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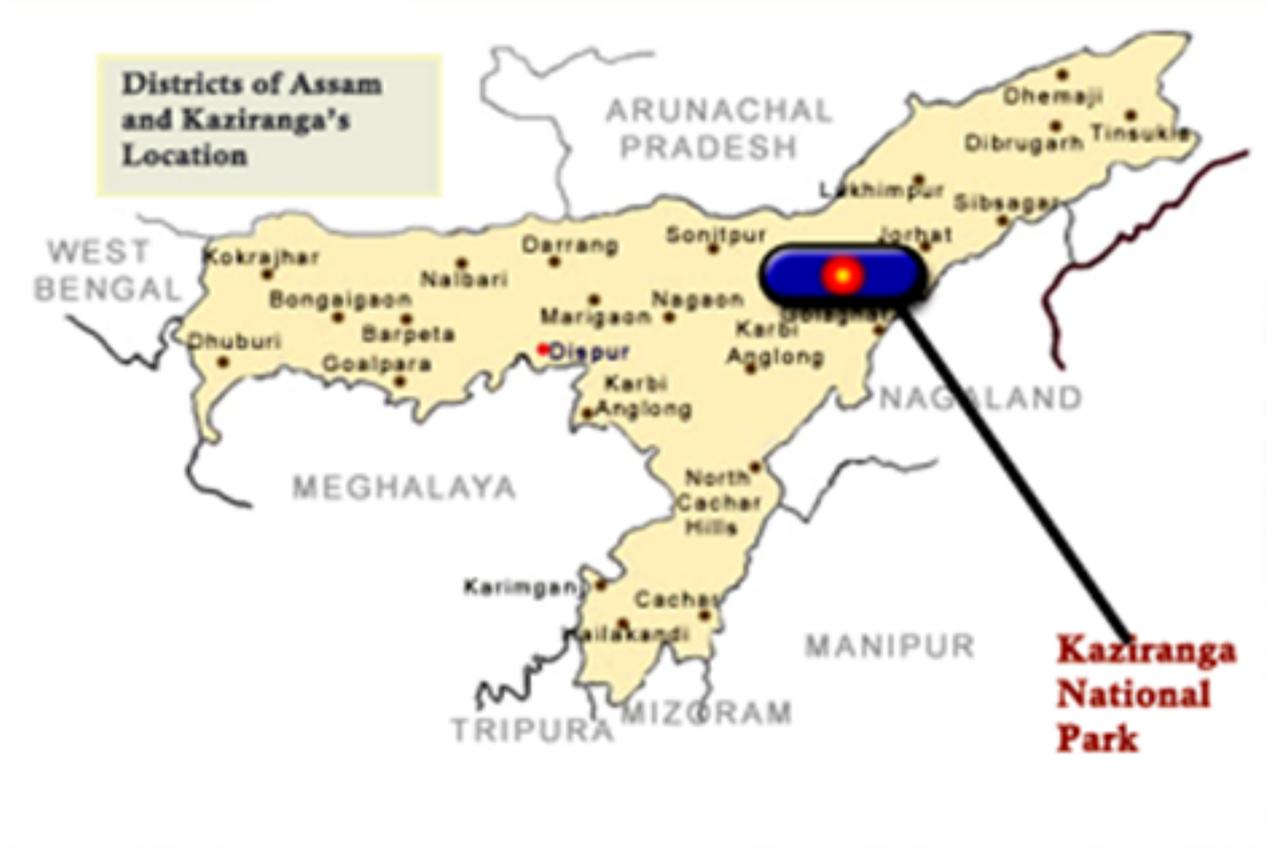
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1. Why are floods essential for Kaziranga (Assam)?

Kaziranga in Assam



Floods in Assam



Brahmaputra

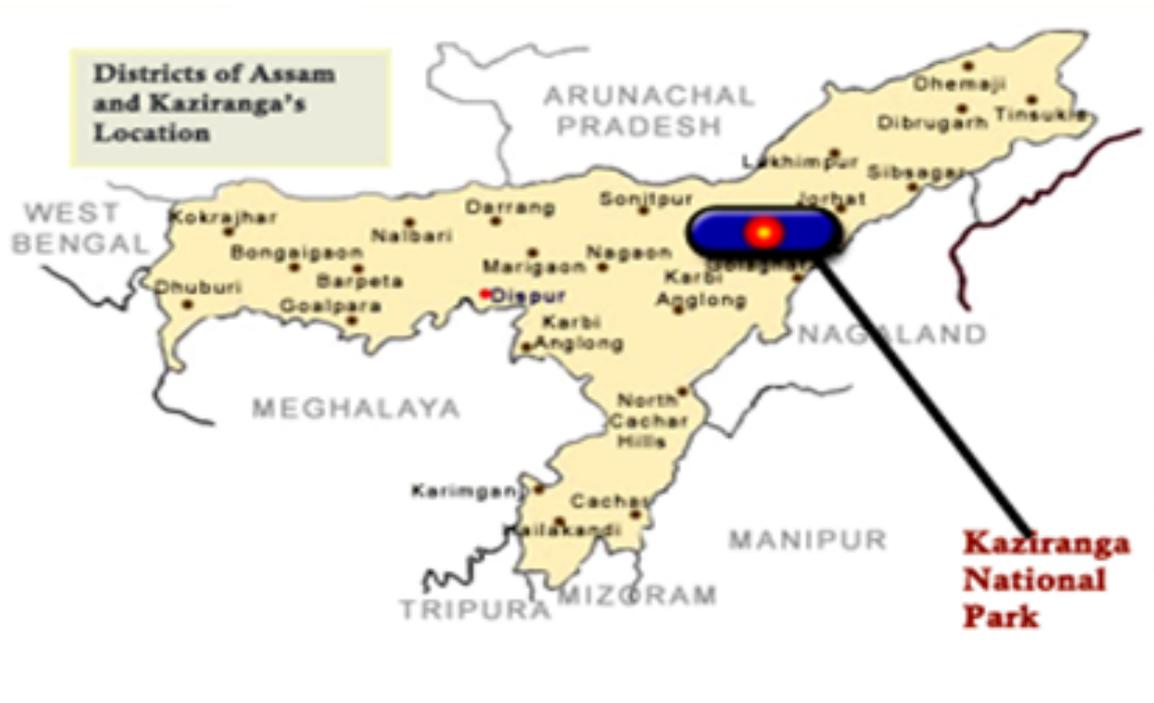


Let's see a Different View



Role of floods in Kaziranga's ecosystem?

- The entire area of Kaziranga – formed by alluvial deposits from the Brahmaputra and its tributaries – is centred around the river.
- It is a riverine ecosystem, not a solid landmass-based ecosystem,” “The system won't survive without water.



Advantages of these floods

- The regenerative nature of floods helps replenish Kaziranga's water bodies and maintain its landscape, a mix of wetlands, grasslands and semi-evergreen deciduous forests.
- The waters also help get rid of unwanted plants such as water hyacinth which collect in huge masses in the landscape.
- The floodwaters also function as a breeding ground for fish.
- In a herbivore-dominated area like Kaziranga, it is important we maintain its grassland status. If it were not for the annual floods, the area would become a woodland,
- Those floods are a way of natural selection. “A number of animals – especially the old, weak – cannot survive the floods. Only the ones with superior genes survive.

