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JAB JUBILATION: 'Indian scientists have risen to the occasion'

**Covid-19 vaccines
made in India will
help humanity: PM**

NEW DELHI, PTI

Indian scientists and health warriors have risen to the occasion and the vaccines being developed and manufactured in India will help our people, as well as humanity at large escaping from the COVID-19 pandemic, said Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in a message to Maldivian President Ibrahim Solih Monday. He conveyed this message on Twitter while responding to the latter's congratulatory message over India's "landmark programme" to vaccinate Indian population against COVID-19.

"I'm highly confident that we'll be successful in this endeavour and that we are finally seeing an end to the COVID-19 scourge," Solih said on Twitter.

Prime Minister Modi tweeted on Monday in response to

Solih's message: "Thank you, President @ibusolih. Our scientists and health-warriors have risen to the occasion."

"The vaccines being developed and manufactured in India will help our people as well as humanity at large in escaping from the pandemic," Modi said.



Narendra Modi

Bhutan Prime Minister Lotay Tshering and Sri Lankan premier Mahinda Rajapaksa had also congratulated Modi earlier for the landmark launch of the world's largest Covid-19 vaccination drive, hoping it would mitigate the sufferings endured by the people due to the pandemic.

Modi on Saturday launched the vaccination drive with healthcare workers at the frontline of India's Covid-19 battle getting their first jabs, showing the light at the end of a 10-month tunnel that upended millions of lives and livelihoods.

BENGALURU, REUTERS

Several Indian companies are planning to buy Covid-19 vaccines for their employees, just days after the country's government began one of the world's largest vaccination drives with healthcare and other frontline workers.

Steel producer Jindal Steel and Power Ltd, autos to technology conglomerate Mahindra Group and consumer goods giant ITC Ltd have begun initial checks on hopes that vaccines will be available for purchase after the government covers priority segments.

"ITC would certainly like to extend the vaccination to employees... We have approached vaccine manufacturers and are in exploratory talks," Amitav Mukherji, head of corporate human resources, said.

The country is currently using Britain's Oxford University/AstraZeneca vaccine, which is being produced here by the Serum Institute, and a government-backed alternative developed by Bharat Biotech.

Tata Steel said it would get employees inoculated as soon as shots are available commercially.

"We are reaching out to vac-

**Indian companies prepare
to buy vaccines for employees**

COVID-19 Tracker					
State/UT	Active	Recovered	Death	Tests	Early Deaths
Kerala	68,438	8,51,195	3,481	3,347	17
Maharashtra	50,680	19,92,683	50,473	1,924	35
Uttar Pradesh	8,631	5,96,904	8,580	376	4
Karnataka	8,033	9,32,432	12,175	435	9
West Bengal	6,893	5,65,661	10,063	389	10
Gujarat	6,193	2,56,367	4,367	495	2
Madhya Pradesh	6,160	2,51,882	3,756	304	3
Chhattisgarh	5,997	2,93,972	3,563	471	5
Tamil Nadu	5,725	8,31,323	12,272	551	8
Haryana	4,634	2,66,428	2,989	119	4
Others	27,983	37,43,719	40,828	1,460	32
1,99,367		1,02,79,134	1,05,82,566		
TOTAL ACTIVE CASES		TOTAL RECOVERED		TOTAL DEATHS	
1,52,547		1,458		NON-COVID DEATHS*	
TOTAL DEATHS		NON-COVID DEATHS*		DHNS/PTI (10 PM, January 18)	
				*Patients dead due to non-Covid reasons	

cine manufacturers for bulk supply of doses and will try to get these doses after completion of all frontline Covid warriors' vaccination," Pankaj Lochan, chief human resource officer, JSPL, said. The company did not give details of the number of doses it plans to buy or who it was in talks with.

Billionaire Anand Mahindra-led Mahindra Group said

it was also interested in buying vaccines for employees "in accordance with the priorities and sequence to be specified by the government".

Global consumer goods giant Unilever last week said it encourages employees to get vaccinated as soon as possible and floated the idea of buying shots to share with people in poorer countries.