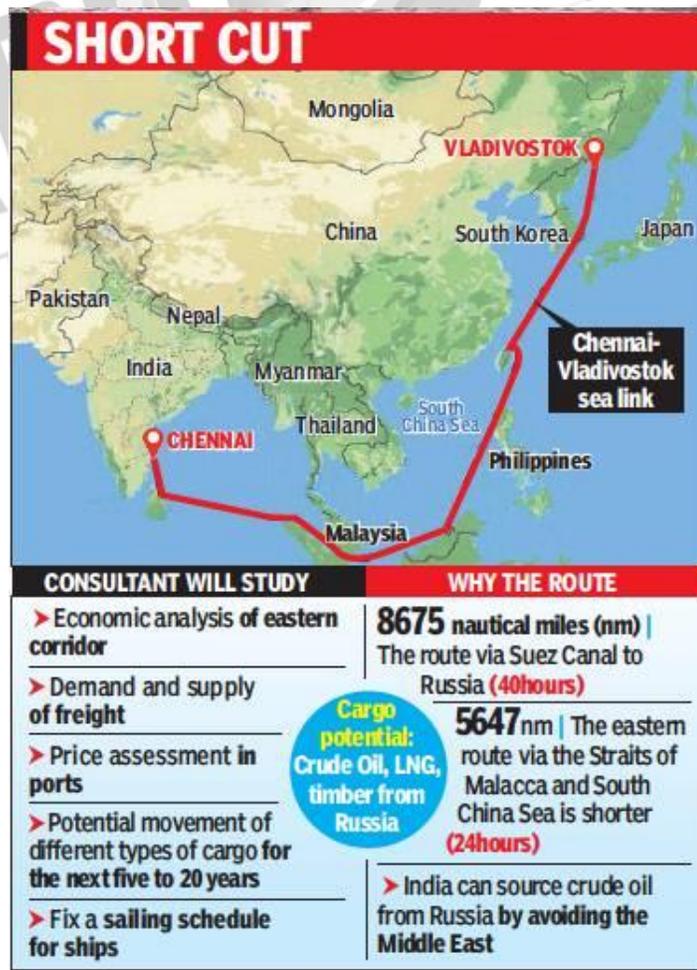


EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – APRIL 20, 2021

TAMIL NADU

- **Chennai Port Trust - to start the process of identifying a consultant to study feasibility of a new Chennai-Vladivostok sea link, avoiding Middle East**
- ✓ The new sea link, conceived two years ago, will link both the ports via the Straits of Malacca and South China Sea, covering ports in Malaysia, Philippines and South Korea



- ✓ The commercial bids or final bids for the feasibility study are expected to be opened on April 22.
- ✓ The consultant will study the route, its revenue potential, the goods that can be transported and other details in around four to five months after the contract has been awarded.
- ✓ The Eastern maritime corridor is shorter and ships will be able to sail to the destination in Russia in 24 hours as against the longer route via Suez Canal and Europe.
- ✓ The main aim of the route is to import crude oil and LNG as part of the efforts to explore import options from countries other than those in the Middle East.
- ✓ ONGC Videsh has already started production in an offshore field off Sakhalin Islands in Russia.
- ✓ There is also scope for bringing coal, timber, machinery, agriculture produce, vehicles, tin, gold, diamond and other materials from Russia.
- ✓ So far there is no direct connectivity between Chennai port and the Russian ports
- ✓ At present, cargo movements from Chennai to Vladivostok passes through Visakhapatnam, Kolkata, Myanmar, Malaysia and reaches Suez Canal from there to the east coast of Russia.
- ✓ The route is being prepared after Prime Minister Narendra Modi signed an agreement at Vladivostok in 2019.
- ✓ The proposed eastern maritime corridor will link ports of Chennai, Visakhapatnam and Kolkata with those of ports in Vladivostok, Vostochny and Olga in the east coast of Russia.

NATIONAL

- **On April 19, the Centre - permitted all persons above 18 years of age to receive anti-Covid shots from May 1**
- ✓ The Centre also allowed states, hospital chains as well as corporate houses to procure and vaccinate all eligible recipients.
- ✓ The decision was taken at a meeting chaired by PM Narendra Modi in New Delhi

STATES CAN FIX AGE CRITERIA

| | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Vaccine manufacturers will supply 50% of their monthly doses to Centre and will be free to supply remaining 50% to states and in open market > Vax firms to make advance declaration of price that will be available to states & in open market before May 1. Pvt vaccination providers to also declare self-set price > States will be free to decide the age bar for any category of | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> people above 18 years > Pvt hosps will have to procure supplies exclusively from 50% supply earmarked for other than central channel > States and hospital chains will be allowed to procure vaccines directly from manufacturers and even contract them from abroad > Free shots will continue at govt centres for people above 45 years of age |
|---|--|

- ✓ The government expects a satisfactory coverage of vulnerable groups currently eligible for vaccination by April 30
- ✓ Pharma companies manufacturing in India will be free to sell 50% of their production to states and hospital chains at a pre-fixed price for vaccination of people above 18 outside the central programme.
- ✓ States and hospital chains will be allowed to procure vaccines directly from manufacturers approved for use by the Centre.
- ✓ Moreover, states will be free to decide the age bar for any category of people above 18
- ✓ Meanwhile, the central programme of vaccinating all above 45 will continue with the shots given for free in government hospitals.
- ✓ As on date, India has administered 12.69 crore doses since the rollout of the vaccination drive on January 16
- ✓ In the first phase, health and frontline workers were given priority, followed by those above 60 and then 45-plus in subsequent phases.

