

India approves J&J's single-shot COVID-19 vaccine for emergency use

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India gave emergency approval to Johnson and Johnson's single-shot coronavirus vaccine Saturday to ramp up its flailing immunisation campaign as fears grow of a new wave of infections.

Health minister Mansukh Mandaviya said the approval will boost the

fight against the pandemic in India, where at least 200,000 people died in a brutal two-month wave up to mid-June.

"India expands its [vaccine](#) basket! Johnson and Johnson's single-dose COVID-19 vaccine is given approval for Emergency Use in India," the minister said on Twitter.

No indication has been given as to when the US company's doses will reach India.

The nation of 1.3 billion people has administered 500 million vaccine doses so far, but barely eight percent of the population has had two shots.

Johnson and Johnson's vaccine is the fifth to be approved after Oxford-AstraZeneca's Covishield, the home developed Covaxin, Russia's Sputnik V, and the US-made Moderna jab.

India remains the second worst-hit nation after the United States, with more than 32 million confirmed cases and 427,000 deaths. Because of under-reporting experts say the real toll is much higher.

They also warn that the slow vaccination pace puts India at risk from any new infection crisis. The number of new cases and deaths has started rising again in the past two weeks.

The government's free immunisation drive relies heavily on Covishield and Covaxin and [producers](#) are struggling to meet demand.

Sputnik has not yet scaled up production and Moderna is yet to import any shots.

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