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Make in India drone used to transport Covid vaccines in Manipur



By Sarkaritel
October 5, 2021 11:44



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New Delhi, Oct 5 For the first time, a 'Make in India' drone has been used to transport Covid vaccines over an aerial distance of 15 km, from the Bishnupur district hospital to Loktak lake in Manipur, for their administration at the PHC, Union Health Minister Mansukha Mandaviya said on Monday, adding that in a geographically diversified country like India, drones can be used to deliver essentials to the last mile.

In an effort to make healthcare accessible to the last citizen of the country, Mandaviya launched ICMR's Drone Response and Outreach in North East (i-Drone) programme on Monday.

This is a delivery model to make sure that life-saving vaccines reach everyone. The actual distance by road between these locations is 26 km. On Monday, 10 beneficiaries received the first dose while 8 received the second dose at the PHC.

Congratulating the people on this innovative step, Mandaviya said, "We can use drones to deliver life-saving medicines and collect blood samples. This technology can also be used in critical situations. It may prove a game changer in addressing the challenges in healthcare delivery, particularly health supplies in difficult areas."

Launching the initiative, which would facilitate vaccine delivery to the hard-to-reach terrains of the country, the minister said, "Our immunisation programme for Covid-19 has already exceeded all expectations. I strongly believe that this initiative will further help us achieve the highest possible immunisation coverage for Covid-19."

"Incorporating such drone technologies into the national programmes would help deliver other vaccines and medical supplies as quickly as possible."

The minister also said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the nation is progressing at a great pace.

"Today is a historic day, which showed us how technology is making life easier and bringing social change," he said.

i-Drone has been designed to overcome challenges by deploying unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) to remote areas. Currently, the drone-based delivery project has been granted permission for implementation in Manipur and Nagaland, as well as 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 Islands. These studies provided promising results on the basis of which the Ministry of Civil Aviation, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) and other regulatory authorities have granted permission to fly drones beyond the visual line of sight.

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