Water Hyacinth



Are floods become problematic for Kaziranga?

- Earlier, a big flood would come once in ten years - Now, they happen every other year.”
- Reasons :
 - ✓ Massive deforestation in catchment areas
 - ✓ Release of waters by dams upstream may be contributory factors.

Floods in Assam

- Natural Reasons
- Manmade reasons



Result

- Animals adapt naturally to floods but when the waters hit a certain level, they gravitate towards safer, higher ground in the Karbi Anglong hills. While in the past, Kaziranga and Karbi Anglong were part of the same landscape, the animals now have to cross the bustling National Highway 37 which cuts across the park.
- As a result, animals that venture out of the park, die either under the wheels of speeding vehicles on the highway, or are killed by poachers who take advantage of their vulnerability
- Fleeing floodwaters, animals stray from the boundary of the park, and there is an increased interaction between humans and wildlife, at times leading to conflict. --- MAN ANIMAL CONFLICT

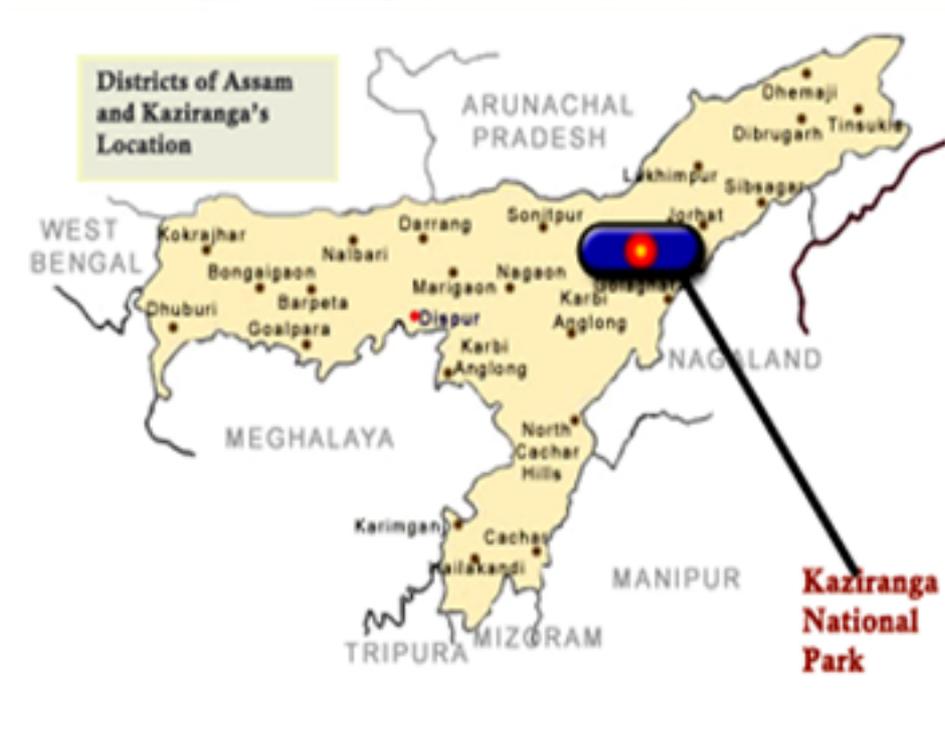
Karbi Anglong

Kaziranga in Assam

How helpful are Kaziranga's artificial highlands?

- Over the years, another mitigation measure has been artificial highlands (111 in the Nineties, 33 in 2016-17) built inside the park for wild animals to take refuge in during the flood.

- Some animals do not take to the highlands naturally. “They have been migrating to natural highlands of Karbi Anglong for centuries; suddenly these artificial constructions do not inspire confidence, they do not find it secure.
- Animals do take refuge there – especially rhino and swamp deer – but it is not viable to build more highlands since such constructions will ruin the natural ecosystem.



What measures are taken to prepare for the flood?

- The authorities keep a track of updates from the Central Water Commission, and monitor water levels of the Brahmaputra tributaries upstream in Arunachal Pradesh.
- The civil administration, park authority, NGOs, and local communities work together to tackle the floods. “To avoid disease outbreaks, a door-to-door vaccination is organised every year pre-floods,
- Camps are organised to create awareness against poaching and harming wild animals that are rendered vulnerable during the floods.”



- When the floods hit, Section 144 (Unlawful assembly) is imposed along NH-37, speed limits are enforced and fines levied.
- Barricades are also placed to help animals cross over to Karbi Anglong.

So what has been the solution till now?

- Experts believe that emphasis needs to be put on securing animal corridors and ensuring a safe passage to the Karbi hills.
- In April 2019, the Supreme Court banned all types of mining and related activities along the park's southern boundary and in the entire catchment area of the rivers that originate in the Karbi Anglong hill ranges and flow into Kaziranga, as well as new construction activities in private lands on nine animal corridors.

2. The Story behind Masjid Mubarak Begum

Masjid Mubarak Begum

- Masjid Mubarak Begum, a striking structure in Old Delhi built in 1822 as the palace and later the dome of a courtesan who went by the name Mubarak Begum, suffered considerable damage early Sunday morning due to torrential rain and lightning.
- Of the three domes on the red sandstone mosque, the one in the centre broke and turned to rubble.
- Live monuments such as temples and mosques are not considered under the protection of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).

Mubarak Begum

- Mubarak Begum was an ambitious, influential woman married to the British Resident of Delhi, David Ochterlony.
- She was the senior most partner/concubine of the elderly Sir David Ochterlony and built a glorious double-storeyed mosque in the Hauz Qasi area of old Delhi.
- While Ochterlony is known to have had 13 concubines or wives, one of them, Mubarak Begum, clearly appeared to have been most favoured.
- Formerly a Brahmin girl from Pune, Mubarak converted to Islam, and in Ochterlony's will she was referred to as 'Beebee Mahruttun Moobarukh ul Nissa Begume, alias Begum Ochterlony, mother of my younger children'. Locally, she was well known as 'Generalee Begum'.
- She served as a courtesan in the Mughal Court before becoming Ochterlony's partner.
- Ochterlony was appointed Resident at Delhi in 1803. He loved, adopted and embraced the Indo-Persian culture of 19th century Delhi
- Ochterlony loved her nevertheless and built her several shrines to prove his devotion including the Mubarak Bagh.
- With the death of Ochterlony, she then remarried Wilayat Ali, a Mughal soldier.
- Ali became the captain of the royal troops during Bahadur Shah Zafar's reign.

- All the royal appointees had to provide a 'nazrana' or a security deposit when they took up any post. Having inherited quite a lot of wealth from her first husband, it was Mubarak who provided the money and got him the post
- Her Haveli remained a place of high Mughal culture & here Fahatullah Baig set The Last Mushairah of Dehli.
- In the last two centuries, the mosque came to be refurbished with a youthful look of rust red.
- The Masjid Mubarak Begum is the only one that boasts to have been created by the Indian 'begum' of a British Resident.
- Mubarak Begum died in 1878 and the mosque was taken over by the British government. It was restored for the first time in 1898.
- As per the records of the archaeologist Maulvi Zafar Hasan, Mubarak Begum built the mosque in Hauz Qazi in 1822-23 and named it after herself.
- The courtesan fell from grace when she started getting airs about being the partner of Ochterlony and wanted to be called "Lady Ochterlony"
- She offended the British by calling herself 'Lady Ochterlony', and also offended the Mughals by awarding herself the title Qudisia Begum, previously that of the emperor's mother
- Further, since she was a dancing girl in the past, no respectable Mughal would be seen entering the mosque built by her. Consequently, it acquired the epithet, 'Rundi ki masjid' (prostitute's mosque)*, which continues to be in use till date.

