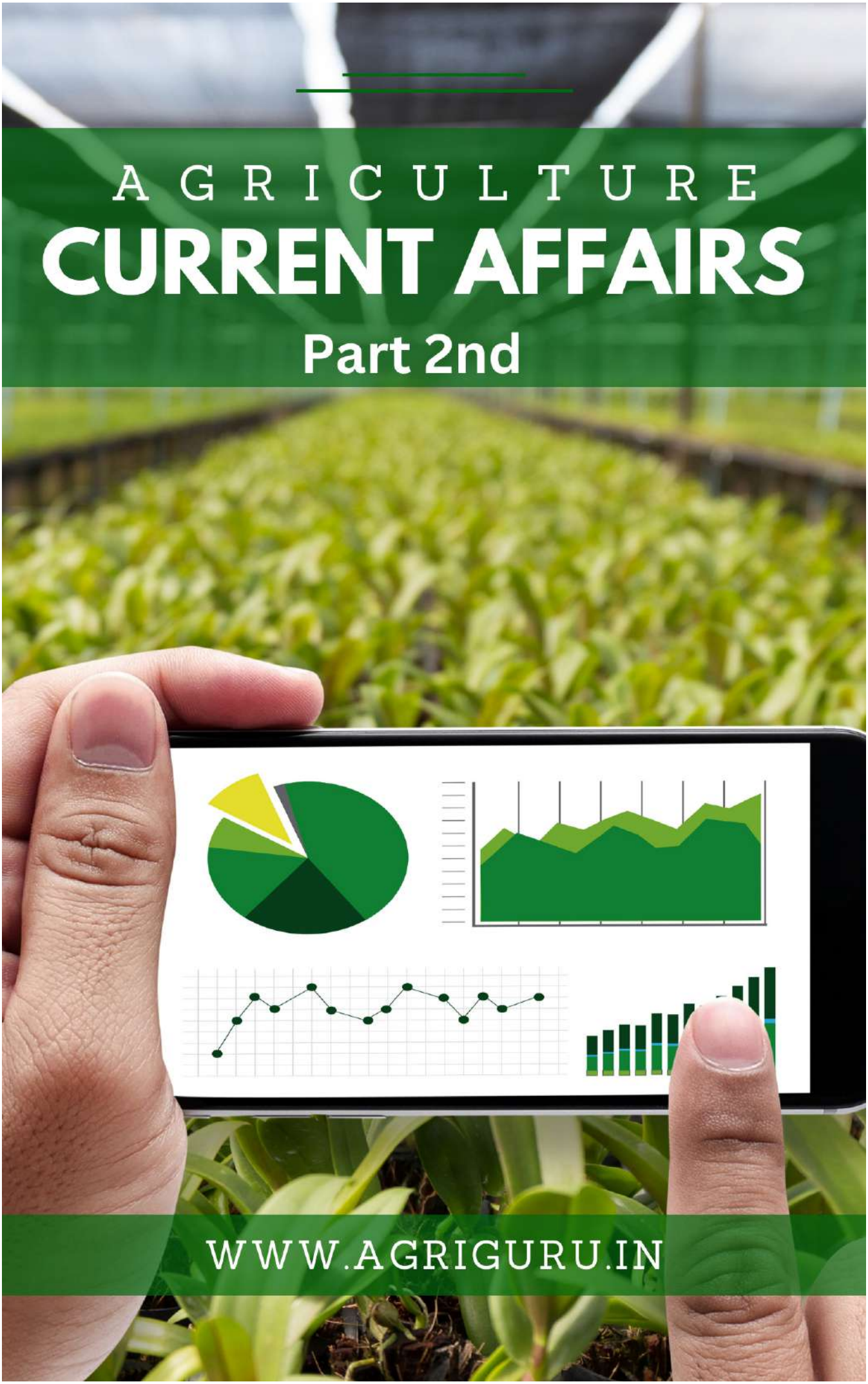
AGRICULTURE

# CURRENT AFFAIRS

## Part 2nd



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# AGRICULTURE CURRENT AFFAIRS FEBRUARY 2024 By agriguru.in

## Cabinet approvals on 24 January 2024

On January 24, 2024, the Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi approved the following schemes and incentives:

i. Approved the Rs 8,500 crore scheme for the promotion of Coal/Lignite Gasification Projects.
ii. Passed the Resolution on Pran Pratishtha at Shri Ram Temple, Ayodhya Dham
iii. Approved signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Oman on cooperation in the field of Information Technology (IT).
iv. Approved the protocol to establish a Joint Economic and Trade Committee (JETCO) between India and the Dominican Republic.

