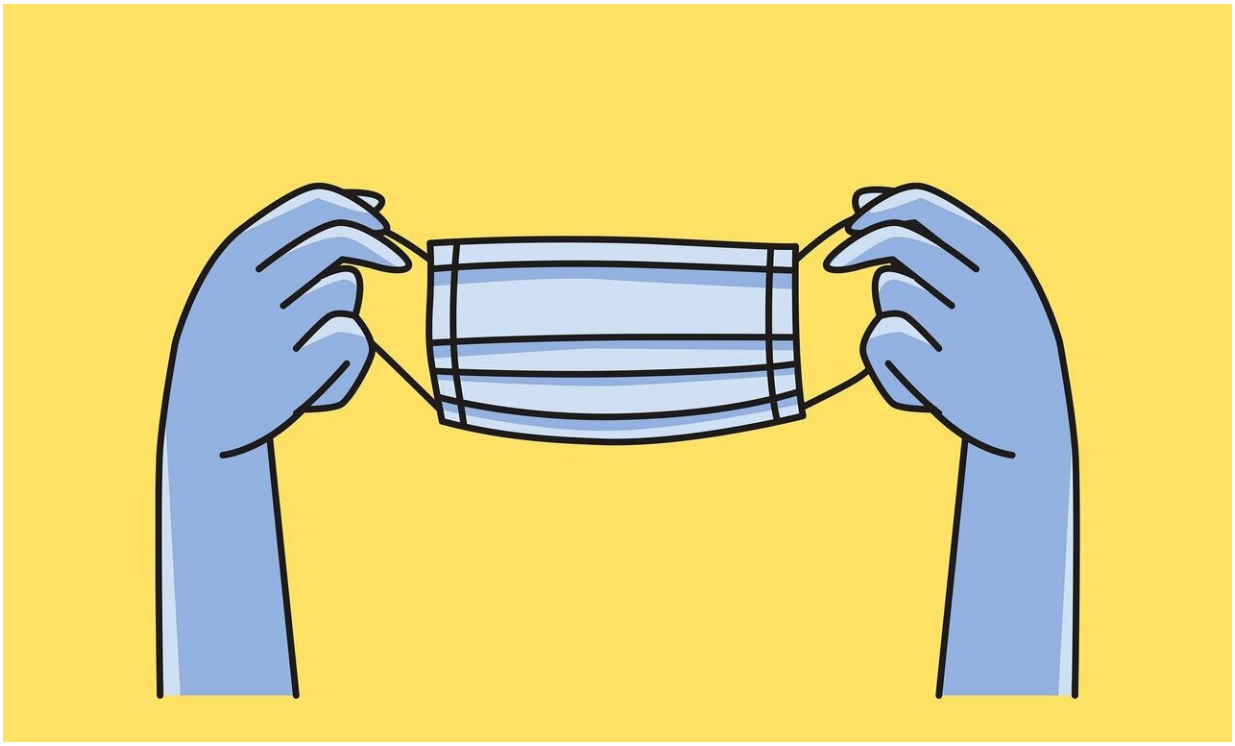
Chile approves Chinese coronavirus vaccine

January 20 2021



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Chile on Wednesday became the latest country to give emergency approval to China's CoronaVac vaccine as it battles the coronavirus epidemic which has claimed more than 17,500 lives in the country to date.

CoronaVac was developed by China's Sinovac firm and has been

approved for emergency use in Brazil, China, Indonesia and Turkey.

Chile joined the small club on Wednesday when its ISP public health institute gave the go-ahead. The country hopes to receive 10 million doses of the vaccine, adding to the Pfizer/Biontech jab that it has already started distributing.

ISP director Heriberto Garcia told reporters Wednesday the approval was given after trials showed CoronaVac was safe and 78 percent effective in preventing infection if given in two doses to people aged between 18 and 60.

Earlier this month, Brazil said its own tests had shown CoronaVac to be 50 percent effective.

Panama rolled out its own vaccination campaign Wednesday with nurse Violeta Gaona receiving the first shot.

The country has the highest infection rate in Central America, with some 300,000 cases and more than 4,800 deaths.

Some countries have been having trouble laying their hands on enough vaccine doses, and the World Health Organization has said rich countries are hogging most of the doses as it warned of a "catastrophic moral failure" if poor countries are left behind.

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