

UPSC Daily Current Affairs 10 Jun 2021

1. Centre announces hike in MSP for paddy, pulses, oilseeds

(Topic- GS Paper II –Governance, Source- The Hindu)

Why in the news?

- The Central government has hiked the minimum support price (MSP) for common paddy to ₹1,940 a quintal for the coming kharif season, less than 4% higher than last year's price of ₹1,868.
- The decision was taken by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs.

To encourage crop diversification

Better returns

The Minimum Support Prices for most Kharif crops have been increased for the 2021-22 season so that the returns over cost of production is at least 50%. The price list of select crops:

Crop	MSP 2021-22 (₹/ quintal)	Absolute increase in MSP (₹/ quintal)	Returns over cost (%)
Paddy (Common)	1,940	72	50
Bajra	2,250	100	85
Ragi	3,377	82	50
Maize	1,870	20	50
Tur (Arhar)	6,300	300	62
Moong	7,275	79	50
Urad	6,300	300	65
Groundnut	5,550	275	50
Sunflower seed	6,015	130	50

- In a bid to encourage crop diversification, there were slightly higher increases in the MSP for pulses, oilseeds and coarse cereals.
- Both tur and urad dal saw the MSP rise by ₹300, a 5% increase to ₹6,300 a quintal, while the highest absolute increase was for sesamum, whose MSP rose 6.6% to ₹7,307.
- Groundnut and niger seed saw an increase of ₹275 and ₹235 respectively. However, maize saw a minimal hike of just ₹20 to ₹1,870 a quintal.
- The MSP is the rate at which the government purchases crops from farmers, and is based on a calculation of at least one-and-a-half times the cost of production incurred by the farmers.

About Minimum Support Price

- The MSP is the rate at which the government buys grains from farmers.

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Major objectives of MSP

- To support the farmers' interest from distress sale.
- To procure food grains for the public distribution system.
- To provide stability in agriculture production.
- MSP may impact the market prices to some extent; however, MSP policy of the government does not aim to influence the market price of the crops.

Fixation of MSP

- The Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices, under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, estimates the MSP in the country.
- CACP recommends MSP for 22 crops and Fair & Remunerative Price (FRP) for sugarcane.
- For sugarcane, FRP is declared by the Department of Food & Public Distribution

Factors taken into consideration for fixing MSP include:

- a. Cost of cultivation,
- b. Demand and supply,
- c. Price trends in the market, both domestic and international,
- d. Inter-crop price parity,
- e. Terms of trade between agriculture and non-agriculture,
- f. A minimum of 50% as the margin over cost of production, and
- g. Likely implications of MSP (inflation) on consumers of that product

MSP Calculation

This MSP is usually estimated based on three types of calculation methods.

1. A2: Under this, MSP is set 50% higher than the amount farmers spend on farming including spending on seeds, fertilisers, pesticides, and labour.
2. A2+FL: It includes A2 plus an assigned value of unpaid family labour.
3. C2: Under C2, the estimated land rent and the cost of interest on the money taken for farming are added on top of A2+FL.

2. Quad vaccine 1 billion doses to Asian Countries

(Topic- GS Paper II –International relation, Source- The Hindu)

Why in the news?

- Recently, the Biden administration official has said the Quad groups of countries are on track to meet their goal of producing at least 1 billion vaccines for the Asia region by the end of 2022.

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About Quad Vaccine Partnership

- The Quad vaccine partnership was announced at a summit level meeting in March 2021, before the pandemic situation in India deteriorated significantly.

Key highlights Quad Vaccine Partnership

- Agreed to ensure “equitable” access to vaccines to counter the pandemic.
- Agreed to a plan to pool their financial resources, manufacturing capabilities and logistical strengths.
- Japan, USA and Australia will finance the vaccine initiative that India has welcomed.
- Appreciated the Vaccine Maitri initiative (India’s Vaccine Diplomacy) of India.