**Cabinet Approves Scheme for Coal Gasification Projects**
The Cabinet committee chaired by PM Modi approved a scheme for the promotion of Coal/Lignite Gasification Projects of Government PSUs (Public Sector Undertakings) and Private Sector.

**Financial outlay:**
A total outlay of Rs 8,500 crore will be provided as financial assistance for coal gasification projects under
3 categories.

i. **Category I: Rs 4050 crore** (provisioned for Government PSUs)
- Under this up to 3 projects will be supported with a grant of Rs 1350 crore or 15% of capex(Capital Expenditure), whichever is lower

ii. **Category II: Rs 3850 crore** (provisioned for the private sector & Government PSUs)

• Under this, At least one project will be bid out on a tariff-based bidding process and its criteria will be designed in consultation with NITI Aayog(National Institution for Transforming India).
• A grant of Rs 1000 crore or 15% of capex, whichever is lower provided for each project.

iii. **Category III: Rs 600 crore** (provisioned for demonstration Projects (indigenous technology) and/or small-scale product-based Gasification Plants)

• under this, a grant of Rs 100 crore or 15% of capex, whichever is lower, will be given to the selected entity, with a minimum Capex of Rs 100 Crore and minimum production of 1500 Nm3/hr Syn gas(Normal Cubic Meter/hour synthesis Gas).

**Points to note:**

i. The selection of entities under categories II and III will be carried out through a competitive and transparent bidding process.
ii. The grant will be paid to the selected entity in two equal instalments
iii. EGoS (Empowered Group of Secretaries) chaired by Secretary of the Ministry of Coal (Amrit Lal Meena current Secretary(Coal)) will be fully empowered to make any changes required in the modalities of the scheme subject to the condition that overall financial outlay remains within Rs.8,500 crore.

**What is Gasification?**

Gasification is a technological process that can convert any carbon-based raw material such as coal into fuel gas, also known as synthesis gas (syngas), and is considered a cleaner option as compared to burning coal and has diversified the use of coal in other forms of energy.

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## Cabinet Approvals on 1st February 2024

On February 1, 2024, the Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi approved the following schemes and initiatives:

- **i.** Extension of Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund (AHIDF).
- **ii.** Extension of Scheme of Sugar Subsidy for Antyodya Anna Yojna (AAY) Families under the Public Distribution Scheme (PDS).
- **iii.** Continuation of Scheme for Rebate of State and Central Taxes and Levies for export of Apparel/Garments.
- **iv.** Approves marketing margin for the supply of Domestic gas to Fertilizer (Urea) for the Period May 2009 – November 2015.
- **v.** Signing and ratification of the Bilateral Investment Treaty between India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

**Cabinet approves Extension of AHIDF:**

The Union Cabinet Chaired by PM Modi approved the continuation of the Animal Husbandry Infrastructure
Development Fund (AHIDF) to be implemented under the Infrastructure Development Fund (IDF) for three years till 2025-26 with an outlay of Rs 29,610.25 crore.

**Key Points:**

- **i.** The Scheme will encourage investments in animal-based (Dairy and Meat) processing and diversification, Animal Feed Plant, breed multiplication farms, Agri-waste management, and veterinary vaccine/drug production facilities.
- **ii.** The scheme is expected to generate direct and indirect employment for 35 lakh people.

Eligible entities: Individuals, Private Companies, FPO(Farmer Producer Organizations), MSME(Micro,
Small and Medium Enterprise), and Section 8 companies.

