



Dr. Piyush Chaubey



Piyush Kumar

Daily News Decoding

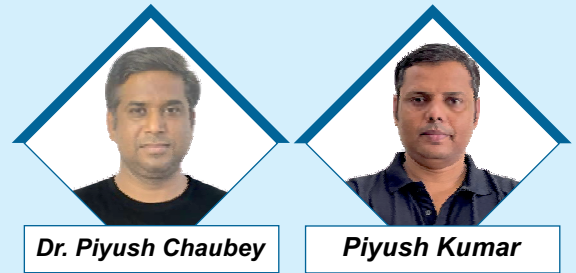
Current Affairs

23rd January, 2023



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Constitutional Conduct Group

Prelims & GS Paper - II

1

Context: *The Constitutional Conduct Group has written to President Droupadi Murmu protesting the government's push for a mega-infrastructure project in the Great Nicobar island.*

About:

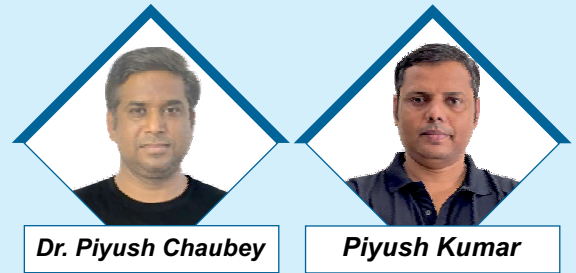
- It is a group of former civil servants.
- The group is **non-partisan in nature**.
- It is motivated only by the desire to **promote the democratic principles enshrined in the Constitution**.
- The motto of this consortium is "**SPEAKING TRUTH TO POWER**".
- It represents **effort to present the situation as it actually exists at the ground level**, bring this to the notice of the community and the institutions charged with the preservation of democracy in India and use the weapon of moral suasion to induce and persuade the governments of the day to faithfully abide by their oaths to the Constitution of India.
- The major concern of the group is the **departure of rule of law**.
- The group seeks to **imbibe moral values in the governance practices**.

Principles:

- Firmly committed to the Constitution of India
- Firmly committed to pluralism in all its forms – gender, religion, ethnicity, class, caste, language, or otherwise;
- Adhere to the ideal of non-violence in conduct, both word and deed.

Need of Such Groups:

- **Wide Experience:** Former civil servants are no less than institutions in governance and their plethora of experience would help to effectively implement schemes and policies in a better way.
- **Constitutional morality:** Governance if wrapped with morality, in addition to constitutionalism will uphold the values on which the country got independence. The 2nd ARC also recommended civil servants to hold ethical and moral values.
- **Neutrality:** Statesmen like Ambedkar wanted neutral civil servants as a pillar of successful democracy to deliver their remarks without any notion of benefits behind their back.
- **Nurturing** **Compassionate** **Civil**
Servants



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Digital Crop Survey

Prelims & GS Paper - III

Context: *THE Center plans to launch a digital crop survey from the kharif-2023 season across 10 states.*

About:

- The digital crop survey will be rolled out initially as a pilot project in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Kerala and Gujarat.
- Later, it will be gradually rolled out across the country.
- Once it becomes fully operational, it will add on to the age-old crop area statistics collection system, which is known as “patwari agency”, that is currently in use in most of the states.
- The proposed survey will use “the latest technological advancements such as visual and advanced analytics, GIS-GPS Technologies and AI/ML” to provide “near real-time” information about the crops sown by the farmers.

Crop Registry:

- With this digital survey, a crop registry, with a list of all the crops sown in India, will be developed.

- It will act as a single source of truth for collecting the data in a standardized manner, during the digital crop survey.
- The crop registry will have the ability to capture single or multiple crop IDs for the same farmland plot for the same season, along with the respective area of sowing and type of crops, such as intercrop, mixed crops, single crop.
- The linkage to Global Positioning Systems (GPS) and Geo-referenced Cadastral maps would enable users to reach the right farm and collect the right data and images.

