Prelim Bits 14-09-2021 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

Minimum Support Price for Rabi Crops

Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has approved the increase in the Minimum Support Prices (MSP) for all designated Rabi crops for Rabi Marketing Season (RMS) 2022-23, when in advance of the sowing season.

- Normally MSP for Rabi season was announced in October. But this announcement has been advanced to September since last year.
- MSP approved for designated Rabi Crops for 2022-23 during RMS is higher or equal to 1.5 times of cost of production.

Minimum Support Price

- MSP is an integral component of Agriculture Price Policy and it targets to ensure support price to farmers and affordable prices to the consumer.
- The Government of India declares MSP for agricultural crops such as Cereal, Pulses, Oilseeds and commercial crops every year at the beginning of the sowing season based on the,
    1. Views of State Governments and Central Ministries/ Departments concerned,
    2. Recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP).

  CACP is an attached office of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.

  It is an advisory body that came into existence in 1965 whose recommendations are not binding on the Government.

  Aside from fixing MSP, CACP also fixes Fair Remunerative Prices (FRP) for Sugarcane.

- Factors considered by CACP for fixing MSP include
    1. Cost of production,
    2. Domestic and international prices,
    3. Demand-supply conditions,
    4. Inter-crop price parity,
    5. Terms of trade between agricultural and non-agricultural sectors.
- **Crops** - MSP is announced for Kharif crops - Paddy, Jowar, Bajra, Ragi, Maize, Tur,/Arhar, Moong, Urad, Cotton, Groundnut, Sunflower Seed, Soyabean (yellow), Sesamum, nigerseed and cotton.
- MSP is announced for Rabi crops - Wheat, Barley, Gram, Masur, Rapeseeds & Mustard, Safflower and Toria.
- MSP is also announced for 2 other commercial crops - Copra and De-husked Coconut, and

Jute.
    - MSPs of toria and de-husked coconut are fixed on the basis of the MSPs of rapeseed/mustard and copra, respectively.

Procurement of Agriculture Produce

- In recent years, there is a manifold increase in the procurement of agriculture produce of designated crops on MSP by the Government of India in collaboration with the State Governments.
- Procurement of wheat and Paddy at MSP comes under Schemes implemented by Dept. of Food & Public Distribution (DFPD) through centralized and de-centralized procurement mechanism.
    - The procured Wheat and Paddy is utilized in distribution under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) and other welfare schemes under National Food Security Act (NFSA).
- Procurement of pulses and oilseeds is made at MSP as per the Schemes under PM-AASHA scheme of DA&FW.
- Procurement of Notified Pulses is done under Price support Scheme (PSS) by the Central Nodal Agencies through State designated Agencies during harvesting season.
- Since 2015, the procurement of Pulses is also done at MSP to maintain the National Buffer stock of Pulses under Price Stabilization Fund (PSF).
- Procurement of Coarse grains is done as per the existing DFPD scheme.
- Procurement of Cotton is done at MSP by the Cotton Corporation of India under the Scheme implemented by Ministry of Textiles.
- Procurement of Copra is done under PSS of the PM-AASHA in Copra producing States based on the receipt of the proposal.
- To know more about PM-AASHA, click here.

Climate Action & Finance Mobilization Dialogue

India and the USA launched the "Climate Action and Finance Mobilization Dialogue (CAFMD)".

- CAFMD was launched under India-US Climate and Clean Energy Agenda 2030 Partnership launched at the Leaders' Summit on Climate.
- It aims to advance inclusive and resilient economic development.

India-US Climate & Clean Energy Agenda 2030 Partnership

- It is a joint climate and clean energy initiative by India with the US.
- It will demonstrate how the world can align towards swift climate action with inclusive & resilient economic development by taking into account the national circumstances as well as sustainable development priorities.
- The objectives of the initiative are,
    1. To mobilise investments and speed clean energy deployment,
    2. To demonstrate & scale clean technologies needed to decarbonize sectors including industry, transportation, power, and buildings,
    3. Build capacity to measure, manage, and adapt to the risks of climate-related impacts,
    4. Enabling green collaborations in India in order to create templates of sustainable development for other developing countries.
- The Partnership will proceed along two main tracks:
    1. Strategic Clean Energy Partnership and
    2. Climate Action and Finance Mobilization Dialogue.

Precision-guided Sterile Insect Technique (pgSIT)

Researchers have created pgSIT system that restrains populations of mosquitoes that infect millions each year with debilitating diseases.

- The pgSIT will use CRISPR-based genetic engineering system to alter the Aedes aegypti mosquito's genes linked to
    1. Male fertility (creating sterile offspring) and
    2. Female flight (rendering female mosquitoes flightless).
- [Aedes aegypti is the mosquito species responsible for spreading diseases including dengue fever, chikungunya and Zika.]
- pgSIT is self-limiting and is not predicted to persist or spread in the environment.
- pgSIT eggs can be shipped to a location threatened by mosquito-borne disease or developed at an on-site facility that could produce the eggs for nearby deployment.
- Once the pgSIT eggs are released in the wild, sterile pgSIT males will emerge and mate with females, driving down the wild population.

Impacts of Thawing Permafrost

The latest IPCC report has warned that increasing global warming will result in reductions in Arctic permafrost.

> Permafrost is defined as Ground (Soil, rock and any included ice or organic material) that remained at or below zero degree Celsius for at least 2 consecutive years.
>
> It is spread across an area of over 23 million square kms, covering about 15% of the land area of the globe.

- Permafrost thawing will very rapidly impact the countries where **roads/ buildings were constructed on permafrost**. E.g.: Russian railways, Some roads in northwest Canada, etc
- If thawing begins, the **organic material** that is now entombed and frozen in the ground will become available for microbiota to break down.
- In some environments, the biota will **release carbon dioxide**, and in others **release methane** which is about 25 to 30 times more potent as a greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide.
    1. Total quantity of carbon buried in permafrost is about 1500 billion tonnes and the top 3 meters of the ground has 1000 billion tonnes.
    2. Currently, the world emits into the atmosphere approximately 10 billion tonnes of carbon a year.
    3. So, if the permafrost thaws and releases even only 1% of the frozen carbon in any one year, it can nullify anything that we do about industrial emissions.
- **New diseases -** It is not sure whether thawing permafrost can release new bacteria or viruses, or even cause another pandemic.
- When the permafrost was formed thousands of years ago, there weren't many humans who lived in that region which was necessarily very cold.
- The environment now is so much more suitable than during the Ice Age for not just human life, but also for microbes.

Source: PIB, The Hindu, The Indian Express

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