**Benefits:**

- **i.** Government of India(GoI) will provide 3% interest subsidy for 8 years(including 2 years of moratorium) for loans up to 90% from scheduled banks and the National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC), the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), and The National Dairy Development Board (NDDB).
- **ii.** The government will also provide credit guarantees to the MSME and Dairy cooperatives up to 25% of the credit amount from the Credit Guarantee Fund of Rs 750 Crore.

**About AHIDF:**

- **i.** AHIDF is a Central Sector Scheme under the Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan stimulus package.
- **ii.** The Union Cabinet approved AHIDF in June 2020 with an initial corpus of Rs 15000 crore.

**Cabinet Approves Sugar Subsidy Scheme for AAY Families Under PDS**

The Union Cabinet chaired by the PM approved the extension of the Scheme of sugar subsidy for AAY
families distributed through the PDS for two more years till 31 March 2026.

**Key Points**

i. The scheme gives a subsidy of Rs 18.50 per kg per month of sugar to AAY families of participating States
ii. States have the responsibility to procure and distribute sugar to AAY families through PDS at the rate of One kg per family per month
iii. The scheme is expected to benefit about 1.89 crore AAY families in India
iv. During the 15th Finance Commission (from 2020-21 to 2025-26), the approval is expected to provide benefits worth more than Rs 1850 crore.

**Additional Information**

i. At present, GoI provides a free ration under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojna (PM-GKAY).
ii. Besides this 'Bharat Atta', 'Bharat Dal', and Tomatoes and Onions are provided at affordable prices to ensure sufficient food for citizens.
iv. About 3 Lakh Tons of Bharat Dal (Chana dal) and about 2.4 Lakh Ton of Bharat Atta have already been sold benefitting consumers.

**About AAY:**

Antyodya Anna Yojna (AAY) is a public distribution system scheme that was implemented in India in 2000.
Purpose: To provide food security to the people and end hunger in India.

## Continuation of Scheme for Rebate of State and Central Taxes and Levies for Export of Apparel/Garments.

The Union Cabinet chaired by the PM approved the extension of the Scheme for Rebate of State and Central Taxes and Levies **(RoSCTL)** for two years till **31st March 2026** for export of Apparel/Garments and Made-ups.

• This is the 2nd extension to the scheme, earlier it was extended till 31st March 2024 from 31st March 2020.

**Key Points**

The scheme is for exporters to reimburse taxes and duties paid by them such as value-added tax, coal cess, mandi tax, electricity duties, and fuel used for transportation, which are not exempted or refunded under any other existing mechanism.

• Indirect taxes on inputs as well as other unrefunded State & Central taxes and levies will be rebated or reimbursed through the scheme.

**Background**

The Ministry of Textiles notified the initial Rebate of State and Central Taxes and Levies (RoSCTL) scheme on 7th March 2019 to benefit the exporters that are not refunded through Goods and Services Tax(GST).

**Note:** The other textile products (excluding Chapters 61, 62, and 63) not covered under the RoSCTL, are eligible to avail of the benefits under RoDTEP(Remission of Duties and Taxes on Export) along with other products.

## Cabinet Approves Marketing Margin for Supply of Domestic Gas to Fertilizer(Urea) (May 2009 – November 2015)

The Union Cabinet chaired by PM Modi has given its approval for the determination of the Marketing Margin on the supply of domestic gas to Fertilizer (Urea) Units from May 1, 2009, to November 17, 2015.

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**Marketing Margin:**

Marketing Margin is charged by gas marketing companies from consumers over and above the cost of gas for taking on the additional risk and cost associated with marketing gas.

**Key Points:**

- **i.** Previously in 2015, the government determined the marketing margin on the supply of domestic gas to urea and Liquefied petroleum gas(LPG) producers.
- **ii.** This approval will provide additional capital to Urea Units for the component of marketing margins they paid during 1st May 2009 to 17th November 2015, based on the rates paid from 18th November 2015.
- **iii.** This will lead to self-sufficiency in fertilizers and increase investment in the gas infrastructure sector.

