

SPUTNIK V

Russia's COVID-19 vaccine — Sputnik V — has been recommended for emergency use authorisation in India following a meeting of the Subject Expert Committee (SEC).

Sputnik V, the third COVID-19 vaccine approved for emergency use in India, is similar to the AstraZeneca 'Covishield vaccine' in terms of design

▪ Sputnik V was granted emergency approval in Russia without proper controlled trials. However, results of such trials were published later in *The Lancet*, showing a 91.6% efficacy

▪ Before India, the vaccine was approved under

emergency use authorisation in 59 countries

▪ There are no definitive studies establishing the efficacy of the vaccine against the newer variants

▪ The vaccine can be stored as a ready-to-use solution in water frozen to -18°C or as freeze-dried powder stored at $2-8^{\circ}\text{C}$



About:

- If approved by the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI), Sputnik V would be the third vaccine to be made available in India after the Serum Institute of India's Covishield and Bharat Biotech's Covaxin.
- Sputnik V, developed by Russia's Gamaleya Research Institute of Epidemiology and Microbiology, claims to be one of the three vaccines in the world with efficacy of over 90%.
- the vaccine supplies for the global market will be produced by the Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF) international partners in India, Brazil, China, South Korea and other countries.

AAHAAR KRANTI

Union Health Minister, Dr Harsh Vardhan will launch a new mission called 'Aahaar Kranti'.

About:

- The mission is aimed to spread the message of the need for a nutritionally balanced diet and to understand the importance of accessible to all local fruits and vegetables.
- Vijnana Bharati (Vibha) and Global Indian Scientists' and Technocrats' Forum (GIST) have come together to launch the mission with the motto of 'Good Diet-Good

Cognition’.

- The ‘Aahaar Kranti’ movement is designed to address the problem of ‘hunger and diseases in abundance’.
- Union Ministry of Science and Technology’s Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)’s Pravasi Bharatiya Academic and Scientific Sampark (Prabhaas) is collaborating, and various central and state government ministries and agencies are involved.
- The programme will focus on training teachers, who, in turn, will pass on the message to the multitudes of students, and through them to their families and finally the society at large. Such a strategy was adopted for the eradication of Polio and it turned out to be a grand success.
- Studies estimate that India produces as much as two times the amount of calories that it consumes. However, many in the country are still malnourished. The root cause of this strange phenomenon is a lack of nutritional awareness in all sections of our society.

Important Info :

- The United Nations has also declared 2021 as the International Year of Fruits and Vegetables, which vibes very well with Aahaar Kranti. Fruits and vegetables make a large part of a balanced diet.
- Further, UN sustainable goal # 3 that emphasizes on human well-being reads, “Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.” This goal too makes Aahaar Kranti more meaningful. Diet and well-being are inseparable partners.

‘REFUGEES’ AND ‘ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS’

Last week, the Supreme Court appeared to accept the Centre’s contention that the Rohingya people in India are illegal immigrants, most of whom are in a detention camp in Jammu, and others in Delhi. It said they should be deported according to procedures under the Foreigners Act, 1946.

About:

- **Under the 1951 UN Convention on the Status of Refugees and the subsequent 1967 Protocol**, the word refugee pertains to any person who is outside their country of origin and unable or unwilling to return owing to well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.
- Stateless persons may also be refugees in this sense, where country of origin (citizenship) is understood as ‘country of former habitual residence’.

