

Daily Economic News Summary: 22 February 2019

1. Pulwama Attack: Import Duty Hike On Pakistani Goods Hits Indian Traders

Source: The Hindu, Business Line ([Link](#))

The sharp increase in import duties on all goods from Pakistan last week by India in response to the Pulwama terror attack has claimed an unintended victim the Indian importer. Truck loads of cement, dates and some other items from Pakistan are languishing at the Attari border since February 16 when import duties increased to 200 per cent by India. Indian importers have paid for these goods mostly, but they find it impossible to take delivery because of the duty hike. The 70 trucks that are parked at Attari, with goods estimated at ₹25 crore, have already been paid for by importers. The exporters are not willing to take back the goods and at 200 per cent duty it is not possible for traders to claim it.

2. Russian Helicopters Looks For Localisation

Source: The Hindu, Business Line ([Link](#))

Russian Helicopters Holding Company (a part of State Corporation Rostec) and a number of Indian companies signed Memorandums of Understanding at Aero India 2019. The parties agreed to explore the producing a number of assemblies and components for Ka-226T helicopter in India. The MOUs were signed with the following companies Elcom, Valdel Advanced Technologies, Dynamatic Technologies, Integrated Helicopter Services and Bharat Forge, covering assemblies such as fuselage, blades, radiostation and landing gear.

3. FSSAI, Ayush Ministry Discussing Regulations For Ayurvedic Foods

Source: The Hindu, Business Line ([Link](#))

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) in collaboration with the Ministry of Ayush is exploring the possibility of setting standards for Ayurvedic Ahaar, traditional Ayurvedic foods, as a separate category. Speaking on the sidelines of a CII event, Pawan Agarwal, CEO, FSSAI, said, “We are in discussions with the Ministry of Ayush to explore various possibilities and looking at whether there can be standards for Ayurvedic Ahaar as a separate category in the food supplements regulatory framework. These standards could either be

part of food supplements and nutraceutical regulations or we could look at having a separate set of regulations for Ayurvedic Ahaar.”

4. Government In A Hurry To Ease Norms For Andaman Tourism Project

Source: The Economic Times ([Link](#))

The environment ministry is preparing to relax Island Coastal Regulation Zone (ICRZ) norms by month-end to beat the election code of conduct, paving the way for ecotourism projects in the Andaman & Nicobar islands, said people with knowledge of the matter. Key to this is ensuring green clearances for the ambitious Niti Aayog project to develop a tent city on Aves island. The move comes weeks after the Centre renamed three main islands and announced seaplane operations at seven of them.

5. Stamp Duty Evasion: Big Changes In Law Cleared

Source: Financial Express ([Link](#))

The President on 21 February gave his assent to the amendments related to financial securities proposed in the Indian Stamp Act, 1899, clearing the way for states to collect stamp duty on securities market at one place by one agency, the government said. The proposed system is expected to lead to zero tax evasion and minimisation of collection cost. “Adoption of the centralised collection mechanism is expected to bring in not only more revenue but greater stability to the revenue collection by the states. Further, this system will help develop equity markets and equity culture across the length and breadth of the country, ushering in balanced regional development,” the government said in a statement.

6. Proposal To Bar H-1b Spouses From Working In Us Reaches White House For Final Decision; Move To Impact 90,000

Source: Firstpost ([Link](#))

The White House has formally received the proposed changes in the existing regulations to end the work authorisation for certain categories of H-1B foreign work visas. The move that would impact over 90,000 spouses of H-1B visa holders, an overwhelming number of whom are Indians, was sent by the Department of Homeland Security to the White House Office of management for Budget on Wednesday, officials said. It's now for the White House to take a final call on it, before a formal regulation in this regard could be issued and the Department of Homeland Security can inform a federal court, where a lawsuit on this issue is pending.