Digitization of Agriculture:

- According to the NITI Ayog research on artificial intelligence, agriculture must expand at a rate of 4 per cent or higher right now to maintain an annual growth rate of 8–10 per cent.
- The NITI Aayog predicted in a report that by 2025, AI in agriculture would be worth \$ 2.6 Bn and rise at a pace of 22.5 percent Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR).
- AI currently helps farmers increase yield by assisting them in choosing better crops, hybrid seeds, and resource-efficient farming techniques.



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- It is also utilized to improve farming productivity and accuracy to assist farmers in creating seasonal forecasting models.

Digital Agriculture Initiatives in India

- The **Digital Agriculture Mission 2021–2025** was launched in September 2021 by the Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare. It aims to encourage and speed up projects based on cutting-edge technologies, including AI, blockchain, remote sensing, robots, and drones.
- To provide farmers with real-time data and the necessary advice, NITI Aayog has teamed up with International Business Machines (IBM) to create a crop production forecast model supported by AI. It aids in enhancing crop output, soil quality, agricultural input control, and early disease outbreak warning.
- In August 2019, Cisco created an **Agricultural Digital Infrastructure (ADI)** solution to improve farming and knowledge exchange. This played an essential role in the data pool that the Department of Agriculture developed under the National Agri Stack.
- The **Jio Agri (Jio Krishi)** platform was introduced in February 2020, and it digitized the agricultural ecosystem along the entire value chain to empower farmers. The platform's primary function leverages data from standalone applications to offer counsel. Its advanced features use data from various sources, input it into AI algorithms, and then deliver precise, individualized advice.
- The farmers in Gujarat's Dhundi village have begun employing solar electricity and other sustainable energy sources for irrigation.

- Microsoft and the Indian government have teamed up to support India's small-holder farmers by running a pilot programme called '**Unified Farmer Services Interface**'. The alliance aims to boost farmers' incomes through improved price management and increased agricultural yield using AI sensors.
- Six institutions are a part of the government's **Sensor-based Smart Agriculture (SENSAGRI)** programme. Drones would be utilized in this concept to scout over land areas efficiently, acquire priceless information, and instantly communicate the data to farmers.
- Government has finalized an **India Digital Ecosystem of Agriculture (IDEA) framework** which would lay down the architecture for the federated farmers' database being built by taking the publicly available data as existing in various schemes and linking them with the digitized land records. The IDEA would serve as a foundation to build innovative agri-focused solutions leveraging emerging technologies to contribute effectively in creating a better Ecosystem for Agriculture in India.
- Central Institute of Agricultural Engineering, Bhopal (ICAR-CIAE) under Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has developed **Krishi Yantra App** to augment research, operations and technology dissemination process in the field of agricultural engineering.
- Microsoft has developed an "**AI-Sowing App**", in collaboration with **International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-arid Tropics (ICRISAT)**. This application sends advisory to the farmers regarding the optimal date of seed-sowing. The farmers neither need to install any sensor on their farm nor incur any capital investment.



