

## Target Prelims 2022 CNA 8th May 2022

### Pg 12. GS 3 (Economy)

## What are India's plans to avert a wheat crisis?

With procurement dipping, how will the government balance domestic supplies and rise in export demand?

VIKAS VASUDEVA  
DIKSHA MUNJAL

**The story so far:** On May 4, the government lowered its wheat production estimates by 5.7% to 105 million tonnes (MT) from the projected 111.32 MT for the crop year ending June. The production is expected to fall on account of unusually warm weather conditions that persisted during March to April in most parts of the key grain-producing States of Punjab, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh as well as Uttar Pradesh. Till May 4, wheat procurement in the ongoing winter (rabi) marketing season too had seen a drop, with the Centre procuring 17.5 MT of wheat, which is likely to touch 19.5 MT when the season ends. In the last marketing year, the government had purchased 43.3 MT of wheat from farmers, and this year it had set a target of 44.4 MT. The announcement came around the same time as a report by the World Food Programme, which said the "unfolding war in Ukraine" was likely to "exacerbate the already severe 2022 acute food insecurity forecasts" in countries.

**Why has wheat production dwindled?**

■ India is the second largest producer of wheat in the world, with China being the top producer and Russia the third largest – Ukraine is the world's eighth largest producer of wheat. After five straight years of a bumper wheat output, India has had to revise downwards its estimated production. Unprecedented heatwaves across the north, west and central parts of the country, and March and April being the hottest in over 100 years, have caused substantial loss to the yield at 6%, with 20% of the wheat grain shrivelling up. Some estimates have pegged the shrivelling as high as 80% of the crop purchased by the government. For instance, according to crop cutting experiments, conducted by the Punjab Agriculture Department every year, the State's yield per hectare could have fallen 5-10% compared to last year's yield. Food Secretary Sudhanshu Pandey attributed the lower estimates to "early summer" affecting the crop yields in States, especially Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh.

**What about government procurement?**

■ This year the government's wheat purchase has seen a dip owing to several reasons from lower yield to higher market prices being offered by private traders. A large quantity of wheat was being bought by traders at a higher rate than the minimum support price (MSP). Private traders have been prompted to buy more wheat from farmers as the price of wheat at the international level has shot up and is expected to rise due to the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine. In Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Gujarat, farmers are selling



**Not enough:** According to new guidelines, the gap left by wheat will be filled with an increased allocation of rice. •••

such as the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) introduced during the pandemic. The government has revised the grain allocation under PMGKAY for May to September 2022. According to the new guidelines, the FCI will fill the gap left by wheat with an increased allocation of rice. An additional 5.5 MT rice is being allocated to the States to fill the gap in supplying wheat grain. Mr. Pandey said rice procurement last year was about 60 MT and this year a similar quantity is expected. Under the National Food Security Act (NFSA), he said the annual requirement is roughly about 35 MT. Pointing out that from next year, fortified rice will be distributed to the entire Public Distribution System (PDS), he said with surplus rice stocks, the country is in a comfortable situation.

**Will domestic wheat prices be hit?**

■ As government wheat procurement has dipped, concerns are being raised about the stability of prices in the country and the availability of grain for internal consumption, which many agri-experts argue should be a priority. An agriculture domain expert and a former member of the Uttar Pradesh Planning Commission, Sudhir Panwar, points out that the government has to ensure that the market price for the domestic consumer is not determined by private players – "this can happen if one or two big business houses are buying chunk of the wheat crop." The key question, according to Mr. Panwar, is in a scenario where private traders start dictating the price in the domestic market, will the buffer stock be used under the Open Market Sale Scheme to control the market price or will it be used for the NFSA and other welfare schemes. The government has dismissed concerns about both prices and stocks, asserting that India is in a comfortable situation with the overall

body, opines that more private buying of wheat will help India expand the agri-export basket to new countries, riding the current crisis situation. This trade relationship will stay even when the global crisis is over, which means farmers will get about 10%-15% extra price as market prices are ruling above MSP.

The government has dismissed concerns about prices and stocks, asserting that India is in a comfortable situation with the overall availability of grain expected to be higher than the minimum requirement for the next one year

**What about export plans?**

■ Till now, 4 MT wheat has been contracted for export and about 1.1 MT has been exported in April 2022. After Egypt, Turkey has also given approval for the import of Indian wheat. India has been eyeing deals with new export markets in European Union countries too. Compared to record

wheat exports of 7.85 MT in the fiscal year 2021-22, the Centre had estimated exports of 12 MT for 2022-23, to cash in on the market rally in global prices following the Ukraine crisis. Global wheat prices rose nearly 50% since the start of this year as supplies from Russia, the number one wheat exporter, and Ukraine, number six, were hit. Despite the crop loss and revision of the output estimate, the Centre maintained that no curbs would be placed on wheat exports and that it was facilitating traders. Market observers estimate exports will be lower than projected earlier at about 10 MT amid low or damaged output.

