

**"Pursue what catches your heart, not what catches your eyes."**

**Roy T. Bennett**

## NATIONAL

### MODI GOVT'S CROP MSP PLAN MAY STOKES INFLATION: NITI AAYOG

#### Effect of new Crop MSP policy of Govt.

The twin budget promises of fixing minimum support price (MSP) of crops at cost plus 50% and ensuring MSP to farmers for all crops will lift farm-gate prices by 15% and raise rural incomes.

The transmission of this price rise to wholesale and retail levels will have strong implications for inflation.

#### WARNINGS FROM NITI AAYOG

- ▶ Farm-level **prices will rise** by 15% if government implements budget promises on minimum support price (MSP)
- ▶ Transmission of price increase from farm gate to retail will strongly **impact inflation**
- ▶ Farm **incomes will rise** by 24% if budget promise of higher and effective MSP is implemented
- ▶ MSP promises **may cost** the government an additional **Rs45,000 crore** every year



#### Tackling the inflation:

NITI Aayog has recommended that states reform their agriculture markets by creating efficient supply chains, competitive markets and application of modern logistics and commerce in agriculture marketing.

To counter the effect of the increase in farm-level prices, states should adopt the model Agricultural Produce and Livestock Marketing Act.

Financial support to states for MSP operations should be linked to the satisfactory adoption of major provisions of the model APLM Act.

Three models proposed to the government to ensure MSP to farmers.

Under the Market Assurance Scheme (MAS), states will directly procure crops at MSP and pay farmers when prices dip below support prices, a part of which will be compensated by the centre.

Under the Price Deficiency Payment scheme (PDPS) based on a pilot rolled out by Madhya Pradesh last year, farmers will be paid the difference between sale price and MSP—this scheme does not involve any physical procurement of grains.

In the private procurement and stockiest scheme (PPSS), empanelled private traders will procure crops at MSP prompted by incentives like exemption from export restrictions, income tax benefits, credit access, exemption of market fees, and a maximum of 5% commission on the value of procured crops.

#### UNION CABINET APPROVED SIX CHANGES TO THE NATIONAL MEDICAL COMMISSION (NMC) BILL

The Union Cabinet has recently approved six out of the dozens of changes to the contentious National Medical Commission (NMC) Bill that were suggested by a Parliamentary Standing Committee

These changes address some of the loudest criticisms of the Bill.

Among them, the final year MBBS exam is now merged with an exit exam for doctors, and a contentious bridge course for AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, Homeopathy) practitioners has been removed

Health-care experts had recommended other modifications, which the Cabinet ignored

For example, despite the Cabinet's amendments, the NMC, the regulatory body that will replace the Medical Council of India, will be heavily controlled by the government

#### Other changes accepted by the cabinet

The amendments cleared by the Cabinet also increase State representation in the NMC from three part-time members to six, in what seems like a gesture to please the States.

Contrast this with the parliamentary committee's recommendation to include 10 State representatives, given India's vastness.

Another amendment that doesn't go far enough is the decision to raise the proportion

of private college seats for which fees will be regulated from 40% to 50%.

The fees for unregulated seats could then increase abruptly, pushing poorer medical aspirants out of the system.

#### **Future challenges:**

Despite these deficiencies, if passed by Parliament, the legislation will mark a new era for medical education in India.

The next step will be to design rules and regulations that capture the intent of this law (NMC bill). This will be a massive challenge.

Another concern is that under the new amendments States now have the freedom to implement an AYUSH bridge course, even if no longer mandatory.

How will the Centre ensure the quality of such courses to prevent a new set of poorly trained doctors from emerging?

#### **NEW CHINESE NORMS TO BOOST INDIA'S PHARMACEUTICAL SECTOR**

Indian pharmaceutical and medical equipment manufacturers are set to gain in the China market, thanks to new regulatory norms notified by the Chinese government.

China's General Office of the State Council has released new guidelines that aim at encouraging innovation in drugs and medical equipment.

Authorities in China will now accept data collected from clinical trials conducted outside the mainland for applications to register drugs and medical equipment.

India has been a major player in clinical trials and has been a destination for many pharmacy majors from the US and Europe.

These new provisions are likely to offer faster drug registration and easier market access for Indian pharmaceuticals and medical equipment in China.

