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**CURRENT AFFAIRS**



# Intellectual property waiver for Covid-19 vaccines

## Context

The United States announced support for waiving intellectual property protection for Covid-19 vaccines stating extraordinary circumstances call for extraordinary measures.

## Approach

it will approach through “text-based negotiations” on the waiver at the World Trade Organization (WTO). It involves negotiators exchanging texts with their preferred wording and then thrashing out a consensus on the working

## Meaning of intellectual property waiver for Covid-19 vaccines

The IP waiver might open up space for production of Covid vaccines with emergency use authorisations (EUA) — such as those developed by Pfizer, Moderna, AstraZeneca, Novavax, Johnson & Johnson and Bharat Biotech — on a larger scale in middle-income countries.

Most production is currently concentrated in high-income countries; production by middle-income countries has been happening through licensing or technology transfer agreements.

## Background

In October 2020, India and South Africa had asked the WTO to waive certain conditions of the Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement that could impede timely access to affordable medical products to combat Covid-19.

The countries had asked the TRIPS Council to recommend, “as early as possible”, a waiver on the implementation, application and enforcement of four sections in the second part of the agreement.

These sections — 1, 4, 5, and 7 — pertain to copyright and related rights, industrial designs, patents, and the protection of undisclosed information.

## Patents and IP rights

A patent represents a powerful intellectual property right, and is an exclusive monopoly granted by a government to an inventor for a limited, pre-specified time. It provides an enforceable legal right to prevent others from copying the invention.

Patents can be either process patents or product patents:

A product patent ensures that the rights to the final product is protected, and anyone other than the patent holder can be restrained from manufacturing it during a specified period, even if they were to use a different process.

A process patent enables any person other than the patent holder to manufacture the patented product by modifying certain processes in the manufacturing exercise.

Patent regime in India:

## India and IPR

India moved from product patenting to process patenting in the 1970s, which enabled India to become a significant producer of generic drugs at global scale, and allowed companies like Cipla to provide Africa with anti-HIV drugs in the 1990s.

But due to obligations arising out of the TRIPS Agreement, India had to amend the Patents Act in 2005, and switch to a product patents regime across the pharma, chemicals, and biotech sectors

## Anamalai Tiger Reserve (Environment)

### Context:

Two Tribal settlements (Kattupatti and Kuzhipatti) of Pulayar community within the limits of Anamalai Tiger Reserve in Tamil Nadu are gearing up for their annual festival of local deity Vairapattan.

## Fundamentals:

### Pulayar Community:

- The Pulayar, is one of the main social groups found in Kerala, Karnataka and in historical Tamil Nadu or Tamilakam.
- They are a Schedule Caste in Kerala and Tamil Nadu.
- They are noted for their music, craftsmanship, and for certain dances which include,

1. Kolam-thullal, a mask dance which is part of their exorcism rituals, and
2. Mudi-attamor hair-dance which has its origins in a fertility ritual.

## Anamalai Tiger Reserve:

- It is one of the four Tiger Reserves in Tamil Nadu. It forms part of the Southern Western Ghats.
- It forms part of the Anamalai Parambikulam Elephant Reserve declared in 2003.
- It is surrounded by Parambikulam Tiger Reserve on the East, Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary and Eravikulam National Park on the South Western side (all belong to Kerala).
- The reserve is also surrounded by Nenmara, Vazhachal, Malayattur and Marayur reserved forests of Kerala.

## Diversity:

- The area has more than 4600 Adivasi people from six tribes of indigenous people
- The tribes are the Kadars, Malasars, Malaimalasar, Pulaiyars, Muduvars and the Eravallan (Eravalar).

## Flora:

- It includes wet evergreen forest and semi-evergreen forest, montane shola-grassland, moist deciduous, dry deciduous, thorn forests and marshes.

# Fauna:

- The important mammals include: Asiatic elephant, Sambar, Spotted deer, Barking deer, Mouse deer, Gaur, Nilgiri tahr, Tiger, etc.

## Other Protected Areas in Tamil Nadu:

1. Mudumalai Tiger Reserve
2. Kalakkad – Mundanthurai TR
3. Sathyamangalam TR
4. Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve
5. Mukurthi National Park
6. Gulf of Mannar Marine National Park
7. Guindy National Park

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