About the India’s “Vaccine Maitri” Initiative

- The Vaccine Maitri initiative was launched by India on January 20 to gift COVID-19 vaccines to neighbouring countries.

About the initiative

- Sri Lanka has received 5 lakh Covid-19 vaccines from India as a part of the “Vaccine Maitri” initiative.
- Consignment of vaccines has also been sent to Bahrain.
- India has already delivered over 5 million doses to seven countries in the neighbourhood under the initiative before Sri Lanka and Bahrain.
- The 7 countries are- the Maldives (100,000 vaccines), Bhutan (150,000 vaccines), Nepal (1 million vaccines), Bangladesh (2 million vaccines), Myanmar (1.5 million vaccines), Mauritius (100,000 vaccines), and Seychelles (50,000 vaccines).
- Commercial supplies of Covishield have also been sent to Morocco, Brazil, (2 million doses each), and Bangladesh (5 million doses).

Related Information

Vaccine diplomacy

- Vaccine diplomacy is the use of vaccines to improve a country's diplomatic relationship and influence of other countries.
- Vaccine diplomacy also "means a set of diplomatic measures taken to ensure access to the best practices in the development of potential vaccines, to enhance bilateral and/or multilateral cooperation between countries in conducting joint R&D, and, in the case of the announcement of production, to ensure the signing of a contract for the purchase of the vaccine at the shortest term.

3. US Senate Approves innovation Bill To Counter China

(Topic- GS Paper II –International relation, Source- The Hindu)

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Why in the news?

- Recently, the US Senate passed a sweeping industrial policy bill aimed at countering a surging economic threat from rival China, overcoming partisan divisions to support pumping more than \$170 billion into research and development.
- It is known as United States Innovation and Competition Act.

Focused key areas

- The proposal aims to address a number of technological areas in which the United States has fallen behind its Chinese competitors, including in semiconductor production.
- The Bill allocates \$52 billion in funding for a previously approved plan to increase domestic manufacturing of semiconductors.
- It also authorises \$120 billion over five years for activities at the National Science Foundation to advance priorities, including research and development in key areas such as artificial intelligence and quantum science.
- It also facilitates tie-ups between private firms and research universities.

4. Pakke Tiger Reserve's

(Topic- GS Paper III –Environment, Source- The Hindu)

Why in the news ?

- Recently, more than 200 contingency workers of the Pakke Tiger Reserve in Arunachal Pradesh went on an indefinite strike from June 9 over non-payment of wages since December 2020.

More on the news

Reserve unguarded

- The 862 sq.km. Tiger reserve in Pakke-Kessang district has been left unguarded as all the 202 workers, along with their eight elephants, converged at the tiger reserve's administrative office to demand wages pending for the last six months.
- Other than payment of wages of the staff under Project Tiger, the union has demanded regularisation of the Special Tiger Protection Force (STPF), an increase of wage last revised in 2018 to ₹11,000 per month and monthly payout instead of periodic disbursement.

About the Pakke Tiger Reserve

- It is also known as Pakhui Tiger Reserve, is a Project Tiger reserve in the Pakke Kessang district of Arunachal Pradesh in northeastern India.

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- Pakhui Wildlife Sanctuary is bounded to the north and west by the River Bhareli (known as Kameng in Arunachal Pradesh), to the east by the River Pakke and to the south by the Nameri National Park of Assam (an IBA).
- Doimara Reserve Forest (RF) lies to the west of Pakhui in the Kameng district, while Papum RF lies to the east of the Sanctuary in East Kameng district
- This Tiger Reserve has won India Biodiversity Award 2016 in the category of 'Conservation of threatened species' for its **Hornbill Nest Adoption Programme**.

5. Dihing Patkai is Assam's 7th National Park

(Topic- GS Paper III –Environment, Source- The Hindu)

Why in the news ?

- Recently, Dihing Patkai has become Assam's seventh National Park.