Important Info :

India & UN convention

- India has welcomed refugees in the past, and on date, nearly 300,000 people here are categorised as refugees.
- But India is not a signatory to the **1951 UN Convention on the Status of Refugees and the subsequent 1967 Protocol**.
- Nor does India have a refugee policy or a refugee law of its own.
- The closest India has come to a refugee policy in recent years is the Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019, which discriminates between refugees on the basis of religion in offering them Indian citizenship.

e-Courts

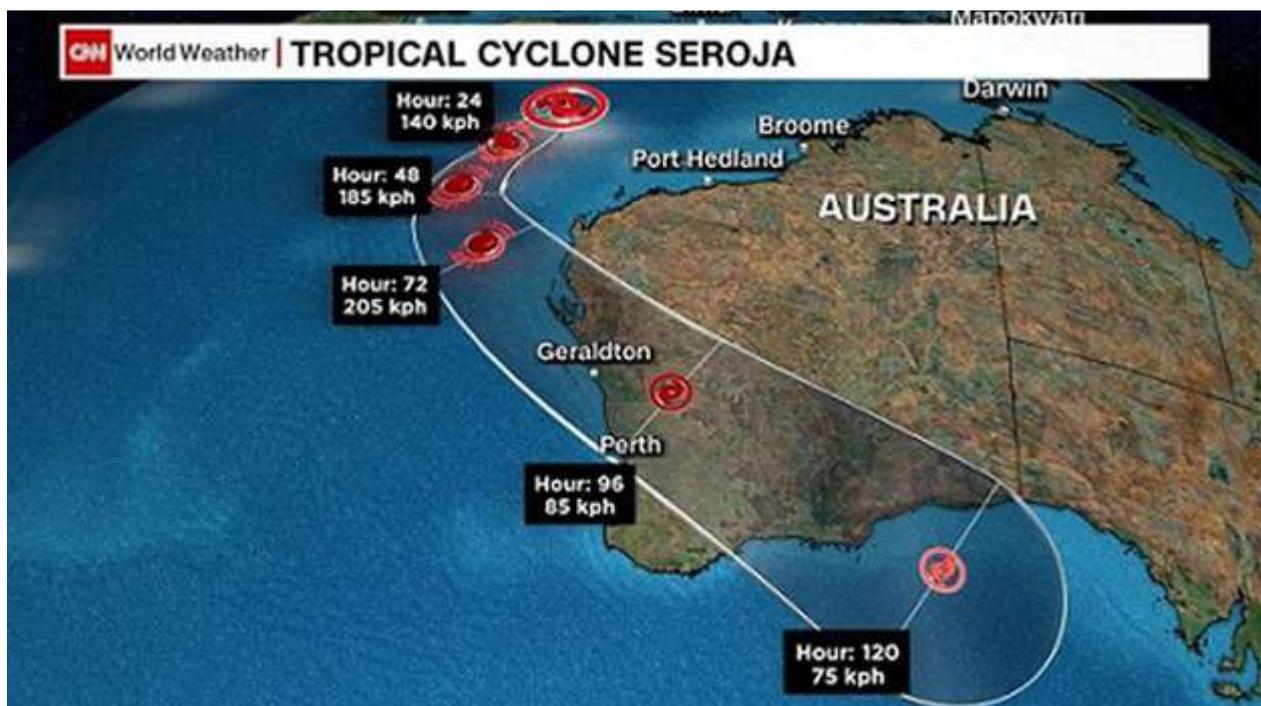
Dr Justice Dhananjaya Y. Chandrachud, Judge, Supreme Court of India and Chairperson, e-Committee of the Supreme Court inaugurated a Judgments and Orders Portal and an e-Filing 3.0 module.

About:

- The Judgments and Orders search portal is a repository of judgments pronounced by various High Courts in the country. It provides facility to search judgements and final orders based on multiple search criteria.
- The e-filing 3.0 module, introduced by the e-Committee of the Supreme Court, allows electronic filing of court documents. With the introduction of the new module, there will be no need for lawyers or clients to visit the court premises for filing of a case.
- The eCourts project has played a sustained role in ensuring citizen centric justice and in recognition of this exemplary work, this project has been conferred the Excellence in Digital Governance Award in 2020 by Government of India.

SEROJA (CYCLONE)

Tropical cyclone Seroja has ripped across a 1,000km stretch of Western Australia, leaving a trail of damage.



