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Drone-based COVID vaccine delivery starts in Northeast

The minister said 10 beneficiaries will receive the first dose and eight will receive the second dose at the PHC

Written by [FE Online](#)

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Drones to deliver vaccines, medical supplies to last mile. (representative Image)

Covid-19 vaccines will now reach remote areas through drones. Union Health minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Monday launched a new initiative as a part of its universal vaccine coverage to deliver jabs to tough and not so motorable terrains of North East India through drones.

In Line with the government's commitment to 'Antyodaya' in health, making healthcare accessible to the last citizen of the country, the ICMR's Drone Response and outreach in North East (i-Drone) has started this initiative.

This is the first time a "[Make in India](#)" drone will be used in South Asia for the delivery of Covid-19 vaccines at an aerial distance of 15 kms, 12 to 15 mins from Bishnupur district hospital to Manipur's Karang island. The actual road distance between these locations is 26 kms.

The minister informed that 10 beneficiaries will receive the first dose and eight the second dose at PHC. Thanking Prime Minister [Narendra Modi](#), Mandaviya said under his leadership India is using technology to make life easier and bring social change. He emphasised on the use of drones to deliver essentials to the last mile.

Drones, Mandaviya said can be used to deliver other important life-saving medicines, collecting blood samples and can be made a game-changer in addressing challenges in healthcare, particularly delivery supplies to difficult terrains.

Mandaviya further said the immunisation program has exceeded all expectations and by incorporating drone technology into the national programme health authorities can deliver vaccines and supplies as early as possible. Vaccine delivery is still a challenge in hard-to-reach and tough terrains he said.

i-done has been designed to address this challenge, Mandaviya said. The drone-based delivery project has been given permission for implementation in Nagaland, Manipur and in the Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands. An initial study was conducted by ICMR in collaboration with Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur to test the capacity of drones to transfer vaccines safely.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation and ministry of Civil Aviation has granted permission to fly drones beyond visual line of Sight based on study conducted by Manipur, Nagaland and Andamana and Nicobar.

Mandaviya thanked the DGCA, Ministry of civil. Aviation for support and health workers associated with this landmark initiative.

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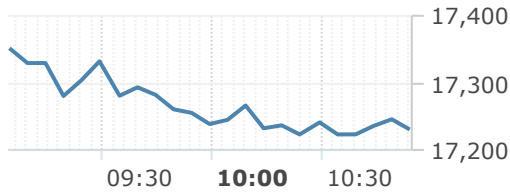
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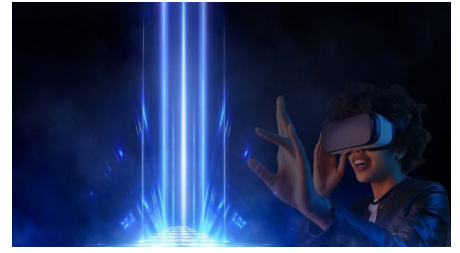
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