

Russia's Sputnik V Vaccine Rollout Begins in India

By [AFP](#)

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Arun Sankar / AFP

India on Friday started inoculating its population with Russia's Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine, the jab's developers said.

The Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF), which helped finance the jab, said vaccination started in the southern city of Hyderabad on Friday, making Sputnik V the "first foreign-made vaccine that is used in India".

It said a first batch of the two-dose vaccine arrived in India on May 1 and a second delivery is expected in the next few days.

"RDIF stands ready to support our partners in India to launch a full-scale vaccination with Sputnik V as soon as possible," the fund's CEO Kirill Dmitriev said in a statement.

Sputnik was approved in India in mid-April under emergency use authorization.

A number of leading India-based drugmakers, including Virchow Biotech and Hetero Biopharma, have agreements for local production of Sputnik V with the aim to produce over 850 million doses of the jab a year.

According to the RDIF, Russia's vaccine, which is named after the Soviet-era satellite, has been registered in 65 countries.

It has not yet been approved by the European Medicines Agency (EMA) or the United States' Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Some Western countries have been wary of Sputnik V over concerns the Kremlin would use it as a soft-power tool to advance its interests.

Moscow registered the jab in August before large-scale clinical trials, but leading medical journal The Lancet has since said it is safe and more than 90 percent effective.

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