

## Testwale Current Affairs PDF

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### **1. Germany to pursue \$5.2-billion deal with India to build 6 submarines ( Feb. 25, 2023 )**

**Germany** will sign a **\$5.2 billion deal** to **jointly build six conventional submarines** with **India during German Chancellor Olaf Scholz's visit to India** on February 25-26.

#### **An overview of the news**

- The naval project is the latest attempt by the **Western military manufacturing power** to end **India's dependence on Russia** for military hardware.
- India is looking to **replace 11 of its 16 conventional submarines** that are more than two decades old, as it seeks to counter China's growing presence in the Indian Ocean.
- The Indian Navy also has two indigenous nuclear-powered submarines.
- **Germany's ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems (TKMS)** is one of the two **international bidders** for the submarine project Berlin will back the deal.
- Under the deal, a foreign submarine maker will have to partner with an **Indian company to build submarines in India.**

### **2. Russian space agency launches Soyuz spacecraft to bring back 3 astronauts stranded on ISS ( Feb. 25, 2023 )**

Recently the **Russian space agency, Roscosmos** has successfully launched the **Soyuz spacecraft to bring back three astronauts stranded on the International Space Station (ISS)** following a **leak in the cooling system in their Soyuz capsule.**

#### **An overview of the news**

- Two **Russian and one American astronauts** will board the **empty Soyuz spacecraft to return to Earth.**
- The **Soyuz MS-23** spacecraft was launched from the **Baikonur Space Center in Kazakhstan and placed in orbit.**
- US astronaut **Francisco Rubio**, along with Russian cosmonauts **Sergei Prokopyev and Dmitry Petelin**, were due to return to Earth after their mission ended.
- But two months ago, it got stuck in space due to a leak in the cooling system of **Soyuz MS-22 capsule.**
- According to the Russian space agency Roscosmos, all three Soyuz will **return to Earth on the MS-23 vehicle in September.**
- The leak on the MS-22 spacecraft was **caused by a small piece of a micrometeoroid hitting the capsule.**

## **About International Space Station (ISS)**

- It is a **multi-nation construction project** that is the largest single structure humans ever put into space.
- Its main construction was completed between **1998 and 2011**.
- It is not owned by a single nation and according to the **European Space Agency (ESA)** is a "**co-operative program**" between **Europe, the United States, Russia, Canada and Japan**.
- As of May 2022, **258 individuals from 20 countries** have visited the International Space Station.
- The top participating countries include the **United States (158 people) and Russia (54 people)**.

## **3. FATF suspends Russia's membership over Ukraine war ( Feb. 25, 2023 )**

Global anti-money laundering watchdog **Financial Action Task Force (FATF)** suspended **Russia's membership** on February 24 over the Ukraine war.

### **An overview of the news**

- The FATF has suspended Russia's membership for its "**illegal, unprovoked and unjustified**" full-scale military invasion of Ukraine.
- Russia's actions "**run unacceptably**" against the FATF's core principles, which aim to protect, safeguard and promote the integrity of the global financial system.
- The FATF is also concerned about information on arms trade between **Russia and UN-sanctioned jurisdictions, and Russia's malicious cyber activities**.
- Russia is accountable for its **obligation to implement FATF standards**.

### **South Africa, Nigeria on dirty-money grey list**

- **South Africa and Nigeria** have been placed on **FATF's gray list**, indicating deficiencies in the handling of financial flows to the nations.
- It is a move that tarnishes the international reputation of such countries and could raise costs for banks and asset managers.
- **Morocco and Cambodia** have been removed from the list after reforming their controls.

### **Financial Action Task Force (FATF)**

- It was formed in the **year 1989** at the meeting of **G-7 countries held in Paris**.
- It works to generate the necessary political will to bring about legislative and regulatory reforms in the world on issues like money laundering, terror funding.

- **Headquarters** - Located in the headquarters of the Organisation for the Development of Economic Co-operation (OECD) in Paris.
- **Member Countries - 39 member countries** including India and 2 regional organisations (European Commission and Gulf Cooperation Council).
- **India became a member of FATF in the year 2010.**
- Its sessions are held **three times a year.**
- Financial Action Task Force (FATF) President - **Raja Kumar**

### **List of FATF**

- **Gray List** - Countries that are considered safe havens for supporting terror funding and money laundering are placed on the FATF gray list.
- **Black List** - Countries identified as non-cooperative countries or regions are included in the black list. These countries support terrorist funding and money laundering activities.