About Dihing Patkai National Park

- Dehing Patkai National Park is located in the Dibrugarh and Tinsukia districts of Assam.
- It was declared a wildlife sanctuary on 13 June 2004.
- The Dehing Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary was also declared as Dehing-Patkai Elephant Reserve under Project Elephant.

Related Information

- Recently, **Raimona reserve forest in lower Assam became the state's sixth national park.**

About Raimona reserve forest

RAIMONA
National Park

A Giant Step
by Govt of Assam towards fulfilling
UN vision of
Ecosystem Restoration

New national park in **BTR**

Declared on the occasion of
World Environment Day | June 5, 2021

Highest biodiversity rich forest belt

Location
Kachugaon forest division, Gossaigaon
sub-division, Kokrajhar district

Famous for
Golden Langur
the pride of Bodoland

Variety of species
Asian elephant, tiger, clouded
leopard, Indian gaur, wild
buffalo, spotted deer, hornbill,
more than 150 species of
butterflies, 170 species of birds,
380 species of plants, several
species of orchids

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- It is in the Kokrajhar district of Assam.
- The Raimona national park is surrounded by the Phipsoo Wildlife Sanctuary in Bhutan to its north, the Buxa Tiger Reserve in West Bengal to its west and the Manas National Park to its east.

Other five National Park in Assam

- Kaziranga National Park, Manas National Park, Nameri National Park, Dibru-Saikhowa National Park and Orang National Park are the five other existing national parks in the state.

Related Information

Golden Langur protection status

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- IUCN List of Threatened Species: Endangered
- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) : Appendix I
- Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 : Schedule I

6. El Salvador

(Topic- GS Paper III –Science and Technology, Source- Indian Express)

Why in the news?

- Recently, El Salvador, a small coastal country in Central America has become the first in the world to make Bitcoin, a digital currency, legal.
- The country was officially ‘dollarized’ in 2001 and runs on the monetary policy of the US Federal Reserve.

About El Salvador



- El Salvador, officially the Republic of El Salvador is a country in Central America.

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- It is bordered on the northeast by Honduras, on the northwest by Guatemala, and on the south by the Pacific Ocean.
- El Salvador's capital and largest city is San Salvador.

Related Information

Cryptocurrencies in India

- In 2018, the RBI issued a circular preventing all banks from dealing in cryptocurrencies.
- This circular was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in May 2020.
- Recently, the government has announced to introduce a bill; **Cryptocurrency and Regulation of Official Digital Currency Bill, 2021**, to create a sovereign digital currency and simultaneously ban all private cryptocurrencies.
- In India, the funds that have gone into the Indian blockchain start-ups account for less than 0.2% of the amount raised by the sector globally.
- The current approach towards cryptocurrencies makes it near-impossible for blockchain entrepreneurs and investors to acquire much economic benefit.

7. UN urges action to end AIDS, saying COVID-19 hurt progress

(Topic- GS Paper III –Health, Source- The Hindu)

Why in the news?

- The UN General Assembly overwhelmingly approved a declaration calling for urgent action to end AIDS by 2030.

More on the news

- The declaration commits the assembly's 193 member nations to implement the 18-page document, including reducing annual new HIV infections to under 370,000 and annual AIDS-related deaths to under 250,000 by 2025.
- It also calls for progress toward eliminating all forms of HIV-related stigma and discrimination and for urgent work toward an HIV vaccine and a cure for AIDS.

Related Information

- The **World AIDS Day is observed on 1st December every year all over the world.**
- Theme for 2020 World AIDS Day: “**Global solidarity, resilient HIV services.**”
- It was founded in 1988 by the World Health Organization (WHO) and was the first ever global health day with a motto of raising public awareness about Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS).

Key highlights

- AIDS is a pandemic disease caused by the infection of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), which damages the human immune system.