#### **GOVT MADE E-WAY BILL MANDATORY**

Businesses and transporters moving goods worth over Rs50, 000 from one state to

another will have to carry an electronic or e-way bill from 1 April.

The e-way bill provision of the goods and services tax (GST) was first introduced on 1 February. With several states also starting to generate intra-state e-way bills on the portal, the system developed a snag.

Karnataka will be an exception having notified the e-way bill for both inter-state as well as intra-state movement of goods.

Karnataka was the first state to operationalize the e-way bill system in September 2017, using the information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure available with the state.

The GSTN has now activated only that facility on its portal where an e-way bill can be generated when goods are transported from one state to another by either road, railways, airways or vessels

The system has been designed and developed by National Informatics Centre (NIC).

#### **E-way bill**

E-Way Bill is an electronic way bill for movement of goods which can be generated on the e-Way Bill Portal.

Transport of goods of more than Rs. 50,000 (Single Invoice/bill/delivery challan) in value in a vehicle cannot be made by a registered person without an e-way bill.

When an e-way bill is generated a unique e-way bill number (EBN) is allocated and is available to the supplier, recipient, and the transporter

An e-way bill is valid for 1 day for distance less Than 100 Kms and additional 1 day for every additional 100 Kms or part thereof. The validity of Eway bill can be extended.

#### **SCIENCE AND TECH**

#### **INDIA-BASED NEUTRINO OBSERVATORY GOT APPROVAL**

Nod has been provided for setting up of India-based Neutrino Observatory (INO) surface facilities & for setting up of the National Centre for High Energy Physics-INO Centre.

Accordingly, Government of Tamil Nadu had allotted land of 26.8 ha.

The INO is estimated to be operationalized seven years after obtaining all statutory clearances

### **India Neutrino Observatory (INO)**

A world-class underground laboratory with a rock cover of approx.1200 m for non-accelerator based high energy and nuclear physics research in India.

**The Primary aims of the INO are the following:**

- Research to study the properties of neutrinos which are the second most abundant particles in the Universe. They are elementary particles, like electrons, but not part of atoms.
- Study of matter effects through electric charge identification that may lead to the determination of the unknown sign of one of the mass differences.
- Study of charge-conjugation and charge parity (CP) violation in the leptonic sector as well as possible charge-conjugation, parity, time-reversal (CPT) violation studies.
- Study of Kolar events, possible identification of very-high energy neutrinos and multi-muon events.

The project aims at carrying out these particles were created in large numbers during the Big Bang that led to the creation of the universe. They also continue to get created when the cosmic rays interact with the atmosphere. Scores of neutrinos pass through the human body without causing any harm because they hardly interact with matter.

Neutrinos are neutral particles and weakly interactive particles which are very difficult to detect. Therefore, they need a massive detector.

### **SARMAT**

It is Russia's most advanced nuclear-capable intercontinental ballistic missile. It was flight-tested recently.

The SARMAT is a heavy ICBM intended to replace Russia's aging, Soviet-era missiles that form the basis of its nuclear deterrent.

The chief innovation of the SARMAT is its ability to carry a large number of guided warheads.

The missile is believed to be able to fly 16,000 miles and is capable of flying over the South Pole to strike the U.S.

NATO has named this missile as 'Satan 2'.

### **INTERSTITIUM**

Scientists have discovered a new organ in the human body which they have dubbed the 'interstitium'.

The new organ is known as the Interstitium and it is found everywhere in our bodies, acting as a shock absorber in all places where tissues are moved or subjected to force.

It lies beneath the top layer of skin, but is also in tissue layers lining the gut, lungs, blood vessels, and muscles. The organ is a network of interconnected, fluid-filled spaces all over the body.

Scientists say, it may even be one of the largest organs in the body. The organ acts like a shock absorber in all places where tissues are moved or subjected to force.

The organ is a network of interconnected, fluid-filled spaces all over the body and is made up of both strong (collagen) and flexible (elastin) connective tissue proteins, with interstitial fluid moving throughout.

#### **Functions of the organ:**

Interstitial spaces are organized by a collagen "mesh", can shrink, expand, and "may thus serve as shock absorbers."

These "dynamically compressible and distensible sinuses" act as thoroughfares to transport critical fluids within organs and around the body.

The Interstitium plays an important role in carrying lymph, the clear fluid that also travels through lymphatic vessels and supports immunity.

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