

21 Sep 2020: PIB Summary & Analysis

1. Minimum Support Prices (MSP) for Rabi Crops

Context:

Cabinet approves Minimum Support Prices (MSP) for Rabi Crops for marketing season 2021-22.

Details:

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has approved the increase in the MSPs for all mandated Rabi crops for the marketing season 2021-22.
- This increase in MSP is in line with the recommendations of the Swaminathan Commission.
 - Know more about the recommendations of the Swaminathan Commission at [CNA dated Oct 3, 2018](#).
- In view of nutritional requirements and changing dietary patterns and to achieve self-sufficiency in pulses and oilseeds production, the government has fixed relatively higher MSP for these crops.
- The increase in MSP for Rabi Crops is in line with the principle of fixing the MSPs at least 1.5 times of the All-India weighted average cost of production as announced in the Union Budget 2018-19.

Additional Information

National Conference for Rabi Campaign 2020

- India has three major growing seasons: Kharif, Rabi and summer, for cultivating a large number of cereal, pulse, oilseed and cash crops.
- Rabi is an important cropping season contributing to more than half of the crop productions.
- National conferences are held before every season to take stock of the preparedness and ensure timely availability of seed, fertilizers and other inputs.
- The Rabi Conference held in September 2020 set a target of 301 million tonnes of food grains production for 2020-21.

2. Rocket Launching Port

Context:

Setting up of country's second space rocket launching port by ISRO.

Details:

- The Union Minister of State for Space informed the Lok Sabha that the Tamil Nadu State Government has identified over 961 hectares in Thoothukudi district for the country's proposed second rocket launch port.
- At present, rockets are launched from the Indian Space Research Organisation spaceport at Sriharikota, near Chennai.
- The government has decided to set up a second facility in the backdrop of an increase in the number of launches by [ISRO](#) for domestic and international customers.
- The proposed site is in Thoothukudi's Kulasekarapattinam town.

- A rocket launch pad at Kulasekarapattinam will be close to the equator and hence ideal for putting satellites in polar orbit.
- ISRO has a Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre (LPSC) is at Mahendragiri in Tirunelveli district, Tamil Nadu where it assembles the second and fourth stages/engines for the PSLV.
- Instead of transporting the second and fourth stages to Sriharikota from Mahendragiri, it will be easier to shift them to the launch pad if it is built in Kulasekarapattinam which is around 100 km away.

3. Neutrino Observatory

Context:

Government to set up Neutrino Observatory in the country.

Details:

- India based Neutrino Observatory (INO) will observe neutrinos produced in the atmosphere of the Earth.
- This observation will tell us more about the properties of neutrino particles, whose main source is the Sun and the Earth's atmosphere.
- The neutrino detector will be a magnetized iron calorimeter, which will be the heaviest one made by any country.
- The site identified is in Bodi West Hills, in Theni district, Tamil Nadu.

What are neutrinos?

- Neutrinos are elusive subatomic particles created in a wide variety of nuclear processes.
- They carry no electrical charge.
- Of the four fundamental forces in the universe, neutrinos only interact with two — gravity and the weak force, which is responsible for the radioactive decay of atoms.
- Having nearly no mass, they zip through the cosmos at almost the speed of light.
- Countless neutrinos came into existence fractions of a second after the Big Bang. And new neutrinos are created all the time: in the nuclear hearts of stars, in particle accelerators and atomic reactors on Earth, during the explosive collapse of supernovas and when radioactive elements decay.
- Neutrinos are extremely difficult to detect because they have very little interaction with matter.

4. PM-AASHA

Know more about PM-AASHA in [PIB dated Sep 12, 2018](#) under the headline PM-AASHA.

Context:

The above information was given by the Union Agriculture Minister in the Lok Sabha.

5. Destination North East-2020

Context:

Union Minister unveils the Logo and song for festival “Destination North East-2020”.

About Destination North East-2020:

- it is a four-day event held in different cities in India to showcase and promote the north-eastern states of India.
- The festival showcases the culture, cuisine, tourist destinations and experiences of the north-east.
- The festival "Destination North East" has been held in different parts around the country for the last couple of years. It was held in Varanasi in 2019 and in Chandigarh the year before that.
- This year, however, the event can be attended while being at home as it will be conducted virtually because of the pandemic.

