



## NEWS



# Short lived romance: Pharma industry facing heat for Covid vaccine failures, greed

### Synopsis

An unprecedented push to manufacture billions of doses this year alone has led to supply bottlenecks, putting firms such as Pfizer and AstraZeneca Plc in the firing line of angry government customers. Now the industry is taking heat for closely guarding its intellectual property.

The discovery of multiple safe and effective Covid-19 vaccines has been the reputational boost the pharmaceutical industry needed. As science has caught up to the coronavirus, the price-inflating antics of Martin Shkreli and manufacturers' roles in the opioid epidemic have faded into the background while people literally raise their glass to drugmakers like Pfizer.

An unprecedented push to manufacture billions of doses this year alone has led to supply bottlenecks, putting firms such as Pfizer and AstraZeneca in the firing line of angry government customers. The potential adverse effects of sticking needles into people's arms are dominating headlines, as seen with the halting of the Astra vaccine in Canada and Europe even as regulators insist the benefits outweigh the risks.

Now the industry is taking heat for closely guarding its intellectual property. That's blamed for what the World Health Organization dubs a "catastrophic moral failure": the immunization gap between the developing world and deep pocketed rich countries,

which have ordered enough doses to cover their populations several times over.

If vaccine makers were to waive exclusive rights to manufacture their product - an idea pushed by 58 countries at the World Trade Organization including India and South Africa - advocates say that supply would bloom and we would exit the pandemic quicker. The push for a "people's vaccine," backed by the likes of Bernie Sanders, is popular with three quarters of British voters and almost two-thirds of French people polled by YouGov.

Unlike in past crises such as HIV/AIDS, cracking open the recipe for Covid vaccines, especially those from Pfizer and Moderna is only half the battle given the complexity of genetic technologies making their debut in this pandemic. Manufacturing is a challenge too, and there isn't much time for trial and error.

We haven't quashed this virus yet and letting the pharma industry's pandemic halo crash to the floor won't help get us there any faster. Finding constructive ways to keep the public's romance with drugmakers last a little longer makes sense, even if it doesn't make money.

Read more at:

[https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/world-news/short-lived-romance-pharma-industry-facing-heat-for-covid-vaccine-failures-greed/articleshow/81775786.cms?utm\\_source=contentofinterest&utm\\_medium=text&utm\\_campaign=cpst](https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/world-news/short-lived-romance-pharma-industry-facing-heat-for-covid-vaccine-failures-greed/articleshow/81775786.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cpst)