

Report says U.S. hoards COVID-19 vaccines amid global shortage



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New York, April 26 (RHC)-- The United States has hoarded tens of millions of COVID vaccine doses that it may never use, amid growing calls by international health experts for a coordinated global vaccine effort to tackle the pandemic.

The U.S. is reportedly "sitting on 35-40 million doses of AstraZeneca vaccine Americans will never use," Brown University School of Public Health's Ashish Jha was quoted as saying by The Indian Express on Monday. In an article titled "Explained: Amid concerns in India and Brazil, the unused vaccine stockpile in

U.S.," the daily said that the AstraZeneca (AZ) vaccine has not been approved as of yet by the U.S. Federal Drug Administration (FDA) due to documented cases of blood clots in younger women in Europe correlated with the vaccine.

"By time AZ is authorized by FDA, we'll have LOTS of vaccines. The time to use AZ here would have been in January. By May, we won't need it," Jha, a physician and health policy researcher, said in a tweet. The comment came after the executive vice president of the US Chamber of Commerce said in a statement on Friday that "these vaccine doses will not be needed in the United States," where other manufacturers are racing to get the population vaccinated by June.

Amassing unused vaccines in the US was done despite warnings by the World Health Organization (WHO) that such practice would compound the global pandemic.

According to Bloomberg's Vaccine Tracker, an overwhelming majority of vaccines has been distributed in the richest countries that are vaccinating their citizens at a pace 25 times faster than the lowest income countries.

India and Brazil are particularly struggling as the number of COVID-19 victims continues to grow. India recorded 2,812 deaths out of 352,991 new cases in the last 24 hours.

In the Indian capital New Delhi, reports said overwhelmed hospitals have severe oxygen and medicine shortages, while families of the patients plead for help on social media. India's caseload now stands at above 16.6 million.

Surging cases and insufficient anti-pandemic measures in Brazil left 1,305 COVID-19-related victims dead in the last 24 hours, bringing its death toll from the highly contagious disease to 390,797, the country's Ministry of Health reported on Sunday.

According to the ministry, another 32,572 new cases were registered, bringing the country's caseload to 14,340,787. Experts have long warned that no one will be safe from COVID-19 until everyone -- including those in the developing world and lower-income nations such as India -- is vaccinated against the virus.

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