

## NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHT

The government increased the minimum support price (MSP) for wheat for the upcoming rabi season to ₹2,015 per quintal, a 2% hike from the ₹1,975 per quintal rate of last year. Oilseeds and pulses such as mustard, safflower and masoor dal saw higher MSP hikes of up to 8% in a bid to encourage crop diversification, a statement on the decision of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs said. The MSP is the rate at which the government purchases crops from farmers. Currently, rates are fixed for 23 crops, including six crops during the upcoming rabi or winter season for which sowing will begin in October.

Hours after the Taliban announced a government in Kabul that included UN designated terrorists, the U.S. mission to the UN has said the UN Security Council will base any decisions on delisting terrorists on the Taliban's human rights policies. The U.S. position is of particular importance to India, which is not only a close neighbour of Afghanistan but also the head of the 1988 UNSC Sanctions Committee, the 'Taliban Sanctions Committee'.

Even as growing evidence emerged on the links between physical and mental health and social disadvantage, former Health Secretary Keshav Desiraju recognised poverty, deprivation and poor social networks as predictors for poor health and mental health outcomes. Therefore, it was not a surprise that as architect of India's Mental Health Policy and Mental Health Care Act, he emphasised mental health care as a basic right for every citizen, placing the onus on the state to find both funding and developing a road map to ensure appropriateness and accessibility of care.

The Supreme Court shot down a petition to direct the government to immediately embark on a doortodoor COVID19 vaccination policy, saying such pleas were a product of ignorance about the diversity of the country and complexity of governance.

The Union Cabinet cleared an outlay of ₹10,683 crore on a production linked incentive scheme aimed at attracting fresh investments in the manmade fibre apparel, fabrics, and

## IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON EL NINO SOUTHERN OSCILLATION

1. There is a growing body of research suggesting that climate change can cause extreme and more frequent El Niño and La Niña events. A study was conducted recently on this using one of South Korea's fastest supercomputers.

2. Findings of the latest study: **Increasing atmospheric carbon dioxide can cause a "weakening of future simulated ENSO sea surface temperature variability."** Future El Niño events will lose heat to the atmosphere more quickly due to the evaporation of water vapour.

3. In the future there will be a reduced temperature difference between the eastern and western tropical Pacific, inhibiting the development of temperature extremes during the ENSO cycle. Also, there can be a weakening of tropical instability waves in the projected future, which can cause a disruption of the La Niña event.

4. What are the Niño and La Niña-They are two natural climate phenomena occurring across the tropical Pacific Ocean and influence the weather conditions all over the world. While the El Niño period is characterised by warming or increased sea surface temperatures in the central and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean, a La Niña event causes the water in the eastern Pacific Ocean to be colder than usual. Together, they are called ENSO or El Niño-Southern Oscillation.

5. What causes El Niño-El Niño sets in when there is an anomaly in the pattern. **The westward-blowing trade winds weaken along the Equator and due to changes in air pressure, the surface water moves eastwards to the coast of northern South America.** The central and eastern Pacific regions warm up for over six months and result in an El Niño condition.

## INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT (IFAD)

1. Sri Lanka and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) are working together to promote the island's agriculture-based economy. They are now partnering to create the Smallholder Agribusiness and Resilience Project (SARP) to combat poverty, food insecurity and gender inequality.

2. How SARP Will Prevent Food Insecurity? Part of food insecurity goes hand in hand with poverty. Farmers who cannot afford to manage their land or crops cannot produce an adequate supply of food. In turn, many of SARP's poverty reduction efforts will ultimately improve food production levels.

3. About IFAD-It is a specialized United Nations agency created in 1977 engaged in providing grants and loans with low interest for allied projects. The IFAD works with rural people allowing them to enhance their food security, improve nutrition and raise their incomes. It also helps people to expand their businesses. The organization is an outcome of the World Food Conference of 1974. It is headquartered in Rome and headed by a President. It has 177 member countries. IFAD brings out the Rural Development Report every year.

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5. The objectives of the IFAD are three-fold: To increase the productive capacity of poor people. To increase benefits for them from market participation. To strengthen the environmental sustainability & climate resilience of their economic activities.

## GST TRIBUNAL

1. The GST Appellate Tribunal (GSTAT) is the second appeal forum under GST for any dissatisfactory order passed by the First Appellate Authorities. The National Appellate Tribunal is also the first common forum to resolve disputes between the centre and the states.

2. It holds the same powers as the court and is deemed Civil Court for trying a case. Section 109 of the GST Act mandates the constitution of the Tribunal.

3. The GSTAT has the following structure: National Bench: The

**technical textiles sectors. The scheme, which the government expects will help draw new investment of more than ₹19,000 crore, aiding in the creation of 7.5 lakh direct jobs, targets improving India's ability to compete in the global textiles market.**

**The Union government entered into a one year ceasefire agreement with the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (K) Niki Group. More than 200 cadres of the outfit, with 83 weapons, have joined the peace process. The agreed ceasefire ground rules were also signed. In a statement, the Union Home Ministry said the agreement would boost the Naga peace process.**

**India and Russia conducted their first "detailed and extensive review" of the situation in Afghanistan, agreeing to coordinate their positions at the United Nations, as a delegation led by Russia's Security Council Secretary General Nikolai Patrushev met National Security Adviser Ajit Doval in Delhi, officials said. During the meeting that came a week after Russia decided to abstain from a UN Security Council Resolution on Afghanistan under India's presidency, the two sides stressed areas of "convergence", including the need to hold the Taliban to their promises.**