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- As per recently released 2019 HIV estimates by the National AIDS Control Organization (NACO)/Ministry of Health and Family Welfare with the technical support of UNAIDS there has been a 66.1% reduction in new HIV infections among children.
- There are 65.3% reduction in AIDS-related deaths in India over a nine-year period.
- The number of pregnant women living with HIV has reduced from 31,000 in 2010 to 20,000 in 2019.
- Overall, antenatal coverage has expanded, and HIV testing has increased over time and within target range.

90-90-90” targets for 2020

- It had to ensure that: 90% of people living with HIV are aware of their status, 90% of people diagnosed with HIV are receiving treatment, and 90% of all people receiving treatment have achieved viral suppression.

About Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS

- It is leading the global effort to end Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) as a public health threat by 2030 as part of the Sustainable Development Goals which was started in 1996.
- UNAIDS has a vision of zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths, and a principle of leaving no one behind.
- The UN Political declaration on ending AIDS was adopted in 2016 which seeks to end AIDS as a public health threat by 2030.

8. ‘Sea snot’ outbreak in Turkey

(Topic- GS Paper III –Environment, Source- The Hindu)

Why in the news?

- Recently, there has been growing environmental concern in Turkey over the accumulation of ‘sea snot’, a slimy layer of grey or green sludge in the country’s seas, which can cause considerable damage to the marine ecosystem.

More on the news

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- Turkey's Sea of Marmara, that connects the Black Sea to the Aegean Sea, has witnessed the largest outbreak of 'sea snot'.
- The sludge has also been spotted in the adjoining Black and Aegean seas.



Reason behind causing 'sea snot' in the seas of Turkey

- 'Sea snot' is marine mucilage that is formed when algae are overloaded with nutrients as a result of water pollution combined with the effects of climate change.
- The nutrient overload occurs when algae feast on warm weather caused by global warming. Water pollution adds to the problem.

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- Environmental experts have said that overproduction of phytoplankton caused by climate change and the uncontrolled dumping of household and industrial waste into the seas has led to the present crisis.

Not a new Phenomenon

- A 'sea snout' outbreak was first recorded in the country in 2007.
- It was also spotted in the Aegean Sea near Greece.
- But the current outbreak in the Sea of Marmara is by far the biggest in the country's history.

Affect the marine ecosystem

- The growth of the mucilage, which floats up on the surface of the sea like a brown phlegm, is posing a severe threat to the marine ecosystem of the country.
- Divers have said that it has caused mass deaths among the fish population, and also killed other aquatic organisms such as corals and sponges.
- The mucilage is now covering the surface of the sea and has also spread to 80-100 feet below the surface.
- If unchecked, this can collapse to the bottom and cover the sea floor, causing major damage to the marine ecosystem.

9. Aducanumab: The new drug for Alzheimer's disease

(Topic- GS Paper III –Science and Technology, Source- Indian Express)

Why in the news?

- Recently, Aducanumab, from the company Biogen, has been approved by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) — the first new medication for Alzheimer's to get FDA approval in nearly two decades.

What is Alzheimer's disease?



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- Dementia is an umbrella term for a range of conditions that involve a loss of cognitive functioning.
- Alzheimer's dementia is the most common type and involves plaques and tangles forming in the brain. Forgetfulness and memory problems are often early symptoms, but as the illness progresses, patients tend to become confused, may lose their way around familiar places, and have difficulties with planning and completing simple tasks.
- The disease is basically an accelerated ageing of certain neurons in the brain that are concerned with storage and processing of memory.

Reports

- According to World Health Organization (WHO) estimates for 2017, dementia affects approximately 50 million people worldwide, a number that is projected to grow to 82 million by 2030.
- In India, it is estimated that 5.3 million people (1 in 27) above the age of 60 have dementia in 2020, according to the Dementia in India 2020 report published by the Alzheimer's and Related Disorders Society of India.
- This is projected to rise to 7.6 million by 2030.

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