

High Commission of India  
Colombo

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**Press Release**

**Gifting of COVISHIELD vaccines from India to Sri Lanka**

Under Government of India's #VaccineMaitri, India will gift 500,000 doses of made in India COVISHIELD vaccines to Sri Lanka. The consignment will be transported in a special Air India flight on 28 January 2021 and packed in tailor-made boxes for the purpose. This will be ceremonially handed over by High Commissioner Gopal Baglay at the Bandaranaike International Airport.

2 In a remarkable coincidence, the consignment of COVISHIELD vaccine will arrive on the auspicious Duruthu Poya Day. As such the High Commissioner, who had first arrived in Sri Lanka to take up his assignment in the Vesak Week in May 2020 with 12.5 tons of medical supplies as gift by India to Sri Lanka for fighting COVID-19 pandemic, will pray at the sacred Gangaramaya Temple for the health and well being of the people of Sri Lanka on the Day. He will also seek the blessings of Ven. Dr. Kirinde Assaji Thero. As per the Buddhist traditions in India and Sri Lanka, High Commissioner will offer meals to devotees at the Temple.

3 Oxford-Astrazeneca's COVISHIELD vaccine is manufactured by Serum Institute of India. This has been approved for emergency use by Government of Sri Lanka.

4 The gift from India is keeping in line with India's continued support to Sri Lanka in fighting the COVID pandemic. Four consignments of medical supplies weighing around 25 tonnes were donated by India, which also organised online experience-sharing programmes for Sri Lankan medical professionals. The two partners have also put up a joint front in the COVID-19 battle with India and Sri Lanka being the largest contributors to the COVID-19 Emergency Fund for SAARC. Prime Minister Modi had complimented Sri Lanka's leadership on containing the pandemic.

5 Guided by 'Neighbourhood First' and SAGAR policies, about 5 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine have been gifted to neighbouring countries, and those in the Gulf and Indian Ocean since 20 January 2021. Millions of doses of made in India COVID vaccines have also been exported to countries as far away as Latin America and West Asia, and will continue to reach those in the Caribbean and the Pacific too. In September 2020, Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi told the UN that India's vaccine capacity will be used to help all humanity fight the COVID pandemic. India, which is called the 'Pharmacy of the World', supplied essential medicines to fight COVID-19 to 150 countries, more than half of which was as gift.

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**27 January 2021**