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Minimum Supporting Price

Context: Data from the Commission for Agricultural Costs & Prices (CACP) reveals that the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for wheat set by the government for the Rabi Marketing Season 2024-25 is Rs 2,275 per quintal, exceeding the C2 plus 50 per cent demand of farmers.

Findings of the study:

- Data from the Commission for Agricultural Costs & Prices (CACP) indicates that the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for wheat set by the government for the Rabi Marketing Season 2024-25 surpasses the demand of farmers, who have been advocating for a price equivalent to C2 plus 50 percent.
- The MSP for wheat, fixed by the Centre for the Rabi Marketing Season 2024-25, stands at Rs 2,275 per quintal, according to CACP reports.
- Farmers have long demanded a price equivalent to C2 plus 50 percent, where C2 represents the cost of production, including paid-out costs, imputed value of family labor, rental value of owned land, and interest on fixed capital.
- In significant wheat-producing states like Punjab and Madhya Pradesh, farmers are slated to receive prices higher than their demand, contributing to almost 35 percent of India's wheat production.
- The CACP bases its MSP recommendations on the formula A2+FL, which includes only paid-out costs incurred by farmers, resulting in a lower MSP compared to C2.
- For wheat in Punjab, the return over the C2 cost of production is projected at 51.36 percent, as per the CACP report, indicating a substantial profit margin for farmers.
 - Factors contributing to higher returns in Punjab include higher yields compared to the national average and projected wheat yields, making it a significant contributor to India's wheat production.

Minimum Support Price (MSP)

- **Definition:** MSP refers to the guaranteed amount paid to farmers by the government when their produce is purchased.
- **Role of CACP:**
 - The Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) recommends MSPs based on various factors such as production costs, demand and supply dynamics, market price trends, and inter-crop price parity.
 - CACP is an attached office of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, established in January 1965.
- **Final Decision:** The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by the Prime Minister, approves the level of MSPs.
- **Objective:** MSP aims to ensure remunerative prices for farmers and encourage crop diversification.

CROPS COVERED UNDER MSP

KHARIF CROPS (14)		RABI CROPS (7)		CALENDAR YEAR CROPS (4)	
1. Paddy		1. Wheat		1. Copra	
2. Jawar		2. Barley		2. De-husked Coconut	
3. Bajara		3. Gram		3. Jute	
4. Ragi		4. Masur		4. Sugar Cane (FRP)	
5. Maize		5. Rapeseed& Mustard			
6. Arhar		6. Safflower			
7. Moong		7. Torai			
8. Urad					
9. Cotton					
10. Ground Nuts					
11. Sunflower					
12. Soyabean					
13. Sesamum					
14. Nigerseed					

• CACP recommends MSP for 22 crops before the sowing period each year
 • MSP derived for Toria based on MSP for Rapeseeds and Mustard and for De-husked Coconut on the Basis of MSP of Copra.
 • Fair and Remunerative prices for Sugar is also declared

Crops Covered Under MSP

- CACP recommends MSPs for 22 mandated crops and Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP) for sugarcane.
- Mandated crops include 14 kharif season crops, 6 rabi crops, and 2 other commercial crops.

Three Types of Production Costs

- **A2:** Encompasses all paid-out costs directly incurred by farmers, including cash and kind expenses on seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, hired labor, leased-in land, fuel, and irrigation.
- **A2+FL:** Includes A2 costs along with an imputed value of unpaid family labor.
- **C2:** A comprehensive cost covering rentals and interest for owned land and fixed capital assets, in addition to A2+FL.
 - CACP considers both A2+FL and C2 costs while recommending MSP, but primarily uses C2 costs as benchmark reference costs to ensure MSPs cover these costs in major producing states.
- **Considerations for Return:** CACP calculates return based on A2+FL cost, while C2 costs serve as benchmark reference costs (opportunity costs) to assess if recommended MSPs cover production costs in key producing states.

Draft resolutions on the Atlas on animal migratory species

Context: Draft decisions on the Atlas on Animal Migration were submitted during the 14th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (COP14) on February 13.

Amendments to UN Environment Programme Reporting Burdens Proposed by EU at COP14: The European Union proposed amendments to the United Nations Environment Programme during the 14th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (COP14) held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, focusing on reporting burdens.

