

1. PM fasal Bhima Yojana



Topic: Economy

In News: The Centre is open to taking “pro-farmer changes” in the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) to meet the challenges of recent climate crisis and rapid technological advances.

More on the Topic

- Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana is the flagship scheme of the government for agricultural insurance in India in line with the **One Nation-One Scheme** theme.
- The government of India in 2016, launched the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) replacing the earlier insurance schemes viz. Modified National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (**MNAIS**), Weather-based Crop Insurance scheme, and the National Agriculture Insurance Scheme (**NAIS**).
- Farmers including **sharecroppers and tenant farmers** growing notified crops in the notified areas are eligible for coverage.

Objectives of the Scheme:

- To provide **insurance coverage and financial support** to the farmers in the event of failure of any of the notified crop as a result of natural calamities, pests & diseases.
- To **stabilise the income of farmers** to ensure their continuance in farming.
- To encourage farmers to **adopt innovative and modern agricultural practices**.
- To ensure flow of **credit to the agriculture sector**.

Premium:

- There will be a **uniform premium of only 2% to be paid by farmers** for all Kharif crops and 1.5% for all Rabi crops.



- In the case of **annual commercial and horticultural crops**, the premium to be paid by farmers will be only 5%.
- The premium rates to be paid by farmers are very low and the balance premium will be paid by the Government to provide **full insured amount to the farmers against crop loss on account of natural calamities**.
- There is **no upper limit on Government subsidies**. Even if the balance premium is 90%, it will be borne by the Government.

Defence Relations:

- The first-ever Bilateral Maritime Exercise, **AUSINDEX 15**, was conducted in Visakhapatnam in 2015.
- 4th edition of **AUSTRAHIND** (Special Forces of Army Exercise) was held in 2019.

Issues Related to the Scheme:

- Many farmers are dissatisfied with both the level of compensation and delays in settlement.
- Lack of awareness among farmers on the correct methodology for reporting claims.
- Failure to forecast rainfall etc. hinders assessment of crop loss and delays payment.
- **The financial constraints of the state governments** and low claim ratio during normal seasons are the major reasons for non-implementation of the Scheme by many States.
- **Absence of Grievance Redressal Committees (GRCs)** to the farmers is a grave concern.
- **Insurance companies tend to charge high premiums** in order to ensure that claims do not exceed premiums collected. This is more common in areas more prone to crop loss.

Way Ahead Suggested by Parliamentary Committee:

- The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Agriculture had given several recommendations on reforming the Scheme. These include:
- (a) **Using technology and the coordination** of all institutional mechanisms to ensure faster claim settlement;
- (b) **Implementing timeline for settlement** of claims by insurance companies;
- (c) **Uploading the contact details of officials insurance companies** on the insurance portal so that they are accessible to farmers;
- (d) **Penalising defaulting insurance companies** in a time-bound manner;
- (e) **Ensure the formulation of GRCs in all States**. Nominate local public representatives (including Members of Parliament) in the Committees to ensure accountability.

Source: Indian Express

2. Lithium



Topic: Science and Technology

In News: India has sent a team of three geologists to Argentina “to assess potential lithium deposits” and possible acquisition opportunities in the Latin American nation.

More on the Topic:

- Lithium is the key component of batteries and other electronics including in rechargeable batteries (used in EVs) and energy storage solutions. While Australia is among the top six producers on the mineral globally.
- The other five are Bolivia, Argentina, Chile, the USA and China.

About the Lithium Triangle:

- Lithium is found in **cedemine rock formation and in brine form which is called salar in Argentina, Bolivia and Chile.**
- The other alternative is liquid form. Last year, Argentina and Chile produced about 30 per cent of the world’s lithium.
- The three nations, considered as the ‘lithium trinity’, together account for over 50 per cent of the world’s resource.

- Argentina is already witnessing substantial investment in the sector from international players, including China-backed firms.

How Lithium is processed in South America:

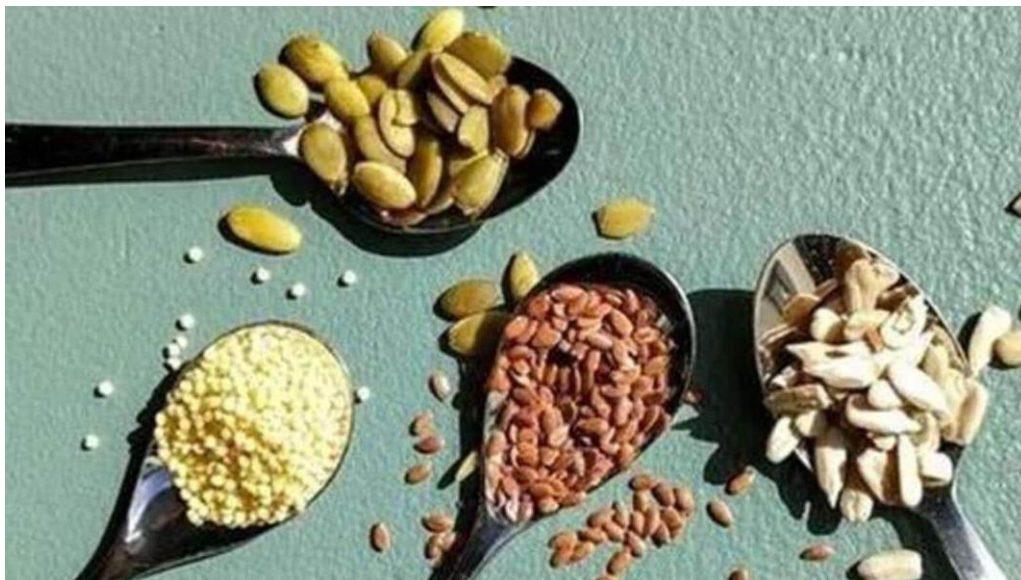
- In South America, lithium is typically extracted from the salt flats by pumping brine into ponds and processing the lithium salts that crystallise once the water has evaporated.
- It requires time and investment to set up, **but thereafter production is cheaper than the hard-rock mining practiced in Australia.**

