

SII, Zipline, Maharashtra Govt launch medical delivery drones services

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Launch Supported By a Grant From SII



The Government of Maharashtra and Zipline, the world's first and only national-scale drone delivery service, announced a partnership to use a logistics network of autonomous delivery drones to help transform emergency medicine and critical care in one of India's most populous and dynamic states. The launch of this ground-breaking initiative will be supported through a grant from SII (Serum Institute of India), the largest vaccine manufacturer in the world.

The revolutionary new service, which is expected to launch operations in early 2020, is part of Government of Maharashtra's bold vision of using drone delivery to establish universal, seven-days-a-week access to lifesaving and critical medicines for each of its 120 million citizens over the coming years. Zipline drones will make on-demand and emergency deliveries of blood products, vaccines and life-saving medications.

The Government of Maharashtra's vision is for Zipline to establish a total of 10 Distribution centres across Maharashtra in phases over the next several years. The government's goal is to put almost all of its 120 million citizens within minutes of a lifesaving medical delivery by drone. In the first phase of operations, two distribution centres located near Pune and Nandurbar will be established to service public health facilities in those regions beginning in early 2020.

The operations in Pune and Nandurbar will be financed through a grant from SII. Future distribution centers will be financed by the Government of Maharashtra and other private and philanthropic partners.

“Maharashtra has one of the best health care systems in India. But while we celebrate our successes, we must also recognize that we have much more work to do to create universal access to critical healthcare for all,” said **Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis**. *“This new emergency drone delivery service is a great solution to deliver vaccines, blood and other lifesaving products instantly when time is of essence. It will help ensure that millions of people in Maharashtra will always get the care they need.”*

“Millions of people across the world die each year because they can’t get the medicine they need when they need it,” said **Zipline CEO Keller Rinaudo**. *“Instant drone delivery can help solve that problem. We’re proud to partner with the Government of Maharashtra and The Serum Institute of India to ensure that millions of people have on-demand, instant access to the blood, vaccines and critical medicines they need to stay healthy and alive.”*

“At SII, we are committed to ensuring full immunization cover and better healthcare solutions for citizens across the country” **Adar Poonawalla, CEO of SII** said. *“With this association and the support provided by the Government of Maharashtra as well as the technological advancements provided by Zipline, we hope to create deeper impact and extend immunization cover in the state, bringing our vision to life.”*

The Global Problem

Access to vital health products, in India and around the world, is hampered by the last mile problem: the difficulty of matching the supply of medicine from central storage to the demand at urban and rural health facilities. All too often, people requiring lifesaving care do not get the medicine they need when they need it. Zipline’s medical drone delivery system is designed to eliminate this problem.

About Maharashtra's Medical Drone Delivery Service

To increase access and reduce medical waste, key stock of blood products, vaccines and life-saving medications will be stored at Zipline’s distribution centers for just-in-time delivery. Health workers will place orders by text message or call and promptly receive their deliveries in 30 minutes on average.

The drones both take off from and land at Zipline’s distribution centers, requiring no additional infrastructure or manpower at the clinics they serve. The drones fly autonomously and can carry 1.8 kilos of cargo, cruising at 110 kilometers an hour, and have a round trip range of 160 kilometers—even in high speed winds and rain.

Each of the two Zipline distribution centers in Maharashtra will cover a delivery area of more than 20,000 km. They will collectively be capable of serving up to 20 million people. Deliveries are made from the sky, with the drone descending to a safe height above the ground and releasing a box of medicine by parachute to a designated spot at the health centers it serves.

Zipline’s Record To Date

Zipline’s autonomous drones have flown millions of kilometers, made tens of thousands of on-demand medical deliveries and helped to save thousands of lives in emergencies. Since launching in October of 2016 to deliver blood to 21 hospitals in Rwanda, Zipline has expanded its service nationwide putting most of the country’s 12 million citizens within minutes of a lifesaving delivery of hundreds of medical products at 450 facilities. In April of 2019, Zipline partnered with the Government of Ghana to launch the first of four distribution centers that will serve 2,000 health facilities and a population of 12 million people across the country.

Zipline’s Global Expansion in 2019 and Beyond

Zipline’s commercial partnerships with the Government of Maharashtra, Ghana and Rwanda are expected to help save tens of thousands of lives over the next several years. Zipline’s goal is to serve 700 million people in the next five years. The company is hard at work catching up to demand to expand drone delivery services to developed and developing countries across Africa, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Americas, including the United States. Zipline is working with the U.S. state of North Carolina to launch its medical drone delivery as a part of the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration’s (FAA) UAS

Integration Pilot Program (UASIPP) in 2019.