**India and Australia will hold the inaugural 2+2 Ministerial meeting here during the upcoming visit of Foreign Minister Marise Payne and Minister of Defence Peter Dutton. The meeting will be part of Australia's engagement with regional partners. These inaugural 2+2 discussions are a cornerstone of the Australia-India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, which is founded on a shared commitment to a secure, stable and prosperous Indo-Pacific region," said Ms. Payne before starting the tour.**

**The main underground group coordinating resistance to Myanmar's military government issued a sweeping call for a nationwide uprising on Tuesday, raising the prospect of spiralling unrest.**

**China welcomed the Taliban's announcement of formation of an interim government as "a necessary step" and "an end to the anarchy" in Afghanistan. Beijing also appeared to water down its earlier stand of underlining the importance of the Taliban setting up an "inclusive" government, which some officials had suggested was an expectation of Beijing as it considers recognising the new regime.**

**Nearly 80 Yemen rebels and pro-government troops have been killed**

National Appellate Tribunal is situated in New Delhi, constitutes a National President (Head) along with 2 Technical Members (1 from Centre and State each). Regional Benches: On the recommendations of the GST Council, the government can constitute (by notification) Regional Benches, as required. As of now, there are 3 Regional Benches (situated in Mumbai, Kolkata and Hyderabad) in India.

### **CHANDIGARH GETS ITS FIRST POLLEN CALENDAR**

**1.**The city of Chandigarh now has its first pollen calendar. Pollen calendars are graphical representations of the time dynamics of airborne pollen taxa in a certain geographic area. They are location-specific, with concentrations strongly tied to the flora found in the area.

**2.**They provide easy-to-understand visual information on diverse airborne pollen species that are present throughout the year, as well as their seasonality, in a single image.

**3.**Significance: **Pollens are considered major outdoor airborne allergens responsible for allergic rhinitis, asthma, and atopic dermatitis in humans.** These calendars can identify potential allergy triggers and provide a clear understanding for clinicians as well as allergy sufferers about their causes to help limit their exposure during high pollen loads.

### **CREDIT CRISIS OF MSMEs-A DIGITAL WAY OUT**

**1.**Given the significance of MSMEs (micro, small and medium-sized enterprises), enhancing the credit availability to the sector is essential.

**2.**What is MSMEs' composition in India? India's MSME sector - 63-million-enterprises 3.3 lakh MSMEs - Between Rs 5 crore and Rs 70 crore annual turnover. Manufacturing, services and trade each comprise about 1/3rd of the overall MSME sector.

**3.**Recent government initiatives-**Change in the MSMEs definition to allow for turnover-based thresholds with enhanced limits. (Earlier-only based on investments).Services were included alongside manufacturing under the MSME category.** Wholesale and retail trade were classified as MSMEs by the RBI for the purposes of accessing credit. To address the effects of Covid-19 on MSMEs, the government announced a series of stimulus measures: Rs 6.28 lakh crore package. An equity infusion of Rs 88,000 crore into the ECGC (Export Credit Guarantee Corporation of India). loan guarantees of Rs 1.1 lakh crore. Factoring Regulation Bill in 2020 to improve the availability of credit to MSMEs. An emergency credit line guarantee scheme (ECLGS) of Rs 1.5 lakh crore.

**4.**Did credits reach the enterprises-Banks, in the absence of appropriate incentives, disbursed funds only to borrowers with good record of paying back. Banks' hesitation to lend leaves MSMEs struggling to find funds to manage their businesses. 84% of MSME debt, amounting to about Rs 58.4 lakh crore, is sourced from informal sources.

**5.**What is needed for effective implementation-**Coordination among multiple entities - regulators, ministries, lenders, MSMEs and third-party providers. Enhancing digital awareness.** Framing of a techno-legal policy that empowers MSMEs.Efficient use of India's digital platform stacks, protocols and frameworks -Aadhaar, UPI, eKYC, eSign, GSTN, IT, Account Aggregator, etc. Ascertaining borrower's financial health from the GSTN, bank and IT data Processing eKYC through Aadhaar e-Signing of documents Transferring money via UPI into bank accounts that are mostly Aadhaar-linked too.

### **NIPAH VIRUS**

**1.**After a gap of over three years, a case of the zoonotic Nipah virus infection has been reported in Kozhikode district of Kerala.

**2.**What is Nipah? It is a zoonotic virus (it is transmitted from animals to humans). **It first broke out in Malaysia and Singapore in 1998 and 1999. It first appeared in domestic pigs and has been found among several species of domestic animals including dogs, cats, goats, horses and sheep.**

**3.**Need of the hour: At a time when there is a relentless surge in Covid-19 infections in Kerala, accounting for a lion's share of the nationwide case load, the return of the dreaded Nipah virus to the State is a cause for major concern. This is the time for the Centre and the State government to take up containment measures with mutual trust and coordination. There are urgent steps that need to be taken jointly, including contact tracing, quarantine, isolation, collection, and transportation of samples

**as fighting intensifies for the northern city of Marib, officials said, nearly seven years into a war that has triggered a major humanitarian crisis.**

for lab testing and a detailed study of the surrounding areas by the National Centre for Disease Control from an epidemiological standpoint.