

Important Vocab for the Editorial

1. Covaxin (noun) – India's first indigenous COVID-19 vaccine candidate (COVAXIN) developed by a Hyderabad-based company (Bharat Biotech) in collaboration with the ICMR (The Indian Council of Medical Research).
2. enable (verb) – allow, permit, give permission to, authorize.
3. ravage (verb) – devastate, ruin, destroy, wreak havoc on, damage.
4. universal (adjective) – relating to all people, applicable to all, comprehensive, all-inclusive, all-round, across the board.
5. swift (adjective) – prompt, rapid, quick, sudden, immediate.
6. vaccination (noun) – treatment with a vaccine to protect against a particular disease; immunization.
7. universal vaccination (noun) – vaccination for all.
8. way out (noun) – answer, solution.
9. mitigate (verb) – reduce, lessen, decrease, make less severe.
10. pandemic (noun) – the worldwide spread of a new disease; The illness spreads around the world and typically affects a large number of people across a wide area.
11. dose (noun) – an amount/quantity of something.
12. vaccinate (verb) – inoculate, administer, introduce (with a vaccine to provide immunity against a disease).
13. substantial (adjective) – considerable, significant, large.
14. immunity (noun) – protection, resistance, non-susceptibility (against infectious disease).
15. novel coronavirus (nCoV) (SARS-CoV-2) (noun) – a new strain (type/variety) coronavirus that has not been previously identified in humans. (Courtesy: [WHO](#))
16. variant (noun) – different or form or version or mutant of something (virus).
17. a tall order (phrase) – something that is very difficult to do; demanding, exacting, difficult (task/job).
18. constraint (noun) – restriction, limitation, restraint.
19. vaccine (noun) – a biological preparation that improves immunity to a particular disease.
20. so far (phrase) – until now, up to the present, up to this point.
21. Oxford vaccine/Covishield (noun) – (ChAdOx1 nCoV-19) or (AZD1222) is a COVID-19 vaccine candidate developed by Oxford

University and AstraZeneca, UK Ltd. (named Covishield in India). Serum Institute of India (SII), a biotechnology company has partnered with global pharma giant AstraZeneca and Oxford University for this vaccine candidate 'Covidshield'.

22. Sputnik V (noun) – a COVID-19 vaccine candidate developed by the Gamaleya Research Institute of Epidemiology and Microbiology, Moscow and registered by the Russian Ministry of Health.
23. deploy (verb) – use, utilize, employ, make use of.
24. halt (verb) – stop, terminate, end.
25. address (verb) – tackle, deal with, attend to, try to sort out.
26. augmentation (noun) – increase, expansion, multiplication, enlargement.
27. abroad (noun) – foreign countries as a whole.
28. over the long term (phrase) – for a long period of time.
29. expose (verb) – make vulnerable; subject to something (infectious agents & others).
30. seek (verb) – request, ask for, appeal, demand.
31. waiver (noun) – deferral, rejection, renunciation (with no stipulations/restrictions).
32. provision (noun) – clause, (legal) term, requirement, condition.
33. Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) (noun) – the WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) is the most comprehensive multilateral agreement on intellectual property (IP). It plays a central role in facilitating trade in knowledge and creativity, in resolving trade disputes over IP, and in assuring WTO members the latitude to achieve their domestic policy objectives. It frames the IP system in terms of innovation, technology transfer and public welfare. The Agreement is a legal recognition of the significance of links between IP and trade and the need for a balanced IP system.
34. facilitate (verb) – make easy, make possible, enable; assist, help/aid.
35. statutory (adjective) – legitimate, acceptable, permissible.
36. regime (noun) – system, arrangement, apparatus, mechanism.
37. diversity (noun) – variety, range, array.
38. submission (noun) – proposal, suggestion, proposition, recommendation.
39. statutory power (noun) – a legal power given by statute law.
40. patents Act, 1970 (noun) – An Act to amend and consolidate the law relating to patents.

