

Russian planes land with critical COVID aid for India

In an effort to help India deal with the second wave of COVID-19, in the early hours of April 29, two special flights of the Russian EMERCOM have successfully delivered humanitarian aid from Russia.^[1]

These special flights carried around 22 tonnes of medical supplies which included 20 oxygen production units, 75 ventilators, and 200,000 packs of medicines.

After the UK, Russia is the second country which has rushed aid to India which is fighting a huge surge in the COVID-19 cases.

In a late night message, Russian Ambassador to India Nikolay R.Kudashev: said that his country “is watching the situation in India, which is becoming more and more alarming with unprecedented spread of the coronavirus infection.”

“Three aircraft carrying aid from the US are expected to arrive soon. Two will be arriving on Friday, and the third one on May 3,” Foreign Secretary Harsh Shringla told media on Thursday.

A friend in need is a friend indeed: Prime Minister Modi and Russian President phone call

On Wednesday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Russian President Vladimir Putin spoke over the phone. During the conversation, the Russian President Vladimir Putin announced the decision to send emergency humanitarian aid to India.

Both countries have also agreed during the call to establish a ‘2+2 ministerial dialogue’ (Foreign and Defence Ministers level), as this will help in further enhancing the bilateral relations.

Both leaders discussed bilateral cooperation in different fields including the space exploration and renewable energy sector, as well as in hydrogen economy.

India’s approval for the emergency use of Sputnik V vaccine received appreciation by the Russian leader. The Sputnik V is expected to be ready for rollout from May 1, sources confirmed.

According to a statement issued by the Russian Foreign Ministry, “The expressed satisfaction that via the Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF) an agreement was reached with Indian companies to produce up to 850 million doses of Sputnik V. The production is expected to begin in May.”

Sources confirmed to Financial Express Online, that the first batch of the Russian vaccine doses will arrive separately and this will be followed by the India partner of Sputnik, Dr Reddy’s, producing this later in the country.

Which countries have offered critical items needed?

Several countries have promised critical items such as oxygen concentrators and related parts and other medical aids. Almost 40 countries including the UK, France, EU, Germany, Romania, Luxembourg, Finland, Ireland, Mexico, Guyana, Russia, Bhutan, Bangladesh, UAE, Uzbekistan, Egypt, Switzerland, Sweden, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Kuwait, Mauritius, Saudi Arabia, Thailand and Singapore have promised aid.

According to Foreign Secretary Harsh Shringla, “The overseas assistance is going to be received by the Indian Red Cross Society on behalf of the government. The requirements have been prioritised: Liquid Oxygen, equipment, generators, cryogenic tankers and critical medicines like Remdesivir, Tocilizumab are being sought.”

While India is looking for Oxygen related devices and equipment, all the Indian missions and Posts across the globe have been mobilised with a list of items that are required to fight the pandemic.

The state governments are free to buy life-saving equipment and medicines from foreign agencies, and the central government will not oppose it.

What did the Foreign Secretary Harsh Shringla say during Thursday briefing?

Briefing the media on the global aid coming in, the foreign secretary said that as part of international v

As part international cooperation, foreign secretary told the media persons that India is expecting: 550 oxygen generating plants ; 4000 + oxygen concentrators; 10,000+ oxygen cylinders;17 cryogenic oxygen tanks; 450,000 doses of Remdesivir; and 300,000 doses of Favipiravir.

India is also looking at “G to G procurement; foreign nations have offered assistance; Procurement by Indian corporates; International corporates and Indian community associations.”

References

1. <https://bharatshakti.in/russian-planes-land-with-critical-covid-aid-for-india/>
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