On 27th February 2021 the U.S. FDA issued an emergency use authorization (EUA) for vaccine developed by Janssen for the prevention of COVID-19 caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2)

Editorial:
The first single dose COVID vaccine developed by Jansen got Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) by US FDA on 27th February 2021. This vaccine is adenovirus based. They use a virus – in this case, a version of adenoviruses. This virus has been modified to include DNA that codes for the spike protein on the SARS-CoV-2 virus. This spike protein is one of the virus’ identifying features for immune cells, and what the virus uses to weasel its way into human cells.

As per US FDA this decision was based on scientific evidence, including data from the Phase 3 study involving 43,783 participants across the US, Latin America and South Africa, that demonstrated the vaccine was 85 percent effective in preventing severe disease across all regions studied and showed protection against COVID-19 related hospitalization and death, beginning 28 days after vaccination. This vaccine was approved by FDA through an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for active immunization to prevent Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in individuals 18 years of age and older. This vaccine is stable at -20 degree centigrade for 2 years and stable for 3 months at 2-8 degree centigrade and administered intramuscularly.

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WHO encourages all Nations to closely monitor Adverse Effects of any Vaccine In use

All countries should closely monitor adverse health effects related to the use of any vaccine, a spokesperson for the World Health Organization (WHO) told Sputnik following the suspension of the AstraZeneca drug in several EU countries.

A number of European states have suspended vaccination with the AstraZeneca drug as a precaution after reports on severe side-effects, including blood clots that were allegedly triggered
by the vaccine. The European Medicines Agency said there was currently no indication that the reported negative effects had been caused by the vaccination.

"WHO encourages all countries to continue to carefully monitor for any adverse events following immunization (AEFIs) with any vaccine and to report any serious cases of AEFIs to the global AEFI surveillance database," the spokesperson said on late Thursday.

The WHO's Global Advisory Committee on Vaccine Safety (GACVS) reviews all the reports on the vaccines' safety, according to the organization's representative.

"WHO's Global Advisory Committee on Vaccine Safety (GACVS) systematically reviews any vaccine safety signals and concerns related to COVID-19 vaccine safety, to advise WHO on any new safety signals or concerns related to COVID-19 vaccines," the spokesperson said.

The World Health Organization declared the COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic on March 11, 2020. To date, more than 118.34 million people have been infected with the coronavirus worldwide, with over 2.62 million fatalities, according to Johns Hopkins University.

Source: Business Standard

India to produce J&J shot as part of Quad initiative
India will manufacture the US-developed Johnson & Johnson’s single-dose Covid shot as part of the first Quad vaccine initiative. The project will be financed by Japan and the US, while Australia will use its logistics capability to ship the vaccines to Southeast Asia and Pacific countries.

This will be a notable takeaway from Friday’s first ever Quad summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi, US President Joe Biden, Japanese PM Yoshihide Suga and Australian PM Scott Morrison that will serve to emphasise India’s strength in the pharma sector and mesh with its current initiatives to provide vaccines to dozens of countries.

The discussion is one of the earliest multilateral summits by the new Biden administration (he has only held a G-7 virtual meeting) and emphasises growing strategic convergence between the Quad countries on countering China’s expansionist policies in the security and economic domains.

While the maritime concerns remain the bedrock of security cooperation among the four nations, the summit will send a more evolved message to the Indo-Pacific region. The sentiment that powered the first Quad response to the 2004 tsunami is being resurrected — that democracies joining hands to secure and promote certain values and provide assistance is preferable to authoritarian regimes in a region with countries lacking the power to push back against a power like China.

The other takeaway may be in the area of technology as well as climate change — with all four countries diversifying from China, there will be efforts to create reliable and trusted technology and manufacturing chains — from joint development of 5G networks to fabricating semi-conductors. Biden has made climate change a major part of his foreign policy and a coordinated approach by the Quad members is likely to emerge.

"Our role in the Quad vaccine initiative will project and reinforce India’s credentials as a trusted, reliable manufacturer and supplier of quality vaccines. It will strengthen India’s standing as the ‘pharmacy of the world’, a critical node in global health supply chains and as a selfless contributor to global health security," a source here said.

There is already pushback from China and Russia on the Quad, with Chinese commentators describing it as an "Asian NATO". Sources here say there is no such bureaucracy under consideration and plans are to keep the Quad flexible, making it easier to address and respond to emerging global challenges. The vision of the grouping could look beyond the Indo-Pacific and

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the vaccine initiative itself could be a start, sources say.

The current avatar of the Quad began in 2017, in the aftermath of the Doklam crisis between India and China. The 2020 standoff between India and China in eastern Ladakh has only deepened India’s determination on both Indo-Pacific and the Quad. For the first time in 2020, India invited Australia to join the Malabar naval exercises, which cemented the security cooperation of the Quad.

Source: The Times of India

Govt. hospitals administer over 71% of doses of COVID vaccines
A majority of anti-Covid vaccines are being administered in government hospitals with over 71% doses given in public health facilities, whereas around 29% doses were dispensed in private hospitals.

Till Thursday evening (7pm), India administered over 2.6 crore doses of Bharat Biotech’s Covaxin and Serum Institute of India’s Covishield.

In around 17 states, including Himachal Pradesh, West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Gujarat, the private sector administered vaccine doses below the national average of 28.7%.

However, some states and UTs like Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim and Tripura have very few private facilities and vaccination is largely driven by government hospitals.

Though private hospitals were part of the vaccination drive even when the programme was initially rolled out for health and frontline workers on January 16, and the government has now allowed all hospitals that meet the requirements, their participation remains sub-par.

This was done in view of increasing footfalls for vaccination after the government started inoculating those above 60 and those between 45 and 60 with specified co-morbidities.

Source: ET Health World

Dr. Subhash C. Mandal receiving 2nd dose of COVID vaccine as a Front Line COVID worker

Dr. Rajiv Kumar Raghuvanshi joined as the Secretary-cum-Scientific Director of Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission

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