



## Current Affairs of the Day

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- 'Northeast citizens faced bias amid pandemic'

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- As cases surge, panel approves Russia's Sputnik V vaccine



## ‘Northeast citizens faced bias amid pandemic’

A study commissioned by the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) on racial discrimination and hate crimes against people from the northeastern States found that the “northeast India seamlessly fits [an] Indian’s imagination of a Chinese person”.

### Racism and Hate:

1. The study found that 78% of the people from the region who were interviewed believed that physical appearance was the most important reason for prejudice.
2. Amid the COVID-19 outbreak last year, people from the region “faced an increased number of acts of hate and prejudices against them”.
3. A series of attacks were reported in various parts of the country, where people from the region were “harassed, abused, and traumatised” and were disparagingly called “coronavirus”, the study said.
4. People from the northeast faced discrimination when it came to renting accommodation, visiting a restaurant and even while finding transportation.
5. The study revealed that the hate crime and racial discrimination against people from the northeast are deep-rooted even in the cosmopolitan cities. Even in restaurants, they faced issues forcing them to eat mostly in eateries run by people from their communities.

### Reasons for Hate crimes:

1. The most pervasive reasons behind hate crime incidents against the northeastern people were public attitude and insensitivity.
2. The incidence of non-reporting of the incidents was also perpetuating discriminatory behaviour and Hate crime.
3. Also, As many as 34% of persons faced a common issue of refusal to file FIR by the police.

### Way Forward:

1. The study said the M.P. Bezbaruah Committee in 2014 recommended amendments to the IPC by creating new offences under Section 153C and 509A to deal with comments, gestures and acts intended to insult a member of a particular racial group.



2. It also suggested making such offences as ‘gender-neutral’, ‘cognizable’ and ‘non-bailable’ with imprisonment extendable up to three years or five years with fine, respectively,” said the study.

## As cases surge, panel approves Russia's Sputnik V vaccine

Russia's COVID-19 vaccine — Sputnik V — has been recommended for emergency use authorization in India following a meeting of the Subject Expert Committee (SEC).

### Highlights:

1. Sputnik V is the third vaccine to be made available in India after the Serum Institute of India's Covishield and Bharat Biotech's Covaxin.
2. Sputnik V, developed by Russia's Gamaleya Research Institute of Epidemiology and Microbiology, claims to be one of the three vaccines in the world with an efficacy of over 90%.

### RDIF to produce shots

1. It adds that the vaccine supplies for the global market will be produced by the Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF) international partners in India, Brazil, China, South Korea and other countries.
2. While Dr Reddy's will market the vaccine in India, RDIF has tied up with other Indian companies — Hetero Biopharma, Gland Pharma, Stelis Biopharma and Virchow Biotech — to produce 850 million doses of Sputnik V in the country every year.

### Adding to the mix

Sputnik V, the third COVID-19 vaccine approved for emergency use in India, is similar to the AstraZeneca 'Covishield vaccine' in terms of design

- Sputnik V was granted emergency approval in Russia without proper controlled trials. However, results of such trials were published later in *The Lancet*, showing a 91.6% efficacy

- Before India, the vaccine was approved under

emergency use authorisation in 59 countries

- There are no definitive studies establishing the efficacy of the vaccine against the newer variants

- The vaccine can be stored as a ready-to-use solution in water frozen to -18°C or as freeze-dried powder stored at 2-8 °C





3. RDIF jointly with partners and manufacturers is ramping up the production of Sputnik V. The cost of one dose of the vaccine for international markets is less than \$10 (Sputnik V is a two-dose vaccine).
4. The (freeze-dried form) of the vaccine can be stored at a temperature of +2 to +8 degrees Celsius, which allows for easy distribution worldwide, including hard-to-reach regions.