Stories of those times

- Today's Chawri Bazaar was once Bazaar-e-Husn (Market of Beauty). This was when Old Delhi was Shahjahanabad.
- Shah Jahan may not have anticipated the Taj Mahal will be seen as a wonder in the future. Like rulers of his time, he believed a ruler's legacy must be a great city.
- So he planned Shahjahanabad on professional lines, representing every best occupation in the world.
- Initially, no lane was allocated to entertainers, but later it occurred to him that he can't have a great city without entertainment.
- So the lane's ground floor was lined with shops selling all kinds of wares—and entertainers were put up on the first.
- When the Mughals entered India, they had dominis and lolonis to entertain the army; our dancers were devadasis.
- The Mughals loved their music and dance. Therefore they sent for dancers and musicians from Persia and Central Asia. These dancing girls were known as: Dominis, Hansinis, Lolonis, and Hourkinis. All of them had their distinctive style of dancing
- Mughal dancers got paid for performances, but unlike devadasis, never got invited to perform in public as their dance was erotic. Intermingling changed this.
- When dominis–lolonis met our devadasis, they were awed by the subtlety of our temple dancer's movements, and their expressive hand and eye gestures. Gradually, a fusion form emerged–kathak!



- Until Shahjahanabad was formed, travelling troupes of kathakars performed all over India. This was the first time a permanent space was created for entertainers.
- But every dancer wasn't skilled enough to combine the devdasi's grace and ghungru with Mughal dancers' swift movements, resulting in a hierarchy.
- At Bazaar-e-Husn, the hierarchy was visible through accommodations.
- At one end there were kotharis (small cells) for bednis (prostitutes).
- A rank above were dominis, who performed a loose form of kathak, offering titillation to soldiers and middle-ranking officers.
- Further up were masters of kathak, who enthralled with dazzling turns aka tawaf (meaning circumambulation in Persian). That's how dancers who could do it came to be called tawaifs. They lived in big apartments called kothas.
- Every evening, it saw a gathering of the city's elite, nawabs and aficionados of high art.
- Every day, tawaifs spent hours in riyaz and grooming to put up a grand spectacle.
- Highest in the order were Randis—yes, the derogatory R-word. But in Husn-e-Bazar randis were the city's divas—not only skilled in dance, but also singing, conversation and poetry.
- The city's whos-who lined-up to seek their company. Their manner was so refined, they ran grooming centres of sorts; young nawabs were sent to them to learn the art of conversation.
- Always surrounded by the powerful, randis knew the city's secrets. Therefore, the rich visited them also to keep an ear to the ground.
- Their large kothis (multi-storeyed homes) with courtyards showed their stature and they only occasionally did public performances.
- Randis chose and refused admirers as they liked.
- They weren't looked down upon, but flaunted by men who entered long-term relationships with them.
- When the British entered with East India Company, they made it compulsory for army men to bring their wives, or marry natives (temporarily).
- No Indian families would've agreed, so these ladies were their only recourse.
- It was Delhi's first British resident, David Ochterlony, who married Mubarak Begum and built a mosque in her honour.
- For the first time, a nautch girl, not royalty, had commissioned a mosque and so Randi ki Masjid became the informal name.
- The 1857 sepoy mutiny changed everything. British analysis blamed the event on "officers indulging too much in Indian culture and forgetting their 'Christian values'".
- It's said the real reason behind the anti-nautch campaigns launched by missionaries was the British desire to usurp property—tawaifs and randis were targeted as they belonged to the highest tax bracket and lived in huge homes in the best localities.
- The British formed red-light districts. Women with talent would've refused to move, yet many got forced. They were now shamed rather than flaunted.

- And randi, which merely meant woman, wife or widow as per old Hindi or Urdu, over time became an abuse.
- Nautch girls who survived the banishment now performed for smaller rajas.
- When radio emerged, things looked up again.
- The British wanted women who sang well to fill gaps between the war announcements.
- The public heard tawaifs for the first time as nautch girls previously only performed for gatherings of the wealthy.
- The masses were so enamoured by Calcutta's Gauhar Jan's voice that she went on to record songs in several languages and became 'India's Gramophone Queen'."
- Soon, nautch girls began getting offers from natak mandalis and later, movie-makers, changing the age-old tradition of men cross-dressing to play women's roles.
- Initially, many of Bollywood's ladies came from the tawaif tradition; also why till the 1940s and '50s they weren't looked at kindly.
- Naseeman Banu (mother of Saira Banu) had a kotha in old Delhi. Nargis's mother, Jaddan Bai, descended from this tradition too and although there's no evidence, people believe so did Madhubala.

3. India's Chabahar investment held hostage to US and China?

- What happened to the Chabahar- Zahedan railway line?



Why is Chabahar important?

- The Shahid Beheshti Port at Chabahar is located on the Makran coast of Sistan and Baluchistan Province, next to the Gulf of Oman and at the mouth of Strait of Hormuz.
- As per Dr. Sudha Ramachandran, it is the only Iranian port with direct access to the Indian Ocean.
- The Port is "Golden Gate" to land-locked countries of Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan etc.
- The Chabahar trade zone could be an important weigh station for India's energy imports and food and material exports coming from Kandla and Mundra ports.
- Counter China's growing presence in the Indian Ocean and especially its ties with Pakistan at the Gwadar Port.
- Pakistan's Chinese-funded deep sea port at Gwadar is also on the Makran coast. Gwadar is located on the Gulf of Oman, close to the entrance of the Persian Gulf.
- Until 1958 it belonged to Oman, which gave this land to Pakistani rulers who expected that the location would contribute to what Kaplan calls "a new destiny."
- Christopher Jafferlot point two main advantages to China:
 - ✓ It will provide Beijing with, first, a listening post from where the Chinese may exert surveillance on hyper-strategic sea links as well as military activities of the Indian and American navies in the region.
 - ✓ Secondly, it provides dual-use civilian-military facilities providing a base for Chinese ships and submarines.
- Importantly, the Gwadar helps China counter its Achilles heel in the Strait of Malacca.



- The motive of the development of Gwadar Port by China is to avoid the choke point of the Strait of Malacca in case of naval blockade, in addition to accessing Central Asia through the development of the Gwadar as the Silk Road Subway Antenna.
- India's natural position in the Indian Ocean, with basing capabilities in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands at the mouth of the strait, would allow its navy to cut it off in the event of a crisis or war with China.
- Indonesia permitted India to invest in Sabang Port, which is located near the strategic and vital shipping channel – the Strait of Malacca.

What is the issue?



- The issue is with regard to railway line from Chabahar port to Zahedan on the border with Afghanistan which was inaugurated on July 7 of which India was not a part, despite a previous 2016 MoU between Iranian railway infrastructure company CDTIC and Indian railway construction company IRCON.
- State-owned Ircon International Limited (IRCON) was associated with the rail project even as India acted quickly to develop Chabahar port facilities.
- Over the years, the Chabahar project has grown, and now envisages a port, a free trade zone, the 628-km railway line to Zahedan, and then the little over 1,000-km track to Sarakhs on the border with Turkmenistan.
- Suhasini Haider writes that in the last five years, the railway line languished. After several threats and appeals to India, Iran said it was moving ahead to build the Chabahar-Zahedan line on its own this

month, with approximately \$400 million from the National Development Fund of Islamic Republic of Iran.

