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THE BIG PICTURE

Covid-19: Chile joins top five countries in world vaccination league

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Since the beginning of the year Santiago airport in Chile has been busy distributing millions of covid-19 vaccines as the country has joined some of the world's richest nations at the top of the vaccination table.

To date Chile has ordered over 88 million doses of vaccine, enough to fully vaccinate more than double its 19 million people. The government's ambitious goal is to vaccinate 80% of its population by June. This week around 25% had received at least one dose, putting Chile just behind Israel, the United Arab Emirates, and the UK in terms of jabs delivered.

The strategy was developed last summer, when the government, realising that an effective programme could win back support from voters angry at its pandemic response, held early price negotiations with companies developing vaccines. It also invited AstraZeneca, Johnson & Johnson, Sinovac, and CanSino to hold phase III trials in the country.

Its biggest order is for 66 million doses from the Chinese company Sinovac, one of which was given to President Sebastián Piñera in February, just days after the start of a drive to vaccinate all care home residents in Santiago. The city has been hit by more than a third of Chile's 812 344 infections. More than 20 000 Chileans have died from covid-19.