



EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – APRIL 3, 2021

TAMIL NADU

- **The State government – has announced compulsory paid holiday to all the workers on April 6 in view of the upcoming Tamil-Nadu legislative assembly elections**
 - ✓ This includes daily wages, temporary and contract labour employed in factories
 - ✓ The state government said action will be taken against those who flout the norms.
 - ✓ The paid holiday is to enable public to cast their vote on the election day.
 - ✓ Meanwhile, Chennai police have issued prohibitory orders barring any assembly or meeting in public places from April 1 to 30 under Section 144 of CrPC.
 - ✓ The order was passed by commissioner Mahesh Kumar Aggarwal
 - ✓ It specifically bars assemblies, processions, fasts, demonstrations, human chain meetings within city limits during the mentioned period.
 - ✓ The implementation of other guidelines and restrictions mentioned in the order will be issued by the Revenue and Disaster Management Department.
 - ✓ The order was passed considering the assembly election on April 6 and the raging coronavirus pandemic.
 - ✓ However, people who have a wedding or a funeral in the house don't come under the regulatory orders.

- **The State Express Transport Corporation – to operate germ-protected air-conditioned bus this summer to counter the Covid-19 pandemic fears among travellers**
 - ✓ In this regard, the SETC has upgraded 20 airconditioned buses in Chennai
 - ✓ In these buses, the SETC has installed multi-stage air filters and disinfection systems using Ultraviolet Controlled (UVC) sterilization to prevent the entry of virus, bacteria and other microorganisms.
 - ✓ The pilot project has been launched with the collaboration of a private firm
 - ✓ Each of the UV-based air filters cost approximately ₹40,000 and are fitted to make the buses free from germs

FILTERING THE VIRUS OUT





MULTI-STAGE UV AIR FILTERS FOR SETC BUSES

20 Buses have been fitted with multi-stage air filters

₹40,000 is cost of a filter

COMPONENTS

- > Ionisation is combined with UV-controlled sterilization
- > Photocatalyst
- > Filter mesh
- > Fresh air is recirculated regularly
- > Maintains air quality index (AQI) below 50 as recommended by govt norms

- ✓ The multi-stage filtration kits were attached to existing AC grills of buses
- ✓ These filters have ionisation combined UVC sterilizers, photocatalyst, filter mesh and fresh air device.
- ✓ The sterilization kit generates UV rays (of appropriate wavelength), which destroy the molecular structure of DNA or RNA in the cells of microorganisms which try to enter the bus and make them unable to multiply.
- ✓ When a microorganism can't multiply, it is considered dead and is no longer infectious.
- ✓ The photocatalyst and filter mesh are fitted to absorb larger microorganisms, while other components ensure that fresh air is re-circulated.
- ✓ This not only reduces harmful gases and odour but also reduces travel fatigue.
- ✓ The buses aim to maintain the Air Quality Index (AQI) value at less than 50, as the AQI value above the range of 100 is considered unhealthy or hazardous.
- ✓ During a trial run, the private firm claimed that the AQI was reduced from 759 microorganisms per cubic metre to 33 microorganisms per cubic metre in standard operating conditions after 25 minutes of deep purification.
- ✓ An air quality monitor is fit in the driver's cabin to monitor AQI, temperature and humidity levels.

STATES

- **The Odisha state government - has proposed a second biosphere reserve in the southern part of the state at Mahendragiri hills**
- ✓ Mahendragiri is also the second-highest peak in the state at an altitude of 1,501 metres
- ✓ It is located in the Gajapati district of the state.
- ✓ The area of the proposed second biosphere reserve - Mahendragiri Biosphere Reserve – will be approximately 470,955 hectares.
- ✓ In this regard, a feasibility report was prepared by the Biosphere Reserve Committee for the proposed project



- ✓ The feasibility report has been submitted to the government which will now be taken up by the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
- ✓ Earlier, the protected archeological remains of Mahendragiri were listed in the tentative list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites, thereby making it easier to declare as a biosphere reserve.
- ✓ The rich flora in Mahendragiri represents 40% of the reported flora of Odisha, consisting of around 1,358 species of plants.
- ✓ Also, out of the 41 species of threatened medicinal plants found in Odisha, 29 are found in the biosphere reserve area.
- ✓ Further, the hill consists of 388 species of animals, including 165 species of birds, 27 species of mammals, 23 species of snakes, three species of turtles, 15 species of amphibians, and 19 lizards.
- ✓ A vulnerable tribal group, Soura, is one of the inhabitants at Mahendragiri.
- ✓ Similipal Biosphere Reserve is the first biosphere reserve of Odisha, which was notified on May 20, 1996.
- ✓ It has an area of a 5,569-square kilometre.

NATIONAL

- **The Ministry of Environment – has issued new deadlines for coal-based power plants to adopt new emission standards**
- ✓ Accordingly, the coal-based power plants in comparatively lesser polluting areas will have time period up to three years for complying with the new emission norms
- ✓ Further, the new norms have also allowed the defaulters to continue their operations after paying penalty if they miss the new timelines.
- ✓ Thermal power plants (TPPs) located in different regions will have different deadlines
- ✓ This will be the third deadline extension given by the government, since the notification of new emission norms for the coal-fired TPPs
- ✓ The TPPs located within 10 km radius of the national capital region (NCR) or the cities having more than one million population will have to adhere to the December 31, 2022 deadline
- ✓ But, others including retiring units will have graded deadlines up to December 31, 2025.

