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No move to vaccinate all adults now: Health Ministry

'We cannot ramp up process suddenly'

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NEW DELHI

With a growing public clamour for making vaccines available to all adults, the Union Health Ministry said on Tuesday that India was following a scientific protocol on administering vaccines and that it wasn't possible "to suddenly ramp up" vaccinations.

On Tuesday, when the country reported administering a single-day record of 4.3 million shots, Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan said, "When people say that India isn't vaccinating fast enough, we must remember that vaccinating isn't like buying something and carrying it home in a bag; it can't be immediately accelerated. We are following a scientific protocol. We have to observe people for half an hour for side-effects, reactions... Vaccines aren't given as a matter

Delhi declares night curfew till April 30

The Delhi government has imposed a night curfew from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. in the city from April 6 to April 30, with an exception for emergency activities and services, according to an official order. ▶ PAGE 10

of individual choice, but according to need."

All countries had employed a restrictive criterion that prioritised the elderly, healthcare workers, and those with co-morbidities and India, too, was following a guidance protocol of the WHO in prioritising those most at risk, he said.

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No move to vaccinate all adults now: Health Ministry

V.K. Paul, Member (Health), NITI Aayog, claimed that India was the only country administering vaccines to healthy adults over 45. However, in several States in the U.S. anyone above the age of 16 is eligible to be vaccinated. In Israel too, anyone over 16, has been eligible for a vaccine since the first week of February.

India was in a "good posi-

tion" globally, Mr. Bhushan added. The U.S. had administered 165 million doses in 112 days and India 79 million doses in 79 days. While it wasn't established what percentage of a region's population needed to be vaccinated for 'herd immunity', it was a "fact" that vaccines protected against severe disease and reduced mortality, Dr. Paul underlined.