## Cabinet Approvals on 8th February 2024

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi approved the following schemes and initiatives on 8th February 2024.

- **i.** Approved Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kisan Samridhi Sah-Yojana (PM-MKSSY).
- **ii.** Approved Extension of Fisheries Infrastructure Development Fund (FIDF) for 3 years.
- **iii.** Telecom spectrum auctions at a base price of Rs 96,317.65 crore.

**Cabinet Approved PM-MKSSY for Fisheries Sector Micro & Small Enterprises**

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The Union Cabinet chaired by PM Modi approved the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kisan Samridhi SahYojana (PM-MKSSY) a Central Sector sub-scheme under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY).

The scheme aims to formalize the fisheries sector and support the fisheries micro and small enterprises over the next 4 years (FY 2023-24 to FY 2026-27) in all States/Union Territories (UTs)

**Expenditure:**

i. The estimated outlay of the scheme is Rs 6000 crores. This consists of 50%(RS 3000 crore) public finance including the World Bank and the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) external financing.
ii. The remaining 50% is the expected investment from the beneficiaries / private sector leverage. The targeted beneficiaries include,

• people directly engaged in the fisheries value chain(Fishers, Fish (Aquaculture) Farmers, Fish workers, Fish Vendors).
• Micro and small enterprises(Limited Liability Partnerships (LLPs), Self Help Groups (SHGs), cooperatives, Fish Farmers Producer Organizations (FFPOs), and startups), registered in India.
• Department of Fisheries under Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying.

**Benefits:**

i. Formalise the fisheries sector and enhance access to institutional credit. This will benefit around 6.4lakh micro-enterprises and 5,500 fisheries cooperatives.

ii. Create a National Fisheries Digital Platform and provide work-based identities to 40 lakh small and micro-enterprises.
iii. Promote environment and sustainability initiatives, and address aquaculture crop losses through insurance coverage.
iv. This will create 1.7 lakh new jobs, with a special focus on employing 75,000 women.
v. This will also generate 5.4 lakh continued employment opportunities in the micro and small enterprises value chain.

**Major components:**

**Component 1-A:** Formalization of the fisheries sector and facilitating access of fisheries microenterprises to Government of India programs for working capital financing:

i. NFDP will be created and stakeholders will be mobilized to register on it. This will offer financial ncentives, training, and support for project preparation, documentation, and strengthening of existing fisheries cooperative societies.

**Component 1-B: Facilitating the adoption of aquaculture insurance:**

i. The proposal is to provide insurance coverage for at least 1 lakh hectares of aquaculture farms and to incentivise farmers with a one-time incentive of 40% of the cost of the premium, subject to a limit of Rs 25000 per hectare of water spread area of the aqua farm.
ii. The maximum incentive payable to a single farmer will be Rs 1 lakh and the maximum farm size eligible for the incentive is 4 hectares
iii. Additional incentives of @10% will be provided to Scheduled Caste (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), and Women beneficiaries.

**Component 2: Supporting microenterprises to improve fisheries sector value chain efficiencies:**

Aims to improve efficiency by supporting 55,000 targeted micro and small enterprises in the fishery sector by incentivizing microenterprises to engage in production and job creation. This will be done through performance grants with measurable parameters.

**Component 3:** Adoption and expansion of fish and fishery product safety and quality assurance systems:
The proposal is to encourage safety and quality assurance systems for marketing fish and fishery products by offering performance grants based on measurable parameters.

