

Leading the Way, Leading the World

PM Modi Inspires India to Become Pharmacy of the World

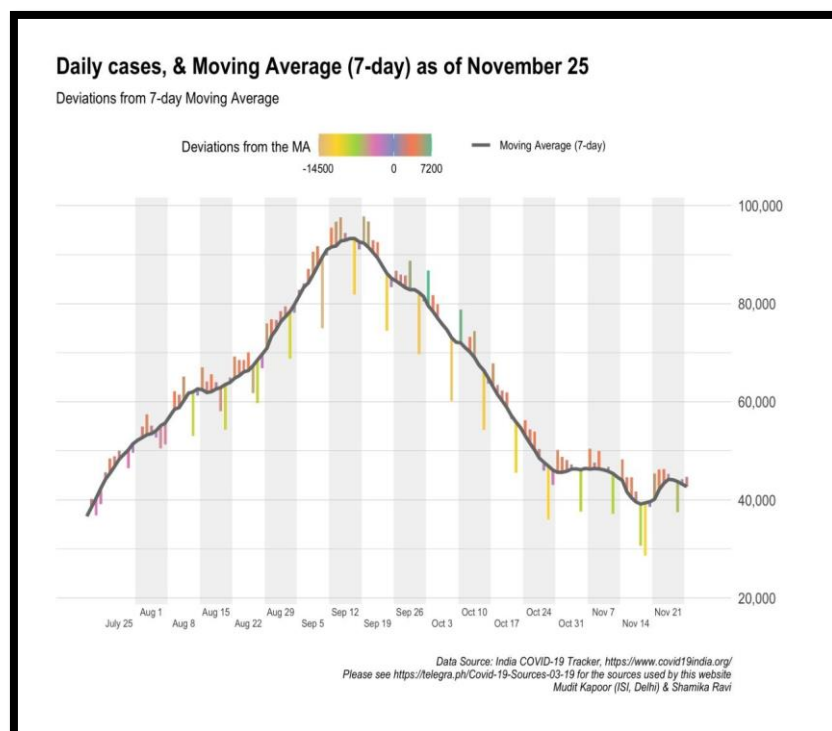
- PM Modi undertook a 3-city tour to conduct an extensive review of the vaccine development and manufacturing process. He visited the Zydus Biotech Park in Ahmedabad, Bharat Biotech in Hyderabad and Serum Institute of India in Pune.
- Two of these sites are where India is indigenously developing vaccines to fight COVID and one of these sites is where crores of vaccines to save the world will be manufactured.
- He told the scientists that he chose to meet them face to face in order to boost their morale & help accelerate their efforts at this critical juncture in the vaccine development journey.
- PM Modi stressed that India considers vaccines as not only vital to good health but also as a global good, and it is India's duty to assist other countries, including the nations in our neighbourhood, in the collective fight against the virus.
- India is not only leading the world in research for vaccines but will also be crucial for the world's vaccine production.
- Next month, ambassadors of 100 countries are scheduled to visit Pune on December 4, they will visit Serum Institute of India and Gennova Biopharmaceuticals Limited.
- India has become the Pharmacy of the World in its fight against the pandemic.