**How is the global supply situation shaping up?**

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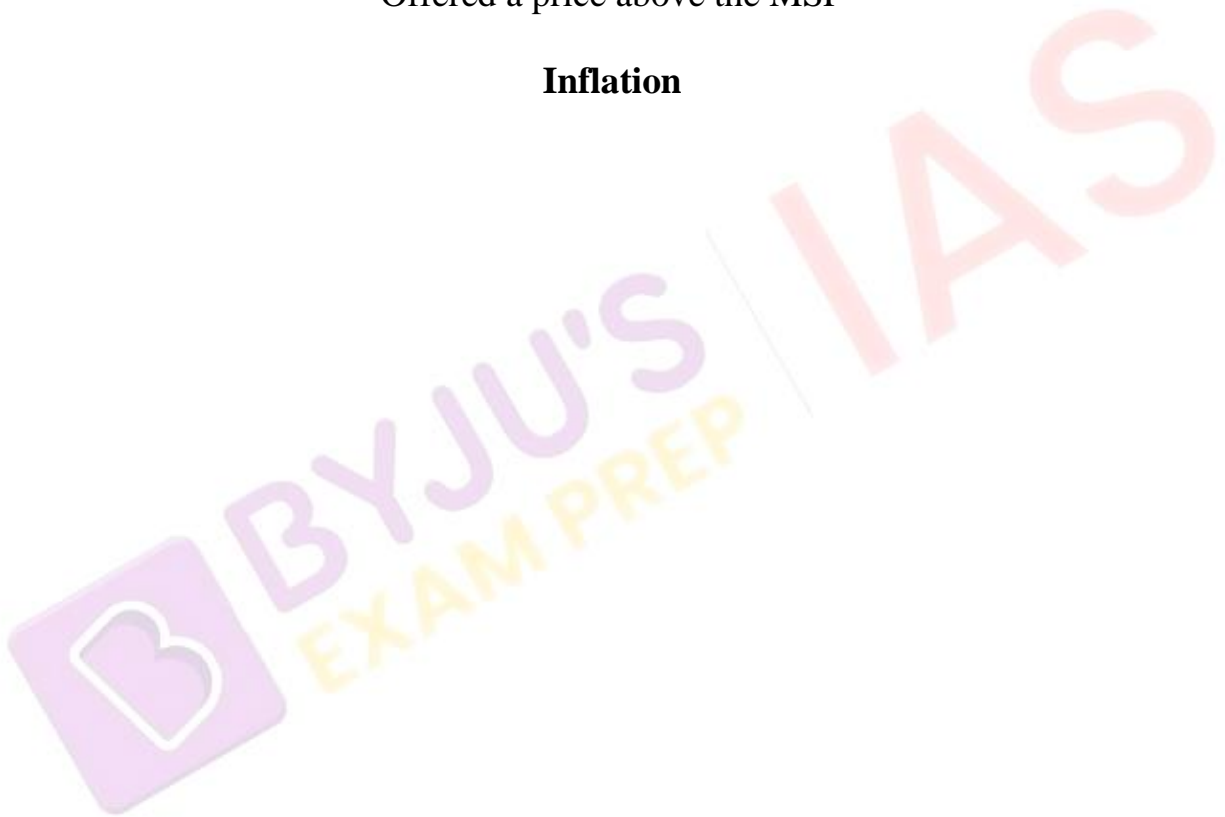
yield to higher market prices being offered by private traders

Wheat procurement is undertaken by the state-owned Food Corporation of India (FCI) and other agencies at MSP to meet the requirements under the Public Distribution System (PDS) and other welfare schemes such as the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) introduced during the pandemic

- ❑ An additional 5.5 MT rice is being allocated to the States to fill the gap in supplying wheat grain

India is in a comfortable situation with the overall availability of grains and stocks  
Offered a price above the MSP

### **Inflation**



## Pg 12. GS 2 (Health)

### Food labelling

What is the debate around the nutritional information packaging that the FSSAI has mooted?

JAGRITI CHANDRA

**The story so far:** The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) is expected to issue a draft regulation for labels on front of food packets that will inform consumers if a product is high in salt, sugar and fat. It is expected to propose a system under which stars will be assigned to a product, which has earned the ire of public health experts and consumer organisations who say it will be misleading and ineffective. Health experts are demanding that the FSSAI instead recommend the "warning label" system which has proven to have altered consumer behaviour.

