Prelim Bits 28-08-2022 & 29-08-2022 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

Fiji Virus

The novel Fijivirus has caused a disease that had dwarfed some non-basmati and basmati plants in Haryana and Punjab.

- The Fiji Virus is the other name for the Southern Rice Black-Streaked Dwarf Virus (SRBSDV).
- The virus was first reported in southern China in 2001 and causes a striking disease on rice and maize that leads to serious yield losses in several East Asian countries, such as China, Vietnam and Japan.
- It spreads by the white-backed plant hopper (*Sogatella furcifera*), which injects it while sucking the sap from mostly young plants.
- The virus is specific to the phloem and is not transmitted by seed or grain.
- **Symptoms** - The affected plants showed severely stunted appearance.
- The roots were poorly developed and turned brownish.
- The infected tillers can be pulled out easily.

Reference

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2. https://indianexpress.com/article/india/iari-new-virus-behind-mystery-dwarfing-of-rice-8117779/
3. https://bsppjournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/ppa.12630

Appointment of Chief Justice of India

Justice Uday Umesh Lalit has been appointed as the 49th Chief Justice of India. He will only be the second CJI to have been appointed directly from the Supreme Court Bar Association, without serving as a judge of a high court.

> *India's highest judicial post is the Chief Justice of India.*

- The Chief Justice of India (CJI) and the other judges of the Supreme Court are appointed by the President under Article 124 (2) of the Indian Constitution.
- Article 124 also says that appointment by the President is to be done "after consultation" with judges of the Supreme Court, as the President may "deem necessary".
- Article 217, which deals with the appointment of High Court judges, says the President

should consult the CJI, Governor, and Chief Justice of the High Court concerned.

- **Qualifications** - Apart from being an Indian citizen, the person to be appointed as the Chief Justice of India must
    1. Have been for at least 5 years a Judge of a High Court or of two or more such Courts in succession or
    2. Have been for at least 10 years an advocate of a High Court or of two or more such Courts in succession, or
    3. Be, in the opinion of the President, a distinguished jurist.
- **Collegium System** - The more than two decades-old collegium system is followed in the appointment of judges, consisting of five senior-most judges of the Supreme Court and the High Courts.
- The government gets a background inquiry done by the Intelligence Bureau (IB) at times from the names first suggested for appointment by the collegium.
- While the government can also raise objections, usually the collegium's will prevails.
- The term "collegium" is not mentioned in the constitution, which only speaks of consultation by the President.
- Given the ambiguity of the word "consult", this method of appointment has often been challenged in the courts.
- **Seniority** - Usually, the seniormost judge of the court after the chief justice (in terms of the years served) is recommended as the successor.
- This convention was discarded by former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, who appointed Justice AN Ray as CJI in 1973 over his seniors.
- According to the government's Memorandum of procedure for the appointment of Supreme Court Judges, seniority is to be the norm.
- The Union Minister of Law, Justice and Company Affairs seeks the recommendation of the outgoing CJI for appointing the next CJI.
- After the collegium's recommendations are finalised and received from the CJI, the Law Minister will put up the recommendation to the Prime Minister who will advise the President on the matter of appointment.

Removal of CJI

- The constitution states, "A Judge of the Supreme Court shall not be removed from his office except by an order of the President".
- This Presidential order must be passed after an address by each House of Parliament supported by
    1. A majority of the total membership of that House and
    2. A majority of not less than two-thirds of the members of that House present and voting.
- An address in the same session has to be presented to the President for removal on one of the two grounds - proved misbehaviour or incapacity.

Reference

1. https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1850553
2. https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-how-the-chief-justice-of-india-gets-appointed-8115493/
3. https://doj.gov.in/memorandum-of-procedure-of-appointment-of-supreme-court-judges/

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Full Court Meeting

Within hours of taking over, the new Chief Justice of India, U U Lalit called a meeting of the 'full court' where the judges discussed how to deal with issues relating to listing and backlog of cases.