India – Putting Up a Better Fight than Most

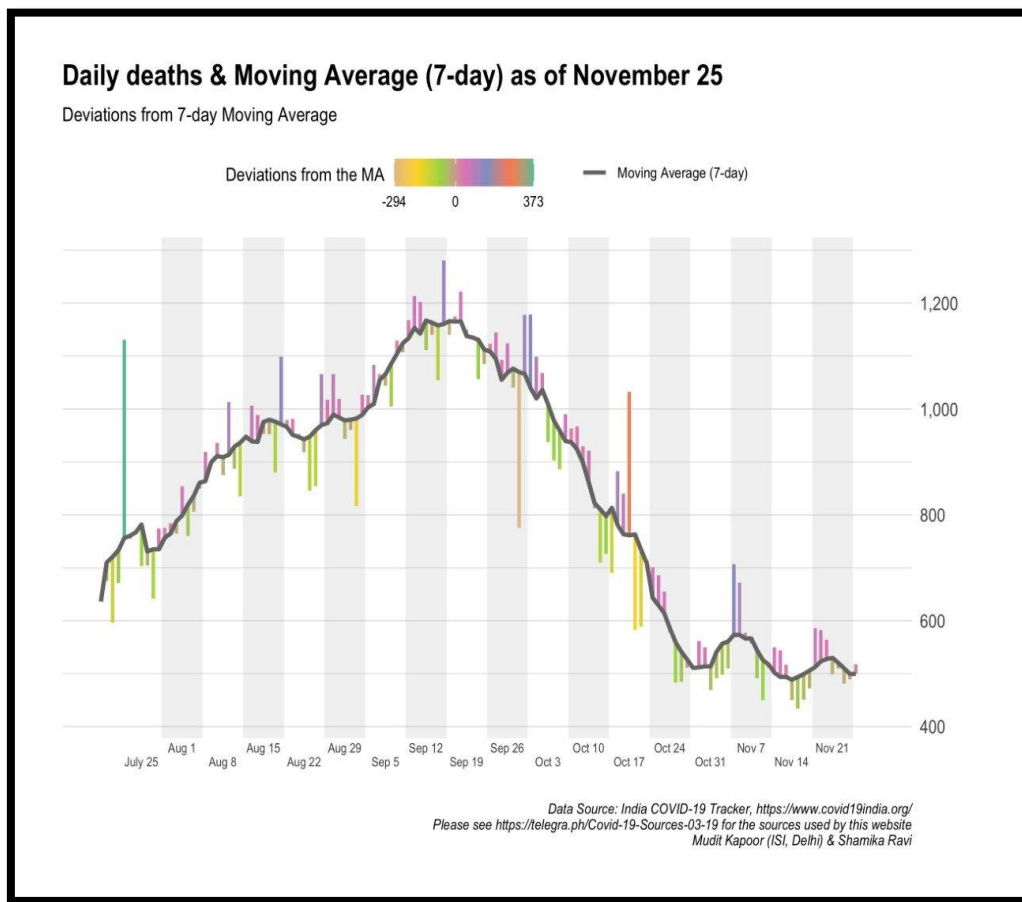
- When someone asks how various countries have fared against the pandemic, it is easy to look at the total number of cases of each country.
- But the true measure of a country's performance is number of cases per million and number of deaths per million.
- As of 28 November, India has 6,731 cases per million population. In comparison, USA has 40,000 cases per million, UK has 23,361, France has 33,424, Brazil has 29,129 while Italy has 25,456. Most of these countries

have about 4-5 times the number of cases than India, on a per million basis.

- When it comes to number of deaths per million population. India saw 98 deaths per million population.
- Every life is precious, not even a single death is acceptable, but this is just to compare how effective countries have been in saving lives from the pandemic.
- As of 28 November, While India saw 98 deaths per million population, USA saw 813, Brazil saw 805, France saw 780, Spain saw 955, UK saw 846 and Italy 888. Almost all these countries have about 8-9 times more deaths than India on a per million basis.
- This is despite the fact that many of these countries are said to be developed countries with much better healthcare systems than India!
- Currently, India's curve is showing a downward trend. From the peak of almost 97,894 daily cases in mid-September, on 26 November there were 43,174 cases.
- India seems to have bent the curve (as of 25 November) when one considers the daily cases with a 7-day moving average.



- Here's the daily deaths, as of 25 November, by the same yardstick.



India's Better Response – Thanks to Quick Decision-Making of PM Modi

- The Oxford University COVID-19 Government Response Stringency Index shows how proactively and decisively a country's government has acted against the spread of the pandemic.
- Let's consider when different countries first achieved their highest score on Oxford University COVID-19 Government Response Stringency Index.
- On 21 March, when the USA first achieved its highest score (72.69), it had 16.24 daily confirmed COVID cases per million.
- On 26 March UK (75.93) already had 21.39 daily confirmed COVID cases per million population, 2.74 daily deaths per million population and 10.22 total COVID deaths per million population.
- Similarly, on 12th April, Italy (93.52) already had 77.64 daily confirmed COVID cases per million population, 10 daily deaths per million population and 322 total COVID deaths per million population.

- In contrast to all these examples, when India first achieved its highest score (100%) on the Stringency Index on 25 March, it had only 0.04 daily confirmed COVID cases per million population, 0 daily deaths per million population and less than 0.01 total COVID deaths per million population.
- This means, PM Modi took quick and proactive decisions, and went all out to attack the pandemic even before it could spread major havoc in the country.

