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Sputnik V debuts in Kolkata, 150 get jabs

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KOLKATA: The much awaited made-in-Russia shots arrived in Kolkata on Tuesday afternoon. Vials of Sputnik V vaccines landed in the city all the way from Hyderabad. Russia's vaccine made its debut in Kolkata in the form of a soft launch under a pilot project at RN Tagore International Institute of Cardiac Sciences where 150 recipients got the shot.

“The vials have come for a pilot soft launch for a few registered healthcare volunteers and not for commercial launch. We have got very limited doses for this special purpose. We expect to get our consignment for commercial launch by the end of third week in June,” said Narayana Health zonal director (East) R Venkatesh.

'DOSES FOR SPECIAL PURPOSE'

- ▶ Sputnik V launched in Kolkata via a pilot project
- ▶ 150 healthcare volunteers got the jab on Day 1
- ▶ Drive for two more days during the soft launch
- ▶ Hospitals expects to get their commercial orders by June third week



➤ Efficacy rate 91.6%	Sputnik V vials
➤ Price Rs 948 a dose plus GST	
➤ Required temperature for	
	storing Minus 20 degrees and below

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R Venkatesh | NARAYANA HEALTH ZONAL DIRECTOR (EAST)

 It is great that the city has got its share of the vials even if in limited doses for a pilot project. With an efficacy of 91.6% the second dose has to be taken 21 days apart. But the only issue is the vaccine is temperature sensitive and has to be stored below minus 20 degree Celsius

Subhrojyoti Bhowmick | PEERLESS HOSPITALS DIRECTOR (CLINICAL RESEARCH & ACADEMICS)

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The vials arrived in Kolkata airport around 1 pm on Tuesday. The consignment was rushed to the hospital in Mukundapur where the storage space with freezers below minus 20 degree Celsius was kept ready. The pilot inoculation drive began around 3pm.

“Since this vaccine is very much temperature sensitive we ensured the required temperature at our cold chain points and other storage criteria,” added Venkatesh.

The pilot project will go on for two more days. Sputnik V got the emergency use authorisation in India in April. The first consignment of the Russian jab arrived in India in May first week. Yet to be commercially launched, the doses currently are being administered on pilot projects.

After debuting in Hyderabad in mid-May in the form of a special pilot project the city got its brush with the Russia-made vaccine. In Hyderabad the doses were administered on employees of Dr Reddy’s Laboratory. The Hyderabad-based organisation that had partnered with the Russian Direct Investment Fund for the vaccines for its clinical trial in India.

Developed by the Gamaleya Research Institute of Epidemiology and Microbiology in Russia, Dr. Reddy’s so far has the sole distribution rights in India. The imported doses of the vaccine are currently priced as Rs 948 without GST.

“It is great that the city has got its share of the vials even if in limited doses for a pilot project. With an efficacy of 91.6% the second dose has to be taken 21 days apart. But the only issue is the vaccine is temperature sensitive and has to be stored below minus 20 degree Celsius. We hope a stability study is conducted for storing the vaccine in between 2 to eight 8 degrees so that the people in districts can have access to the vaccine,” said Peerless Hospitals director (clinical research & academics) Subhrojyoti Bhowmick, who was the principal investigator during Sputnik V’s phase 3 clinical trial at the hospital.

Some hospitals in the city including RTIICS, Woodlands and AMRI have already initiated the procedure of procuring Sputnik V vials.

