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China Seeks to Use Access to Covid-19 Vaccines for Diplomacy

Beijing's top officials and its drugmakers have offered Brazil, Indonesia, Pakistan, Russia and the Philippines priority in receiving doses and other deals



President Vladimir Putin announced that Russia has officially registered the world's first coronavirus vaccine. WSJ's Thomas Grove explains how Moscow reached this milestone faster than anyone else, and what we know about the drug. Photo: Alexander Zemlianichenko Jr/Associated Press

By [Chao Deng](#)

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TAIPEI—With China closing in on a coronavirus vaccine, Beijing's top officials and some of its drugmakers have begun promising early access to countries of strategic interest as it seeks to shore up its global standing after a pandemic that has strained geopolitical ties.

China's Foreign Ministry has promised the Philippines priority access to a Chinese vaccine, while privately-owned Chinese firm Sinovac Biotech Ltd. has agreed to work with Brazil and Indonesia to produce hundreds of millions of doses of its vaccine candidate for local use.

Pakistan, one of China's closest allies in the developing world, would receive doses to distribute to roughly one-fifth of its population of 220 million, [under a deal that allows](#) China National Pharmaceutical Group, also known as Sinopharm, to conduct clinical trials there.

And Russia may produce a vaccine developed by China's military and China-based CanSino Biologics Inc., if the Russian health ministry approves.

Chinese state-owned and private drugmakers are responsible for three of the six global vaccine candidates in the final stages of human testing, among the more than two dozen candidates in clinical trials around the world, according to the World Health Organization. The other three in late-stage tests are being developed by companies based in the U.S., U.K. and Germany.

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