What Were These Quick Decisions that PM Modi Took?

- India was among the quickest to react at the government and institutional level.
- China notified the world on 7 January about the Wuhan virus. **The very next day**, India had a mission meeting on 8 January itself.
- India **started screening passengers from 17 January**, among the first countries in the world to do so.
- First case in India was detected on 30 January and aggressive containment and screening measures were instituted then and there.
- On the other end of the spectrum, **India was among the first to introduce Rapid Antigen Tests along with RT-PCR tests**. India was criticised initially for this strategy but later the WHO itself has adopted this model.
- It was in March first week itself that PM Modi announced that he would not join any Holi Milan event since the scientific advice was to stay away from social gatherings. It was among the earliest examples among world leaders to send a message to the country.
- **When PM Modi sent this message of staying away from mass gatherings to millions of countrymen, India did not even have 50 cases!**



- Large parts of India made **masks mandatory way back in April itself**, with Modi himself wearing masks in public since early April, while the WHO waited till June before recommending it the world over.

Early Lockdown to Contain Exponential Spread

- When PM Modi called for a complete lockdown on 24 March, India had just about 500 cases.
- India could have waited or delayed imposing a lockdown and risked going down the European or USA trajectory.
- The growth rate of new cases had increased from 10.9% to 19.6% in just one week and the doubling time was just over 3 days.
- That is when Prime Minister Narendra Modi took the decision to impose a national lockdown, which till then no other country had taken so early.
- This one decision changed India's trajectory.
- If the lockdown option is exercised late, it really does not help since exponential phase is already on. By this time the hospitals are already full and deaths pile up.
- Moreover, this was a crucial period for the government to build up infrastructure to treat the pandemic.
- It utilized the period of lockdown to create 15,362 dedicated COVID1-19 health facilities, about 15.40 lakh isolation beds, 2.70 lakh oxygen supported beds and 78,000 ICU beds.
- It also delivered 32,400 ventilators to government hospitals across the country. Compare this with fact that in the last 70 years, these government hospitals possessed only 12,000 ventilators!
- It also provided 3.70 crore N95 Masks and 1.60 crore PPEs to State Governments.

PM Modi's Leadership – A Crucial Ingredient

- PM Modi first mentioned COVID-19 to his entire Cabinet on 29 January and asked them to take it seriously. He also directed that India's response must be entirely science-based. Remember, at this time India had not even seen its first case.

- He has been personally monitoring India's statistics every morning since early March. He is known to look at data on testing, cases, deaths, regions, states and even districts. He then calls up CMs to speak to them away from the public eye (to avoid any chance of politicization) to get a sense of the situation.
- Since then, PM Modi has discussed COVID-19 situation in all Cabinet meetings, asking Ministers about their assessment of situation in their respective areas.
- PM Modi has chaired at least once COVID-19 related meeting a week over the last 9 months, and most have been away from the public eye.
- He has interacted with all sections of society from healthcare professionals, to sportspersons, to media to even radio jockeys, to motivate them to spread awareness, learn from them, know their experience, harness their expertise.
- As we already saw, PM Modi led the way in refraining from social gatherings in early March during Holi. This had already conveyed the seriousness of the situation to millions of people.
- Next, he addressed the nation and came out with a unique Jan Bhagidari initiative called 'Janata Curfew'. He exhorted the people themselves to observe a countrywide lockdown of one day and show the world how India could unite to fight the pandemic.
- The people responded in an emphatic way. This prepared the nation mentally for an upcoming lockdown.
- Next, PM Modi announced a nationwide lockdown from March 24. In the same address, he gave the message of 'Jaan Hai Toh Jahaan Hai' to convey the seriousness of the situation.
- He also asked people to wear masks and clean hands regularly, much needed.
- Yet again, people responded.
- During the lockdown, PM Modi called for people to light lamps and show solidarity with each other. He also asked them to show support to healthcare professionals in a unique way. This sent a wave of positivity across the nation.
- Next, before the 'Unlock' phase, PM Modi addressed the nation again and guided them with the philosophy of 'Jaan Bhi Jahaan Bhi'.
- India had gone into lockdown early and also went into the Unlock phase pretty early.

- Throughout these phases, his personal leadership assured every Indian that they were in safe hands that was following sound scientific advice and putting the objective of saving lives above everything else.
- This is the reason for today's situation where India's infections per million and deaths per million are both much lower than many developed countries.