41. counter-productive (adjective) – harmful, damaging, dangerous/destructive.
42. contradictory (adjective) – contrary, contrasting, conflicting, inconsistent.
43. Section 100 of the Patents Act, 1970 (noun) – It enables Central Government to use patented inventions for government purposes. It allows the Centre Government to license specific companies to manufacture the vaccines.
44. Section 92 of the Patents Act, 1970 (noun) – It enables the Central Government to issue compulsory licenses for the manufacture of patented drugs in a public health emergency.
45. circumstances (noun) – situation, condition, context.
46. toll (noun) – number, count, total (number of deaths).
47. case load (noun) – the number of cases to be handled by a doctor at one time.
48. rigid (adjective) – firm, inflexible; strict, severe, stern.
49. stance (noun) – position, approach, standpoint.
50. consent (noun) – agreement, assent, approval.
51. Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) (noun) – the apex body in India for the formulation, coordination and promotion of biomedical research, is one of the oldest medical research bodies in the world. As early as in 1911, the Government of India set up the Indian Research Fund Association (IRFA) with the specific objective of sponsoring and coordinating medical research in the country. It was redesignated in 1949 as the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR). The ICMR is funded by the Government of India through the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.
52. National Institute of Virology (NIV) (noun) – The National Institute of Virology is one of the major Institutes of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR). It was established at Pune, Maharashtra State in 1952 as Virus Research Centre (VRC) to do intensive training and research in virology in India.
53. redundant (adjective) – unnecessary, not required, inessential, unwanted.
54. augment (verb) – increase, intensify; improve, boost, enhance.
55. Public Sector Enterprise/Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) (noun) – Companies owned by the Union Government of India or one of the many state or territorial governments or both together in parts. The company stock is majority-owned by the government in a PSU.

56. immunological (adjective) – relating to immunology (the study of immune systems in all organisms).
57. besides (preposition/linking adverb) – in addition to, as well, apart from.

Using all options: On Covaxin licensing

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Enabling other manufacturers to produce Covaxin is a necessary step

As the second COVID-19 wave continues to ravage the country, it is now clear that universal and swift vaccination is the only way out to mitigate the effects of the pandemic. But with only 3% and 10.4% of the total population estimated to have taken the second and a single dose, respectively, the goal of vaccinating a substantial number of people to achieve immunity against SARS-CoV-2 and its variants, remains a tall order for India. Supply constraints in delivering the only two vaccines available to Indians so far — Covishield and Covaxin — (the Russian-developed Sputnik V vaccine has just been deployed) are one of the reasons why the pace of vaccination has fallen. Karnataka and Maharashtra have halted vaccination for the 18-44 age group to address this as well. While the manufacturers, Serum Institute of India and Bharat Biotech, have promised an augmentation in production capacity, the dependence on them till other vaccines, including those from abroad, are made available over the long term, will remain a constraint in the pace of vaccination and expose much of the population to the possibility of infection. India has rightly sought (along with South Africa) a temporary waiver of provisions in the TRIPS Agreement to facilitate universal access to COVID-19 vaccines. But the Centre has done nothing to bring vaccines and medicines under a statutory regime in India to allow for wider availability and a diversity of options.

In fact, the Centre's submission to the Supreme Court that the "exercise of statutory powers... under the Patents Act, 1970... can only prove to be counter-productive at this stage", is clearly contradictory to its international position for a temporary waiver in the TRIPS Agreement. The Agreement allows exceptions to the rights of patent owners by grant of compulsory licences. Section 100 of the Patents Act, 1970, allows the Centre to license specific companies to manufacture the vaccines, while Section 92 of the Act

allows the Centre to issue a compulsory licence in circumstances of a national or an extreme emergency. Considering the impact of the second wave, the daily toll and the high case load, the Centre should revisit its rigid and contradictory stance on the issue of compulsory licensing that would allow the manufacture of vaccines and important drugs without the consent of the patent holder. In the case of Bharat Biotech's Covaxin, which was developed in collaboration with the publicly funded ICMR and the NIV, even this route is redundant. The ICMR can license other public sector vaccine manufacturers to help augment its supply over the medium term. As of now, two central PSUs, Indian Immunologicals Ltd and BIBCOLD, have already entered into a technology transfer agreement with Bharat Biotech, besides the Haffkine Bio-pharmaceutical Corporation based in Mumbai. Other manufacturers can also re-purpose their plants to produce the vaccine.

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