

CURRENT AFFAIRS

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Farmers' outfits question delay in announcing MSP for ongoing Rabi season

A.M. Jigeesh
NEW DELHI

Farmers' organisations have questioned the delay in announcing the minimum support price (MSP) for crops in the ongoing Rabi season even as sowing has started in several States. Farmers point out that announcing the MSP is important so that they can select the crops that have to be sown during the season.

Shamli-based farmers leader Jitender Singh Hudda urged the Centre to implement the Swaminathan Commission formula to decide the MSP and include comprehensive input cost, including rental value of land plus 50%. "The input cost for fuels, seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, labour and transportation has increased. Agricultural instruments and their maintenance have also become costly," Mr. Hudda said.

The RSS-affiliated farmers' outfit Bharatiya Kisan Sangh (BKS) said it was not consulted either by the



Late arrival: In 2020, the MSP for Rabi was announced on September 23 and in 2021, on September 8. K.V.S. GIRI

Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) or the Centre this time. "Earlier, there used to be two members representing farmers in the CACP. Now, there are no members representing farmers, and the MSP is calculated based on available statistics before the government," said BKS general secretary Mohini Mohan Mishra.

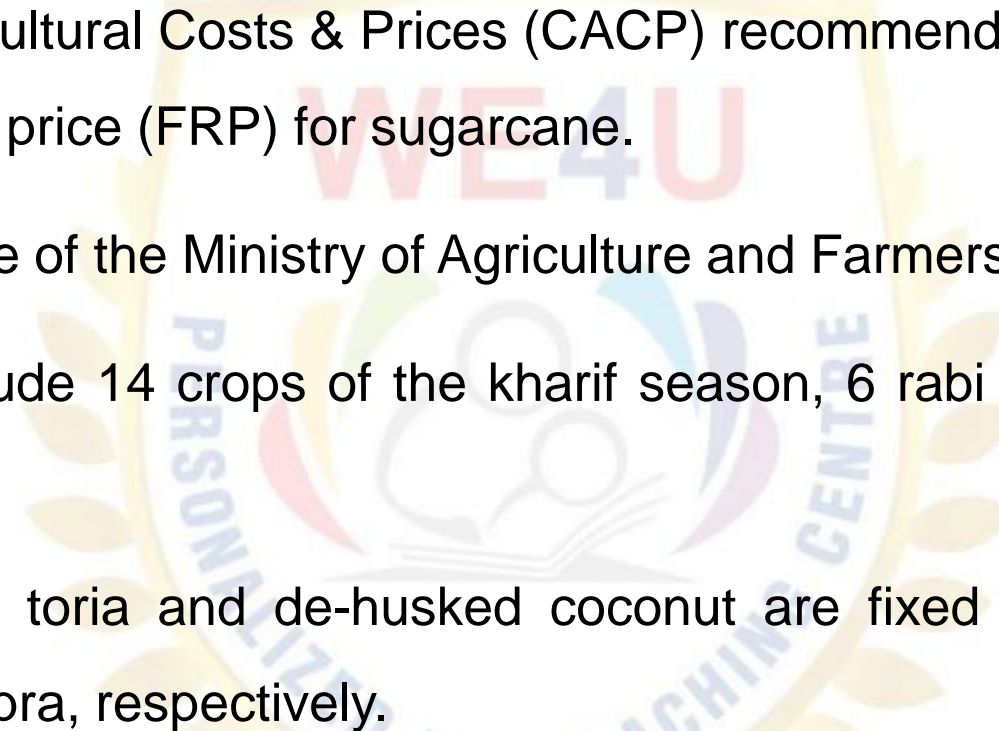
All-India Kisan Sabha president Ashok Dhawale said the CACP generally send invitation for discussion. "We placed our opinion when the CACP consulted us before the Kharif

sowing. However, we believe that whatever consultations held on MSP were a mere formality so far," Dr. Dhawale said. He added that there was tremendous increase on the input price, particularly insecticides and fertilizers. "The MSP has to be hiked a lot if some kind of a justice has to be done to the farmers. The Centre should have announced the MSP in September itself. Otherwise, how will the farmer decide what should be sown and what should not be. They should have the MSP figures before them to take a decision," he added.