Help from the Government through the Pandemic

- While the nation was fighting the pandemic, there was also an urgent need to fight poverty.
- There was a need to ensure that the disruption doesn't become distress for the poor.
- Immediately, the Modi government swung into action to help the poor.
- Through the Rs 1.70 lakh crore Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Package (PMGKP), the Government announced free food grains and cash payment to women and poor senior citizens and farmers.
- The numbers achieved by this programme are mindboggling and could have made some world records in itself!
- Around 42 crore poor people received financial assistance of Rs 68,820 crore.
- Rs 17,891 crore was transferred under PM-KISAN scheme to almost 9 crore farmers.
- Nearly Rs 31,000 crore was transferred to 20 crore women Jan Dhan account holders in 3 instalments.
- Rs 2,814.50 crore was transferred to about 2.81 crore old age persons, widows and disabled persons in 2 installments.
- 1.82 crore building & construction workers received financial support worth Rs 4,987.18 crore.
- About 13 crore free Ujjwala gas cylinders were delivered to poor households.
- Under Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana, nearly 80 crore people received free foodgrains and pulses till November, month on month!
- And remember, wherever cash transfers were done, they went directly to the bank accounts of the beneficiaries – no leakages!

Impact of the Unlock Most High Frequency Indicators Looking Up

- India went into lockdown early and also unlocked the economy much earlier.
- The impact of this is seen in most high frequency indicators seeing an uptick!
- Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) rose from 56.8 in September to 58.9 in October, 2020, registering the highest figure in over a decade.
- PMI Services index also rose to 54.1 in October, ending the seven-month sequence of contraction, signalling improved market conditions.
- Power consumption clocked double digit YoY growth of 12.1 per cent in October and 4.5 per cent in the first 24 days of November, reflecting a post-recovery rebound and even in growth economic activity across all spheres – agriculture, industry and services.
- Passenger vehicle sales reported 2 per cent growth in October 2020, while total domestic sales of two-wheelers increased 16.8 per cent, auguring well for consumption demand.
- Domestic tractor sales posted a 7 per cent YoY growth in October, auguring well for rural demand and signaling an early indicator of the transformation arising from agricultural reforms introduced under Aatmanirbhar Bharat package.
- E-way bills generated witnessed a double-digit YoY growth of 21.4 per cent in October, reaching an all-time high of 641 lakh, and 7 per cent in the first 23 days of November.
- GST collections swelled to eight-month high at ₹1.05 lakh crore in October – crossing ₹1 lakh crore after February, 2020 – registering a positive year on year growth of 10.2 percent.
- Railway freight grew YoY at 15.4 per cent in October and 13.6 per cent in the first 10 days of November. Also, gross revenue from railway passenger bookings stood at ₹533.27 crore in the first ten days of November, reaching 8 per cent of October levels.
- Cargo traffic volumes in October have reached 7 per cent of previous year levels, registering a 1.23 per cent YoY growth.
- Domestic aviation passengers increased from 2.8 lakh in May to 28.32 lakh in August and 39.43 lakh in September and 52.71 lakh in October.

- Under MGNREGA, 252.4 crore person days of work have been created during April to October of FY 2021 as against 159.7 crore person days in the corresponding period of previous year.

Economic Impact of the Pandemic

- GDP growth numbers naturally went down, given the disruption due to the pandemic.
- However, GDP for Q2 of FY20 contracted by (-) 7.5 per cent, much smaller when compared to the contraction of (-) 23.9 percent reported for Q1 of FY20.
- Between these two quarters, already a huge improvement can be seen in private consumption expenditure.
- Agriculture reported a growth of 3.4% in Q2, the same as in Q1.
- Manufacturing has grown by 0.6% in Q2 as compared to a contraction of (-) 39.3% in Q1.
- Here's a comparison with other economies globally which shows India's position is better

Table: GDP Growth (%) Across Prominent G20 Economies

Country	Q1 of 2020-21	Q2 of 2020-21
Japan	-10.3	-5.9
Spain	-21.5	-8.7
United Kingdom	-21.5	-9.6
United States	-9.0	-2.9
China	3.2	4.9
India	-23.9	(-) 7.5

Indonesia	-5.4	-3.6
Mexico	-18.7	-8.7