Why do we need front-of-package labelling?

■ In the past three decades, the country's disease patterns have shifted. While mortality due to communicable, maternal, neonatal, and nutritional diseases has declined and India's population is living longer, non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and injuries are increasingly contributing to the overall disease burden. In 2016, NCDs accounted for 55% of premature death and disability in the country. Indians also have a disposition for excessive fat around the stomach and abdomen which leads to increased risk of cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes. According to the National Family Health Survey-5 (2019-2021), 47.7% of men and 56.7% of women have high risk waist-to-hip ratio. An increased consumption of packaged and junk food has also led to a double burden of undernutrition and overnutrition among children. Over half of the children and adolescents, whether under-nourished or with

normal weight, are at risk of cardiovascular diseases, according to an analysis by the Comprehensive National Nutrition Survey in India (2016-2018). Reducing sugar, salt, and fat is among the best ways to prevent non-communicable diseases. While the FSSAI requires mandatory disclosure on food packets, this appears on the back of a packet and is difficult to interpret

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Reducing sugar, salt, and fat is among the best ways to prevent and control non-communicable diseases. While the FSSAI requires mandatory disclosure of nutrition information on food packets, this is located on the back of a packet and is



Draft regulation for labels  
in front of food packets

- While mortality due to **communicable, maternal, neonatal, and nutritional diseases** has declined and India's population is living longer, **Non-communicable Diseases (NCDs)** and injuries are increasingly contributing to the overall disease burden.
- In 2016, NCDs accounted for 55% of premature death and disability in the country. Indians also have a disposition for excessive fat around the stomach and abdomen which leads to increased risk of cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes.
- According to the National Family Health Survey-5 (2019-2021), 47.7% of men and 56.7% of women have **high risk waist-to-hip ratio**.

- Whether a food product was high in sugar, salt and fat;
- That the implementation will be voluntary for a period of four years before it is made mandatory; and
- That the health-star rating system would be used as labels
- The **food industry** agreed with the FSSAI's decision on the issue of mandatory implementation and use of ratings, and sought more time to study the issue of thresholds.
- The **World Health Organization representative** said the thresholds levels were lenient,
- The consumer organisations opposed all three decisions

In a health-star rating system, introduced in 2014 in Australia and New Zealand, a product is assigned a certain number of stars using a calculator designed to **assess positive** (e.g., fruit, nut, protein content, etc) and **risk nutrients in food** (calories, saturated fat, total sugar, sodium)

“Warning labels” in Chile (which uses black octagonal or stop symbols) and Israel (a red label) for products high in sugar, salt and fat.

The ‘NutriScore’, used in France, presents a coloured scale of A to E, and the Multiple Traffic Light (MTL), used in the U.K. and other countries depict red (high), amber (medium) or green (low) lights to indicate the risk factors.



## Pg 9. GS 2 (Polity)

### SC seeks govt. view on making sports a right

Report seeks physical literacy mission

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has asked the Centre and States to respond to a report recommending sports to be expressly made a fundamental right under Article 21 of the Constitution.

A report submitted by the *amicus curiae*, senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan, suggested that the "narrow" phrase "sport" be replaced by "physical literacy", which is a term "firmly established as a right in the leading sporting nations of the world".

A Bench led by Justice L. Nageswara Rao has directed the Centre to respond to the report's view to establish a National Physical Literacy Mission to "give effect to the right by establishing and implementing a responsibilities matrix that includes curriculum design, compliance monitoring, and review, grievance redress and self-correction mechanisms", which starts at the school level to groom children for various sports.

"All school boards, including CBSE, ICSE, State Boards, IB, IGCSE, should be directed to ensure that from the academic year, at least 90 minutes of every



school day will be dedicated to free play and games," Mr. Sankaranarayanan's report in the apex court recommended.

#### Time given

The report suggested that State governments ought to ensure that from the current academic year, "all non-residential colleges and schools should compulsorily allow access during non-working hours to neighbourhood children to use sports facilities for free, subject to basic norms of identification, security and care". The report opined that 180 days' time should be given to educational institutions to publish a physical literacy policy.

The report was filed on a PIL plea moved by Kanishka Pandey to amend the Constitution to make sports a fundamental right.

#### PIL

It sought directions to the Centre and all states to make sports a part of the fundamental rights as well as ensure promotion of sports education in the country. Court appointed an amicus to assist it and suggest measures to deal with the issue.