MSP

The MSP is the rate at which the government purchases crops from farmers, and is based on a calculation of at least one-and-a-half times the cost of production incurred by the farmers.

MSP is a "minimum price" for any crop that the government considers as remunerative for farmers and hence deserving of "support".

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- ✓ The Commission for Agricultural Costs & Prices (CACP) recommends MSPs for 22 mandated crops and fair and remunerative price (FRP) for sugarcane.
 - ✓ CACP is an attached office of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.
 - ✓ The mandated crops include 14 crops of the kharif season, 6 rabi crops and 2 other commercial crops.
 - ✓ In addition, the MSPs of toria and de-husked coconut are fixed on the basis of the MSPs of rapeseed/mustard and copra, respectively.

Rabi Crops

- ✓ Rabi crops are sown in winter from October to December and harvested in summer from April to June.
- ✓ Some of the important rabi crops are wheat, barley, peas, gram and mustard.
- ✓ Though, these crops are grown in large parts of India, states from the north and northwestern parts such as Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh are important for the production of wheat and other rabi crops.

Chandrachud nominated as next Chief Justice of India

U.U. Lalit's recommendation will begin the process for his appointment as the 50th Chief Justice of the country; if the government gives approval, he is expected to assume charge on November 9

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

Chief Justice of India U.U. Lalit nominated Justice D.Y. Chandrachud as his successor in a brief meeting held at the Supreme Court judges' lounge in the presence of all judges of the court on Tuesday.

Chief Justice Lalit's recommendation to the government would start the process for appointment of Justice Chandrachud as the 50th Chief Justice of India.

If the government approval comes through, Justice Chandrachud would be the first second-generation CJI. His father, Justice Y.V. Chandrachud, was the



D.Y. Chandrachud

16th CJI and one of the longest serving.

Chief Justice Lalit is scheduled to retire on November 8 at the end of a 74-day tenure as top judge. Justice Chandrachud is expected to be sworn in and assume charge as Chief Jus-

ice of India from November 9. He has a tenure of two years as Chief Justice until his retirement on November 11, 2024.

Judicial career

Justice Chandrachud was appointed judge of the Supreme Court on May 13, 2016. He was before that the Chief Justice of the Allahabad High Court from October 31, 2013.

Justice Chandrachud began his career as a judge in the Bombay High Court on March 29, 2000 until his appointment as the Chief Justice of the Allahabad High Court.

He was Additional Solicitor-General from 1998 until appointment to the

Bombay High Court Bench. He was designated a senior advocate by the Bombay High Court in June 1998 and had practised law at the Supreme Court and the Bombay High Court.

Justice Chandrachud's career in law combines a blend of both practical experience in law and academics. He was a visiting professor of Comparative Constitutional Law at the University of Mumbai and the Oklahoma University School of Law, U.S.



Watch | How is the Chief Justice of India appointed?
bit.ly/3eLVXyb

Appointment of CJI:

- ✓ The President of India appoints the CJI and the other SC judges.
- ✓ As far as the CJI is concerned, the outgoing CJI recommends his successor.
- ✓ In practice, it has been strictly by seniority ever since the supersession controversy of the 1970s.

