

'World's heaviest woman' to fly to India for surgery

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An Egyptian believed to be the world's heaviest woman will fly to India for weight reduction surgery Saturday after intervention from the country's foreign minister ensured her a visa.

Eman Ahmed Abd El Aty, aged 36 and weighing around 500 kilogrammes (1,100 pounds), is slated to arrive in India's financial capital Mumbai in the early hours of Saturday, Muffazal Lakdawala, her doctor, said in a statement.

She will be flown on a specially modified Airbus and will be taken to Mumbai's Saifee Hospital upon arrival, the statement said.

"To prepare her (Eman) for the flight, a team of doctors has been in Egypt for the last ten days to optimise the conditions for her travel," the statement said.

Abd El Aty's sister had approached Lakdawala in October saying her sibling needed urgent medical attention.

Her family told the doctor that as a child she was diagnosed with elephantiasis, a condition that causes the limbs and other body parts to swell, leaving her almost immobile.

She later suffered a stroke and was rendered bedridden, triggering a series of ailments including diabetes, [high blood pressure](#), hypertension and sleep apnoea.

After hearing about her case Lakdawala had offered to carry out the procedure free of charge.

Her request for a visa was initially rejected, prompting Lakdawala in December to tweet a request for help to India's [foreign minister](#) Sushma Swaraj.

At the time Swaraj was in hospital awaiting a kidney transplant but was quick to respond with an offer of help.

Abd El Aty has had a long wait as no airliners were previously willing to fly her from Egypt to India owing to her health complications.

"...Transporting Eman to Mumbai is a challenging task keeping in mind the complexities of her case as she is a high risk patient who has not been able to move or leave the house for the past 25 years," the surgeon said.

If Abd El Aty's weight claims are proven medically, she will beat Pauline Potter (643 pounds) from the United States to become the world's heaviest woman alive.

Bariatric surgery is essentially a stomach-shrinking bypass procedure carried out on those wanting to lose excessive weight.

It is increasingly common in India, which has a growing problem with obesity, particularly in urban areas.

India is a key destination for medical tourists because it offers quality services at a fraction of the cost of western countries and no waiting lists.

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