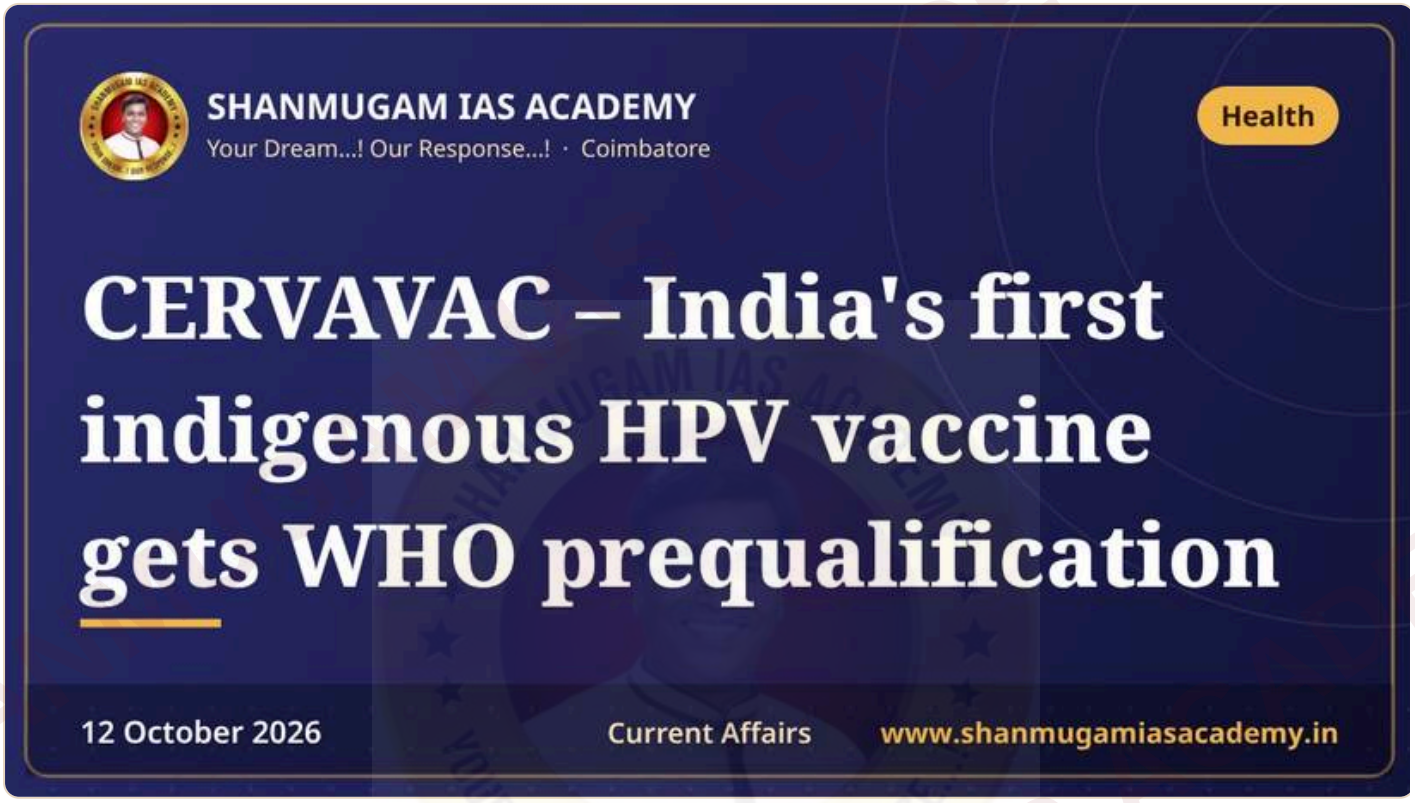
CERVAVAC – India's first indigenous HPV vaccine gets WHO prequalification

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News

On 5 Oct 2026 the World Health Organization (WHO) granted 'prequalification' to CERVAVAC, Serum Institute of India's (Pune) vaccine against cervical cancer and India's first indigenous HPV (human papillomavirus) vaccine. UN agencies such as UNICEF and GAVI can now buy and supply it to other countries. It is the Serum Institute's 32nd WHO-prequalified product.

Key facts

Vaccine	CERVAVAC – quadrivalent HPV vaccine: types 6, 11, 16, 18
Maker	Serum Institute of India, Pune; DBT–BIRAC support
DCGI approval	July 2022; launched 1 Sept 2022
Age group	Girls and boys aged 9–26; 2 doses at 9–14 years
WHO status	Prequalified – 5 Oct 2026

Background

- Science: HPV 16 and 18 are high-risk types behind most cervical cancers; 6 and 11 cause genital warts. Harald zur Hausen won the 2008 Medicine Nobel for linking HPV to cervical cancer.

- India: cervical cancer is the second most common cancer among Indian women after breast cancer. Under the national HPV drive, 14-year-old girls get a free single dose of 'Gardasil-4' (registered on U-WIN); over 80 lakh doses had been given by Sept 2026.
- WHO's '90-70-90' targets for 2030: 90% of girls vaccinated, 70% of women screened, 90% of patients treated.
- Institutions: Department of Biotechnology (DBT) 1986; BIRAC – DBT's public-sector company (2012). Serum Institute – founded by Cyrus Poonawalla in 1966; the world's largest vaccine maker by doses.

Tamil Nadu link: the Union Health Ministry named Tamil Nadu among the leading States in the national HPV drive. The Cancer Institute, Adyar, Chennai (1954) was founded by Dr Muthulakshmi Reddy; Dr V. Shanta later led it.

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