

KSG:NEWSPAPER CRUX

29TH SEPTEMBER, 2020

NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHTS

- Aiming to create women leaders, the Department of Science and Technology is developing a framework to rate and rank science institutes depending on the proportion of women employed.
- Chief Justice of India S A Bobde said there was need for more clarity on the Constitution bench ruling in the case regarding interpretation of the land acquisition Act.
- Some 120 million rapid diagnostic tests for coronavirus will be made available to low- and middle- income countries at a maximum of \$ 5 each, the World Health Organisation said.
- Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan on Monday said the first vaccine for COVID19 is likely to be available in the first quarter of 2021.
- The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) which met approved proposals for capital acquisitions worth approximately ₹ 2,290 crore which include 72,400 SIG-716 assault rifles for the Army and Smart Anti Airfield Weapon for the Navy and Air Force.
- The Union Labour and Employment Ministry issued a statement addressing the criticism of the three labour codes passed by Parliament on September 23. The codes, it said, did not enable a "hire and fire" policy and the rights of workers and unions had been protected.
- Petrol consumption in India has reached pre-COVID19 levels, indicating a rise in personal mobility; however, diesel consumption is still 8-9% lower than the preCOVID19 period.
- In an unprecedented development, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) postponed the bimonthly meeting of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) scheduled from September 29 to October 1, after the government failed to nominate its three members to the six-member panel on time.

CLOSER SCRUTINY OF IMPORTS UNDER FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS(FTAs)

- 1.FTA allow imports of most of the items at nil or concessional basic customs duty rate thereby encouraging bilateral and multilateral trade.
- 2.Recently, finance Minister highlighted that imports under **FTAs are on the rise and benefits under FTAs were also being misused** which caused an adverse effect to the domestic industry.
- 3.To address duty evasion through routing exports to India under FTAs,government notified Customs(Administration of Rules of Origin under Trade Agreements) Rules,2020(**CAROTAR,2020**).

APMCs(AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE MARKET COMMITTEES):THE GOOD AND THE BAD

- 1.APMC are the central points where **farm produce is pooled together(Supply) and distributed to other parts(demand) of the country.**
- 2.APMCs were created to ensure price discovery and fair transactions and were designed to create infrastructure for auctions and storage out of the cess paid by the buyers.
- 3.Issues with APMCs-**Small and marginal farmers face issues, such as inadequate marketable surplus,**long distance to nearest APMC markets, and lack of transportation facilities.

MINISTRY OF JAL SHAKTI NOTIFIED NEW GUIDELINES TO REGULATE EXTRACTION OF GROUNDWATER

- 1.Guidelines aim to have sustainable management of the scarce groundwater resources in the country.
- 2.Key guidelines-A **no objection certificate(NOC) is mandatory** for new and existing industries,for withdrawal of groundwater.
- 3.Projects **falling within 500m. From demarcated wetland** areas shall mandatorily submit proposal indicating that groundwater abstraction does not affect the protected wetland areas.

HEALTH IN INDIA REPORT RELEASED BY MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION(MOSPI)

- 1.**Total expenditure on health, by Centre and States, for FY20 was 1.29% of GDP.** Of total public expenditure, Centre's share was 25%.Centre spends less as public health and sanitation are state subjects.
- 2.Key Findings-Population availing treatment in Public hospitals:About 42%(46% in rural areas,35% in urban areas.).
- 3.Population availing treatment in private hospitals(excl. Charitable,NGO run):55%(52% in rural areas, 61% in urban areas).

INDIA-SRILANKA SUMMIT

- 1.Announcement of India's grant assistance of **US\$ 15 million for promotion of Buddhist ties** between the two countries.
- 2.Continue engagement to address the issues related to through regular consultations.

NATIONAL PHARMACEUTICALS PRICING AUTHORITY(NPAA)

- 1.**NPAA capped prices of Liquid Medical Oxygen and Medical Oxygen cylinders to ensure availability at fair price amidst COVID-19 pandemic.**
- 2.NPAA is as an independent Regulator for pricing of drugs and to ensure availability and accessibility of medicines at affordable prices.