INTERNATIONAL

- **Israel – has recently announced a National Plan to reduce 80% of Greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 as against an earlier deadline of 2015.**
- ✓ The Ministry of Energy of Israel aims to shut down all coal-fired power plants by 2025 and increase the production of renewable energy in due course
- ✓ It aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the electricity sector by 75% to 85% by 2050.
- ✓ The plan involves a transition of 25% of buses and vehicles in the country to be zero-emission by 2030.
- ✓ The government will direct homes and businesses to adopt public transportation hubs and will create sustainable and walkable communities.
- ✓ The downtown areas are to be closed for cars and only those vehicles that do not pollute are to be allowed in these regions.
- ✓ The country is to move towards solar and hydrogen energy to achieve the targets.
- ✓ Further, around 25% of new apartment buildings are expected to become green energy buildings.

INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES

- **On April 19, UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson – announced the cancellation of his trip to India on April 25 following the grim Covid situation**
- ✓ The leader is expected to hold a virtual call with PM Narendra Modi instead.
- ✓ UK has proposed to add India to the red list from April 23, which means anyone who is not a UK/Irish citizen or resident can't enter the UK if they have been in India in the previous 10 days.
- ✓ The trip was meant to see announcements of a post-Brexit enhanced trade partnership and deepening defence, security ties in the Indo-Pacific region.

- **India and Germany - have recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding on “Cities Combating Plastic Entering the Marine Environment”.**
- ✓ The agreement mainly focuses on sustainable solid waste management.
- ✓ It will help India achieve the goal of phasing out single use plastics by 2022.
- ✓ The project is being launched under a joint declaration made by both the countries regarding cooperation in prevention of marine litter in 2019.
- ✓ The project is to be implemented mainly in the states of Kerala, Uttar Pradesh and Andaman and Nicobar Islands over a period of three and half years.
- ✓ It will mainly benefit cities such as Port Blair, Kochi and Kanpur.
- ✓ The project will help the cities in improving their system of garbage collection and segregation.
- ✓ Around 15% to 20% of the plastics entering the oceans are through the river system.
- ✓ India is the twelfth largest source of marine litter in the world.
- ✓ By 2025, it is expected to become the fifth largest source of marine litter.
- ✓ India consumes 16.5 million tonnes of plastics annually, of which 43% are single use plastic material.

DEFENCE

- **India and Kyrgyzstan - commenced the 8th edition of a joint Special Forces Military Exercise - the “Khanjar”- on April 16**

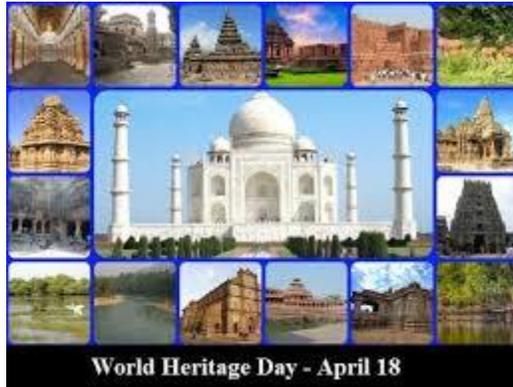


- ✓ It was held at the Special Forces Brigade of National Guards of the Kyrgyz Republic in Bishkek, the capital of the host Kyrgyzstan.
- ✓ The two-week exercise will focus on counter-terrorism and high-altitude and mountain warfare.
- ✓ The Khanjar exercise is held annually between India and Kyrgyzstan since 2011.

- ✓ In 2018, India and Kyrgyzstan signed four agreements, including one to boost defence cooperation and hold annual joint military exercises.

INTERNATIONAL DAY

➤ World Heritage Day (International Day for Monuments and Sites) - April 18



- ✓ The day aims to preserve human heritage, vulnerability and diversity of the world monuments and historical sites
- ✓ Theme 2021 – “Complex Pasts: Diverse Futures”
- ✓ The World Heritage Day is observed annually by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS).
- ✓ It was proposed by ICOMOS in 1982 and was approved by the United Nations in 1983.
- ✓ The ICOMOS is an organisation that was established based on the principles of Venice Charter, proclaimed in 1964
- ✓ The Venice Charter is also called the International Charter on the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites.
- ✓ The World Heritage sites are maintained by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee under the World Heritage Programme.
- ✓ The World Heritage Sites are embodied in the international treaty, which was adopted by UNESCO in 1972.
- ✓ There are 38 UNESCO World Heritage sites in India.
- ✓ Of these, 7 hold natural importance and 30 hold cultural importance.
- ✓ The Khangchendzonga National Park is classified as “mixed”, as it has both cultural and natural importance.

