

COVID-19

# India pushes for patent exemption for COVID-19 vaccines at WTO

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NEW DELHI, Nov. 26 (Reuters) – India will take the lead on demands for an intellectual property rights exemption for COVID-19 vaccines and an intellectual property right at a World Trade Organization (WTO) meeting next week at a World Trade Organization (WTO) meeting. supplies, two government officials said.

A year after India and South Africa submitted a proposal to the WTO to temporarily waive intellectual property rights over COVID-19 vaccines and therapies, negotiations are stalled amid opposition from some developed countries. [read more](#)

Shyamal Misra, a senior official at the Ministry of Commerce, said India would speak not only for itself at the WTO ministerial conference in Geneva starting Nov. 30, but for other developing countries it works closely with.

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“We expect that the interests of developing countries will not be compromised,” Misra told an event late Thursday to discuss India’s strategy.

India claimed that developed countries, led by the European Union, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, “prevented poor countries’ access to vaccines”, leading to loss of life.

Swiss Ambassador to the WTO Didier Chambovey said on Thursday that the country is open to compromise but remains opposed to a full exemption. [read more](#)

WTO members agreed at a meeting of the Council on Trade Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) last week to continue negotiations until the start of the ministerial conference to seek a solution.

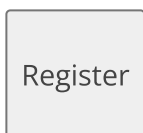
Another senior government official, who will accompany Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal at the meeting, told Reuters on Friday that India would push for a fair and equitable deal.

Developed countries need to understand that they cannot endanger the lives of people in developing countries for the benefit of some pharmaceutical companies, he said.

“All eyes are looking for a positive outcome,” said Sachin Chaturvedi, a government adviser and head of the Delhi-based think tank Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS).

Citing Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s meeting with G20 leaders last month, he said India would produce more than five billion doses of COVID vaccines for the country and the world by the end of 2022.

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