About:

- Severe Tropical Cyclone Seroja was a deadly tropical cyclone that brought historic flooding and landslides in portions of southern Indonesia and East Timor and later went on to impact Western Australia's Mid-West region, becoming one of the first to do so since Cyclone Elaine in 1999.
- The name Seroja means lotus in Indonesian.
- As of 12 April 2021, it is estimated that at least 224 people were killed by the storm, with 181 people in Indonesia, 42 in East Timor, and one in Australia.

INDIA ENERGY DASHBOARDS (IED)

The India Energy Dashboards Version 2.0 was launched by NITI Aayog.

About:

- India Energy Dashboards (IED) is an endeavour to provide single-window access to the energy data for the country.
- Energy data published/provided by Central Electricity Authority, Coal Controller's Organisation, and Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas is compiled in the Dashboards.
- NITI Aayog launched the Version 1.0 in May 2017.

Important Info :

The key features of the enhanced version, India Energy Dashboards Version 2.0, are -

- The IED provides time series data from FY 2005-06 until FY 2019-20;
- Enhanced data download – It enables easy downloading of data into convenient spreadsheet formats in a cleaner, more intuitive way;
- IED provides data at sub-yearly frequencies as well. This includes monthly data and API linked data from some portals maintained by the government agencies.
- The monthly data is sourced from the monthly reports that are regularly published for the electricity, petroleum and natural gas sectors.
- API linked data from Saubhagya, UJALA, PRAAPTI, and Vidyut PRAVAH has been incorporated in the portal.

SUSHIL CHANDRA

The President of India appointed Sushil Chandra the senior-most Election Commissioner, as the Chief Election Commissioner in the Election Commission of India.

About:

- Sushil Chandra will assume the charge of office of the Chief Election Commissioner with effect from the 13th April, 2021 vice Shri Sunil Arora consequent upon his demitting the Office of the Chief Election Commissioner on the 12th April, 2021.
- **Setup:** Election Commission of India is a permanent Constitutional Body. Originally the commission had only a Chief Election Commissioner. It currently consists of Chief Election Commissioner and two Election Commissioners.
- **Appointment of Commissioners:** The power to appoint the CEC and the ECs lies with the President of India under Article 324(2) of the Constitution, which states that "the President shall fix the number of ECs in a manner he sees fit, subject to the provisions of any law made by Parliament". Thus, Article 324(2) left it open for the Parliament to legislate on the issue.
- **Procedure:** But, in the absence of any Parliamentary law governing the appointment issue, the ECs are appointed by the government of the day, without pursuing any consultation process. There is no concept of collegium and no involvement of the opposition.
- **Tenure of Commissioners:** They have tenure of six years, or up to the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier. The Chief Election Commissioner can be removed from office only through impeachment by Parliament.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ONE HEALTH

Dr Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare chaired ICMR's International Symposium titled 'One Health in India: Research informing biosafety, preparedness and response'.

About:

- He launched a special issue of ICMR's Indian Journal of Medical Research which discusses the One Health approach, corroborating multisectoral research informing regarding biosafety, preparedness and response and has original articles, viewpoints, perspectives and reviews from the eminent experts in the field.
- The commencement of the constitution of a high-level steering committee for Eco Health Initiatives in India was also announced.
- This committee will have its secretariat hosted at the ICMR, and will also be supported by the upcoming National Institute of One Health which is planned to be set-up in Nagpur.

DGFT 'TRADE FACILITATION' MOBILE APP

Union Commerce & Industry Minister launched DGFT 'Trade Facilitation' Mobile App for promoting ease of doing business and providing quick access to information to importers/exporters.

About:

- It has been developed by the Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), as per the directions of the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT).
- Trade facilitation App is **READY for Industry 4.0**, as it provides
 - Real-time trade policy updates, notifications, application status alert, tracking help requests
 - Explore item-wise Export-Import policy & statistics, Track IEC Portfolio
 - AI-based 24*7 assistance for trade queries
 - DGFT services made accessible to all
 - Your Trade Dashboard accessible anytime & anywhere