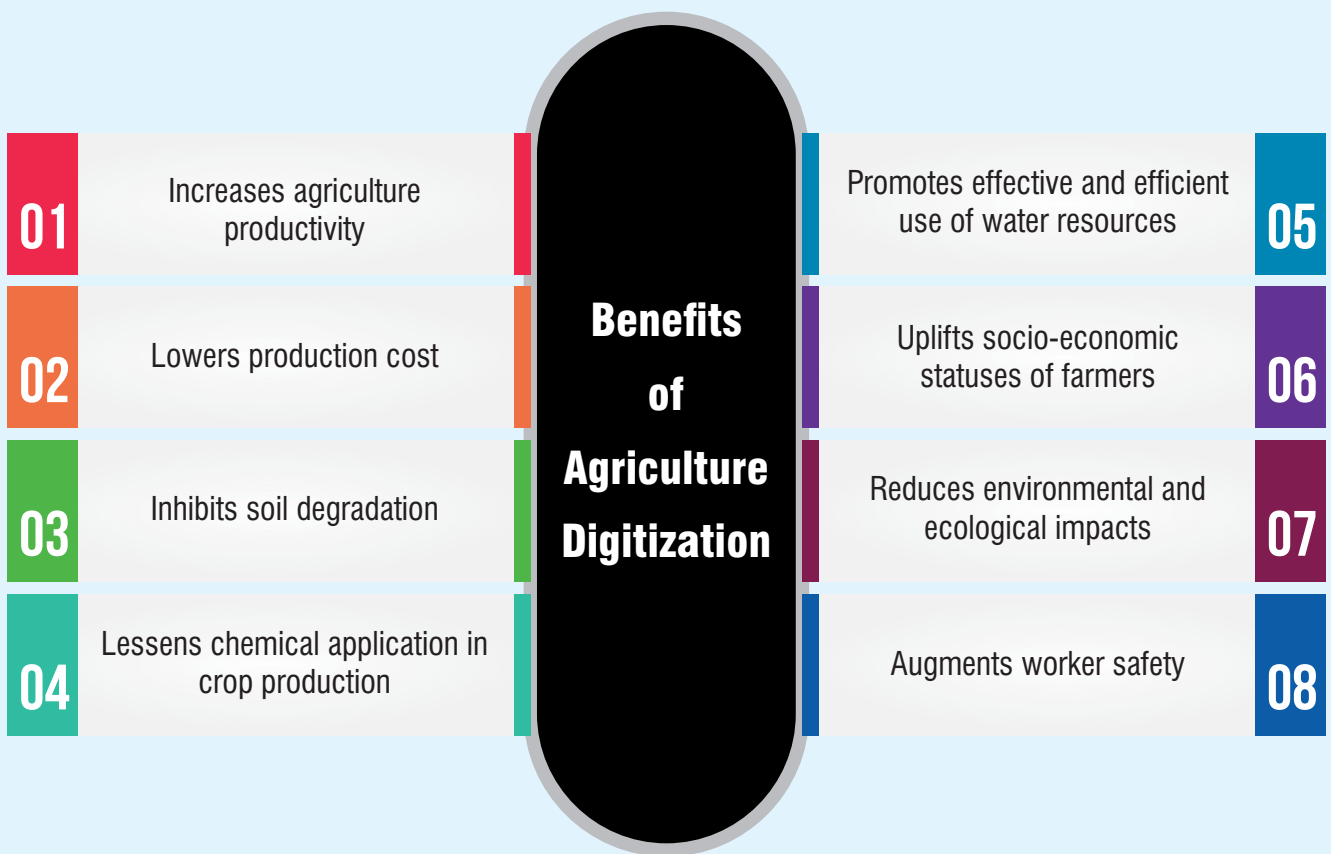
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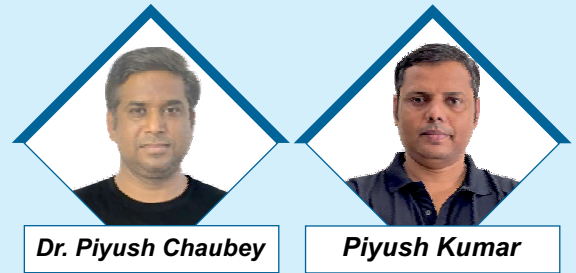


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Personal Pay

Prelims & GS Paper - II

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Context: To address the long-pending issue of reduced pay between the rank of Brigadier and Major General, a 'personal pay' of ₹14,900 has been proposed to be added to the latter.

What is Personal Pay?

- It is an additional pay granted to an employee.
- It is provided by the appointing authority, some on the grounds of exceptional circumstances.
- It is made to save an employee from loss of substantive pay or on the basis of individual and personal consideration, or permanent post.
- This loss is due to a revision of pay or due to any reduction of such substantive pay otherwise than as a disciplinary measure.