One of the suggestions was "**physical literacy to be recognised as a fundamental right** protected by Article 21 (protection of life and liberty) of the Constitution".

#### National Physical Literacy Mission (NLPM)

It also sought a direction to ensure that all non-residential colleges and schools shall compulsorily allow **access during non-working hours to the neighbourhood children to use their playgrounds and sports facilities** for free from the academic year commencing from 2022.

All school boards, including CBSE, ICSE, State Boards, IB, IGCSE, should be directed to ensure that from the academic year , at least 90 minutes of every school day will be dedicated to free play and games

The Amicus has submitted that the Court may direct the Ministry of Education, through the Department of School Education and Literacy, to form an empowered committee or working group consisting of senior officers from key line ministries, and independent experts from the fields of education, health, disability, sports and movement.

### UNESCO- International Charter of Physical Education and Sport

wholesome personality development

Playing a sport regularly can help keep the body active

Discipline

Team

Playing sports allows children to exhibit leadership skills and qualities.

Pg 11. GS 1 (Geography)

# Is La Nina a fair weather friend of our country?

It has resulted in long spells of heatwaves across India

JACOB KOSHY

In most years, meteorologists consider the La Nina to be a friend of India. The phenomenon associated with below normal sea surface temperatures in the eastern and central Pacific Ocean, makes the summer monsoon wetter and the winter colder unlike its evil twin, the El Nino, or a warming phenomenon that frequently dries up monsoon rains over India.

This year, however, the La Nina is being blamed for worsening perhaps the longest spell of heatwaves from March to April in north, west and Central India.

## Periodic pattern

Formally known as the El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO), the La Nina-El Niño phenomenon follows a periodic pattern that roughly lasts three years.

During a La Nina winter, a north-south pressure pat-

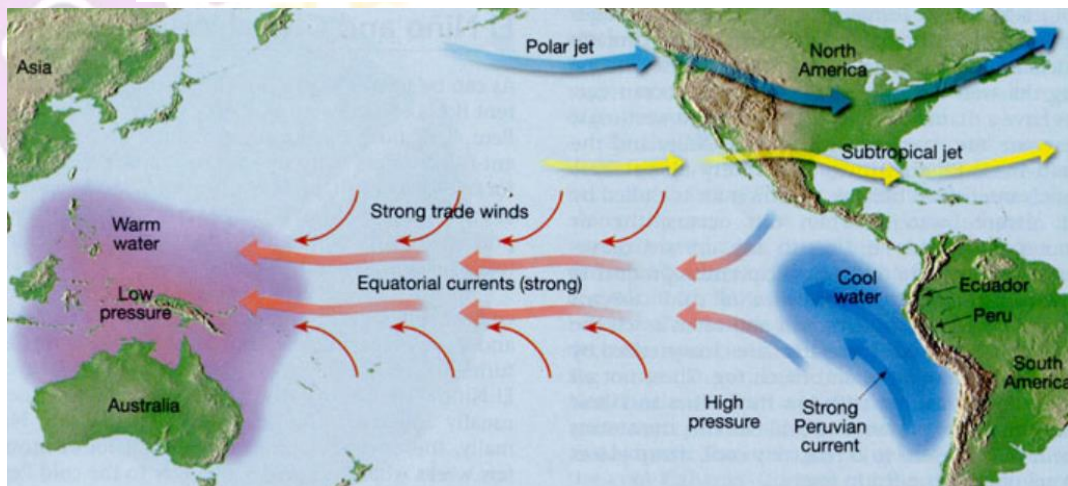
tern sets up over India and normally this influences the trade winds that bring rains to India. However, because the La Nina didn't peak, the sea surface temperatures continued to be cold and this drove hot westerly winds and blasts of hot air from the Middle East into Pakistan and India.

