

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – FEBRUARY 22, 2022

NATIONAL

- **On February 21, the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) - granted an emergency use authorisation (EUA) to coronavirus vaccine Corbevax for use in children aged 12 to 18 years**
- ✓ With this, Corbevax became India's third indigenous vaccine to receive an emergency use approval for use in adolescents, joining Zydus Cadila's DNA shot ZyCoV-D and Bharat Biotech's Covaxin.
- ✓ Currently, India only administers Bharat Biotech's Covaxin to those in the 15-18 age group, since January 3, 2022
- ✓ According to Hyderabad-based pharma company Biological E Limited, Corbevax vaccine is India's first indigenously developed Receptor Binding Domain (RBD) Protein sub-unit vaccine against Covid-19
 - ✓ Instead of using the whole virus, the platform triggers an immune response by using its fragments, like the spike protein
 - ✓ Currently, hepatitis B vaccine is the only other similar protein subunit vaccine administered in the country.
- ✓ The DCGI has already approved Corbevax for restricted use in an emergency situation in adults on December 28, 2021
- ✓ However, it has not been included in the country's vaccination drive yet.
- ✓ The Corbevax vaccine is administered through intramuscular route with two doses scheduled 28 days apart
- ✓ It is stored at 2 to 8 degrees Celsius and will be supplied in a single shot pack of 0.5ml, 5ml vial of 10 doses and 10ml vial containing 20 doses.
- ✓ According to the Health Ministry, the company has conducted phase 1/2, 2/3 clinical trials of its vaccine in the country.
- ✓ The government has placed an order with Biological E for five crore doses of 'Corbevax' vaccine with each dose costing ₹145
- ✓ The Centre had earlier placed an order for 30 crore Corbevax doses on August 21 last year.

- ✓ The Hyderabad-based firm Biological E was founded in 1953
 - ✓ It is the first private sector biological products company in India and the first pharmaceutical company in southern India
 - ✓ It has to be recalled that Serum Institute of India (SII) — makers of Covishield — has also sought regulatory nod for emergency use of Covovax in those aged 12-17
- **On February 21, a special CBI court - sentenced Rashtriya Janata Dal supremo and former Bihar chief minister Lalu Prasad Yadav to 5 years in prison and slapped a fine of Rs 60 lakh in the Rs 139.5 crore Doranda treasury embezzlement case in 1995-96**



- ✓ This is the fifth fodder scam case in which he has been convicted.
- ✓ Prasad has been convicted in four other fodder scams, which first came to light in January 1996.
- ✓ Lalu is already serving a combined jail term of 14 years in these four cases
- ✓ Charges in the Doranda treasury scam, Ranchi, were framed in September 2005.
- ✓ The prosecution closed arguments in May, 2019 and statements of the accused were recorded in January 2020.
- ✓ The 73-year-old Lalu and 74 others were found guilty by the court on February 15
- ✓ Of the 99 accused in the Doranda treasury case, 24 were acquitted while three-year jail terms were pronounced for 46 accused last week itself.
- ✓ The Doranda fodder scam is part of the Rs 950 crore scam linked to fraudulent withdrawal of public funds from government treasuries in various districts of undivided Bihar during Lalu Prasad Yadav's term as Bihar chief minister.
- ✓ Of the total of Rs 950 crore, Rs 37.70 crore and Rs 33.13 crore were withdrawn from the Chaibasa treasury, Rs 89.27 crore from the Deoghar treasury, and Rs 3.76 crore from the Dumka treasury.
- ✓ In June 1997, Prasad was named as an accused in the case for the first time in a chargesheet filed by the CBI and the trial in the special CBI court began in February 2002.
- ✓ The sixth case linked to the fodder scam is being heard by the CBI court in Patna, which relates to money taken out illegally from the Banka-Bhagalpur treasury.

INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES

- **India and France - have agreed on a 'Roadmap on Blue Economy and Ocean Governance' to promote cooperation in maritime security**



- ✓ The agreement was signed during External Affairs Minister Dr. S Jaishankar's three-day visit to France with his French counterpart Jean-Yves Le Drian on February 20
- ✓ The scope of the roadmap will include maritime trade, the naval industry, fisheries, marine technology and scientific research, integrated coastal management, marine eco-tourism, inland waterways, and cooperation between competent administrations on civil maritime issues.
- ✓ The roadmap released by the Ministry of External Affairs seeks to enhance bilateral exchanges on the blue economy and create a common vision of ocean governance based on the rule of law and cooperate on sustainable and resilient coastal and waterways infrastructure.
- ✓ As part of this, India and France planned to organise an annual bilateral dialogue on the blue economy and ocean governance.
- ✓ The NITI Aayog in India, and the Ambassador for Poles and Maritime Affairs in the MoFA in France will be contact points for coordinating the organisation of this dialogue and ensuring the involvement of competent ministries.
- ✓ India and France seeks to contribute to the United Nations Sustainable Development Agenda, which aims to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources.
- ✓ Both countries act in accordance with international law, specifically the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the Paris Climate Agreement, the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, as well as the International Maritime Organization's initial strategy for reducing greenhouse gas emissions from ships.
- ✓ They support the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030).