**Performance Grants:**

| | General Category | SC, ST and Women |
|---|---|---|
| **Microenterprise** | shall not exceed 25% of the total investment or Rs 35 lakhs | shall not exceed 35% of total investment or Rs 45 lakhs |
| **Small Enterprise** | shall not exceed 25% of total investment or Rs 75 lakhs | shall not exceed 35% of total investment or Rs100 lakhs |

For Village-level organizations and Federations of Self-Help Groups (SHGs), FFPOs, and Cooperatives – not more than 35% of total investment or Rs 200 lakhs (whichever is lower)

**Component 4: Project management, monitoring, and reporting:**

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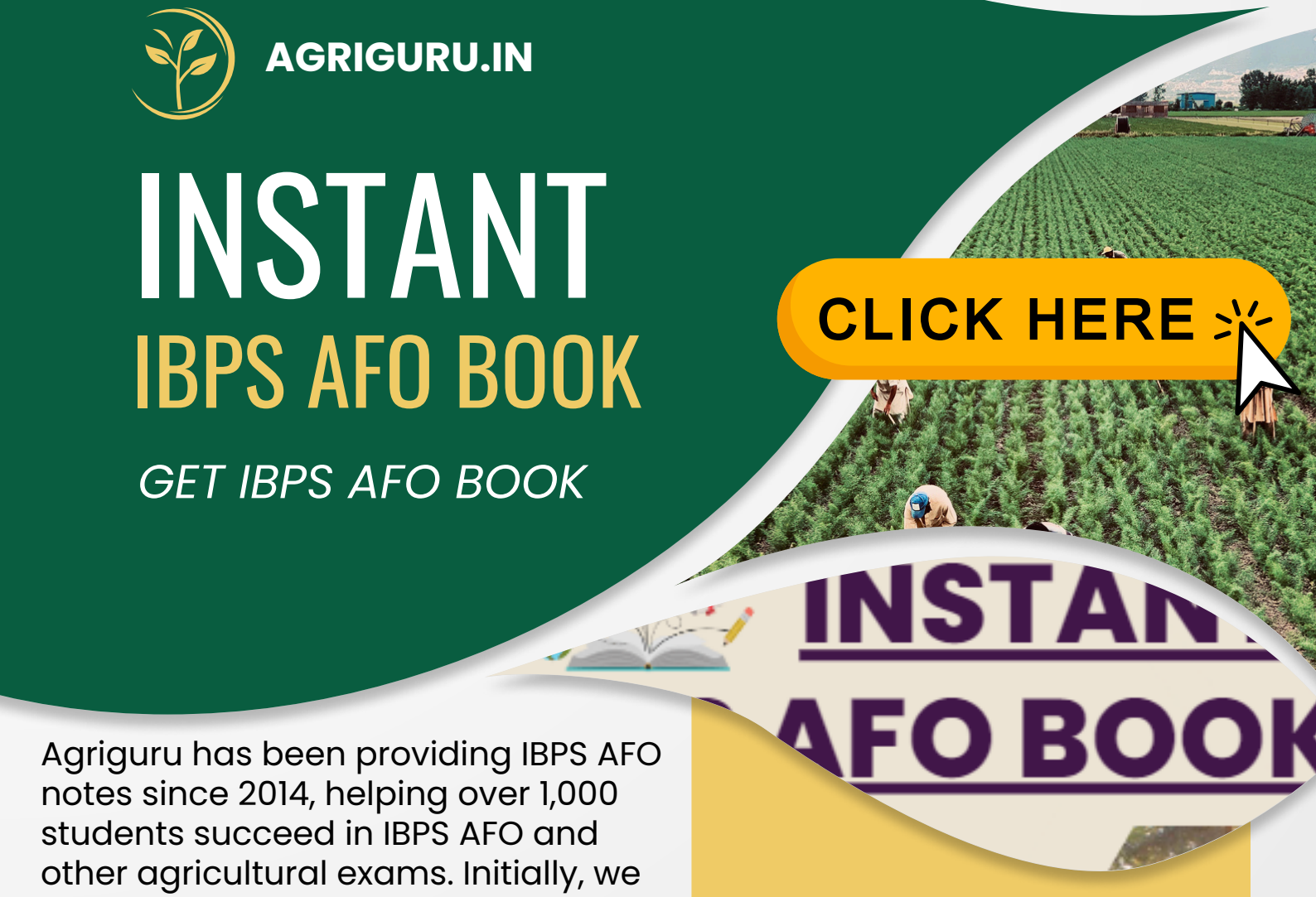
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