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Sri Lanka receives first batch of Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines

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A consignment of Pfizer vaccines arrived in Colombo on 5th July, the first batch of 800,000 doses to be delivered in the next few weeks. A total of five million vaccines financed through the World Bank's Sri Lanka COVID-19 Emergency Response and Health System Preparedness Project will be supplied by December 2021.

"The delivery of this first batch of vaccines reflects the joint work of the government of Sri Lanka and its partners to ensure fair access to safe and effective vaccines for Sri Lankans," said Faris H. Hadad-Zervos, World Bank Country Director for Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. "More vaccines are under review and will arrive by year's end."

The vaccines were procured through the procedure established in the loan agreement signed with the Government of Sri Lanka in May 2021, as well as the two criteria for the World Bank vaccine approval.

Since the first COVID-19 case was confirmed in early 2020, Sri Lanka has successfully managed the pandemic, but the country now faces a third wave of coronavirus. World Bank support, which first prioritized health emergency needs, will also help Sri Lanka's public healthcare withstand future shocks.

So far, the Bank's support has helped strengthen Sri Lanka's testing capacity, such as establishing molecular biology laboratories and providing essential laboratory and biomedical equipment.