



EMBASSY OF INDIA
YANGON

PRESS RELEASE

Handing over of COVISHIELD vaccine to Myanmar

Today (22 January, 2021), Mr. Saurabh Kumar, Ambassador of India to Myanmar handed over 1.5 million doses of COVISHIELD vaccine to Prof. Zaw Than Htun, Director General, Directorate of Medical Research, Ministry of Health and Sports, Myanmar. The consignment is a gift from India to Myanmar to assist in latter's fight against COVID-19 pandemic. It arrived in Yangon at 1430 hrs by Air India relief flight AI-1234.

2. The supply of vaccines by India to our partners, including Myanmar, fulfills the commitment made by Prime Minister Modi in 2020. In his address at the Global Vaccine Summit in London in June 2020, he had said "*India not only has the capacity to contribute to the global health efforts, but also has the will to do so in a spirit of sharing and caring*". Later, in his address at the United Nations General Assembly in September 2020, he said "*India's vaccine production and delivery capacity will be used to help all humanity in fighting this crisis.*"

3. The delivery of vaccines to Myanmar today is the result of high-level consultations between the two governments. State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in her new year's speech mentioned that Myanmar plans to start vaccinating priority groups by February. The arrival of vaccines today in Yangon, on a government-to-government basis, will help Myanmar government start this process. Myanmar has also signed an MoU with Serum Institute of India, the manufacturer of COVISHIELD for procuring additional doses of vaccines directly.

4. India is referred to as the '*Pharmacy of the World*'. The vaccine sector accounts for 60% of global vaccine production and supplies 1.5 billion doses per year, with exports of USD 410 million to more than 150 countries. India is the largest supplier of DPT, BCG and Measles vaccines and about 70% of WHO's essential vaccine requirement is sourced from India. India is a leader in vaccine R&D with a well-developed ecosystem linking private and public sectors, as well as, academia and industry in networks that spur innovation. Serum Institute of India, the largest manufacturer of vaccines in the world, collaborated with AstraZeneca and Oxford University in the context of COVISHIELD.

5. Presently, 6 COVID-19 vaccine candidates, including 3 indigenously developed ones are in clinical stages of development and 3 vaccine candidates are in advanced pre-clinical stage of development. Many others are in pre- early stages of development. Two vaccines received Emergency Use Authorization on 2nd January 2021. An Indian pharmaceutical multinational Zydus Cadila which has an investment in Myanmar also has a Covid-19 vaccine candidate (ZyCov-D) which is presently in phase-III clinical trial.

6. Prior to the delivery of vaccines today, a 'training for trainers' programme, covering administrative and operational aspects, was conducted on 19-20 January 2021 for immunization managers, cold chain officers, communication officers and data managers of the recipient countries, both at national and provincial levels. India has also been associated with several neighbouring countries to enhance and strengthen clinical capabilities, under the Partnerships for Accelerating Clinical Trials (PACT) programme. Separately, several courses have been organized for healthcare workers and administrators of partner countries under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme, sharing our experience in dealing with the pandemic.

7. Myanmar is a close neighbour and friend of India. As part of our collaboration and cooperation, India supplied USD 900,000 worth of medical equipment, devices and medicines to Myanmar as part of our assistance last year. Later, our Foreign Secretary during his visit in October presented 3,000 vials of Remdesivir to the State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

8. India and Myanmar have a good potential for cooperation in areas of vaccines, pharmaceuticals and health. Indian pharmaceutical sector is well-represented in Myanmar and contributes significantly to the country's requirements. Both governments are in touch to further strengthen cooperation in these important areas.

Embassy of India, Yangon
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