaccine, Covid
Hindustan Times - 2		2			Vaccine, MR
Indian Express - 2	1	1			Covid, Measles,
The Hindu - 9	4	5			TB, BCG, HPV, PHC, Vaccine
Business Standard- 2	1	1			Covid, Measles
Economic Times - 1		1			Measles,
The Print-2	2				BCG, Uwin
Hindustan Hindi -6	4	1	1	A two-month-old baby died after taking BCG vaccine	Measles, BCG, HPV, TB
Dainik Bhaskar - 6	5	1			RI, BCG, Measles
Amar Ujala- 3	2	1			TB, BCG
The Telegraph - 1		1			TB
Newyork Times -2	1	1			Polio, RI
Aljazeera --1	1				whooping cough
BBC - 3	1	2			Measles, HPV, Imm
Gavi- 2	2				Malaria, Imm,
BBC - 2		2			HIV, Measles
WHO - 10	3	7			Polio, RI, Measles, Vaccine
UNICEF- 1		1			Imm RI,
Other web portal - 59	36	23			HPV, Covid, RI, Measles, Vaccine, Imm, Polio, TB, Uwin, Dengue, MMR, Vaccination

Important stories with highlights

The Times of India reports that nearly one-third of individuals who received Covaxin experienced 'adverse events of special interest' (AESIs) within a year of vaccination, according to a

study published in the academic journal *Drug Safety* by Springer International. The study identified common AEsIs, including upper respiratory tract infections, new onset skin and subcutaneous disorders, and musculoskeletal disorders. Additionally, the study noted that 5% of women who received Covaxin, developed by Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech, reported menstrual abnormalities.

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/1-in-3-covaxin-ipients-hit-by-adverse-events-study/articleshow/110187284.cms>

Business Standard reports that The Serum Institute of India (SII) has shipped its first batch of the R21/Matrix-M malaria vaccine to Africa, dispatching around 43,200 doses from India. Approximately 163,800 doses have been allocated for the Central African Region (CAR), with other African nations such as South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo set to receive their allocations in the coming days. SII has produced 25 million doses of the vaccine and has the capacity to scale up to 100 million doses annually. According to sources, the vaccine will not be available in India immediately but is expected to become available in the country within the next 2-4 years.

https://www.business-standard.com/companies/news/serum-institute-ships-its-first-set-of-malaria-vaccine-doses-to-africa-124052000833_1.html

The Indian Express reports in its Health and Wellness section that a study by Banaras Hindu University (BHU) identified long-term adverse events of "special interest" in over 900 people a year after receiving Bharat Biotech's Covaxin. The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has criticized the study, labeling it as "poorly designed" with significant flaws. The director-general of ICMR has written to both the authors and the editor of the journal where the paper was published, stating that the study "incorrectly and misleadingly" acknowledges ICMR, despite the organization not providing any financial or technical support. The letters assert, "ICMR cannot be associated with this poorly designed study."

<https://indianexpress.com/article/health-wellness/covaxin-side-effects-bhu-study-icmr-9340377/>

The Hindustan Times published an article stating that the HPV vaccine offers significant benefits for men and boys by reducing their risk of head and neck cancers, according to a new study. The research indicates that vaccinating boys and men against the human papillomavirus (HPV) decreases their risk of developing head and neck cancers and other malignancies. This finding adds to the vaccine's well-established effectiveness in protecting women from cervical cancer. The study, which analyzed data from over 3.4 million individuals, is among the first long-term assessments of the vaccine's real-world impact on preventing HPV-related cancers of the head, neck, anal areas, penis, vulva, vagina, and cervix, researchers said.

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/lifestyle/health/hpv-vaccine-provides-real-benefits-for-men-and-boys-reduces-their-risk-of-head-and-neck-cancers-study-101716542438746-amp.html>

The Hindu reports that District Medical Health Officer P. Jagadeeswara Rao has directed officials to initiate the BCG vaccination program for adults in all panchayats starting June 2, speaking at the District Task Force Committee meeting on BCG vaccination for adults, Dr. Rao emphasized

that the BCG vaccine should be administered to individuals who are 18 years and older, those who have undergone and completed treatment for TB, individuals with a BMI of less than 18, people aged 60 and above, and those who smoke and have diabetes.