The US Angle

- India's investment in Chabahar has always been held hostage to international policy shifts on Iran. U.S. policy in particular has swung wildly in the last two decades. It placed heavy sanctions on Iran until nuclear talks between the P-5+1 (the U.S., the U.K., France, China, Russia and Germany) that began in 2006, ended successfully with the signing of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in 2015.
- The two sides had signed a MoU to work together on the Chabahar-Zahedan railway link project. However, a formal agreement has not come through as India objected to certain entities that Tehran wanted to be a part of the construction project.
- These entities include a Khatam al-Anbiya construction which belongs to Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) - one of the entities proscribed by the United States of America. These entities are part of US's secondary sanctions.
- Under the US sanctions, countries cannot work with a designated entity in Iran even if it is for certain development projects that enjoy waiver from the US scrutiny. The Chabahar port and the Chabahar-Zahedan rail link -- critical route to connect with Afghanistan bypassing Pakistan - have that waiver.

India's loss is China's gain?

- The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has disclosed that India's ONGC Videsh Ltd (OVL) has been cut out of the development of an Iranian gas field project, Farzad B; both sides had been in talks since 2009.
- The project, which will now go to an Iranian company, had also floundered due to a combination of U.S. sanctions, Iran's changing conditions and fluctuating prices, as well as India's delayed responses.
- The announcements on the two projects come even as news filters in of a China-Iran 25-year partnership for \$400 billion to build infrastructure and energy resources in Iran, giving the impression that Iran may be relying more and more on Beijing.
- Importantly China also has the technology and appetite for oil that Iran needs. Recently, the two countries struck a three-year \$3.39 billion deal to produce liquefied natural gas in Iran's mammoth south Pars natural gas field.

Balancing Iran with Arab world

- According to C. Raja Mohan, India needs to balance its relations with the Arab world which outweigh the realisation it has seen in Iran.
- According to Raja Mohan, millions of Indian immigrants in the Arab nations, massive hard currency remittances from them and the density of commercial engagement with the Arab Gulf outweigh the relationship with Iran.
- He argues that loss of railway contract is part of risk of doing business in other countries. Further, sanctions regime imposed by the US has crippled the Iranian economy. It also targets third countries that do business with certain Iranian entities.

- Meanwhile, the Arab world has had its doors open for political, economic and technological cooperation with India. Three moderate Arab nations – Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the UAE – are confronting radical forces in the region and are valuable partners for India in countering forces of destabilisation.
- Recently, the UAE launched the first home-grown Arab space mission from a Japanese rocket. The UAE’s space programme is only a reflection of the emerging sentiment among the Gulf Arabs to reduce the over-dependence on oil, promote alternative energy sources, invest in higher education, and develop technology hubs. This provides a solid basis for elevating India’s economic partnership with the Arab world to the next level.

4. Everything about all the corona vaccines

Important things we’ll see today

- Why discussing vaccines today
- Types of Vaccines
- Vaccine – From Lab to Us
- Important Vaccines in the race and their mechanism

Why Discussing This Today



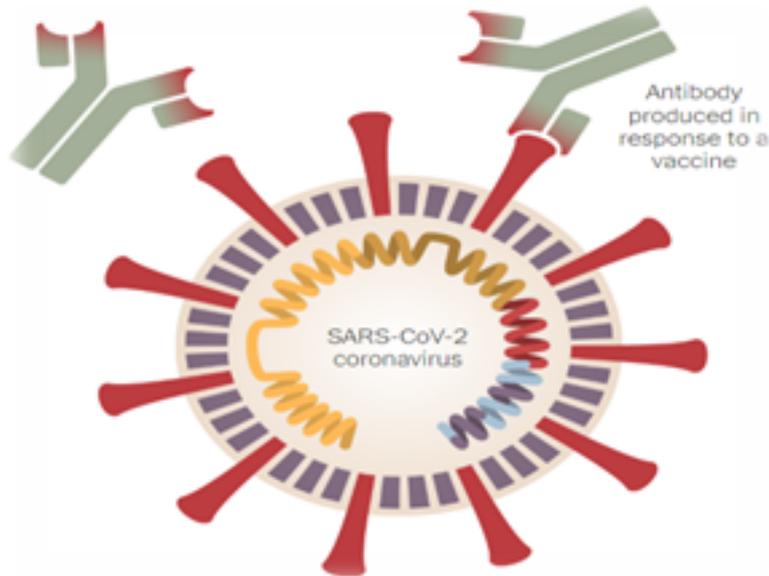
- More than 150 vaccines in race
- Around 15 in Human Trials Phase-1
- Around 11 in Phase-2 (tested on all age groups and diverse populations)
- 4 in Phase-3 (mass vaccinations)
- Phase-4: Approvals by world’s regulators

Important Vaccines

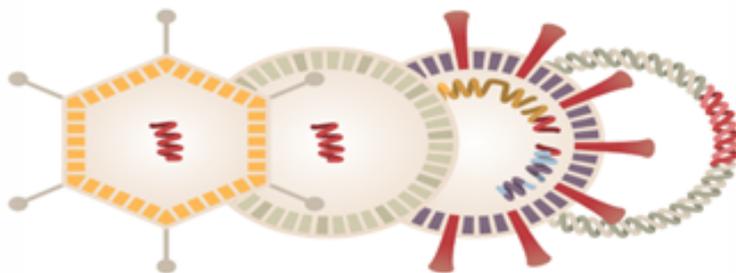
- Moderna’s: USA based. mRNA-1273
- Oxford’s: With AstraZeneca:
- Twin Response Seen: Antibodies and T-cells
- Russia: 2-Years of Immunity
- Bharat Biotech and ICMR: CoVaxin (Phase-1)
- Another Indian Vaccine in the race: ZyCoVd

In short, what do Vaccines do?

- Vaccines work by exposing the immune systems to components of a virus — the coronavirus spike protein.
- It is done with the hopes of provoking a reaction against a real infection in the future.



The development cycle of a vaccine, from lab to clinic.



