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Israel signs deal with Pfizer for potential COVID-19 vaccine

By Rami Ayyub

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FILE PHOTO: A man walks past a sign outside Pfizer Headquarters in the Manhattan borough of New York City, New York, U.S., July 22, 2020. REUTERS/Carlo Allegri/File Photo

EL AVIV (Reuters) - Israel signed a deal with Pfizer Inc [PFE.N](#) on Friday

to receive 8 million doses of the drugmaker's potential COVID-19 vaccine, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said, enough to cover close to half of Israel's population.

Pfizer confirmed that it had finalised a critical supply agreement with Israel "that will provide the Israeli people with a COVID-19 vaccine once approved by regulatory authorities," the company's Chief Executive Officer Albert Bourla said.

The deal needs approval by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and Israel's health ministry, Israeli officials say. Israeli Health Minister Yuli Edelstein said Pfizer is expected to apply for approval at the end of November.

Pfizer and its German partner BioNTech SE's [22UAy.DE](#) potential vaccine is likely to be a two-dose course of treatment, meaning that 8 million doses would cover 4 million of Israel's 9 million population.

In televised remarks, Netanyahu said the supply agreement marked "a great day for Israel" and added: "The goal is for the vaccine supply to start in January and increase in the months thereafter".

Pfizer on Monday announced that its experimental COVID-19 vaccine was more than 90% effective based on initial trial results, a potential major victory in the war against a virus that has killed more than a million people and battered the world economy.

In addition to its new deal with Pfizer, Israel has an agreement with Moderna Inc [MRNA.O](#) for the future purchase of its potential vaccine. Moderna said on Wednesday it had enough data for a first interim analysis of the late-stage trial of its vaccine candidate.

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