

AIR Spotlight: World's Largest Grain Storage Plan

AIR Spotlight is an insightful program featured daily on the All India Radio News on air. In this program, many eminent panellists discuss issues of importance which can be quite helpful in [IAS exam](#) preparation.

This article is about the discussion on: ‘**Cabinet Decisions: World's Largest Grain Storage Plan**’.

Participants:

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Context - The Union Cabinet approved three major decisions - the world's largest grain storage plan, CITIIS 2.0 and to establish a regional office of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) in New Delhi.

World's Largest Grain Storage Plan

The Union Cabinet granted sanction for the constitution and empowerment of an Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) for the facilitation of the ‘World's Largest Grain Storage Plan’ in the cooperative sector with an outlay of around Rs 1 lakh crore.

- Under the plan there will be a convergence of eight ongoing schemes of three ministries - the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, the Ministry of Food Processing Industries and the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution.
- It will be implemented as a pilot project in at least 10 selected districts of different States and UTs in the country and the learnings will be suitably incorporated for the country-wide implementation of the project.
- The Ministry of Cooperation will be the nodal ministry for the implementation of the plan.

Benefits of the project -

The overall food grain production in the country is around 3,100 lakh tonnes and the storage capacity is just 1450 lakh tonnes, i.e., only about 47% of the total output. So, there is an immense need to increase the storage capacity and the GoI has decided to set up almost 700 lakh tonnes worth of storage facilities under the cooperative system over the next five years.

- Lack of agricultural storage capacity leads to wastage of food grains and farmers are forced to sell their crops at low prices. Many of the states/UTs are facing a shortage of storage facilities e.g. West Bengal has only 21% of the total capacity required, and Bihar has just 25-26% of the capacity available. With this decision, farmers will get modern grain storage facilities in their

blocks through PACS ([Primary Agriculture Credit Society](#)) and will be able to get fair prices for their produce.

- A godown of 2000 tonne capacity will be established in each block.
- The plan aims to address not just the shortage of agricultural storage infrastructure in the country by facilitating the establishment of godowns at the level of PACS, but would also enable PACS to undertake various other activities, such as functioning as procurement centres for state agencies/Food Corporation of India ([FCI](#)), serving as Fair Price Shops (FPS) and setting up custom hiring centres and common processing units.
- Creation and modernization of infrastructure at the level of PACS will reduce food grain wastage by creating sufficient storage capacity, strengthening the food security of the country and enabling farmers to realise better prices for their crops.

CITIIS 2.0-

The Union Cabinet also approved the second phase of the City Investments to Innovate, Integrate and Sustain 2.0 (CITIIS 2.0), a programme under the ambit of the [Smart Cities Mission](#), which aims to promote integrated waste management and climate-oriented reform actions.

- CITIIS 2.0 is a program conceived by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) in partnership with the French Development Agency (AFD), Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW), the European Union (EU), and National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA).
- The program will run for a period of four years, i.e., from 2023 to 2027.
- The program envisages supporting competitively selected projects promoting a circular economy with a focus on integrated waste management at the city level, climate-oriented reform actions at the State level, and institutional strengthening and knowledge dissemination at the national level.
- A circular economy focuses on minimising waste while maximising utilisation and calls for a production model aiming to retain the most value to create a system that promotes sustainability, longevity, reuse, and recycling. A circular economy can lead to the emergence of more sustainable production and consumption patterns.
- CITIIS 2.0 will be implemented in 18 cities which would be selected based on competition.
- CITIIS 2.0 will contribute to India's Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC) and [COP26](#) commitments.

Regional Office of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) in New Delhi

The Union Cabinet also approved the establishment of a Regional Office of the Universal Postal Union ([UPU](#)) in New Delhi, India to undertake UPU's development cooperation and technical assistance activities in the region by entering into an agreement with UPU.

- This initiative will have far-reaching benefits not only for India but for the countries in the Asia-Pacific region. The establishment of the UPU regional office will expand India's diplomatic

footprint, strengthen its relationship with other countries, especially in the Asia-Pacific region and enhance its presence in global postal forums.

India GDP Q4 Growth-

The National Statistical Office (NSO) released the quarterly estimates of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for the quarter of January -March (2022-2023).

- The country's gross domestic product or GDP grew by 6.1 percent in the fourth quarter of the fiscal year 2022-23. For the entire FY23, the growth rate came in at 7.2 percent.
- The GDP growth rate surprised by being significantly higher than expected for the fourth quarter, taking the full-year number to 7.2% in 2022-23.
- Growth was led by higher-than-expected agriculture growth and strong growth in services. This validates the growth optimism for India, despite global headwinds.