- A full court meeting literally means one that is attended by all the judges of the court.
- There are no written rules dealing with these meetings.
- As per convention, full-court meetings are called by the Chief Justice of India to discuss issues of importance to the judiciary.
- The senior designations of practicing advocates in the Supreme Court and High Courts are also decided during the full court meetings.
- **Frequency** - As a full court meeting is convened at the discretion of the Chief Justice of India, it does not follow any particular calendar.
- Full court meetings have been held many times in the past.
- In March 2020, it was convened to discuss demands by associations of lawyers to close the court until further notice following the Covid-10 outbreak and its subsequent spread among court staff.
- **Significance** - The basic idea is to take everyone along.
- Full court meetings are an ideal occasion to arrive at common solutions to deal with problems that beset the country's legal system and to make any amends, if necessary, in the administrative practices of the court.

Decisions Made in the Recent Meeting

- The recent meeting has decided to set up "one or two" constitution benches and "six three -judge benches" on priority basis.
- The focus will be on resolving the three -judge bench matters as there are many references to them pending.
- The constitution benches will initially deal with case management and issue directions for getting the records, the paper book, of the case ready to prepare for the hearing.
- The three-judge benches will sit in the first half of the day on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.
- **Listing of Cases** - On the listing of cases, it was decided that Mondays will be dedicated to fresh matters.
- Those miscellaneous matters in which notice has already been issued will be taken up post-lunch on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.
- Fridays will be devoted to after-notice miscellaneous matters.

Reference

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2. https://www.indiatoday.in/law/story/cji-lalit-holds-meeting-over-process-listing-cases-1993353-2022-08-27
3. https://indianexpress.com/article/india/hours-after-taking-over-justice-lalit-holds-meet-t

o-discuss-backlog-listing-of-pleas-8115820/lite/

Tigray Crisis

The Director-General of the World Health Organisation has said that racism is the reason behind a lack of international interest in Ethiopia's war-stricken northern Tigray region, where the civilians are living in dire conditions.

- There have been tensions in the regions for nearly 3 decades.
- But, the tensions escalated in September 2020, when leaders in Tigray held local elections in defiance of the Ethiopian government.
- These elections were considered "illegal" by the federal government, further leading to conflict with Tigray authorities.
- In November 2020, Abiy government claimed that the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TLPF), a former ruling party designated as a terrorist organization by the Ethopian government, had attacked its army bases.
- Over the next year, violence would spread to other parts of the country.
- The conflict was a result of months of disagreements between the Abiy government and political leaders in Tigray, who were opposing reforms pursued by the federal government.
- The government forces of Abiy took control of Tigray's regional capital Mekelle, and installed an interim administration loyal to the federal government. However, the conflict is far from over.
- To know more about the Tigray crisis, click here.

Tigray

- Tigray is Ethiopia's northernmost region.
- Bordering Eritrea, it is home to most of the country's estimated 7 million ethnic Tigrayans.
- The ethnic group, which accounts for about 6% of Ethiopia's population, have had an outsized influence in national affairs.

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Nuclear Matrix

Using a novel method, a group of researchers has established a way to study the nuclear matrix of the fruit fly (Drosophila melanogaster) without removing the nucleus from the embryo.

- Every cell that makes up an organism contains a copy of its genome, which is embedded in the jelly-like nuclear matrix inside the nucleus.
- The nuclear matrix (NM), or nuclear skeleton, is the non-chromatin, ribonucleo-proteinaceous framework that is resistant to high ionic strength buffers, nonionic detergents, and nucleolytic enzymes.
- It fulfils a structural role in eukaryotic cells. It maintains the shape of the nucleus and the spatial organization of chromatin.
- The nuclear matrix is a dynamic material providing access for the regulation of different genes in different cells.
- **Removal** - Using biochemical means, the nucleus is treated with an enzyme that digests the entire DNA, then washed with a solution of high salt concentration so that viable DNA proteins are removed.
- Now what is then left is a fibrous meshwork of proteins called the nuclear matrix.

Reference

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