Development of Atlas on Animal Migration:

- COP11 included the development of an atlas on animal migration for migratory mammals in the Central Asian region and bird migration in the Eurasian-African region.
- Aimed to address historical changes in migration patterns and intentional killing of birds by humans.
- Included understanding migration seasons of hunted species and migration connectivity with the European-African migration system.

Importance of Mapping for Identifying Migration Patterns:

- Mapping needed to identify important sites for migratory species and understand migration patterns.
- Helps achieve objectives of the convention and global policy priorities such as the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

Encouragement for Utilization of Atlas Modules:

- Parties encouraged to use existing modules of the atlas on animal migration in policies, decision making, and management.
- Directed the Secretariat to further develop ongoing modules and promote the knowledge and use of existing modules.
- Directed to consider updating existing modules and improving their usability.

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- Secretariat directed to explore options for developing additional modules and improving availability of various modules of the atlas through scientific council and global database.

Draft Decisions on Seabird Maltreatment and Mutilation in Fisheries:

- COP14 made draft decisions on the maltreatment and mutilation of seabirds in fisheries.
- Directed parties bordering the southwest Atlantic Ocean to work with fisheries management agencies to address issues impacting seabird populations.
- Parties directed to prevent further injuries to threatened and at-risk migratory species in their Exclusive Economic Zones and inform.

State of Migratory Species 2024 Report Highlights:

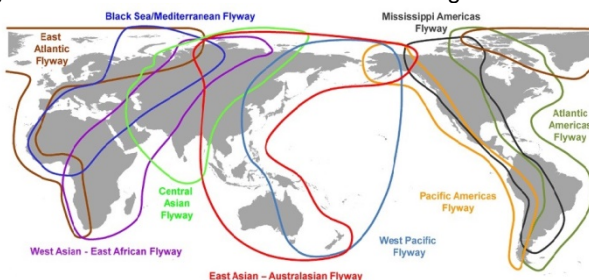
- Bycatch identified as one of the overexploitation factors posing serious threats to seabirds, especially albatrosses and petrels.
- Thousands of seabirds estimated to be killed by getting caught in longline and gillnet fisheries.
- Illegal killing claims about 11 million-36 million birds in the Mediterranean region alone and 1.7 million-4.6 million birds estimated to be taken in Arabian Peninsula, Iran, and Iraq.

Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)

- CMS, also known as the Bonn Convention, is an environmental treaty operating under the United Nations Environment Programme.
- Signed in Bonn, Germany, on 23 June 1979.
- Serves as a global platform for the conservation and sustainable use of migratory animals and their habitats.
- The only global and UN-based intergovernmental organization dedicated exclusively to the conservation and management of terrestrial, aquatic, and avian migratory species across their range.
- Parties to the convention recognise the importance of conserving migratory species, particularly those with unfavourable conservation statuses.
- Activities undertaken by CMS Parties may range from legally binding treaties (Agreements) to less formal instruments, such as Memoranda of Understanding.
- The Conference of Parties (COP) serves as the decision-making body of the convention.

CMS Appendices:

- CMS has two Appendices that list migratory species covered by the Convention.
- Appendix I includes endangered migratory species and imposes prohibitions on their take.
- Appendix II lists species with an unfavourable conservation status and encourages range states to develop range-wide agreements for their conservation and management.



India's Engagement with CMS:

- India has been a party to the CMS since 1983.
- Additionally, India has signed non-legally binding Memoranda of Understanding with CMS on the conservation and management of Siberian Cranes (1998), Marine Turtles (2007), Dugongs (2008), and Raptors (2016).

Halt on card-based commercial payments

Context: Following regulatory action against Paytm, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has instructed card networks Visa and Mastercard to prohibit card-based commercial payments facilitated by payment service providers and companies.

RBI Directive on Card-Based Commercial Payments: The RBI has instructed card networks Visa and Mastercard to bar card-based commercial payments facilitated by payment service providers and companies.

Reasons for the Directive:

- While the RBI has not officially announced the reasons for the directive, fintech companies in the segment suggest that such transactions are being conducted at unauthorized outlets.
- Many fintech firms are reportedly allowing customers to use their cards for payments like tuition fees and rentals, despite not being authorized to accept card payments. This may constitute a violation of the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007, as per banking sources.

Communication from Visa to Fintechs:

- Visa has communicated to fintechs requesting them to suspend all Business Payment Service Provider (BPSP) transactions until further notice.
- Visa warned that failure to comply with these instructions could lead to regulatory sanctions and non-compliance assessments under the Visa rules.

