Israel To Provide 1 Million 'About To Expire' Pfizer Vaccine Doses To Palestinians

18/06/2021 16:04 by admin

Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett said that Israel will send 1 million Pfizer vaccine doses to Palestine that are "about to expire".

Israel will in return receive the 1 million doses that Pfizer is to send to Palestine. (File)

Jerusalem: Israel is to provide around one million doses of Covid-19 vaccine to the Palestinian Authority in a swap as their expiry date looms, the Israeli prime minister's office said Friday.

"Israel has signed an agreement with the Palestinian Authority, and will supply approximately one million doses of Pfizer vaccine that is about to expire," Prime Minister Naftali Bennett's office said, in a joint statement with the defence and health ministries.

Israel "will receive in return the doses that Pfizer is to send to the Palestinian Authority," the statement added.

The Palestinian Authority, based in the occupied West Bank, did not immediately comment on the deal.

"Israel will receive the same amount of doses of Pfizer in September/October 2021, on behalf of what is destined for the Palestinian Authority," the Israeli statement added.

"This agreement was made possible after noting that the stock of vaccines that Israel has in its possession meets its current needs."

Israel launched a sweeping vaccination campaign after obtaining millions of doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine.

More than 55 percent of Israel's population -- some 5.1 million people -- have received both doses of the vaccine.

On the Palestinian side, just over 260,000 people have received their two doses in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, according to the Palestinian health ministry.

From Wednesday to Thursday, 170 new Covid-19 cases were recorded in the West Bank and Gaza, bringing the total since the start of the pandemic to more than 312,000, 3,540 of them.

In Israel, 25 new cases were recorded from Thursday to Friday, bringing the total number of cases to 840,000, with more than 6,420 deaths.

The deal comes amid high tensions between the Jewish state and the Palestinians, with violations of a fragile ceasefire between Israel and Gaza's Hamas rulers that went into effect on May 21, ending 11 days of heavy fighting.

Late Thursday, Israeli fighter jets carried out air strikes on Gaza for a second time since the ceasefire. The military said they were in retaliation for three days of incendiary ballons launched from the Palestinian enclave.

In Gaza, the coronavirus response has been hobbled by last month's fighting, which devastated infrastructure and reduced entire tower blocks to piles of smoking rubble.

- AFP