6. O-SMART Scheme

Context:

Ocean Services, Modelling, Applications, Resources and Technology (O-SMART) Scheme of the Ministry of Earth Sciences.

About the Scheme:

- The Cabinet had approved the O-SMART scheme in August 2019 to integrate a total of 16 sub-projects addressing ocean development activities such as Services, Technology, Resources, Observations and Science.
- Recognizing the importance of implementing schemes that are highly multi-disciplinary in the ocean sector keeping in mind national interests and international commitments, the Ministry had proposed to continue the existing schemes in a focused way as a part of the O-SMART umbrella scheme.
- **Objectives of the scheme:**
 - To generate and regularly update information on Marine Living Resources and their relationship with the physical environment in the Indian [Exclusive Economic Zone \(EEZ\)](#).
 - To periodically monitor levels of seawater pollutants for health assessment of coastal waters of India, to develop shoreline change maps for assessment of coastal erosion due to natural and anthropogenic activities.
 - To develop a wide range of state-of-the-art ocean observation systems for the acquisition of real-time data from the seas around India.
 - To generate and disseminate a suite of user-oriented ocean information, advisories, warnings, data and data products for the benefit of society.
 - To develop high-resolution models for ocean forecast and reanalysis system.
 - To develop algorithms for validation of satellite data for coastal research and to monitor changes in the coastal research.
 - To develop technologies to tap the marine bioresources, to generate freshwater and energy from the ocean, and develop underwater vehicles and technologies.
 - To establish a ballast water treatment facility.
 - To support operation and maintenance of 5 Research vessels for ocean survey/monitoring/technology demonstration programmes.

- To establish a state of the art seafront facility to cater to the testing and sea trial activities of ocean technology.
- And many similar activities.

7. Schemes for Indian researchers residing in foreign countries

Context:

Schemes of the **Ministry of Science & Technology** to provide attractive avenues and opportunities to Indian researchers residing in foreign countries to work in Indian Institutes and Universities.

Details:

- **Visiting Advanced Joint Research (VAJRA) Faculty Scheme:**
 - This Scheme is to bring overseas scientists and academicians including Non-resident Indians (NRI) and Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) to India to work in public-funded Institutions and Universities for a specific period of time.
 - The scheme offers adjunct/visiting faculty assignments to overseas scientists including Indian researchers to undertake high-quality collaborative research in cutting edge areas of science and technology with one or more Indian collaborators.
- **Ramanujan Fellowship:**
 - This Fellowship provides attractive avenues and opportunities to Indian researchers of high calibre, who are residing abroad, to work in Indian Institutes/Universities in all areas of Science, Engineering and Medicine.
 - It is directed to scientists and engineers below the age of 40 years, who want to return to India from abroad.
- **Ramalingaswami Re-entry Fellowship:**
 - The programme is to encourage scientists (Indian Nationals) working outside the country, who would like to return to India to pursue their research interests in Life Sciences, Modern Biology, Biotechnology, and other related areas.
- **Biomedical Research Career Programme (BRCP):**
 - This program provides an opportunity to early, intermediate and senior-level researchers to establish their research & academic career in Basic biomedical or Clinical & Public Health in India.
 - These fellowships are open to all eligible researchers who wish to relocate or continue to work in India.
- **Scientists/Technologists of Indian Origin (STIO) in Indian research Laboratory:**
 - There is a provision to appoint Scientists/Technologists of Indian Origin (STIO) on a contractual basis at Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) laboratories to nurture a research field in their area of expertise.
- **Senior Research Associateship (SRA) (Scientist's Pool Scheme):**
 - This scheme is primarily meant to provide temporary placement to highly qualified Indian scientists, engineers, technologists, and medical personnel returning from abroad, who are not holding any employment in India.
 - The Senior Research Associateship is not a regular appointment, but is a temporary facility to enable the Associate to do research/teaching in India while looking for a regular position.

