

- The strategies include:
  - Free distribution to immediate neighbours such as Bangladesh, Afghanistan and other SAARC nations
  - Heavily Subsidised supplies as part of India's international commitments for equitable distribution
  - Striking market price purchase deals with countries, with supply guarantees
  - Approach nations for co-production of Indian vaccines once approved.
- The idea is to **leverage the country's standing as the world's vaccine factory to consolidate diplomatic ties**. Indian pharmaceutical companies will be among the largest producers of a coronavirus vaccine once it is available and will ensure supplies to friendly nations in the neighborhood.
- Recently, in August 2020, Indian Foreign Secretary informed that **India will supply the COVID-19 vaccine to neighbouring country Bangladesh on a priority basis**. Earlier, Bangladesh was also persuaded to **refuse an offer by China** for conducting human trials of its COVID-19 vaccine among the Bangladeshi citizens.
- It should be kept in mind that any platform India sets up for the supply of vaccines has to **respect licensing agreements**.

### How Things stand for India

- **Three vaccines being tested** among people in India; two of these are indigenous and the third is the global front runner from UK's Oxford-AstraZeneca candidate.
- A committee is working on a roadmap for procuring, supplying and administering the vaccine among people. An emergency authorisation has not been ruled out for any shot that seems promising.

### Opportunity for India

- India is known for **mass production of vaccines and selling** them at **affordable costs** to multilateral organizations like GAVI. Indian manufacturers also **account for 60% of vaccines supplied to UNICEF's global immunization programmes**.
- If a successful vaccine emerges elsewhere, India could still leverage its strong biotech industrial base to partner with foreign firms and institutions for mass production of vaccines.