What is the issue about?

- All officers up to the rank of Brigadier are entitled to a Military Service Pay (MSP) to the tune of ₹15,500, first approved in the Sixth Pay Commission.
- This Military Service Pay stops once an individual is promoted to the rank of Major General.

- **MSP is paid to service personnel for the unique hardships** they face in the line of duty and was introduced in the Sixth Pay Commission.
- In the Seventh Pay Commission, the MSP was ₹5,200 for Junior Commissioned Officers (JCOs) and ORs and ₹15,500 for officers from Lieutenant to the rank of Brigadier.
- For Major Generals, **MSP has been rejected with the logic being that the retirement age of 58** is close to that of the civilian counterparts which is 60 years of age.
- The pay of Brigadiers is ₹2,17,000 and with MSP it becomes ₹2,33,000.
- For Major Generals the pay is ₹2,18,000 but there is no MSP. So, in effect a Major General earns less pay than the previous rank.
- To address this, the personal allowance of ₹14,900 has been proposed to be added to the salary of Major Generals and Lieutenant Generals which does not fall in the basic pay and will bridge the difference.
- After the **implementation of Seventh Pay Commission in 2017**, the Services



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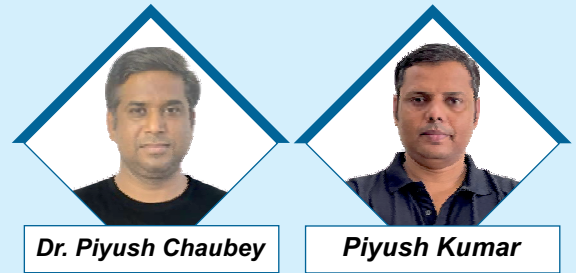
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6 had on several occasions raised four core concerns which they perceive to **reduce the status of the armed forces with respect to their civilian counterparts**. These include **Non Functional Upgrade (NFU)**, **NFU pay fixation**, **Military Service Pay (MSP)** and **common pay matrix for civil and military**.

- Several Major General-rank officers had gone to the Armed Forces Tribunal (AFT) and there are 13 judgments in favor of them. Of the 13, only three have been implemented – all in the Air Force.





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Rabi Crops

Prelims & GS Paper - I

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Context: *The India Meteorological Department has forecast “scattered to fairly widespread rainfall accompanied by thunderstorm activity” over Punjab, Haryana, Delhi and Uttar Pradesh during January 24-26, besides “light isolated” rain over north Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. A fresh western disturbance is expected to bring more rain over northwest India. This rainfall can heavily impact the currently sown Rabi crops.*

About:

- **Rabi crops** or **rabi harvest**, also known as **winter crops**, are agricultural crops that are **sown in winter** and **harvested in the spring** in **India, Pakistan** and **Bangladesh**.
- The **complement of the rabi crop** is the **kharif crop**, which is **grown after the rabi** and **zaid** (zaa-id) crops are harvested one after another respectively.
- The rabi crops are sown around **mid-November**, preferably after the **monsoon rains** are over, and **harvesting begins** in **April/May**.
- During the **southwest monsoon**, the **Kharif cropping season** runs from **July to October**, while the **Rabi cropping season** runs from **October to March** (winter).
- The crops are **grown either with rainwater** that has **percolated** into the **ground** or **using irrigation**.
- **Good rain in winter** spoils the **rabi crops** but is **good for kharif crops**.
- The major rabi crop in India is **wheat**, followed by **barley, mustard, sesame** and **peas**.
- Peas are harvested early, as they are ready early: Indian markets are flooded with green peas from January to March, peaking in February.
- **Many crops are cultivated in both kharif and rabi seasons**.
- The agriculture crops produced in India are **seasonal in nature** and highly dependent on these two monsoons.
- Requires **warm climate** for **seed germination** and **cold climate** to **grow**.