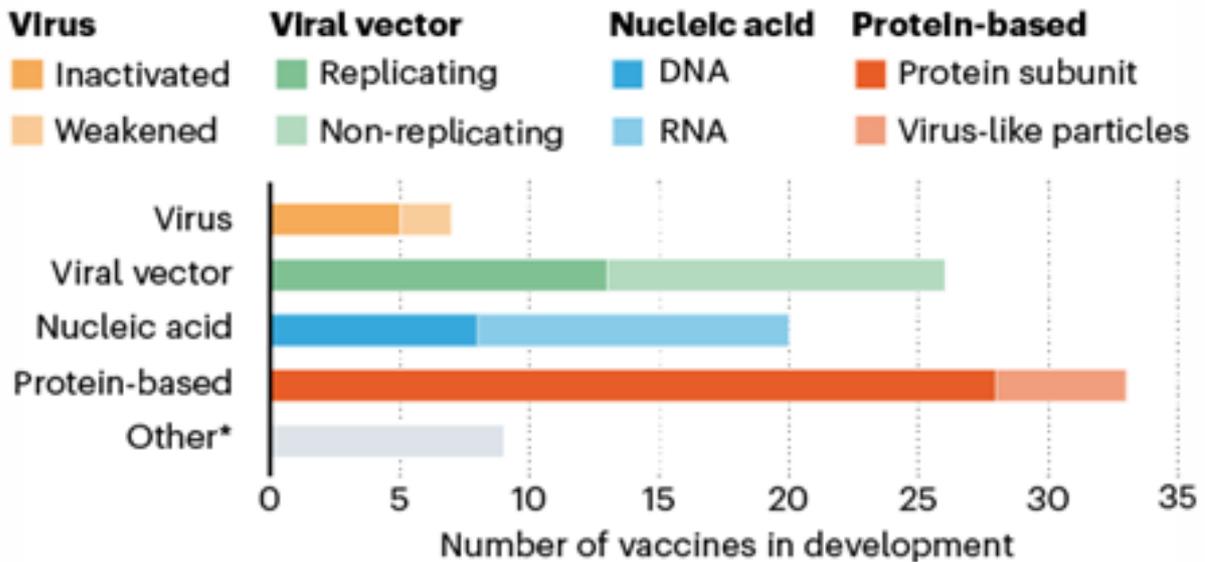
What is /are the aim / aims when we develop a Vaccine?

- The vaccine aims at two broad types of immune responses:
 - ✓ Antibody molecules made by the body that can recognize and, in some cases, inactivate viral particles
 - ✓ T-cells that can kill infected cells as well as promote other immune responses including antibody production.

Types of Vaccines

- Whole Virus: Attenuated or inactivated Virus (India's)
- Viral Vector: Oxford's Vaccine
- Nucleic Acid: Moderna's Vaccine
- Protein Based: Protein of Virus
- Repurposed Vaccines: Made for some other disease but used for Corona as well

AN ARRAY OF VACCINES



* Other efforts include testing whether existing vaccines against poliovirus or tuberculosis could help to fight SARS-CoV-2 by eliciting a general immune response (rather than specific adaptive immunity), or whether certain immune cells could be genetically modified to target the virus.

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Virus Vaccines

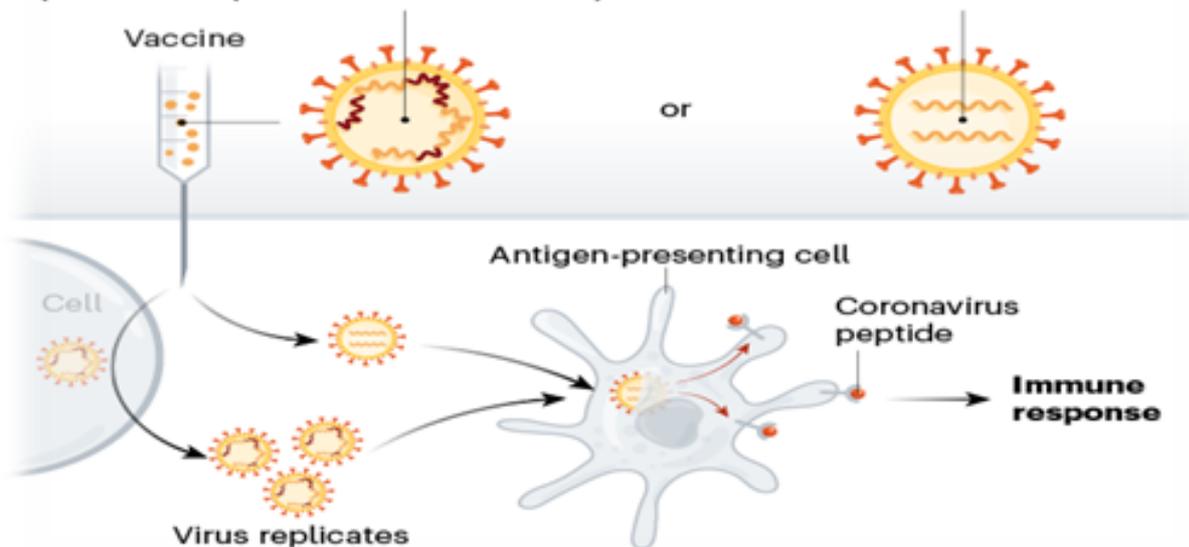
VIRUS VACCINES

Weakened virus

A virus is conventionally weakened for a vaccine by being passed through animal or human cells until it picks up mutations that make it less able to cause disease. Codagenix in Farmingdale, New York, is working with the Serum Institute of India, a vaccine manufacturer in Pune, to weaken SARS-CoV-2 by altering its genetic code so that viral proteins are produced less efficiently.

Inactivated virus

In these vaccines, the virus is rendered uninfected using chemicals, such as formaldehyde, or heat. Making them, however, requires starting with large quantities of infectious virus.



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Viral-vector vaccines

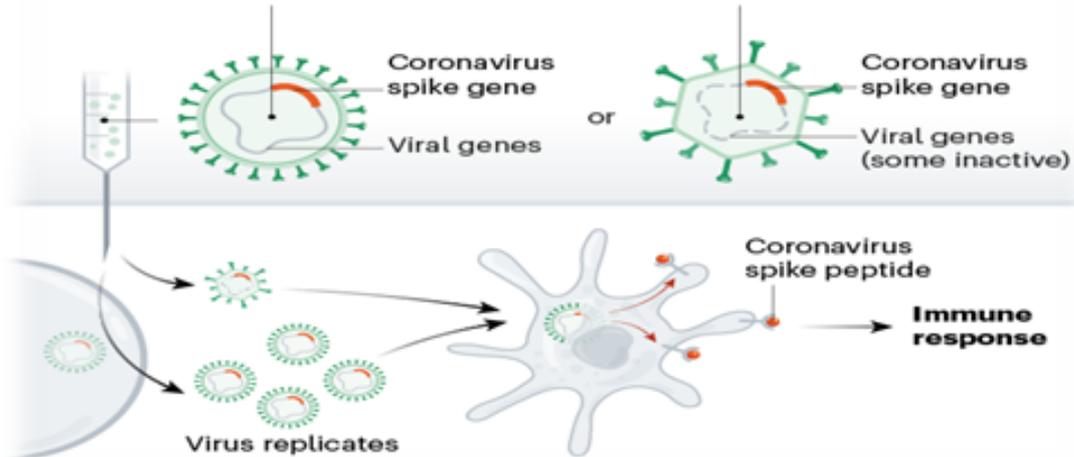
VIRAL-VECTOR VACCINES

Replicating viral vector (such as weakened measles)

The newly approved Ebola vaccine is an example of a viral-vector vaccine that replicates within cells. Such vaccines tend to be safe and provoke a strong immune response. Existing immunity to the vector could blunt the vaccine's effectiveness, however.

Non-replicating viral vector (such as adenovirus)

No licensed vaccines use this method, but they have a long history in gene therapy. Booster shots can be needed to induce long-lasting immunity. US-based drug giant Johnson & Johnson is working on this approach.



