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HPV Vaccine

Why in Newspapers?

Cervavac, a vaccine developed by Serum Institute of India (SII), has recently received market authorization from the Drugs Controller General of India (DGCI).

Quick Issue?

- This is India's first quadrivalent Human Papillomavirus Vaccine (qHPV) designed to protect women from cervical cancer.

Historical Background?

- Cervical Cancer Cervical cancer is a common sexually transmitted infection.
- This is a type of cancer that occurs in the cells of the cervix, it occurs in the lower part of the uterus that connects to the vagina.
- This is mostly due to chronic infection with particular forms of HPV.
- It is the second most prevalent cancer form and the second leading cause of cancer death among women of reproductive age (15-44).
- According to the World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer, India ranks fifth in the world with 1.23 lakh cases and about 67,000 deaths each year.
- Importance of the new vaccine: It is based on Virus-Like Particles (VLP) similar to the Hepatitis-B vaccine and provides protection by producing antibodies against the HPV virus' L1 protein.
- It has been shown to be effective against four strains of the virus – type 6, type 11, type 16 and type 18.
- A quadrivalent vaccine is a vaccine that works by stimulating an immune response against four different antigens, such as four different viruses or other microorganisms.

Other Key Facts?

Central Drugs Standard Control

Organization (CDSCO)

- CDSCO is the National Regulatory Authority (NRA) of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare under the Directorate General of Health Services.
- Its headquarter is in New Delhi.
- It has six zonal offices, four sub-zonal offices, thirteen port offices and seven laboratories across the country.
- Vision: To protect and promote public health in India.
- Mission: To protect public health by enhancing the safety, efficacy and quality of drugs, cosmetics and medical devices.
- Approval of CDSCO drugs under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 and rules 1945, conduct of clinical trials, framing standards of drugs, quality control of imported drugs in the country and state Responsible for bringing about uniformity in enforcement of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act by providing expert advice to drug control organizations.



- It has a significant potential to eliminate cervical cancer and would be helpful if included in national HPV vaccination efforts and offered at a lower cost than existing vaccinations.
- The two current globally licensed vaccines available in India are a quadrivalent vaccine (Gardasil from Merck) and a bivalent vaccine (Cervarix from GlaxoSmithKline) and are expensive and none of them are included in the national immunization programme.
- This will enable the government to buy vaccines in bulk to vaccinate around 50 million girls in the age group of 9 to 14 years after DGI approval.
- Vaccine is effective only if given before first sexual intercourse.

Likely Question Asked In Preliminary Exam

Que. Which of the following is not a specialized agency of UNO?

- (a) Food and Agriculture Organization
- (b) United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
- (c) World Health Organization
- (d) International Criminal Court

Answer: (d) International Criminal Court



Sri Lanka Crisis

Why in Newspapers?

Sri Lanka, which has a population of 22 million, is facing an unprecedented economic crisis, its worst in seven decades, leaving millions struggling to buy food, medicine, fuel and other essentials.

Quick Issue?

- Hundreds of anti-government protesters stormed the President's residence demanding the resignation of the Sri Lankan President following political and economic instability.
- Prime Minister Wickremesinghe and President Gotabaya Rajapaksa have expressed their intention to resign, paving the way for an all-party government.

Historical Background?

- When Sri Lanka emerged from a 26-year long civil war in 2009, post-war GDP growth was significantly higher at 8-9% per annum until 2012.
- Although its average GDP growth rate nearly halved after 2013 as global commodity prices fell, exports slowed and imports increased.
- Sri Lanka's budget deficit during the war was high and the 2008 global financial crisis drained its foreign exchange reserves, causing the country to borrow US\$2.6 billion from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 2009.
- It again approached the IMF in 2016 for a loan of US \$ 1.5 billion, although the terms of the IMF worsened the economic situation of Sri Lanka.
- The April 2019 Easter bombings in Colombo churches caused 253 casualties, resulting in a sharp drop in tourist numbers, which also led to a decline in foreign exchange reserves.
- In the year 2019, the new government of Gotabaya Rajapakse had promised lower tax rates and comprehensive SoP for farmers during its campaign.
- Quick implementation of these baseless promises added to the problem. In the year 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic made the situation worse.

Other Key Facts?

Why is India worried about the Sri Lanka crisis?

- **Economic** - The share of Sri Lanka in India's total exports has come down from 2.16% in FY15 to just 1.3 percent in FY22.
- Automotive firms such as Tata Motors and TVS Motors have stopped exporting vehicle kits to Sri Lanka and halted production at their Sri Lankan assembling units due to volatile foreign exchange reserves and lack of fuel.
- **Refugees** - Whenever a political or social crisis has arisen in Sri Lanka, India has seen a large influx of refugees from the Tamil ethnic community into India from the Sinhalese lands through the Palk Strait and the Gulf of Mannar.
- However, it may be difficult for India to handle such inflows and a strong policy is needed to deal with such a crisis.
- The state of Tamil Nadu has already started to feel the impact of the crisis as 16 persons have been reported from Sri Lanka through illegal means.



- Exports of tea, rubber, spices and clothing suffered losses. Tourist arrivals and revenue declined further.
- The increase in government expenditure led to fiscal deficit exceeding 10% in the year 2020-21 and the debt-to-GDP ratio increasing from 94% in 2019 to 119% in 2021.
- The crisis in Sri Lanka has arisen due to depletion of foreign exchange reserves, which have declined by 70% in the last two years to just US\$ 2 billion by the end of February 2022.
- In the year 2021, all fertilizer imports were completely banned and it was declared that Sri Lanka will become 100% organic farming country overnight.
- The use of organic fertilizers severely affected food production. As a result, the President of Sri Lanka declared an economic emergency to prevent rising food prices, depreciating currency and rapidly depleting foreign exchange reserves.
- Sri Lanka has borrowed considerable money from Beijing for infrastructure projects since 2005, many of which have become white elephants (no longer needed/useful).
- Sri Lanka leased its Hambantota port to a Chinese company in 2017 after it was unable to repay a US\$1.4 billion loan from Beijing.
- China's total debt on Sri Lanka is 8 billion US dollars, which is about one-sixth of its total foreign debt.

Other Key Facts?

Opportunity for India

Tea Market

- India is keen on bridging the supply gap in the global tea market amid sudden stoppage of tea supply by Sri Lanka.
- India can strengthen its role in new markets like Iran as well as Turkey, Iraq.
- Big tea importers from Sri Lanka such as Iran, Turkey, Iraq and Russia are reportedly turning to tea gardens in India (especially tea gardens in Assam and Kolkata).
- As a result, the average price of leaves produced in the traditional way in the recent auction of tea gardens held in Kolkata showed an increase of 41% over the previous year.

Apparel Market

- India is now receiving several apparel orders from United Kingdom, European Union and Latin American countries.
- Several orders have been received by companies in Tiruppur, the hub of the textile industry in Tamil Nadu.

Likely Question Asked In Preliminary Exam

Que. The elephant pass, sometimes seen in the news, has been mentioned in the context of which of the following cases?

- | | |
|----------------|---------------|
| (a) Bangladesh | (b) India |
| (c) Nepal | (d) Sri Lanka |

Answer: (d) Sri Lanka