

## Testwale Current Affairs PDF

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### **1. MSME Technology conclave Center to be set up in Sindhudurg ( Feb. 26, 2022 )**

Union Minister for Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME), Shri Narayan Rane announced the establishment of MSME-Technology Centre with an outlay of Rs. 200 Crore, in Sindhudurg, Maharashtra on 25 February 2022.

- The MSME-Technology Centre will provide the best of technology, incubation as well as advisory support to the industry, especially MSMEs, to enhance their competitiveness and provide skilling services for the employed and unemployed youth of the area to enhance their employability.

The minister also launched the Union MSME RuPay Credit Card of Union Bank of India in Sindhudurg at the two day MSME Conclave being held in the district from 25-26 February 2022.

- The card is being offered by Union Bank of India in association with National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI).
- MSME borrowers will be able to enjoy an interest-free credit period of up to 50 days on their business spends. The card also offers the EMI (Equated Monthly Installments )facility to the customers on their business-related purchases.

The two-day MSME Conclave (25 and 26 February) was organized in Sindhudurg by the Ministry of MSME. The Conclave aims to promote entrepreneurship and trade opportunities for MSMEs in the Konkan region by hand holding them in use of technology, product development and skilling.

### **Concept Clearing**

#### **MSME (Micro Small and Medium Enterprises)**

#### **MSME (Micro Small and Medium Enterprises )**

The MSME has been defined by the 'Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Act, 2006 as amended in 2020.

The enterprises which are which are either in the business of Manufacturing or providing service has been defined as Micro, Small , Medium enterprises on the basis of Investment in plant and machinery needed for production of good (for manufacturing sector ) or services and Turnover (sales)

**Micro Enterprises :** where the investment in Plant and Machinery or Equipment does not exceed one crore rupees and turnover does not exceed five crore rupees;

**Small Enterprise:** where the investment in Plant and Machinery or Equipment does not exceed ten crore rupees and turnover does not exceed fifty crore rupees;

Medium enterprise, where the investment in Plant and Machinery or Equipment does not exceed fifty crore rupees and turnover does not exceed two hundred and fifty crore rupees.

## **2. Prime Minister addresses a webinar on Agriculture and Union Budget 2022-23 ( Feb. 25, 2022 )**

The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi addressed a webinar on the positive impact of the Union Budget 2022 in the Agriculture sector on 24 February 2022.

The Webinar was focused on 'Smart Agriculture'- Strategies for implementation.

### **Main highlights of his speech**

To make Agriculture Modern and Smart

The Prime Minister elaborated on the seven ways in which the Budget proposes to make agriculture modern and smart.

Firstly, The target is to undertake natural farming on mission mode within 5 kms on both the banks of the Ganges.

Secondly, Modern technology in agriculture and horticulture will be made available to the farmers.

Thirdly, Emphasis has been laid on strengthening Mission Oil Palm to reduce the import of edible oil.

Fourthly, new logistics arrangements will be made through the PM Gati-Shakti plan for the transportation of agricultural products.

Fifth solution in the Budget is better organization of agri-waste management and increasing farmers' income through waste to energy solutions.

Sixthly, more than 1.5 lakh post offices will provide services like regular banking so that farmers are not troubled.

Seventh, Agri research and education syllabus will be changed as per demands of modern times with regard to skill development and human resource development.

### **Benefit of PM KISAN yojana**

- As on 22nd February, 2022, benefits under PM KISAN(Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi) scheme have been provided to about 11.78 Crore farmers and funds amounting to Rs1.82 lakh crore in various installments have been released to the eligible beneficiaries of this scheme across India.
- The PM KISAN scheme was launched on 24 February ,2019 at Gorakhpur,Uttar Pradesh , by Narendra Modi . It provides Rs 6000/year to eligible farmers in three installments of Rs 2000 each.

### **Budgetary Allocation for PM -KISAN**

The Centre has allocated Rs 68,000 crore for the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) in the Union Budget 2022-23, which is just 4.6 per cent higher than the Budget Estimates of Rs 65,000 crore for 2021-22 and only 0.74 per cent higher than the revised estimates of Rs 67,500 crore for the current financial year

He said that Agriculture budget allocation has increased manifold .

- The Agriculture Ministry has been allocated Rs 1,32,514 crore in 2022-23, a 4.5% increase over the revised estimates of 2021-22.
- Allocation to the Ministry accounts for 3.4% of the government's budget. 55% of the allocation to the Ministry in 2022-23 is for the PM-KISAN scheme (Rs 68,000 crore).

He said that the government has increased the agriculture loans for farmers by two and half times in the last 7 years”

The target for banks for lending to the agricultural sector in 2022-23 is Rs 18 Lakh Crores. In 2021-22 it was 16.50 lakh crore .”

