

PRAYAS KSG NEWSPAPER SPOTLIGHT'S

(23RD JULY, 2020)

NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHTS

- **ChAdOx1 nCoV-19:**
 1. The early-stage human trial data of a COVID-19 vaccine developed by AstraZeneca and Oxford University has shown positive result. It is safe and induces immune response, with mild side effects in some participants.
 2. The vaccine is made from a genetically engineered virus that causes the common cold in chimpanzees.
 3. The recent study showed 90 percent of involved people developed neutralising antibodies and T-cells that can fight coronavirus after one dose...
- **NSO REPORT ON IMMUNISATION AMONG CHILDREN**
 1. National Statistical Office (NSO) released a report on immunisation among children. The survey was conducted during July 2017-June 2018.
 2. Around 60% of children under five years of age were fully immunised..
- **India, Maldives inked agreement for establishment of 'Emergency Medical Services' in Male.**
- **The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed the Environment Ministry, Oil India Limited (OIL) and two other entities to explain how the proposed drilling of seven oil wells in an eastern Assam national park (DibruSaikhowa National Park) was permitted.**
- **The colour of water in Lonar lake in Maharashtra's Buldhana district turned pink due to a large presence of the salt loving Haloarchaea microbes, according to a study by a Punebased institute (Agharkar Research Institute).**
- **In accordance with the 7th edition of "International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) Global Rights Index 2020-The World's Worst Countries for Workers", India became the new entrant in the 10 worst countries for working people in the world.**
- **Roshni Nadar Malhotra, India's richest woman becomes the 1st woman to head a listed Indian IT company as she took over as the Chairperson of HCL Technologies from her father and billionaire Shiv Nadar(Founder & chairman).**

REVAMP STRATEGY FOR FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS(FTA) TO ENSURE ECONOMIC BENEFIT

Key facts

1. Government move is aimed to ensure that FTA's provide **economic and strategic trade benefits**. Focus is on to those countries which India does not have a significant trade deficit.
2. FTA is a **pact between two or more nations to reduce barriers to imports and exports** among them.
3. India has viewed FTAs as an important tool to enhance its trade and investment, and has signed maximum number of FTAs in Asia.
4. With the exception of SAFTA (South Asia free trade agreement), **India's trade deficit with ASEAN, Korea and Japan** has widened.
5. Expert suggests that Chinese goods are routed through these countries.
6. Concern over **loss of revenue due to trade agreements**, especially in manufacturing sector.
7. Also, India is expected to benefit more on the services front, with software professionals.

CALL FOR STRATEGY OVERHAUL FOR REVISED LAND RESTORATION TARGET

Key facts

1. Last year, India decided to restore 26 million hectares of degraded lands by 2030, revising its earlier target of **21 million hectares**.
2. Land degradation is **deterioration or loss of productive capacity of soils** for present and future.
3. Currently, nearly **one third of the country's area** i.e. 96.4 million hectares is under land degradation.
4. Land restoration is part of India's commitment to **achieve land degradation neutrality**, a flagship initiative under the **United Nations Convention to Combat desertification**.
5. Strategies needed-Comprehensive **rainfed crop systems approach** rather than a soil conservation approach.
6. **Encourages corporate support** to provide scalability to efforts.

CENTRE'S INDECISION ON GENETICALLY MODIFIED(GM) CROPS LEAVES FIELD OPEN FOR BLACK MARKET OPERATORS

Key facts

1. Environmentalist and pro-GM seed farmer's organisations asked government to take **concrete stand on GM crops**.
2. Currently, **Bt cotton is the only GM crop** allowed for commercial cultivation in India.
3. But the GM crops like HT cotton, Bt brinjal, and HT soya seeds are **available in the black market** and farmers are already cultivating these GM crops.
4. Proponents argue that, **goal of food security** and nutritional requirements for growing population can be met by GM crops.