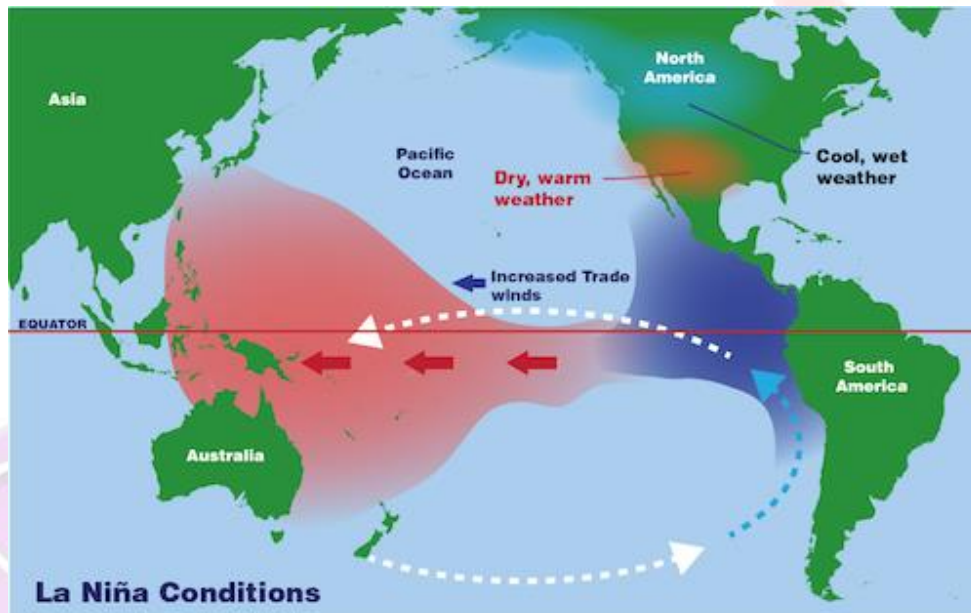
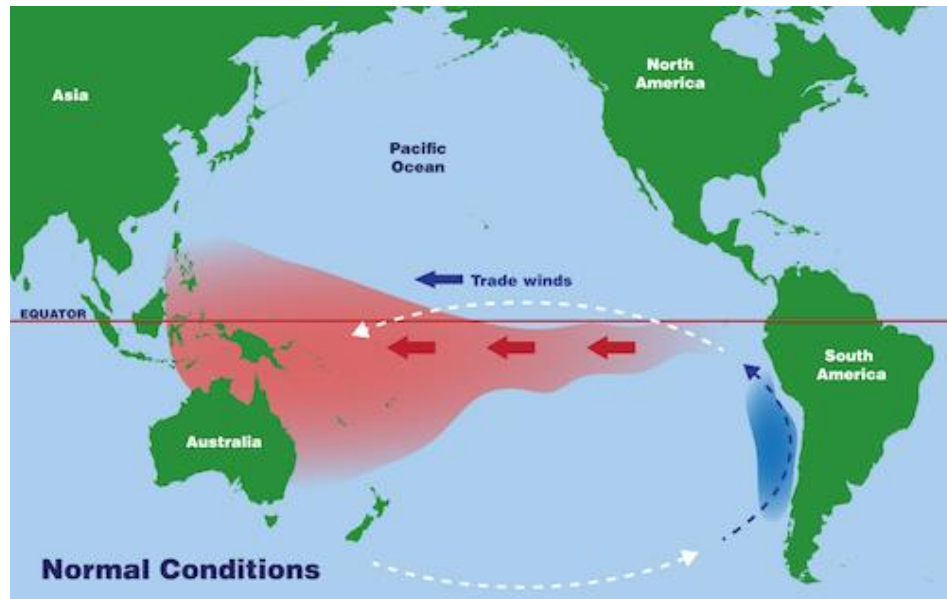
"The north-south pressure pattern has been persisting over India, with La Nina extending its stay over the Pacific. This has definitely impacted the weather over India, which has been seen even during 1998-2000 when La Nina had persisted for three years," Raghu Murtugudde, Professor, Department of Atmospheric and Oceanic Science, University of Maryland told Climate Trends, a communications firm that specialises in climate and environment.

While land temperatures over India begin rising in March, they are usually punctuated by western dis-

turbances, or moisture from the Mediterranean region that fall as rain over north and western India. For these currents to make it as far as India, they need a significant difference in temperature between Europe and the latitudes over India. "Partly due to La Nina, this temperature difference was absent and so the western disturbances that came to India were weak with hardly any rain," M. Ravichandran, Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences and climate scientist, told *The Hindu*.

According to a 2021 report by the Ministry of Earth Sciences, 'Assessment of Climate Change over the Indian Region', all India averaged frequency of summer heatwaves is expected to rise to about 2.5 events per season by the mid-21st century, with a further slight rise to about 3.0 events by the end of 21st century under current trajectory of greenhouse gas emission.







### Mains Practice Questions

**Q.1 Wheat production is expected to fall on account of unusually warm weather conditions. Discuss the measures taken by the government to balance domestic supplies and rise in export demand?**

**(10 Marks, 150 Words) (Economy)**

**Q.2 Front-of-pack nutrition labelling is widely considered to be a powerful and simple tool for discouraging consumption of processed foods. Comment.**

**(10 Marks, 150 Words) (Health)**