- ✓ India and France are also committed to promoting cooperation between the European Union and India on the blue economy and ocean governance, in the framework of the common roadmap “EU-India Strategic Partnership: A Roadmap to 2025” and the EU strategy for cooperation in the Indo-Pacific.
- ✓ They will also enhance their coordination in view of the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly in 2022 to support the initiation of negotiations for a global agreement on marine plastic waste and microplastic.
- ✓ The “Campus mondial de la mer” in France has proposed to make India the Guest of Honour of the Sea Tech Week in Brest from September 26 to 30, 2022, which will be an opportunity to boost industrial partnerships and blue economy innovations.
- ✓ Jaishankar will attend the EU Ministerial Forum for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific on February 22, an initiative of the French Presidency of the European Council.
- ✓ He will also give an address at the French Institute of International Relations (IFRI).
- ✓ This visit comes after Jaishankar participated recently in Munich Security Conference (MSC) 2022 in Germany

DEFENCE

- **The Indian Air Force and Royal Air Force of Oman – kicked off the sixth edition of bilateral air combat exercise ‘Eastern Bridge VI’ on February 21 at Air Force Station, Jodhpur**



- ✓ The exercise seeks to promote professional interaction, exchange of experiences and enhancement of operational knowledge, besides strengthening bilateral relations between the two countries
- ✓ The IAF has fielded Sukhoi-30MKIs, Jaguars and Mirage-2000s, while Oman has deployed F-16 fighters for the exercise to be held from February 21 to 25.
- ✓ Exercise Eastern Bridge V was last held in October 2019 at the Air Force Base Masirah, Oman.
- ✓ The IAF contingent for the last exercise comprised MiG-29 and C-17 aircraft.

- ✓ It was the first time that MIG-29 fighter aircraft participated in an International Exercise outside India
- ✓ The bilateral exercise comes a couple of weeks after Oman's top defence official Mohammed Nasser Al Zaabi visited India from January 30 to February 4 as part of an official visit.
- ✓ Zaabi had co-chaired a meeting of the Joint Military Cooperation Committee, which initiated a series of high-level defence engagements between the two countries.
- ✓ Recently, Rear Admiral Saif Bin Nasser Bin Mohsin Al Rahbi, commander of the Royal Navy of Oman, visited India from February 13 to 17.
- ✓ The two navies have been conducting the biennial maritime exercise 'Naseem Al Bahr' since 1993.

SPORTS

- **Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa - stunned world no 1 Magnus Carlsen in the eighth round of the Airthings Masters, an online rapid chess tournament, on February 21**



- ✓ Praggnanandhaa won with black pieces in 39 moves in a Tarrasch variation game to halt Carlsen's run of three straight wins.
- ✓ With the win, Praggnanadhaa became only the third Indian, after Viswanathan Anand and P Harikrishna, to defeat the world No 1, Magnus Carlsen
- ✓ At 16, he is now the youngest player to defeat Carlsen since the latter became world champion for the first time in 2013
- ✓ His spectacular win over Carlsen comes after a moderate run in the earlier rounds, which included a solitary victory over Lev Aronian, two draws and four defeats.
- ✓ The Indian GM was in joint 12th spot after eight rounds with eight points.
- ✓ The number one position in the tournament is currently being held by Ian Nepomniachtchi from Russia, who has scored 19 points so far.

- ✓ Back in January 2022, the young Indian Grandmaster won games against Andrey Esipenko, Vidit Gujrathi and Nils Grandelius and finished 12th with a final score of 5.5 points in the Masters' section of the Tata Steel Chess Tournament 2022.
- ✓ In June 2018, Chennai-based Praggnanadhaa had become the second youngest Grandmaster (GM) in the world at 12 years, 10 months and 13 days after Russia's chess star Sergey Karjakin
- ✓ He is presently the 5th youngest in the world to earn the title of being a Grandmaster.
- ✓ Abhimanyu Mishra, Sergey Karjakin, Gukesh D and Javokhir Sindarov are the ones ahead of him.
- ✓ Praggnanandha had earlier won the World Youth Chess Championship Under-8 title back in 2013.
- ✓ Aged just 7, he also won the FIDE Master honour which is an open title that is below Grandmaster and International Master.
- ✓ Later, Praggnanandha became the youngest International Master at the age of 10 years, 10 months and 19 days in 2016