Three lakh and counting: RTI pleas pile up at information commissions across India

Sreeparna Chakrabarty
NEW DELHI

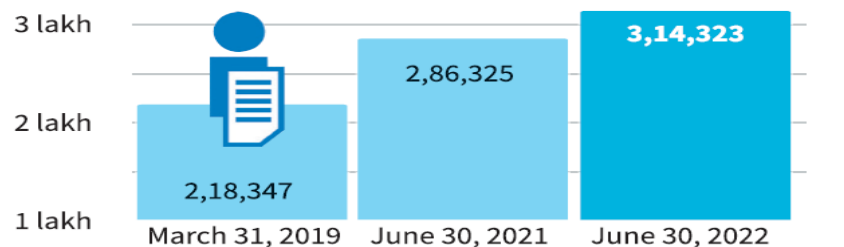
A good 17 years after India got the Right to Information (RTI) Act, the transparency regime in the country remains a mirage with nearly 3.15 lakh complaints and appeals pending with 26 information commissions across India.

According to a report by Satark Nagrik Sangathan, backlog of appeals or complaints is increasing in commissions every year.

The number of appeals and complaints pending in 2019, from data obtained from 26 information commissions was 2,18,347. In 2020, the number climbed up to 2,33,384 with data obtained from 23 information

Rising backlogs

Data gathered by the Satark Nagrik Sangathan show that appeals and complaints pending with information commissions have steadily increased over the years



commissions, in 2021 the number was 2,86,325 with data from 26 commissions and in 2022, it was 3,14,323.

The highest number of pending cases was in Maharashtra at 99,722, followed by Uttar Pradesh at 44,482, Karnataka at 30,358, the Central Information Com-

mission at 26,724 and Bihar at 21,346.

Commissions in trouble

The report says two information commissions—Jharkhand and Tripura—out of 29 across the country have been completely defunct for 29 months and 15

months respectively. Manipur, Telangana, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh are without chiefs at the moment. Only 5% of the all positions in commissions are being occupied by women. Also, several information commissions, including the Central Information Commission, are working at reduced capacity with less than the stipulated number of members being in office.

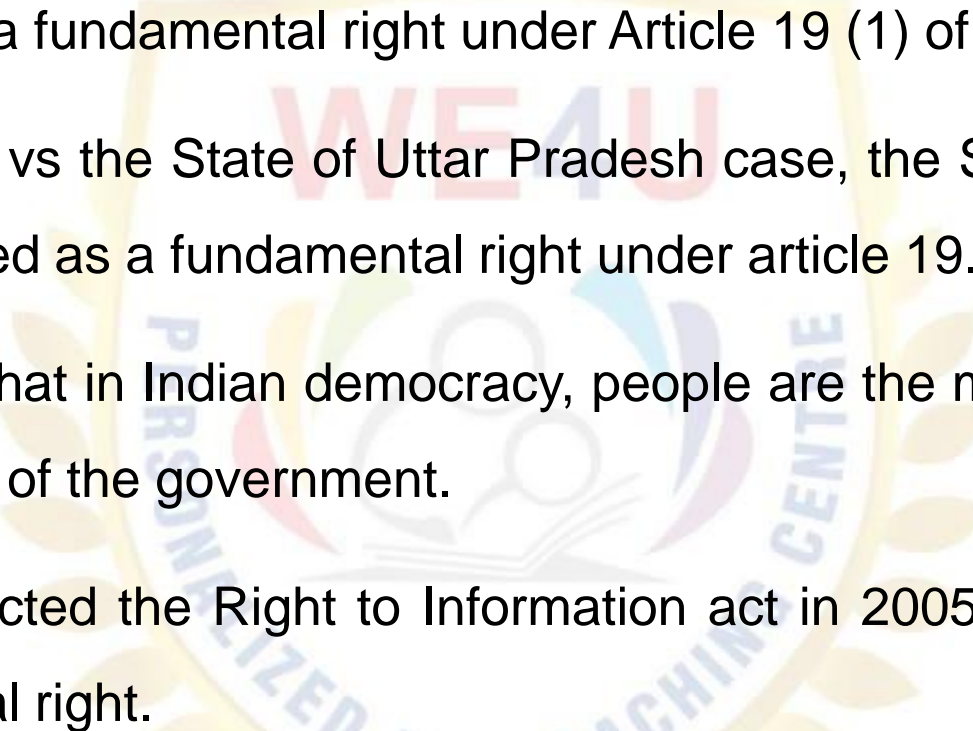
Under RTI law, information commissions are the final appellate authority and are mandated to safeguard and facilitate people's right to information.