RBI's Regulatory Intent:

- The RBI aims to ensure that fintech players and service providers operate within the regulatory framework and prevent fraudulent or unauthorized transactions on digital platforms.
- There may be concerns related to Know Your Customer (KYC) compliance, as the central bank seeks to ensure full KYC compliance for all digital transactions.

Impact of Previous Regulatory Action: On January 31, the RBI barred Paytm from offering its core services, including accounts and wallets, citing various KYC and other issues.

Card Processing Networks:

- A card processing network is a financial organization that helps process card-based payments.
- Common card processing networks include Mastercard, Visa, Discover, American Express (AmEx), and UnionPay in China.
- These networks create the infrastructure for digital payments and set rules for accepting, authorizing, verifying, and approving card transactions.
- They're like railway companies laying down tracks, managing construction, setting rules, and ensuring order and safety in commerce.
- Previously, accepting payments from various networks was challenging, but now, with the rise of card usage, most merchants support major payment networks.
- Card issuers, often in partnership with airlines or retailers, create thousands of card products, including debit cards, credit cards, and gift cards, in association with these networks.

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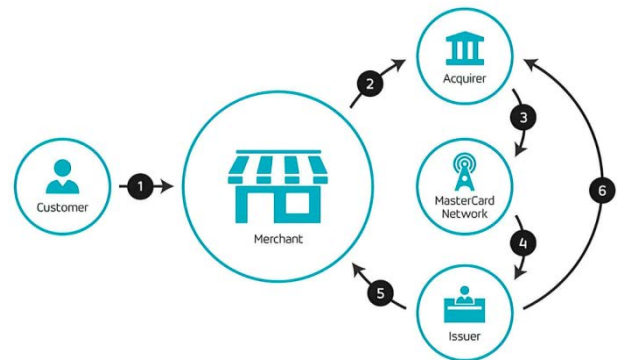
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- Visa, Mastercard, Discover, and AmEx form the PCI Security Standards Council (SSC), regulating and enforcing standards to protect cardholder information.
- These networks ensure a safe processing environment for cardholders, emphasizing both in-person and digital payments' security.
 - They not only facilitate payments but also establish rules and requirements for merchants to follow when accepting card payments.

How does a CPN work?

- Completing a transaction involves several steps and requires assistance from card processing networks and payment service providers.
- In-person card payments use physical POS systems, while digital payments utilize payment gateways.
- Payment processors connect merchants to card processing networks, while payment gateways facilitate communication between cardholders and merchants.
- Each participant in the transaction process must approve it for the transaction to be successful.
- When a customer makes a purchase, the request goes to their card issuer, who sends it to the processing network, then to the acquiring bank, and back to the issuer.
- Issuing banks provide accounts linked to cards and are responsible for authorizations and security standards.

- Acquiring banks receive payments from issuing banks and transfer them to merchants' accounts.
- In open networks like Visa and Mastercard, banks and processors vary in size and structure, while closed networks like American Express have all entities under one brand.
- Merchants should choose networks wisely to optimize the customer experience.
- Transaction flow involves steps like payment authentication, transaction submission, authorization request, authorization response, and merchant payment.



NEWS IN BETWEEN THE LINES

BAPS Temple



Recently, the Prime Minister of India inaugurated Abu Dhabi's first Hindu stone temple, emphasizing its significance as a symbol of the shared heritage of humanity.

About the Temple:

- The BAPS temple in Abu Dhabi was built by the **Bochasanwasi Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS)**, a Vaishnav sect of Hinduism.
- The temple is situated on a 27-acre site in **Abu Mreikhah**, near Al Rahba.
- Deities from diverse regions of India, including **Ram, Sita, Shiva, Parvati** and others, are depicted within the temple.
- Features elements from multiple civilizations, including **Mayan, Aztec, Egyptian, Arabic, European, Chinese and African cultures**, promoting cultural diversity.
- BAPS operates a global network of 1,550 temples and 3,850 centers worldwide, promoting cultural exchange and religious harmony.

e-Jagrti Portal



Recently, the Consumer Affairs Secretary emphasized that integrating artificial intelligence into the 'e-Jagrti' portal will aid in reducing the backlog of pending cases in consumer courts.

