# Prelim Bits 17-08-2023 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

## Unmanned Aerial Systems (Drone) Common Testing Centre

*India's first Unmanned Aerial Systems Common Testing Centre to be established in Tamil Nadu.*

- UAS are air vehicles and associated equipment that do not carry a human operator, but instead are remotely piloted or fly autonomously.
- **Location –** The UAS Common Testing Centre would be established at the SIPCOT Industrial Park, Vallam Vadagal near Sriperumbudur.
- It will be established under ***Defence Testing Infrastructure Scheme (DTIS).***
- **Aim –** To enable the State a significant contributor to the self-reliance of the country in the aerospace and defence sectors.
- Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corporation (TIDCO) is the nodal agency for the implementation of the ***Tamil Nadu Defence Industrial Corridor (TNDIC).***
- As part of the implementation of the TNDIC, the government is about to create an enabling ecosystem including Common Testing Centres for the Aerospace and Defence Industry.

*An integrated facility for testing for UAS (Drone) is available only with DRDO at Chitradurga, Karnataka.*

## Defence Testing Infrastructure Scheme (DTIS)

- **Aim -** To boost domestic defence & aerospace manufacturing.
- **Launch -** May 2020.
- **Ministry -** Ministry of Defence (MoD).
- **Duration -** 5 years.
- It envisages setting up of 6-8 greenfield defence testing infrastructure facilities that are required for defence and aerospace related production.
- **Funding Pattern -** 75% Government funding in the form of 'Grant-in-Aid' + 25% to be borne by the Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) constituents.
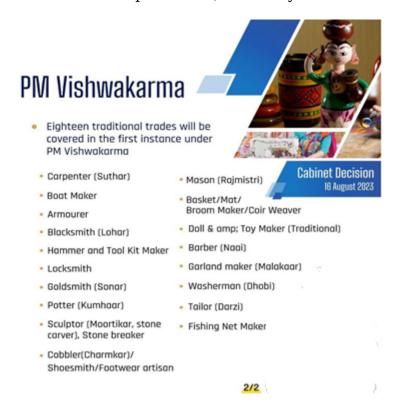
## References

1. The Hindu | Unmanned Aerial Systems (Drone) Common Testing Centre

2. Business Standard | India's first drone common testing centre

3. The Hindu Businessline | India's first drone common testing centre

4. PIB | Defence Testing Infrastructure Scheme

# PM Vishwakarma

*Union Cabinet has recently approved a new Central Sector Scheme 'PM Vishwakarma'.*

- **Aim -** To support traditional artisans and craftspeople (Vishwakarmas) of rural and urban India.
- It will be launched on the forthcoming Vishwakarma Jayanti (17 Sept, 2023).
- **Duration -** 5 years (FY 2023-24 to FY 2027-28).
- **Ministry -** Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises.
- **Significance –** It aims at improving the quality, as well as the reach of products and services of Vishwakarmas and to ensure that they are integrated with the domestic and global value chains.
- ***18 traditional trades*** will be covered in the first instance under PM Vishwakarma.
- **Benefits -** Under this scheme, Vishwakarmas will be provided recognition through
    - PM Vishwakarma certificate and ID card,
    - Credit Support upto Rs.1 lakh (First Tranche) and
    - Rs.2 lakh (Second Tranche) with a concessional interest rate of 5%.
- The scheme will further provide skill upgradation, toolkit incentive, incentive for digital transactions and marketing support.
- Participants will get a stipend of Rs.500 per day while undergoing training.
- Beneficiaries will also receive up to Rs. 15,000 to buy modern tools.



