

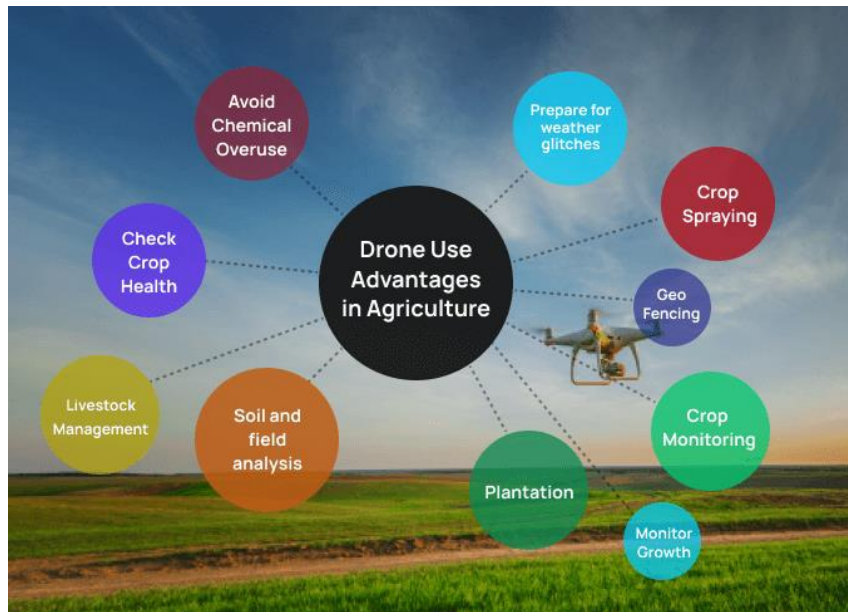


## Current Affairs of the Day

### Govt offers farm drones cheap to spur adoption

1. A range of incentives has opened up India's agriculture sector for the commercial use of drones. New federal guidelines for a scheme called Kisan Drone have provisioned substantial subsidies for farmers and organisations for unmanned aerial vehicles.
2. Drones could prove transformative, making farming smart and efficient, although experts say the costs involved are still high and prohibitive for smallholders.

3. Civil aviation minister Jyotiraditya Scindia launched a drone experience studio at the state-run think tank NITI Aayog. He unveiled two policies – Drone Shakti and Kisan Drone. The former seeks to spur adoption in non-farm sectors.



4. Technology should be welcomed in a country where farm incomes are low, about one-third of those of non-agricultural households. Yet, those actually using advanced technologies are less than 1%.

In manufacturing, technology has spread fast, a process called technology diffusion, data show. This is why, according to the World Bank's estimates cited by its president Jim Yong Kim in a 2016 speech, automation threatens 69% of today's jobs in India.



## Innovation stifled in Agriculture:

1. In agriculture, however, innovation is still bottled up at the top. The Kisan Drone scheme seeks to augment drone usage in three areas: land mapping, spraying of crop nutrients and remote monitoring of crops.
2. Farmers' producer organisations would be eligible to receive grants of up to 75% of the cost of the drone for forwarding demonstrations. The government will also offer ₹6,000 per hectare to implementing agencies that do not want to purchase drones but will hire drones for demonstrations.
3. These grants for the promotion of drone technologies will be available till March 2023.
4. Drone-hiring centres will also receive special funding to provide agricultural services through drones. This includes 40% of the basic cost of the drone and its attachments, or ₹4 lakh, whichever is lower.
5. To be eligible, hiring centres and hi-tech hubs would have to be established by cooperative societies of farmers and rural entrepreneurs. Graduates in agricultural sciences can establish hiring centres and will be eligible to receive 50% of the cost of a drone.

नागर विमानन मंत्रालय  
MINISTRY OF  
CIVIL AVIATION

**BIG BUDGET BOOST TO DRONE INDUSTRY**

**Drone Shakti & Kisaan Drones** will bring tremendous gains for farmers and many others in the grassroots level at a big scale



## BIG BUDGET BOOST TO INDUSTRY DRONE

After New Drone Rule in 2021 and PLI, '**Drone Shakti**' is another boost to the drone industry



Furthering AatmaNirbhar dream

**PLI Scheme for Automobiles and Drones**

myGov  
मेरी सरकार

Cabinet Decisions

15 Sep, 2021

## Drones flying higher

- Promote an upcoming technology
- Fresh investments of over ₹5,000 crore in 3 years
- Incremental production of over ₹1,500 crore
- Create over 10,000 jobs



## BIG BUDGET BOOST TO INDUSTRY DRONE



**Kisan Drones** will help in crop assessments, land records, spraying of insecticides



## BIG BUDGET BOOST TO INDUSTRY DRONE



Drone-based **surveillance** system is also being introduced for Railway Security.



## Govt extends wheat procurement operations and relaxes quality norms

1. The central government will continue to buy wheat till May 31 and has asked the Food Corporation of India and producing states such as Punjab and Haryana to keep procurement centres open.
2. The Centre has also relaxed quality norms, known as fair and average quality. The federal grain-handling agency will now procure shrivelled and broken grains up to 18% without any cut to the minimum support price of ₹2,015 per quintal (100kg), following widespread crop damage due to a severe heatwave in many wheat-growing states.
3. The decision to extend procurement follows requests by state governments to keep the process running. Many farmers are yet to sell their produce in anticipation of higher prices amid a global wheat shortage.
4. India clamped a ban on wheat exports, reversing its policy of freely sending shipments around the world to plug a global food shortage sparked by the Ukraine war. The move comes on the back of a shrunken harvest after a prolonged heatwave in March and a sharp rise in domestic food prices.