### **3. Government of India extends National Means-cum-Merit Scholarship for the next five years ( Feb. 25, 2022 )**

- The government of India has extended the central sector scheme “National Means-cum-Merit Scholarship (NMMSS)” till 2025-26.
- The government has allocated Rs. 1827.00 crore for the scheme for the next five year duration 2021- 26.
- The government of India has also increased the income limit ceiling to Rs 3.5 lakh per annum . It was earlier Rs 1.5 Lakh per annum. It means that students whose parents annual income is upto Rs 3.5 lakh per annum are eligible for scholarship.

### **National cum Merit Scholarship Scheme (NMMSS)**

- The National Cum Merit Scholarship scheme was launched by the Government of India in 2008-2009 .
- The objective of the scheme is to award scholarships to meritorious students of economically weaker sections to arrest their drop-out at class VIII and encourage them to continue their education at secondary stage.
- Under this scheme government of India provides one lakh fresh scholarships of Rs. 12,000/- per annum (Rs.1000/- per month) per student to selected students of class IX every year and their continuation/renewal in classes X to XII for study in State Government, Government-aided and Local body schools under the scheme.
- Students are selected for the award of scholarships through an examination conducted by the State/ UT Governments. The scheme is registered on the National Scholarship Portal (NSP).
- Scholarships are disbursed directly into the bank accounts of students by electronic transfer.
- 100% funds under the scheme are provided by the Central Government.

### **4. Foreign Minister S. Jaishankar visit to Germany and France ( Feb. 24, 2022 )**

Foreign Minister S. Jaishanker was on a week-long trip to Germany and France from 18 to 23 February 2022.

### **Visit to Germany**

- He visited Germany to participate in the 58th Munich Security Conference 2022.
- The Munich Security conference was held in Munich city of Germany from 18-20 February 2022.
- **“Turning the Tide. Unlearning Helplessness”** is the conference motto.

### **Visit to France**

Indian External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar was on a visit to France from 20-23 February 2022.

- He held bilateral talks with the French Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs., **Mr Jean-Yves Le Drian**.
- India and France foreign ministers adopted the “India-France Roadmap on the Blue Economy and Ocean Governance” declaration which aims to enhance partnership in the field of blue economy, by way of institutional, economic, infrastructural and scientific cooperation.

### **Munich Security Conference**

The Munich Security Conference has been held in the German city of Munich since 1963. It is held in the month of February and discusses matters of International security and world politics.

## **5. Railway to install hanging solar fence to save elephants ( Feb. 24, 2022 )**

Southern Railways has begun the installation of hanging solar fences at sensitive forest areas between Kanjikode and Walayar stations. While Kanjikode falls under Palakkad district of Kerala, Walayar falls under TN jurisdiction.

- The Southern Railways was installing a hanging solar fence for the first time to prevent elephant movement across the tracks. The hanging solar fence was being set up for 600 meters on both sides of the B- line railway track.
- The B-line, which has been laid through the Walayar Reserve forest, bisects an elephant corridor. Many elephants have been killed by speeding trains in the area.
- Steel wires are hung in a row from a three-meter high overhead wire. The overhead wire is supported by posts at both ends. The hanging wires will touch the ground.
- If an Elephant touches the wire it will get mild shock which will deter it from entering the railway tracks. The shocks will not be fatal to the elephants.

### **Important Information for Exams**

Headquarter of the Southern Railway : **Chennai**

## **6. Health Minister releases reports of Institute for Competitiveness highlighting India's COVID-19 Vaccination Programme ( Feb. 24, 2022 )**

**Dr Mansukh Mandaviya**, Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare released two reports of the Institute for Competitiveness in New Delhi on 23 February 2022.

The reports titled 'COVID-19-India's Vaccine Development Story' and 'India's COVID - 19 Vaccination Administration Journey' praises India's effort in developing covid -19 vaccine and safe administration of vaccinations to a huge and diverse population.

### **Institute of Competitiveness**

The Institute for Competitiveness is part of the global network of the Institute for Strategy and Competitiveness at Harvard Business School, United States .

It is an research institution dedicated to understanding competition and strategy

Headquarters : **Gurugram, Haryana**

## **7. Vande Bharatam signature tune formally released by the Government of India ( Feb. 23, 2022 )**

Minister of State for Culture & External Affairs **Smt. Meenakshi Lekhi** released the Vande Bharatam song signature tune composed by **Grammy winner Ricky Kej and tabla maestro Bikram Ghosh.**

The song was released at an event on International Mother Language Day named "**Ekam Bharatam**" along with a cultural evening hosted by the Ministry of Culture at Delhi on 22nd February, 2022.

The 'Vande Bharatam' song was produced for Vande Bharatam, Nritya Utsav of the Ministry of Culture, presented at Rajpath, New Delhi for the national Republic Day event in 2022.

## **8. India to be the Chairman of the International Rubber Study Group ( Feb. 23, 2022 )**

India has been elected as the chairman of the International Rubber Study Group (IRSG) for two years.