About e-Jagrti portal:

- The e-Jagrti Portal is an initiative of the **Department of Consumer Affairs, under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution**.
- It serves as a dedicated portal for consumer commissions, **facilitating the resolution of consumer disputes and grievances**.
- The portal is designed to improve the overall customer experience by providing a user-friendly interface and efficient dispute resolution mechanisms.
- It offers a **simple, fast and cost-effective software solution** for consumer dispute redressal at all levels.
- Its aim is to integrate various consumer grievance platforms, including the **Online Case Monitoring System (OCMS), E-Daakhil, National Consumer Dispute Redressal Commission (NCDRC) Case Monitoring System, CONFONET website** and mediation application.

American Horseshoe Crab

Recently, Environmental groups, including the Center for Biological Diversity, have petitioned the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) for the protection of endangered species American Horseshoe Crab.

About the American Horseshoe Crab:

- The American Horseshoe Crab (*Limulus polyphemus*) is a **marine arthropod**, not a true crab, belonging to the order Xiphosura.
- It has a distinctive **horseshoe-shaped shell, spiky tail** and blue blood containing copper-based hemocyanin.

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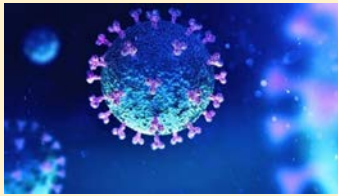


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- It is **considered a "living fossil,"** with ancestors dating back over 450 million years, making it one of the oldest living species on Earth.
- Pharmaceutical companies harvest horseshoe crabs for their **blue-colored blood**, containing a clotting agent used in testing drugs and medical devices for bacterial endotoxins.
- While regulations permit only partial blood extraction and release, **10-15%** of harvested horseshoe crabs die during this process.
- Its decline has negative consequences for migratory shorebirds like the **rufa red knot** (threatened species listing in **2014**), which depend on horseshoe crab eggs for sustenance during migration.
- Once abundant along the **U.S. mid-Atlantic and Gulf Coasts**, populations have plummeted, with a two-thirds decline in spawning numbers since **1990** in the Delaware Bay estuary.

Alskapox Virus



Recently, the health officials revealed that an elderly man from the remote Kenai Peninsula in Alaska has died from recently discovered Alskapox virus.

About Alskapox Virus:

- Poxviruse is a **brick-shaped viruse** with a complex internal structure and first identified in **Alaska, USA, in 2015**.
- It **belongs to the Orthopoxvirus genus**, which includes viruses like **smallpox, monkeypox and cowpox**.
- It primarily **affects small mammals with red-backed voles** and shrews being commonly identified hosts.
- Symptoms of Alskapox include **rash, swollen lymph nodes and joint or muscle pain**.
- It is speculated to be **zoonotic**, possibly transmitted from small mammals to humans.

Place in News

Madagascar

Recently, the Prime Minister of India met President of Republic of Madagascar on the sidelines of the World Governments Summit in Dubai 2024.

Madagascar (Capital: Antananarivo)

Location: Madagascar is an **island country** lying off the southeastern coast of Africa. It is the world's fourth largest island, the second-largest island country (after Indonesia) and the 44th largest country in the world.

Boundaries: Madagascar is surrounded by the **Indian Ocean** on all sides except for its western border, which lies along the **Mozambique Channel**.

Physical Features:

- The island's highest point is **Maromokotro Peak** situated in the Tsaratanana Massif.
- The island has several rivers, including the **Betsiboka, Mangoky and Onilahy** Rivers, which flow from the central highlands to the coast.
- Madagascar has several dormant and active volcanoes, including **Mount Ankaratra and Mount Tsiafajavona** in the central highlands.
- Madagascar experiences a diverse range of climates, including **tropical rainforest, tropical monsoon and semi-arid climates**.



POINTS TO PONDER

- Which region has been declared recently as the fourth Bio-Diversity Heritage Site (BHS) by Odisha? - **Gupteswar forest in Koraput district**
- Which fruit has been declared recently as the 'State Fruit' by the Assam government? - **Kaji Nemu**
- What was the original name of Polo in ancient India, which is believed to have originated in Manipur? - **Sagol Kangjei**
- ENIAC was the world's first programmable, electronic, digital computer. It was dedicated to the University of Pennsylvania on February 15, 1946. What does ENIAC stand for? - **Electronic Numerical Integrator and Calculator**
- Who launched recently the 'Smart Gram Panchayat: Revolution towards Digitization of Gram Panchayat' pilot project? - **Ministry of Panchayati Raj**

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