### **4. NHA exploring to construct roads using Phosphor-Gypsum ( Feb. 25, 2023 )**

With an aim to reduce the **carbon footprint**, the **Ministry of Road, Transport and Highways** is exploring options for **construction of national highways using phosphor-gypsum.**

#### **An overview of the news**

- The move is aimed at increasing **durability and making construction more affordable.**
- India has the **second largest road network in the world.**
- In this context, the **National Highways Authority of India (NHA)** along with the Department of Fertilizers will soon conduct field trials on their projects to achieve a circular economy in the use of **gypsum.**
- The move is in line with the government's commitment to use waste material in building **ecologically sustainable National Highway infrastructure in the country.**

#### **What is Phosphor-Gypsum?**

- Phosphor-gypsum is a **by-product of fertilizer production.**
- The phosphor-gypsum road was first constructed by an **Indian fertilizer company.**
- Later the road was evaluated by **CRRRI (Central Road Research Institute)** and based on their report, the **Indian Roads Congress (IRC)** formally recognized phosphor-gypsum waste material for road construction **for a period of three years.**
- NHA is also promoting the use of **waste plastic in road construction**, which has been successfully tested.

- Scientific research has found that roads made using plastic waste are **sustainable and extend the life cycle of bitumen** (a substance produced through the distillation of crude oil).

## **5. RBI imposed restrictions on 5 co-operative banks ( Feb. 25, 2023 )**

The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** on 24 February **imposed restrictions on five cooperative banks** due to their deteriorating financial condition.

### **An overview of the news**

- RBI has said in its statement that the restrictions imposed on these co-operative banks will remain in **effect for six months**.
- Eligible depositors of all five co-operative banks will receive deposit insurance claim amount of **up to ₹5 lakh from the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation**.
- The move by the RBI is aimed at protecting the interests of depositors and ensuring the stability of the financial system.

### **Five co-operative banks on which restrictions have been imposed**

- Due to the current liquidity position of the following banks, customers will not be able to withdraw funds from their accounts.

1. HCBL Co-operative Bank,
2. Adarsh Mahila Nagari Sahakari Bank Maryadit,
3. Shimsha Sahakara Bank Niyamitha

- **Customers from following banks can withdraw up to ₹5,000.**

1. Uravakonda Co-operative Town Bank
2. Shankarrao Mohite Patil Sahakari Bank

## **6. For the first time, Indian submarine INS Sindhukesari docks Indonesia amid South China Sea conflict ( Feb. 25, 2023 )**

Indian submarine **INS SindhuKesari** docks **Jakarta, Indonesia** for the first time amid the conflict between **China and Indonesia in the South China Sea**.

### **An overview of the news**

- Indonesia is among the countries embroiled in a naval dispute with **Beijing in the South China Sea.**
- It is about strengthening the **maritime partnership between India and Indonesia** towards a secure Indo-Pacific.
- Indian warships frequently visit Indonesia and other ASEAN countries. This is the first time the submarine has been deployed for long distances.
- Under the rule of Xi Jinping, China is trying to **expand its territory by making incursions into its neighbouring countries.**
- On the land border, China is trying to enter **Indian as well as Bhutanese territories.**
- This maiden long-range deployment of a submarine also underlines the operational capability and reach of the **country's underwater warfare arm.**
- INS Sindhukesari is the **3,000-tonne diesel-electric submarine.**

## **7. APEDA inks MoU with Lulu Hypermarket for export promotion of millets in GCC countries ( Feb. 25, 2023 )**

In a move to harness export potential of millets to the Gulf Cooperation Countries (GCCs), the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Lulu Hypermarket LLC on 21 February 2023.