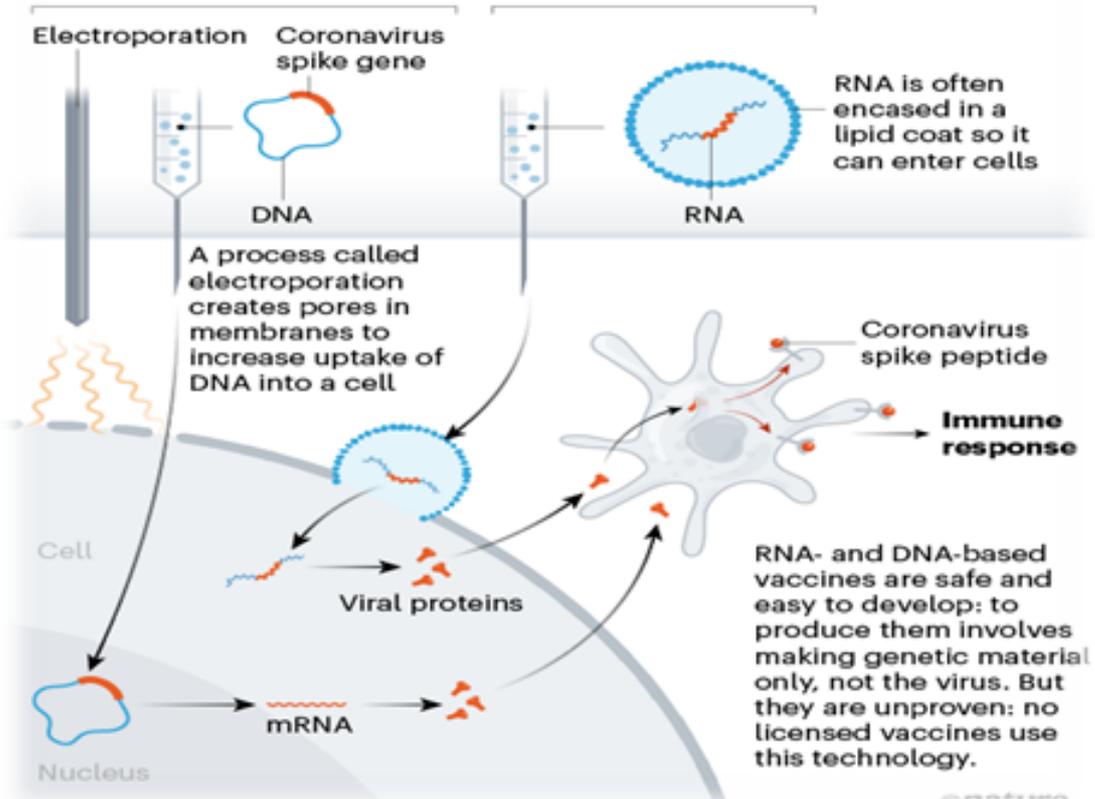
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Nucleic-acid vaccines

NUCLEIC-ACID VACCINES

DNA vaccine

RNA vaccine

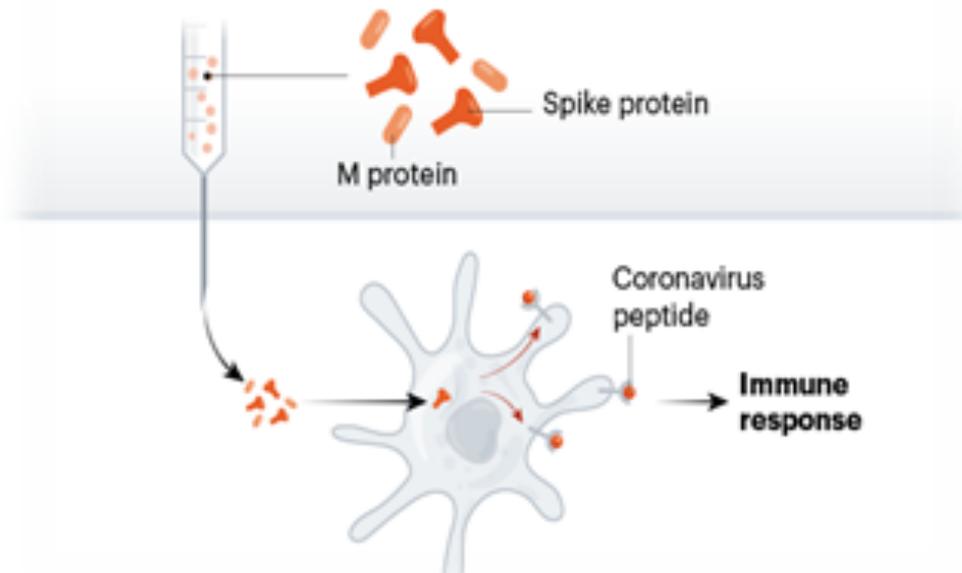


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Protein-based vaccines

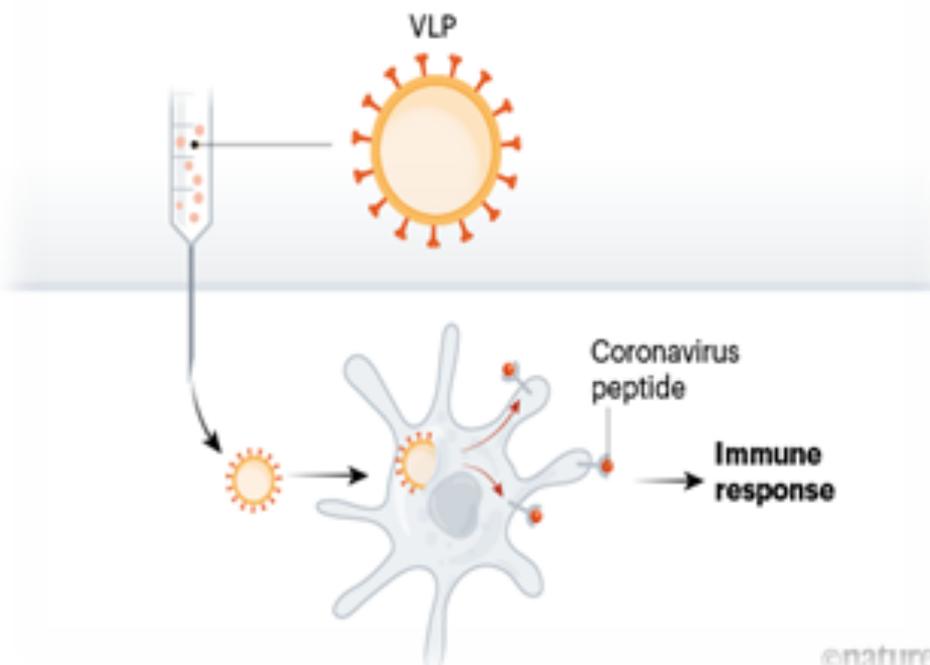
Protein subunits

Twenty-eight teams are working on vaccines with viral protein subunits — most are focusing on the virus's spike protein or a key part of it called the receptor binding domain. Similar vaccines against the SARS virus protected monkeys against infection but haven't been tested in people. To work, these vaccines might require adjuvants — immune-stimulating molecules delivered alongside the vaccine — as well as multiple doses.



Virus-like particles

Empty virus shells mimic the coronavirus structure, but aren't infectious because they lack genetic material. Five teams are working on 'virus-like particle' (VLP) vaccines, which can trigger a strong immune response, but can be difficult to manufacture.



