

Northeast News

Manipur: To deliver vaccines, drones cover 31 km in 15 minutes

The minister said drone technology would also speed up healthcare-related supply to the last mile and expand the supply scope of life-saving and emergency medicines in the region.

by **Rifa Deka**
October 4, 2021



India is fast moving towards covering its entire population by providing timely vaccination against the coronavirus, and has an effective and safe vaccination administration in its states and UTs. Despite this, vaccine delivery to tough and hard-to-reach terrains of the country is still a challenge.



To overcome this, **Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare Mansukh Mandaviya** Monday addressed the launch of ICMR's initiative for 'drone-based vaccine delivery system' in North-Eastern India.

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In a landmark event that "epitomises the government's commitment to 'Antyodaya' in health", making healthcare accessible to the last citizen, the minister flagged off ICMR's Drone Response and Outreach in North East (i-Drone), a delivery model to make sure that life-saving vaccines reach everyone.

The i-Drone has been designed to overcome challenges by deploying unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV)/drones to remote areas and hard-to-reach terrains.

Currently, the drone-based delivery project has been granted permission for implementation in Manipur and Nagaland, as well as the union territory of Andaman and Nicobar Island.

"Our immunization programme for COVID-19 have already exceeded all expectations. I strongly believe that this initiative will further help us achieve the highest possible immunization coverage for COVID-19. Incorporating such drone technologies into the national programmes would help deliver other vaccines and medical supplies as quickly as possible," said Mandviya, launching the initiative.

The ICMR conducted an initial study in collaboration with Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur, to test the capacity of drones to carry and transfer vaccines safely. The study was conducted in Manipur, Nagaland and Andaman and Nicobar.

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These studies provided promising results on the basis of which the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA), Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) and other regulatory authorities granted permission to fly drones beyond the Visual Line Of Sight.

On Monday, covering 31 km in 15 minutes, vaccines were transported from Bishnupur District Hospital to Karang Health Centre, Loktak Lake, Manipur. This distance usually takes 3-4 hours, announced the minister on Twitter.

The minister further announced that 10 beneficiaries would receive their 1st and 8 beneficiaries would receive their second shot today through the speedy delivery.



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Along with transportation, drone technology would speed up healthcare-related supply to the last mile and expand the supply scope of life-saving & emergency medicines.

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“Towards ensuring last-mile delivery of vaccines! Will launch ICMR’s initiative of ‘Drone Response & Outreach in North East’, at 1 p.m. today. This will help India increase immunisation coverage by easily



transporting vaccines to remote and hilly regions,” Mandaviya had tweeted earlier today, making the announcement on the microblogging site.


Dr Mansukh Mandaviya  


@mansukhmandviya



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@ICMRDELHI's #drone-delivered #vaccine today in #Manipur from Bishnupur District Hospital to Karang island in #Loktak lake, a distance of 26 kms. Read details here : pib.gov.in/PressReleasePa...

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