## Devasahayam Pillai becomes 1st Indian layman to be declared a saint by Pope

1. Devasahayam, an Indian man who converted to Christianity in the 18th century in the then kingdom of Travancore, was declared a saint by Pope Francis at the Vatican.
2. While preaching, he particularly insisted on the equality of all people, despite caste differences. This aroused the hatred of the higher classes, and he was arrested in 1749. After enduring increasing hardships, he received the crown of martyrdom when he was shot on 14 January 1752.
3. However, there was some confusion about Devasahayam's last name in the Vatican press release. While one added Devasahayam's last name as 'Pillai', the other named him Lazzarus Devasahayam.



4. In keeping with the Church and state rules, caste names are dropped after a person is anointed as a priest.

Devasahayam had taken the name 'Lazarus' after embracing Christianity in 1745 in Vadakankulam. According to the website of the Diocese of Kottar, 'Martyr' Devasahayam was born in 1712 at Nattalam in the present district of Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu. He was named Neelakandan and his surname 'Pillai' referred to his caste.

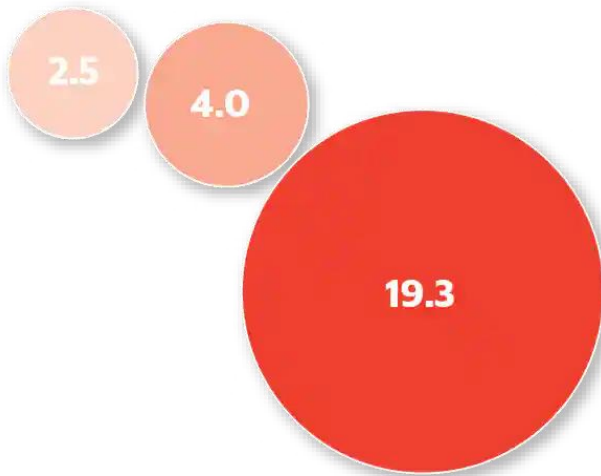
## Another U-turn on farm policy

### Soaring prices

The export ban came after food inflation in April soared to a record 8.38%.

**Change in %** ● Over 1 week ● Over 1 month ● Over 1 year

**Change in retail prices of wheat:**



**Change in retail prices of atta:**



Source: Department of consumer affairs

1. From talking about feeding the world if the World Trade Organization allowed Indian exports to ban wheat exports with immediate effect to check domestic prices, India's agricultural trade policy has done its usual volte face once again.
2. What led to the decision is not difficult to pinpoint. Global markets for wheat have suffered a massive supply shock due to the Russia-Ukraine war.



3. A double whammy of fertiliser shortages and a severe premature heatwave has badly hit the wheat crop yield in India and production is likely to end up being significantly lower than projections.
4. Higher market prices have led to a drop in government procurement of wheat, and stocks are running significantly low compared to the recent past. Allowing wheat exports would have generated more tailwinds for food inflation. Low procurement would have also made it difficult for the government to run its food security programmes smoothly.
5. India's wheat farmers have seen a sharp rise in their cost of cultivation due to rising input costs and a drop in yields. The latter has diminished net returns. By short-circuiting their attempts to exploit a strong export market, the government has once again sacrificed them at the altar of inflation management.

### **The long-term solution to this problem:**

Two principles must be accepted. If farmers are not allowed to exploit windfall market gains, then the government must not hold back in providing an adequate price cushion through hikes in Minimum Support Prices (MSPs). The government will have to show this commitment when it announces MSPs for the Kharif season. India also needs to overhaul its official crop information systems on an urgent basis. If the leadership had timely information about the shortfall in wheat output, this policy embarrassment could have been avoided.

### **Govt trims subsidies on LPG by up to 86% in three years**

1. Even as the price of a cooking gas cylinder continues to rise, breaching ₹1,000 for the first time this month, the government has reduced subsidies on it by as much as 86% in the past three years, from ₹29,628 crores in 2019-20 to an estimated ₹4,000 crore in the current financial year, official data show.
2. The subsidy on domestic liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) through direct benefit transfer (DBT) has been stopped in many markets, including Delhi, since May 2020, when it was priced at ₹581.50 per 14.2kg cylinder. It continues to subsidise additional transportation costs to consumers in remote areas, which is often less than ₹50 per cylinder, four people aware of the development said, requesting anonymity.



<b>MAINS DAWP</b>	<p>Q1. In manufacturing, technology has spread fast, a process called technology diffusion, same has not been the case with agriculture leading to low per capita income in agriculture. Comment.</p>
<b>MCQs</b>	<p>Q1. Which of the commercial crops are covered in the MSP regime?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Jute</li><li>2. Cotton</li><li>3. Sugarcane</li></ol> <p>Select the correct answer from the codes given below</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. 1 and 2 only</li><li>b. 2 and 3 only</li><li>c. 2 only</li><li>d. 1, 2 and 3</li></ol>