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The Vaccine Testing Process

PRECLINICAL TESTING : Scientists give the vaccine to **animals** such as mice or monkeys to see if it produces an immune response.

PHASE I SAFETY TRIALS: Scientists give the vaccine to a small number of people to test the safety and dosage as well as to confirm that it stimulates the immune system

PHASE II EXPANDED TRIALS : Scientists give the vaccine to **hundreds of people** split into groups, such as children and the elderly, to see if the vaccine acts differently in them. These trials further test the vaccine's safety and ability to stimulate the immune system. In June, the F.D.A. said that a coronavirus vaccine would have to protect at least 50% of vaccinated people to be considered effective.

PHASE III EFFICACY TRIALS : Scientists give the vaccine to **thousands of people** and wait to see how many become infected, compared with volunteers who received a placebo. These trials can determine if the vaccine protects against the coronavirus.

APPROVAL : Regulators in each country review the trial results and decide whether to approve the vaccine or not. During a pandemic, a vaccine may receive emergency use authorization before getting formal approval.

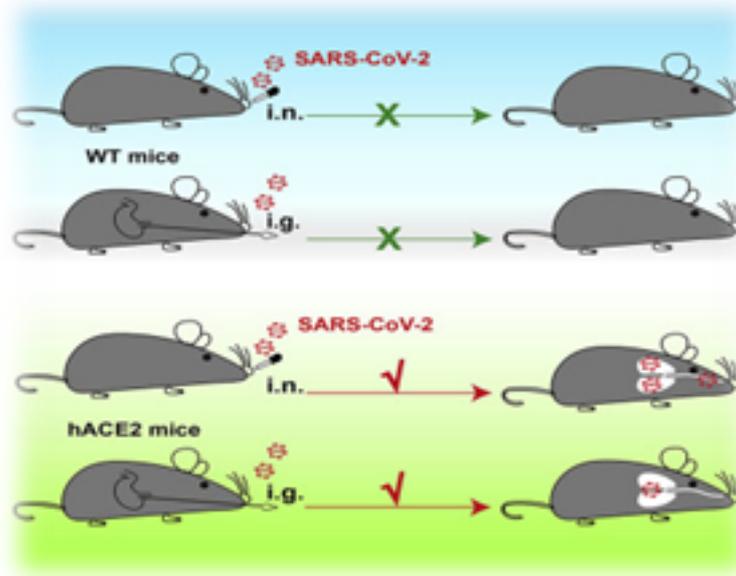
COVAXIN TM

- Bharat Biotech developed it together with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and the National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune.
- The company had also received permission from the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) to begin human trials.
- Covaxin is an inactivated vaccine developed from an Indian strain of the novel coronavirus isolated by NIV.

Some Concerns about COVAXINTM

- According to The Wire:
 - ✓ ICMR transferred the strain NIV had isolated to Biotech Bharat on May 9.
 - ✓ The company published its press release on June 29.
 - ✓ So there were only 50 days in between, during which time the company should have developed the inactivated vaccine, conducted preclinical animal trials (with mice and hamsters, according to the company), and sent its reports to be evaluated and approved by DCGI.
- Animal trials with mice typically take at least three months to conclude.

- Animal trials for COVID-19 can only be conducted with hACE2 transgenic mice, as 'normal' mice can't get infected with the novel coronavirus.
- These mice need to be shipped from the US, Europe or China.



About Bharat Biotech

- Bharat Biotech is a reputed drug manufacturer that delivers four billion doses around the world for infections like rotavirus, hepatitis, Zika, Japanese encephalitis and others.

MODERNA's Vaccine

- They are injecting coronavirus RNA (its genetic code).
- It then starts making viral proteins in order to trigger an immune response.

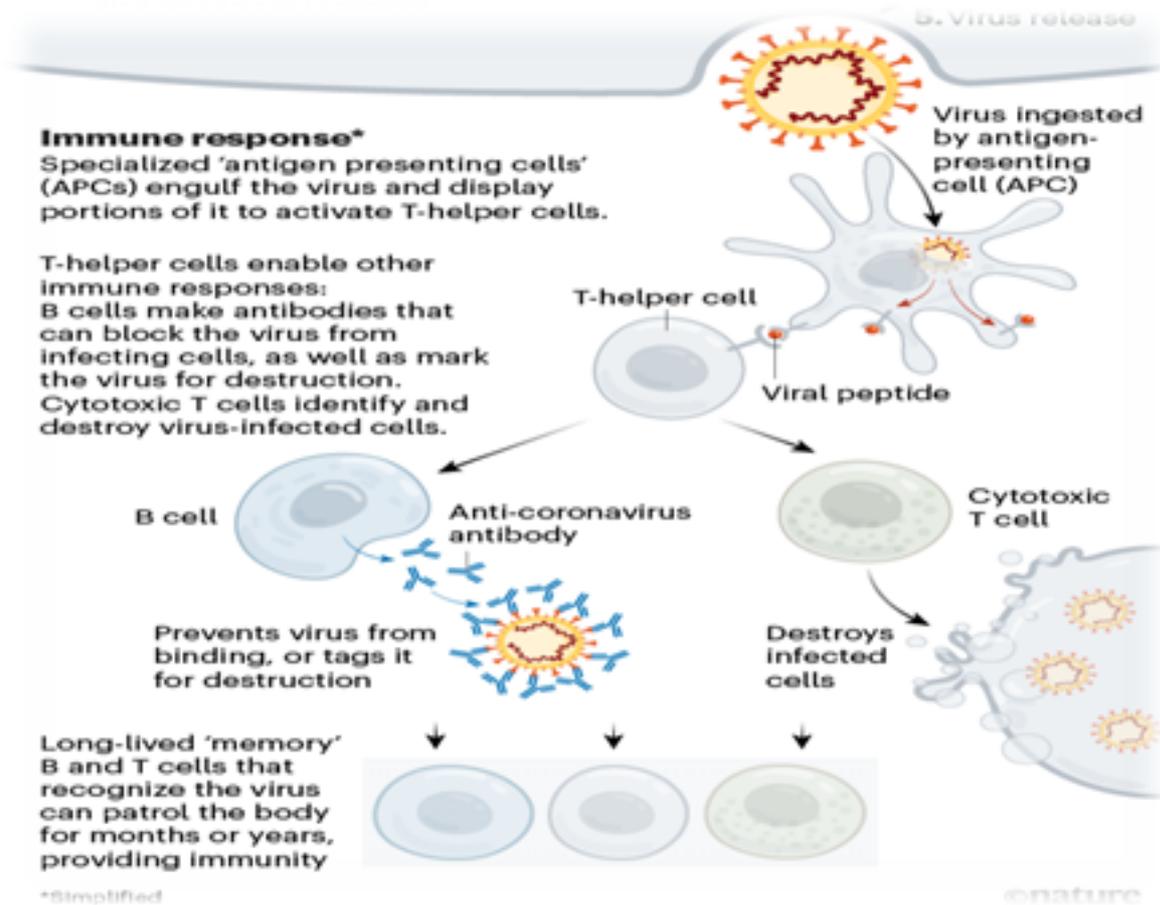
Oxford's Vaccine

- The vaccine is called ChAdOx1 nCoV-19.
- It is made from a genetically engineered virus that causes the common cold in chimpanzees.
- It has been heavily modified, first so it cannot cause infections in people and also to make it "look" more like coronavirus.
- Scientists did this by transferring the genetic instructions for the coronavirus's "spike protein" - the crucial tool it uses to invade our cells - to the vaccine they were developing.
- This means the vaccine resembles the coronavirus and the immune system can learn how to attack it.