An analysis of penalties imposed shows that the commissions did not impose penalties in 95% of the cases where penalties were

potentially imposable.

“The report shows that in several commissions a large backlog of cases has built up, resulting in a long waiting time for disposal, as governments have failed to make appointments of information commissioners in a timely manner,” said Anjali Bharadwaj of Satark Nagarik Sangathan.

According to a separate report by the Transparency International, one-fourth information commissioner posts are vacant and there are only 5% (only 8) women information commissioners in the country. Out of total 165 posts of information commissioners, 42 are vacant, including two chief State information commissioners.

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- The logo for WE4U Personalized IAS Coaching Centre is a circular emblem with a yellow border. Inside, the text 'WE4U' is at the top, 'PERSONALIZED IAS COACHING CENTRE' is written around the bottom, and a central graphic depicts a person reading a book.
- ✓ The right to information is a fundamental right under Article 19 (1) of the Indian Constitution.
 - ✓ In 1976, in the Raj Narain vs the State of Uttar Pradesh case, the Supreme Court ruled that Right to information will be treated as a fundamental right under article 19.
 - ✓ The Supreme Court held that in Indian democracy, people are the masters and they have the right to know about the working of the government.
 - ✓ Thus the government enacted the Right to Information act in 2005 which provides machinery for exercising this fundamental right.

Objective of the RTI Act

- ✓ Empower citizens to question the government.
- ✓ The act promotes transparency and accountability in the working of the government.
- ✓ The act also helps in containing corruption in the government and work for the people in a better way.
- ✓ The act envisages building better-informed citizens who would keep necessary vigil about the functioning of the government machinery.

IMF cuts India's growth forecast to 6.8% this year

The Fund cites Ukraine war, record-high inflation and effects of pandemic as key reasons; it expects inflation in the country to return to the tolerance band in the fiscal year 2023-24

Sriram Lakshman
WASHINGTON DC

The world, including India, will experience an overall slowdown in the next year owing to the impact of the Russia-Ukraine war, tightening monetary conditions globally, the highest inflation in decades, and lingering effects of the pandemic, according to the International Monetary Fund.

India is projected to grow at 6.8% in the current fiscal year, following 8.7% growth in fiscal year that ended March 31 as per figures released in the IMF's October 2022 *World Economic Outlook: Countering the Cost-of-Living Crisis* at the start of the World Bank IMF Annual Meetings here.

Growth rate for this year

Growth cut

The chart shows India's economic growth forecast for the current financial year. The IMF's cut in growth forecast comes after the RBI and the World Bank revised their forecast for FY23



for India has been revised downward by 0.6 percentage points relative to the IMF's June 2022 forecast, following a weaker output in the second quarter, and subdued external demand, the IMF said. The forecast for the next fiscal year remains unaltered at 6.1%.

"India has been doing fairly well in 2022 and is expected to continue grow-

ing fairly robustly in 2023," the IMF's chief economist, Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas said at a press briefing in Washington on Tuesday morning.

Inflation above target

Inflation in India was above the RBI's target, Mr. Gourinchas said, adding that the fiscal and monetary policy should be

"probably be on the tightening side". The IMF has projected 6.9% consumer price inflation this year and 5.1% next year.

The IMF expects inflation in India to return to the inflation tolerance band... in fiscal year 2023-24, "and additional monetary tightening is going to ensure that that happens", IMF economist Daniel Leigh said at the briefing.

For the world as a whole, growth will slow down from 6.0% in 2021 to 3.2% in 2022 and 2.7% in 2023. This is reflective of a U.S. GDP contraction in first half of 2022, a Euro Area contraction in second half, extended COVID-19 outbreaks in China and a property sector crisis.

Inflation Target : 4+-2% Consumer price

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THANK YOU