- ✓ The TPPs will have to install pollution control equipment such as flue gas desulphurisation (FGD) units within the extended deadline to meet the new emission norms of sulphur dioxides.
 - ✓ According to the notification, a task force will be constituted by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) to categorize thermal power plants in three categories
 - ✓ The categorization will be done on the basis of the location of the power plants, to comply with the emission norms within the different time limit.
- **On March 31, the Union Minister of State for Ports, Shipping, and Waterways Mansukh Mandaviya - flagged off the first-of-its-kind cruise service from Hazira Port of Surat to Diu via video conferencing.**



**HON'BLE MINISTER
SHRI MANSUKH MANDAVIYA TO FLAG OFF
SURAT-DIU-SURAT CRUISE SERVICE
VIA VIDEO-CONFERENCEING**

Time: 04:30 P.M. | Date: 31 March 2021

**Surat to become a gateway for
travel destinations of Gujarat**

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- ✓ The new cruise has a capacity of 300 passengers and has 16 cabins and will sail two round trips in a week.
- ✓ The cruise has all modern amenities and takes approximately 13 to 14 hours for one-way travel from Surat to Diu
- ✓ During his speech, the Union minister said that there were 139 cruise calls at the Indian Ports in 2014 but now there are 450 cruise calls in the country
- ✓ The number of tourists in 2014 was around one lakh and in 2019-20, it was around 4.5 lakh.
- ✓ The government has planned 6 international cruise terminals on the east coast (Kolkata, Vishakhapatnam, Chennai) and west coast (Goa, Mumbai, Kochi) of India, as per the Minister
- ✓ Earlier in November 2020, PM Modi had inaugurated the 'Hazira-Ghogha' RoPAX Service to save journey time and the cost of travel.

INTERNATIONAL

- **On March 30, China - gave its approval to the proposal for the most controversial and sweeping overhaul of Hong Kong's electoral system.**

- ✓ The passed proposal will reduce the number of directly elected seats in the city's legislature from 50% to about 20% and will tighten Beijing's control in the Special Administrative Region (SAR).
- ✓ The National People's Congress Standing Committee approved the proposal unanimously
- ✓ Under the new proposal, the people of Hongkong will now only be able to directly vote for 20 representatives while the size of the Legislative Council has been expanded to 90 from 70.
- ✓ Previously 35 of its 70 members were directly elected.
- ✓ The major changes were first announced earlier in March 2021 at the annual session of the National People's Congress in Beijing.
- ✓ The National Security Police Unit will help in scrutinizing the candidates and will submit a report to the newly formed vetting committee.
- ✓ The new members will include the patriotic groups and the members of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference to further reinforcing the pro-establishment control of the body.
- ✓ On the other hand, the 1200-member Election Committee that chooses the Chief Executive of Hong Kong has also been expanded by 300 members
- ✓ It will now include Hong Kong's representative to the Communist Party-controlled legislature.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- **The Drug regulator DCGI's subject expert committee on vaccines - has deferred its decision on the application seeking emergency use authorisation for the Sputnik V vaccine shots in India.**
- ✓ In India, Dr Reddy's Laboratories is conducting bridging studies for the vaccine
- ✓ The vaccine underwent a bridge trial in India on 1,600 candidates.
- ✓ The expert committee has asked Hyderabad-based Dr Reddy's Laboratories for more data related to stability of the vaccine alongwith a factsheet.
- ✓ It has to be noted that a variant of the vaccine needs to be stored at a temperature of minus 18 degrees Celsius
- ✓ In this regard, the committee asked the company to submit a clear logistical plan to support the required cold chain and storage.
- ✓ Dr Reddy's Lab had applied for emergency use licence in February 2021 but was asked to return after completing phase 2 and 3 bridging studies in India.
- ✓ Sputnik V was co-developed by RDIF and Gamaleya Research Institute of Epidemiology and Microbiology
- ✓ It has a high interim efficacy of 91.6%, as per the results of the interim trials.
- ✓ Apart from Dr Reddy's, RDIF has also signed manufacturing pacts with four other Indian companies for a total of 750 million doses.
- ✓ Dr Reddy's Laboratories has partnered Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF) for conducting clinical trials of the vaccine candidate in India.

- ✓ It will also be responsible for distribution of the vaccine in India
- ✓ Sputnik V is made up of two different viruses belonging to the adenovirus family, Ad26 and Ad5

SPORTS

- **14-year old V Pranav - won the 68th Tamil Nadu State Open chess championships which concluded in Tirunelveli on April 2.**



- ✓ The 9-round tournament, played in the classical format, was the first FIDE rated over-the-board event to be held in India since the Covid-19 pandemic last year.
- ✓ Pranav won 9 out of 9 to defend his title.
- ✓ Earlier, Pranav had won the tournament in 2019.
- ✓ Last year, the event couldn't be held due to Covid-19.
- ✓ Pranav gains 18 points from the tournament to take his ELO rating to 2366.