### **An overview of the news**

- APEDA aims to promote millet products and value-added products worldwide in collaboration with **Lulu Group.**
- Lulu Group is an **international retail hypermarket chain** that operates stores and shopping malls in **Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.**
- As per the agreement, Lulu Group will facilitate **promotional activities for millet products** and enable the country to showcase millet and its value-added products.
- APEDA will facilitate manufactures to send various samples of millet products to Lulu Hypermarkets, which will be showcased at its various stores.
- APEDA, in association with Lulu Group, will also provide assistance in labelling of the products in accordance with the requirement of different importing countries.
- As a part of programs to promote the **International Year of Millets 2023**, APEDA is organising export promotion activities for millets at 16 international trade fairs, including **Gulfood 2023.**
- India has exported millets worth **USD 46.05 million** during April-November 2022-23 and UAE is the major importer of Indian millets.

### **About “APEDA”**

- The **Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA)** was established by the Government of India under the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority Act passed by the Parliament in **December 1985**.
- This authority functions under the **Ministry of Commerce and Industry**.
- Headquarters- **New Delhi**
- Chairman- **Dr. M. Angamuthu**

### **8. Inaugural meeting of I2U2 business forum held in Abu Dhabi ( Feb. 24, 2023 )**

The **first conference of I2U2 Business Forum**, a **joint initiative of India, Israel, the US and the United Arab Emirates**, was held on 22 February 2023 in **Abu Dhabi (UAE)**.

#### **An overview of the news**

- According to the Indian Ministry of External Affairs, the I2U2 Forum brought together **representatives from the private and public sectors** of India, Israel, the United States and the United Arab Emirates to discuss opportunities for cooperation between their business communities.
- This is the first such event after its official launch at the **I2U2 Leaders' Summit in July 2022**.
- Economic cooperation is going on in many areas among the member countries of I2U2. Which includes **food security, water, energy, space, transport, health and technology**.
- The Forum aims to leverage private sector capital and expertise to help **modernise infrastructure, decarbonize industries, improve public health, and promote the development of green technologies**.
- It is also known as the '**West Asian Quad**' as it was referred to as the '**International Forum for Economic Cooperation**' in 2021.
- I2U2 aims to encourage joint investments in six mutually identified sectors - **water, energy, transport, space, health and food security**.
- India and the US are already members of the QUAD and India has individual **bilateral defence cooperation** with each country.
- Now I2U2 is set to boost trade and connectivity between partners.

### **9. Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana completes 4 years ( Feb. 24, 2023 )**

On February 24, 2023, the **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana (PM-KISAN)** completed **4 years**.

### **About Prime Minister Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-Kisan)**

- It was launched by **Prime Minister Modi on February 24, 2019** to meet the financial needs of **land holding farmers**.
- Under this scheme a financial benefit of **Rs 6000 per year** in three equal instalments is transferred **every four months** to the bank accounts of farmer families across the country through **Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) mode**.
- It is a Central Sector Scheme with **100 per cent funding by the Government of India**.
- It is being implemented by the **Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare**.
- So far eligible farmer families have received benefits of more than Rs 2 lakh crore in **12 instalments under PM-Kisan**.

### **10. UNGA passes resolution calling for immediate end to hostilities between Ukraine and Russia ( Feb. 24, 2023 )**

The **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)** in its **eleventh emergency special session** on 23 February passed a new resolution **calling for an end to the Russia-Ukraine conflict** after completing one year.

#### **An overview of the news**

- The resolution calls on Russia to **end hostilities and withdraw** its forces from Ukraine.
- **141 members voted in favour** of the motion while **seven members opposed it**. **32 members** including India abstained from voting.
- **Belarus, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Eritrea, Mali, Nicaragua, Russia and Syria** opposed the resolution.
- Support for the resolution upholding the **territorial integrity of Ukraine** was urged.
- Through the resolution, the UNGA urged member states to cooperate in a spirit of solidarity to address the global effects of war on food security, energy, finance, environment and nuclear safety and security.

#### **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)**

- It is the **United Nation's chief policy-making and representative organ** and was **created in 1945**.
- It is one of the **six principal organs of the United Nations (UN)**.

- It serves as the main deliberative, policy making and representative organ of the United Nations.
- Its powers, structure, functions and procedures are set out in **Chapter IV of the United Nations Charter.**
- Its main functions are to prepare the budget of the United Nations, appoint non-permanent members to the Security Council, appoint the Secretary-General of the United Nations, receive reports from other parts of the United Nations system, and make recommendations through resolutions.