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Visakhapatnam/bcg-vaccination-for-adults-to-start-on-june-2/article68208609.ece>

The Print reported that the government has recently entered into a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) with the goal of bolstering capacity and digitalization efforts within vaccine cold chain management. This collaborative initiative is geared towards advancing the digitalization of vaccine cold chain management, enhancing capacity building, and refining communication strategies across India. The MoU was formally signed by Alka Upadhyay, the Secretary of the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying, and Caitlin Wiesen, the UNDP Resident Representative in India.

<https://theprint.in/india/government-signs-mou-with-undp-for-capacity-building-and-digitalization-of-vaccine-cold-chain-management/2095274/>

According to **The Print**, Union Health Secretary Apurva Chandra recently led a high-level meeting focused on "Advancing Health and Well-Being of Billions in the WHO South-East Asia Region." Emphasizing India's status as the pharmaceutical hub of the world, Chandra highlighted how India's expertise contributes to providing affordable medical solutions in the SEARO region. The meeting, held in Geneva as a side event to the 77th World Health Assembly, was co-hosted by the WHO Regional Office for Southeast Asia (SEARO) and the Indian government. Its purpose was to devise collaborative strategies among member States, WHO, and partners to address critical public health priorities in the Southeast Asia Region.

Chandra underscored the significance of digital technologies, citing India's utilization of platforms like CoWIN during the COVID-19 pandemic. He noted the evolution of these technologies into UWIN, a digital platform aimed at monitoring immunization progress and generating digital certificates for every child.

<https://theprint.in/world/india-providing-strength-to-searo-region-on-affordable-medical-counter-measures-union-health-secy/2104378/>

As reported by **The Telegraph**, tuberculosis (TB) has regained its status as the foremost infectious killer worldwide. It's estimated that approximately 15 individuals succumb to this relentless disease each day, totaling around 3,600 deaths within a 24-hour period. These victims endure a slow and debilitating decline, often spending months or even years grappling with relentless coughing and gradual lung deterioration.

Tragically, those most affected by TB are often impoverished individuals from developing or middle-income countries. Unlike newly emerged viruses or superbugs, TB is caused by a bacterium that has plagued humanity for an astonishing 40 millennia, marking it as one of the oldest pandemics known to humankind.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/global-health/science-and-disease/tb-vaccine-tuberculosis-trials-m72-as01e/>

According to **WHO** in its news section has shared that Member States have reaffirmed their commitment to global immunization efforts during the seventy-seventh World Health Assembly. A significant highlight of the session was the welcome reception of the Immunization Agenda 2030 (IA2030) Global Progress Report. The assembly witnessed robust engagement with 50 interventions, including three representing different regions (EMRO, AFRO, SEARO).

Delegates reiterated their steadfast support for Regional Action Plans and National Immunization Strategies, emphasizing ongoing endeavours to strengthen immunization programs worldwide. Noteworthy initiatives discussed included the 'Big Catch-up' campaign, aimed at regaining lost ground due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the introduction of new vaccines, such as those targeting malaria and HPV.

<https://www.who.int/republicofkorea/news/detail-global/30-05-2024-member-states-reaffirm-commitment-to-immunization-at-seventy-seventh-world-health-assembly>

WHO reported in a joint press release from WHO and UNICEF has highlighted that measles cases continue to surge across Europe, posing a significant risk to millions of children. According to the latest data, 56,634 measles cases and four deaths were officially reported across 45 out of 53 countries in the WHO European Region during the first three months of 2024. Throughout 2023, 61,070 cases and 13 deaths were reported by 41 countries.

Measles, according to the press release, significantly impacts children's health, with young ones being particularly vulnerable to severe complications. High rates of hospitalization and the prolonged weakening of immune systems increase the susceptibility of children to other infectious diseases. More than half of those who contracted measles in the Region in 2023 required hospitalization, underscoring the substantial burden on individuals, families, and healthcare systems.

<https://www.who.int/europe/news/item/28-05-2024-joint-press-release-from-who-and-unicef--measles-cases-across-europe-continue-to-surge--putting-millions-of-children-at-risk>