



1 million Covid deaths by 1st August, Lancet blames Modi Govt

- By Ankit Agrawal

India may witness 1 million COVID-19 deaths by Aug 1, says Lancet

The science editorial added that if this outcome were to become a reality, the Narendra Modi-led government would be responsible for presiding over a self-inflicted national catastrophe

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'Hospitals are overwhelmed': Lancet slams Modi govt for the pandemic surge

"The scenes of suffering in India are hard to comprehend," according to an editorial

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WHAT HAS HAPPENED?

India could see a staggering 1 million deaths from Covid-19 by August 1, according to an editorial in the British medical journal *Lancet*.

If that outcome were to happen, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government would be responsible for presiding over a self-inflicted national catastrophe.

So far, 234,083 have died of Covid-19 in the country

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Figure

India's COVID-19 emergency

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Article Info

Figures

The scenes of suffering in India are hard to comprehend. As of May 4, more than 20·2 million cases of COVID-19 had been reported, with a rolling average of 378 000 cases a day, together with more than 222 000 deaths, which experts believe are likely to be substantial underestimates. Hospitals are overwhelmed, and health workers are exhausted and becoming infected. Social media is full of desperate people (doctors and the public) seeking medical oxygen, hospital beds, and other necessities. Yet before the second wave of cases of COVID-19 began to mount in early March, Indian Minister of Health [Harsh Vardhan declared](#) that India was in the “endgame” of the epidemic. The impression from the government was that India had beaten COVID-19 after several months of low case counts, despite [repeated warnings of the dangers of a second wave](#) and the emergence of new strains. Modelling suggested falsely that India had reached herd immunity, encouraging complacency and insufficient preparation, but a serosurvey by the [Indian Council of Medical Research](#) in January suggested that only 21% of the population had antibodies against SARS-CoV-2. At times, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Government has seemed more intent on [removing criticism on Twitter](#) than trying to control the pandemic.

HOW 1 MILLION?

The *Lancet* editorial **quoted the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation**, an independent global health research organisation,

In **giving its projection for a million deaths** by August 1.

“India squandered its early successes in controlling Covid-19. Until April, the government’s **Covid-19 taskforce had not met in months,**” the editorial said.

WHY MODI GOVT?

In a **sharp criticism** of the government strategy, *Lancet* said **despite warnings** about the risks of **superspreader events**,

The **government allowed** religious **festivals** to go ahead, drawing **millions of people** from around the country,

Along with **huge political rallies**—conspicuous for their **lack of Covid mitigation measures**.

It also noted that modelling suggested falsely that India had reached herd immunity, encouraging complacency and insufficient preparation.

“At times, Modi’s government has seemed more intent on removing criticism on Twitter than trying to control the pandemic.”

The editorial also criticised Health Minister Harsh Vardhan for announcing in early March that India is in the **endgame of Covid.**

“The impression from the government was that India had beaten COVID-19 after several months of low case counts, despite repeated warnings of the dangers of a second wave and the emergence of new strains.”

WHAT NOW?

The science journal said that India **must now restructure its response** while the crisis rages.

“The **success of that effort will depend on** the government owning up to its mistakes, providing **responsible leadership and transparency**, and

Implementing a public health response that has **science at its heart.**”

SUGGESTION TO CONTROL COVID

Lancet, in its editorial, has suggested that India should adopt a **two-pronged strategy**.

It said that the “botched **vaccination**” campaign must be **rationalised** and implemented **speedily**.

For this, it **should increase the vaccine supply** and set up a **distribution campaign** that can cover **not just urban** but also **rural and poorer** citizens.

Secondly, India **needs to control transmission** of the virus, **publish accurate data** in a timely manner and

Explain to the public what is happening and **what is needed to bend the epidemic curve**, including the possibility of a new **federal lockdown**.

“**Modi’s actions in attempting to stifle criticism** and open discussion during the crisis **are inexcusable**,” *Lancet* said.

Genome sequencing too needs to be expanded to better track, understand, and control emerging and more transmissible **SARS-CoV-2 variants**, it said.

“The government **must work with local and primary health-care centres** that know their communities and create an **equitable distribution system for the vaccine**,”

Q. Which among the following is correct as per recent studies?

1. Women tend to be more seriously impacted by the novel coronavirus.
2. COVID-19 has currently been detected on all continents of the earth.

- A) 1 only
- B) 2 only
- C) Both 1 & 2
- D) None of the above



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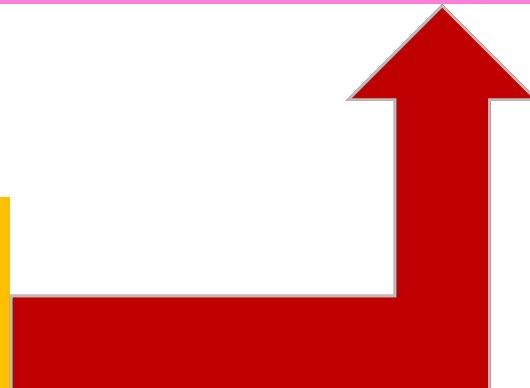
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