What are antibodies and T-cells?

- Antibodies are only one part of our immune defence.
 - ✓ Antibodies are small proteins made by the immune system that stick onto the surface of viruses.
 - ✓ Neutralising antibodies can disable the coronavirus.
- T-cells, a type of white blood cell, help co-ordinate the immune system and are able to spot which of the body's cells have been infected and destroy them.

- An effective vaccines induce both an antibody and a T-cell response



5. “Change in Mindsets” Women Permanent Commission Approved

Why Discussing This Today

- Permanent commission to Short Service Commissioned (SSC) women officers in all 10 streams of the Indian Army.

Supreme Court had said

- There is a “need for change in mindsets to bring about true equality in the Army”

Before the judgement

- Women in the Army were allowed permanent commission in only a few services.
- For the other services, they were forced to leave the SSC after finishing a maximum tenure of 14 years.

Important things to Know

- All women serving as SSC are now entitled to opt for PC.
- That is, they are qualified for permanent commission as much as all male SSC officers are entitled to opt for the PC.
- Applies to women in all services of the Army – no exceptions.

- Officers, who have been serving and completed more than 14 years of service, can now serve until 20 years and retire with full pension benefits.
- Those who served 20 or more years, whether or not they got a PC, will be entitled to pension benefits.
- Command is now open to women officers – this doesn't necessarily mean commanding to fight battalions, but that women can rise to the colonel level.
- A command can also be of a non-fighting unit.

An important number to Know

- There are total of 1,653 women officers which is a miniscule 4 % of the total strength of commissioned officers in the Army

10 streams of the Army

- The order specifies the grant of PC to SSC women officers in all the 10 streams of the Army in which they presently serve:
 - ✓ The Army Air Defence (AAD)
 - ✓ Signals
 - ✓ Engineers
 - ✓ Army Aviation
 - ✓ Electronics and Mechanical Engineers (EME)
 - ✓ Army Service Corps (ASC)
 - ✓ Army Ordnance Corps (AOC)
 - ✓ Intelligence Corps
 - ✓ Judge and Advocate General (JAG)
 - ✓ The Army Educational Corps (AEC)

Why still no command position?

- The government cited “physical” and “physiological limitations” in granting command positions to women officers.
- Supreme Court had said there was need for administrative will and “change of mindset.”

Getting into the details

- Women's careers can be furthered only if they get what are called command assignments or criteria appointments.

What is a criteria appointment

- The Indian Army is what is called a command-oriented Army.
- That is, anyone who has to be given further positions up the chain of command has to first be experienced in command at the level of a full Colonel, a unit command.
- So far, this was denied to women.

- That was the main issue.

Some important inputs

- Women officers, unlike their male counterparts, were not mandated to undergo the "junior command course" and other "adjunct courses" as young captains or majors to be eligible for "command appointments" till now.
- Women, of course, are not allowed to join main combat arms like infantry, mechanized infantry, artillery and armoured corps in the Army.
- They also cannot serve on board warships and submarines in the Navy.
- But the IAF, which already had women transport aircraft and helicopter pilots, has commissioned eight women as fighter pilots since 2016 to break yet another glass ceiling.

Things which will be debated

- Central government's move to make the Battle Physical Efficiency Test (BPET) mandatory for all women officers, including those commissioned before 2009 and above 35 years of age, who were earlier exempt from it.
- (The BPET is a series of tests meant to test the physical fitness of an officer or a jawan to perform military tasks.)
- Reports indicate that senior women officers have been asked to do junior command courses, which are for officers with 5-13 years of service, to train them for junior command appointments in the Army.
- The BPET course was made compulsory 1998 onwards, but women officers of the 1994 batch have now been detailed for that, despite the fact that male officers of the same batch have not done it.
- The grant of permanent commission is dependent on the:
 - ✓ Annual confidential report (ACR) in the first 10 years of service
 - ✓ A 'Shape 1' medical category
 - ✓ Discipline
 - ✓ Vigilance clearance.
- It is said that out of the 620 women officers awaiting a board, 100 women with downgraded medical categories and have been detailed for the JC course.
- Women officers have been asked to go for another 'adequately exercised (AE) tenure', despite many of them having completed it in their years of service.
- (Every officer has to undergo 'AE tenure' of minimum 24 months to prove that he/she is fit for handling command appointments, and the weightage of AE tenure in ACR is 50 marks)
- Women officers have tenanted 48 to 60 months of AE appointments against 24 months, which has not been endorsed in their ACRs and now when they are due for promotion they are being asked to undergo a new AE to delay their board by another two years.

- There is still no induction of women in the Army below the rank of jawans (presently can only be a part of Military Police)
- The panel which studied it has no representation of women.

Some inspiration to follow

Generals, in retrospect, would you have taken orders from a woman officer?

Lt Gen Hasnain: Without blinking an eye, if someone above me, whether man or woman, was someone who demonstrated capability and leadership qualities, there is no question that I would not accept directions, orders. In the Army, we are trained to do that. It's just a mindset [regarding women], we need to overcome that. I would have overcome it almost immediately.

Lt Gen Hooda: Soldiers respect professionalism, good leadership, irrespective of whether it is demonstrated by a male or female officer.

6. The Governor

Not Governor's Powers

- The Governor has no power to unilaterally summon an Assembly session unless the government has, in his view, lost its majority
- He cannot take steps relating to disqualification of the Speaker
- He is barred from unilaterally sending messages to the Assembly on any matter

Mahatma Gandhi on Governors

- "It would be bad economy to do away with provincial Governors and regard Chief Minister as a perfect equivalent. Whist I would resent much power of interference to be given to Governors, I do not think that they should be mere figureheads. They should have enough power enabling them to influence ministerial policy for the better. In their detached position they would be able to see things in their proper perspective and thus prevent mistakes by their cabinets. Theirs must be an all-pervasive moral influence in their provinces"

The Focus Elements in the Office

- Interference versus influence
- Detached position versus figurehead
- Perspective versus prejudice
- All-pervasive moral influence

Importance of the Office

- Governors and for that matter President of India are vital, not because they can hold up or hold back anything, but because they can and should exert the moral voltage, the sense of the rightness and wrongness of things that would underscore the republican credence and democratic credentials of elected governments
- Chief Ministers and Prime Ministers head the government. Governors and Presidents head the state. Governments govern, states sustain. And in a democratic republic, the people power both. They do so, wanting the Chief Minister to act conscientiously and the Governor to act constitutionally, to ensure self-government is good government, swa-raj is also su-raj

Criticism

- Kapil Sibal said in context of Rajasthan Governor that Governors are no longer protectors of the rule of law, but they are protectors of the party in power
- Using a pliant Governor to undermine a State government or engineer a legislative majority is an old and secular trick used by all parties at the Centre

Conclusion and Way Forward

- The Governor's role as a link between the State and the Centre shall not be an imperial one. The office of the Governor must be a dialogic and consultative one
- Women and men in education, commerce, administration, science, medicine, law and public life within and outside of politics, across parties, can surely be found who, as well-wishers, will strengthen and not threaten elected governments working 'for the better'.