About Lithium:

- It is a **soft, silvery-white metal**. Under standard conditions, it is the lightest metal and the lightest solid element.
- It is highly reactive and flammable, and must be stored in mineral oil. It is an alkali metal and a rare metal.
- Lithium's **single valence electron allows it to be a good conductor of electricity.**
- Lithium is a **key element for new technologies** and finds its use in **ceramics, glass, telecommunication and aerospace industries.**
- The well-known uses of Lithium are in **Lithium ion batteries, lubricating grease, high energy additive to rocket propellants, optical modulators for mobile phones and as convertor to tritium** used as a raw material for thermonuclear reactions i.e. fusion.

Source: PIB

3. International Year of Millets (IYOM) – 2023



Topic: International Relations



In News: Pre-launch celebration of the IYOM23 was organised by Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare and Ministry of External Affairs.

More on the Topic:

- **Millets** are a **highly varied group of small-seeded grasses, widely grown around the world as cereal crops or grains for fodder and human food.**
- International Year of Millets will **raise awareness about the contribution of millets** for Food Security and Nutrition, motivate stakeholders for continuous production and quality improvement of millets and attract attention to increase investment in research and development services.
- Asia and Africa are the major production and consumption centres of millet crops. India, Niger, Sudan and Nigeria are the major producer of millet.
- Jowar and Proso Millets (Common Millet) are the most cultivated millets in the 112 and 35 countries respectively. Sorghum and pearl millets covers more than 90% area and production. Remaining production comes from Ragi (Finger Millets), Cheena (Proso Millets), Foxtail Millets (Kangni) and other non-segregated millets.
- Climate friendly crop millet can be grown with **less water consumption, less carbon emission and even in drought.**

India and Millet:

- India is the major production country of Millet in which Kangni, Kutki or small millet, Kodon, Gangora or Barnyard, china and Brown top are included with Jowar, Bajra, Ragi and small millets.
- **Most of the states in India grow one or more millet crop species.**
- During the last 5 years, our country produced more than 13.71 to 18 million tonnes of millets with the highest production in 2020-21.
- For the year 2021-22, about 16 million tonnes millets have been produced in India, which is about **5 percent of the national food grain basket.**
- National Year of Millets celebrated in 2018.
- Millets notified as nutri-cereals and included under **POSHAN Mission Abhiyan.**

Source: Hindu

4. Buddhist Nyingma sect



Topic: Culture

In News: Buddhist Nyingma sect finds 'reincarnation' of famous Rinpoche.

More on the Topic:

- The Nyingma sect is **also known as the Red Hat sect** because its Lamas wear red robes and hats. Its teachings are mainly based on those of Padmasambhava, called Guru Rinpoche and Shantarakshita.
- Nyingma traditional histories consider **their teachings to trace back to the first Buddha Samantabhadra (Güntu Sangpo) and Indian mahasiddhas such as Garab Dorjé, Śrī Siṃha and Jñānasūtra.**
- Traditional sources trace the origin of the Nyingma order in Tibet to figures associated with the initial introduction of Buddhism in the 8th century, such as Padmasambhava, Yeshe Tsogyal, Vimalamitra, Vairotsana, Buddhaguhya and Shantaraksita.
- The most important teacher of **Nyingma sect is padmasambhava.**

Source: Indian Express

5. Competition Commission of India



Topic: Governance

In News: The central government has given the mandate to check Goods and Services Tax (GST) related profiteering by businesses to anti-trust watchdog Competition Commission of India (CCI).

More on the Topic:

- The Competition Commission of India (CCI) is the **chief national competition regulator in India.**
- It is a **statutory body within the Ministry of Corporate Affairs** and is responsible for enforcing the Competition Act, 2002 to promote competition and prevent activities that have an appreciable adverse effect on competition in India.
- The CCI looks into cases and investigates them if the same has a negative impact on competition.
- CCI also **approves combination under the act so that two merging entities do not overtake the market.**

Source: Business Standard

6. Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali

Topic: International Relations



In News: A utility helicopter unit from India will be deployed with the UN mission in Mali, providing "much-needed support" to the peacekeeping forces, amid recent announcements by multiple nations that they will withdraw troops from the mission.

More on the Topic:

- This mission was set up **to assist in the political processes of Mali and undertake numerous security-related tasks** within the conflict-hit country.
- It is tasked with **supporting the transitional authorities of Mali** in achieving the political stabilization and implementing the transitional roadmap.
- In 2014, the UNSC expanded the scope of the mission **to ensure security for the citizens**, supporting national political dialogue and reconciliation, assisting in the re-establishment of state authority, and protecting human rights in the country. portal will provide information on children from every district to smoothen the process of their repatriation and restoration.

Source: Business Standard