**KN Raghavan**, the head of the Indian delegation to IRSG and the Executive Director of the Indian Rubber Board, will serve as Chairman of IRSG for the next two years.

The previous chairman of the IRSG was Cote d'Ivoire's.

### **IRSG**

It was founded in 1944, with **Singapore as its headquarters.**

It is an international body which discusses matters relating to the rubber industry and acts as an intermediary between the Governments and Industry.

## **Fact File**

### **Rubber**

Rubbers are of two types . Natural rubber and Synthetic rubber

Natural rubber is obtained from a plant called **Hevea brasiliensis**, whereas synthetic rubbers are man-made polymers under controlled conditions using petroleum by-products.

### **The Top producer of natural rubber in the world (2020)**

1. Thailand
2. Indonesia
3. Vietnam
4. India
5. Cote d'Ivoire's

### **Source : Food and Agricultural Organisation**

### **The largest exporter of natural rubber in the world**

1. Thailand
2. Indonesia
3. Cote d'Ivoire's

### **Largest natural rubber producing state in India**

1. Kerala
2. Tripura
3. Karnataka

### **Source Government of India , PIB**

### **Fun facts**

Natural Rubber comes from the sap of a plant called Hevea brasiliensis which is a native of the Amazon forest in South America .

**John Joseph Murphy of India set up the country's first commercial rubber plantation at Thattekad near Kothamangalam ,Kerala in 1902.**

### **Full form for exam**

**IRSG** : International Rubber Study Group.

## **9. First batch of Indian wheat aid sent to Afghanistan ( Feb. 23, 2022 )**

**Foreign Secretary Harsh Shringla** flagged off the first truckload of wheat supplies from India to Afghanistan at the Attari-Wagah border on 22 February 2022. Afghan Trucks carrying 2500 tonnes of Indian wheat will carry it to Afghanistan's Jalalabad via Pakistan's Torkham border.

This is the part of 50,000 tonnes of wheat promised by India to Afghanistan as humanitarian aid in October 2021.

### **India Pakistan Trade route**

At present the only operational land trade route between India and Pakistan is through the Attari/Wagah border .

- Wagah is an Indian army outpost on the Indo-Pak border ( between Amritsar and Lahore) and Atari is on the Pakistani side of the border .
- Currently there is only one operational rail route along the Amritsar-Attari-Lahore railway line through Attari and Amritsar rail station for movement of cargo between the two countries.
- The cargo moves either by the goods trains or by freight cars attached to the bi-weekly Samjhauta Express(Delhi to Lahore).

## **10. Germany halts Nord Stream 2 Gas Pipeline ( Feb. 23, 2022 )**

Germany on 22 February 2022 halted the Nord Stream 2 Baltic Sea gas pipeline project in response to the Russian President Vladimir Putin decision to recognise the breakaway Ukrainian region of **Donetsk People's Republic and the Lugansk People's Republic**, as an Independent country on 21 February 2022.

- The Nord 2 gas pipeline is designed to double the flow of Russian gas direct to Germany. Europe's most ambitious and divisive energy project, worth \$11 billion, was finished in September, but has stood idle pending certification by Germany and the European Union.
- Nord 2 and Nord 1 pipelines could deliver 110bn cubic meters of gas to Europe every year. That is over a quarter of all the gas that European Union countries use annually.

### **Controversy over the pipeline**

- The pipeline was meant to ease the pressure on European consumers facing record energy prices amid a wider post-pandemic cost of living crisis.
- The Nord 2 gas pipeline has been controversial from its inception . Germany, which meets half of its gas requirement from Russia, argued that the project was a commercial one not political.
- But the pipeline had faced opposition within the European Union and from the United States. They feel that the pipeline will increase European energy dependence on Russia and the Russians can use it to blackmail Europe in future conflict .

- It will also deny transit fees to Ukraine through which another Russian pipeline passes through and enable Russia to punish Ukraine and possibly invade it .
- Russia planned the Nord gas pipeline after there was a dispute over transit fees with Ukraine on the gas pipeline passing through its territory and Ukraine was found to be using gas meant for Western Europe for itself without the permission of Russia in 2005.

### **Nord 2 Gas pipeline**

- **It is a 1200 Km gas pipeline which will transport natural gas from Ust Luga gas field in Russia to Greifswald in Germany under the baltic sea.**
- The Nord 2 pipeline is owned by the **Russian state owned gas company Gazprom**. It paid half the cost but the rest of the cost was shared by Shell ,Austria's OMV ,France's Engie and Germany's Uniper and Wintershall.
- The Nord 1 pipeline which started transporting gas to Europe along the same route started its operation in 2011.

### **Fact File**

#### **Top Natural Gas Producing countries in the world (2020)**

1. United States
2. Russia
3. Iran
4. Qatar
5. China

#### **Country having biggest reserves of Natural Gas (2020)**

1. Russia
2. Iran
3. Qatar
4. Turkmenistan
5. United States

**Source : BP Statistical Review of World Energy 2021.**