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ICMR's drone-based vaccine delivery model in N-E takes off

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A medical worker wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) takes a box of medical supplies that is being delivered with a drone on the deck of a passenger ship owned by the state-owned shipping company PT PELNI, KM Umsini, which has been modified as an isolation centre for the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) patients in Makassar, South Sulawesi province, Indonesia, August 27, 2021. Picture taken August 27, 2021. REUTERS/Abd. Rahman Muchtar | Photo Credit: STRINGER

Initiative will help the country in achieving the highest possible immunisation coverage

In a bid to facilitate delivery of vaccine doses in difficult terrains of the country, Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya launched the Indian Council of Medical Research's (ICMR) Drone Response and Outreach in the North-East (i-Drone).

"Today, 10 beneficiaries will receive the first dose and 8 will receive the second dose at the PHC (Primary Health Centre)," Mandaviya said, of the locally-made drone that was to transport the Covid-19 vaccines over an aerial distance of 15 kms in 12-15 mins from the Bishnupur district hospital to Loktak lake, Karang island in Manipur for administration at the PHC. The actual road distance between these locations is 26 km.

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The initiative would help the country in achieving the highest possible immunisation coverage for Covid-19, he said.

Currently, the drone-based delivery project has been granted permission for implementation in Manipur, Nagaland, and Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

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. 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 have granted permission to fly drones beyond the Visual Line Of Sight.

Meanwhile India has administered the first dose of Covid-19 vaccination to 70 per cent of its adult population, the Minister said.



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The country administered 68.32 lakh vaccine doses till 7:00 PM aggregating to 91.47 crore doses provided so far. Further, the government said, more than 89.89 crore vaccine doses have been provided to the States/UTs and more than 5.67 crore vaccine doses were still available with them.

Corona tally

India reported 20,799 Covid cases on Monday with 180 deaths in the last 24 hours till 8:00 AM, as per the Health Ministry data. The active cases accounted for less than 1 per cent of the total Covid cases at 0.78 per cent; lowest since March 2020, as per the data. Also, the country's active caseload stood at 2,64,458; lowest in 200 days.

In addition, in the last 24 hours, the country conducted 9.91 lakh tests in the previous day and with this, the country has so far conducted over 57.42 crore cumulative tests. Also, the weekly positivity rate stood at 1.63 per cent, remaining less than 3 per cent for the last 101 days now. The daily positivity rate was at 2.10 per cent, remained below 3 per cent for the last 35 days and below 5 per cent for 118 consecutive days.

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