## References

1. PIB | PM Vishwakarma

2. Economic Times | Vishwakarma scheme

3. Hindustan Times | PM Vishwakarma Scheme

# PM-eBus Sewa

*The Cabinet has recently approved a bus scheme "PM-eBus Sewa".*

- The scheme is about introducing around 10,000 electric buses under the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model in 169 cities across the nation.
- The scheme will promote e-mobility and provide full support for behind-the-meter power infrastructure.
- The scheme was first announced in 2021 in the Union budget.
- **Coverage** - The scheme will cover cities having a population of *3 lakh and above* according to Census 2011.
- Under this scheme priority will be given to cities having no organized bus service.
- **Duration -** The Scheme will support bus operations for 10 years.
- **Ministry -** Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs.
- The Scheme has 2 segments
    - **Segment A** – Augmenting the City bus services **-** (169 cities)
    - **Segment B –** Green Urban Mobility Initiatives (GUMI) - (181 cities).
- **Funding -** Estimated cost of the scheme is Rs 57,613 crore, of which Rs 20,000 crore will be provided by Central government and the rest will be provided by state governments.
- **Operation -** States/Cities shall be responsible for running the bus services and making payments to the bus operators.
- This scheme is different than the one that is rolled out by the Convergence Energy Services Ltd (CESL).

    *CESL is a wholly owned subsidiary of Energy Efficiency Services Limited, under the Ministry of Power.*

## References

1. PIB | PM-eBus Sewa

2. The Hindu Businessline | PM-eBus Sewa

# Sulina Channel

*The Sulina Channel is the new alternative trade route after Russia's drone strikes on ports and grain storage facilities along the Danube river in Ukraine.*

- **Danube River -** Danube is the *Europe's second longest river* which has been historically crucial for the movement of freight.
- It starts at the intersection of two smaller rivers in Southwestern Germany - Brigach and Brech Rivers.
- It passes through countries including *Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Germany, Hungary, Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Ukraine.*
- Before Russia pulled out of the safe passage corridor, the Danube ports accounted for around a quarter of Ukraine's grain exports.

- Recently, Russia attacked the inland Danube ports of *Reni and Izmail.*
- **Channels -** Chilia, Sulina and St George.
- **Sulina Channel -** It is situated in *Romania  (a NATO member).*
- It is the only one deep and wide enough channel fits for freight transport among the three channels.
- Ships carry grain from Ukraine leave from Ukrainian ports such as Izmail and Reni on the mainstream (or the Chilia Channel), and head to the port of Sulina.
- Grains are shipped downriver through territorial waters of European Union and Romania, and onwards from Romania's Black Sea port of Constanta.
- It is a sort of a riverine 'expressway' crucial for transport of goods from Ukraine (one of the world's top grain exporters) to the Black Sea.
- This route is under constant surveillance and *protection of NATO.*
- **Challenges**
  - Limited holding capacity
  - Sheer traffic



**Reference**

[The Indian Express | Sulina Channel](#)

# Incremental CRR (ICRR)

*RBI has announced that it will be imposing an incremental cash reserve ratio (ICRR) of 10% on the increase in banks net demand and time liabilities (NDTL) between May 19 and July 28.*

- **Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR) -** Banks are mandated to maintain a certain proportion of their deposits and specific liabilities as liquid cash with the RBI, which is called as cash reserve ratio.
- This is a tool at the disposal of the RBI to control the liquidity in the economy and can also act as a buffer in periods of bank stress.
- Banks are previously required to maintain **4.5%** of their Net Demand and Time Liabilities as CRR with the RBI.
- RBI has the option to impose incremental credit reserve ratio, in addition to the CRR, in periods of excess liquidity in the system.
- **RBI's recent move** – Effective from August 12, 2023, all scheduled banks must uphold an additional cash reserve ratio equating to 10% of the surge in their net demand and time liabilities (NDTL) recorded between May 19, 2023, and July 28, 2023.
- It will apply to all scheduled banks, including commercial banks, cooperative banks, and regional rural banks.
- It is a temporary measure which will be reviewed in 3 months.
- **Reason –** ICRR is a temporary measure to drain excess liquidity from the banking system due to its withdrawal of Rs 2,000 notes.
- **Impacts -** As liquidity is withdrawn, banks will have limited funds for lending, thereby *decreasing demand for goods and services.*
- This will consequently *reduce the prices.*
- *Short-term interest rates might rise* due to tightening of fund supply in the economy, acting as an additional measure to counter inflation.
- It may *tie up bank resources* and exert upward pressure on market rates.

## References

1. The Hindu Businessline | Incremental CRR

2. The Hindu Businessline | ICRR