

India to vaccinate over-60s from March 1

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India plans to expand its vast but faltering coronavirus vaccination programme from March 1 by offering jabs to the over 60s, the government said Wednesday.

The country began vaccinating its 1.3-billion population last month and plans to inoculate 300 million people by July, but so far the rollout has been limited to [healthcare workers](#) and other frontline staff.

However, from Monday people over 60 and those over 45 with multiple [medical conditions](#) can be vaccinated for free at 10,000 government hospitals and nearly 20,000 [private clinics](#) for a charge.

"Those who want to get vaccinations from private hospitals will have to pay. The amount to be paid will be decided and declared by the health ministry within the next three to four days," Union Minister Prakash Javadekar said after a cabinet meeting.

The vaccination programme, one of the world's largest, has so far seen 12.2 million shots administered, according to the [health ministry](#).

But at the current pace it will take several years to

inoculate 300 million people.

The vaccines being used are the AstraZeneca jab, made domestically by Indian giant the Serum Institute, and the homegrown Covaxin developed by Bharat Biotech, which is yet to complete trials.

The makers of Russia's Sputnik V have also applied for emergency use approval.

The head of Serum, which other [poor countries](#) are relying on for supplies of the AstraZeneca vaccine, said on Sunday it had been "directed to prioritise the huge needs of India".

Some regions of the country have seen an uptick in infections in recent weeks including in the western state of Maharashtra, which has imposed new restrictions on gatherings.

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