

KSG:NEWSPAPER CRUX

21ST JULY, 2020

NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHTS

- Scientists at Oxford University say their experimental coronavirus vaccine has been shown in an early trial to prompt a protective immune response in hundreds of people who got the shot.
- Non-alignment is an old concept today, but India will never be a part of an alliance system, 'Global shifts opening spaces for middle powers like India: S. Jaishankar.
- Amid continuing tensions on the border with China, the Indian Air Force (IAF) is scheduled to induct the first batch of five Rafale fighter jets from France at the Air Force Station, Ambala.
- In the latest twist to Iran's Chabahar Zahedan railway project, Iran's Railway Minister said Iran and India are "determined to continue" cooperation on the railway line. The remarks contradict Iranian officials who had previously said India was not a part of the project.
- Naval ships conducted a Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with the U.S. Navy's USS Nimitz carrier strike group near the Andaman and Nicobar islands as it is transiting the Indian Ocean. The exercise comes amid a high alert by the Navy in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) due to the standoff with China along the border in Ladakh.
- The e-commerce portals will have to set up a robust consumer redressal mechanism as part of the rules under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, that come into force.
- U.K. to suspend extradition treaty with Hong Kong It calls for safeguards to prevent misuse of new security law.
- The burden of debt on the developing countries that amounts to over \$11 trillion should be cancelled in view of the COVID19 pandemic, a group of global notables has demanded.

REPORT ON ACTIVE PHARMACEUTICAL INGREDIENTS(API)

Key facts

1. API is **biologically active component** of a drug product which is required to make medicines.
2. Pharmaceutical industry in India is **third largest in the world** and exports to more than 200 countries.
3. India is **heavily dependent on the imports** for APIs, mainly from **China**.
4. Key Recommendation-**Mega drug manufacturing clusters** with common infrastructure.
5. Support to R&D for pilot API development.

MODALITIES FOR NATIONAL DISASTER RESPONSE FUNF(NDRF) FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION

Key facts

1. Modalities are for receipt of contributions and **grants from any person or institution** for the purpose of disaster management in NDRF.
2. Payments can be made through physical instruments, RTGS/NEFT/UPI and Bharatkosh portal.
3. NDRF to help people in distress during disasters.
4. Central government enhanced its contribution to 90% and all states will contribute 10% to SDRF.
5. NDRF fund was also used to provide **food and accommodation to migrant workers** during the coronavirus-induced lockdown.
6. Home Ministry had decided to treat **COVID-19 as a notified disaster** for purpose of providing assistance under SDRF.

INDIAN RAILWAYS PLANS TO MONETISE ASSETS OF DEDICATED FREIGHT CORRIDOR(DFC) PROJECT

Key facts

1. Railways has decided to include **DFC project in asset-monetisation programme**, along with railway stations and trains to mobilise additional resources for development of railway infrastructure.
2. A high-level committee has been set up which will come up with a plan to: **Corporatisation of railway production units**; Examine asset monetisation and innovative financing methods.
3. Financial issue in IR: Internal revenue generation has been declining, Higher operating ratio.
4. DFC is a **high-speed and high-capacity railway corridor** dedicated exclusively for freight movement.

3RD G20 FINANCE MINISTERS AND CENTRAL BANK GOVERNORS MEETING

Key facts

1. It was held **under Saudi Arabian Presidency** through Video Conferencing.
2. G20 action plan in response to COVID-19 was endorsed by members.
3. Action plan lays out a list of **collective commitments** under the pillars of Health response, Economic response, Strong and sustainable recovery, aimed at co-ordinating G20 efforts to fight the pandemic.
4. G20 is International economic Cooperation forum which brings together developed and developing countries. **India is its member**.