

SEPTEMBER

18

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MK Yadav Sir

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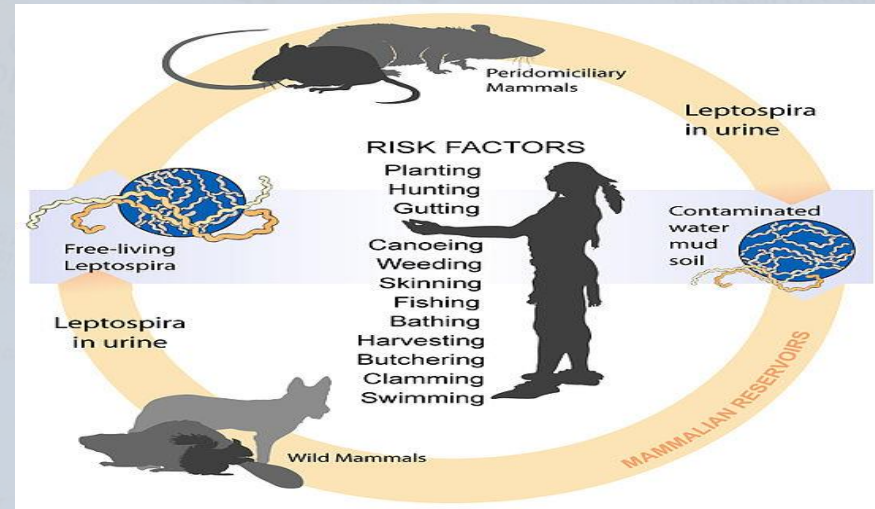
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Odisha hit by two major disease outbreaks. All you need to know about Scrub Typhus, Leptospirosis

Context: Leptospirosis has resulted in **six fatalities** in Odisha, causing great concern in the state, and there has also **been a surge in scrub typhus** cases.

Leptospirosis

- **About:** It is a bacterial disease that affects humans and animals.
- **Symptoms:** High fever, headache, chills, vomiting, red eyes, abdominal pain, rashes, and diarrhea.
- **Leptospirosis may occur in two phases:**
- **After the first phase** (symptoms: fever, chills, headache, muscle aches, vomiting, or diarrhea), the patient may recover for a time but become ill again.
- **If a second phase occurs**, it is more severe; the person may have kidney or liver failure or meningitis.
- **Affected:** Kidney damage, meningitis (inflammation of the membrane around the brain and spinal cord), liver failure, respiratory distress, and even death.
- **Treatment:** The illness lasts from a few days to 3 weeks or longer. Without treatment, recovery may take several months.



Scrub Typhus

- **About:** It is a potentially life-threatening infection caused by *Orientia tsutsugamushi* bacteria.
- **Transmission:** People contract scrub typhus through the bites of infected chiggers, which are larval mites.
- **Symptoms:** Fever, headache, body aches, and sometimes a rash.

PM expresses happiness on Santiniketan being inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List

Context: Recently, the Prime Minister expressed his joy at Santiniketan's inclusion on the **UNESCO World Heritage List**.

Santiniketan

- **About:** It was the home of Rabindranath Tagore, where he lived and composed many of his literary works, including songs, poems, and novels.
- **Location:** Birbhum District, West Bengal, India
- **Built by:** Debendranath Tagore (father of Rabindranath Tagore)
- **Shantiniketan Festivals:** Briksharopan (festival of Planting Saplings) and Halakarshan (festival of Plowing the Fields)

UNESCO World Heritage Sites

- **About:** It is a place that is listed by UNESCO for its special cultural or physical significance.
- **Maintained by:** International 'World Heritage Programme', administered by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee.
- **Selection Criteria:** Sites must be already classified landmarks, unique and significant culturally or physically, such as ancient ruins, historical structures, cities, monuments, etc.
- **India's role:** India has been a member of the World Heritage Committee thrice before (1985-91, 2001-07 & 2011-15) and is serving a fourth term (2021-25).
- **India's sites:** 41 World Heritage Sites.
 - 33 are cultural, 7 are natural, and one, the Khangchendzonga National Park, is of mixed type.



United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

- **Formation:** 1945, is a specialized agency of the United Nations (UN) based in Paris.
- **Objective:** It works to achieve peace and security by promoting international collaboration through educational, scientific, and cultural reforms.
- **Members:** 195 member states and 10 associate members. **India is a founding member** of the Organization.
- **Headquarter:** Paris, France.

EU Parliament votes in favour of Critical Raw Materials Act

Context: The European Parliament has approved the Critical Raw Materials Act to diversify its import dependence and domestic production.

Key Points

- The EU is **the world's largest trading bloc**, aims to reduce its dependence on China and increase its domestic capacity.
 - China is the largest producer of many of the world's critical minerals.
- Metals and critical minerals** are crucial for the green transition as they are used to manufacture solar panels, windmills, and electric car batteries.
- Dependency:** The EU was 99% dependent on China for rare earth metals (REE).
- Aim of Act:** To "diversify the Union's imports of strategic raw materials with a view to ensure that, by 2030.
- Diversification:** **Australia and Chile** with huge reserves such as **cobalt, lithium, and manganese** are potential strategic partners for diversifying the supply chain.

Critical Raw Materials

- About:** Critical minerals are a cluster of minerals crucial for diverse industrial sectors, carrying significant economic and security implications for a nation.
- Found:** Earth's crust
- Examples:** Rare earth elements, lithium, cobalt, graphite, platinum group metals, and certain minerals and metals

Production concentration of critical raw mineral materials



1. Antimony	15. Nickel	iv. Neodymium	20. Rhenium
2. Beryllium	16. PGE	v. Promethium	21. Selenium
3. Bismuth	i. Platinum	vi. Samarium	22. Silicon
4. Cadmium	ii. Palladium	vii. Europium	23. Strontium
5. Cobalt	iii. Rhodium	viii. Gadolinium	24. Tantalum
6. Copper	iv. Ruthenium	ix. Terbium	25. Tellurium
7. Gallium	v. Iridium	x. Dysprosium	26. Tin
8. Germanium	vi. Osmium	xi. Holmium	27. Titanium
9. Graphite	17. Phosphorous	xii. Erbium	28. Tungsten
10. Hafnium	18. Potash	xiii. Thulium	29. Vanadium
11. Indium	19. REE	xiv. Ytterbium	30. Zirconium
12. Lithium	i. Lanthanum	xv. Lutetium	
13. Molybdenum	ii. Cerium	xvi. Scandium	
14. Niobium	iii. Praseodymium	xvii. Yttrium	

Govt mulls MSP hike for key rabi crops ahead of elections

The proposals by a panel on farm prices await Cabinet approval

Puja Das

puja.das@livemint.com

NEW DELHI: The government may raise the minimum support price (MSP) of six rabi or winter crops, with increases ranging from 2% to 7%, for the 2024-25 marketing season as it gears up for high-stakes general and state assembly elections, two officials said. The most substantial hikes are expected for wheat and lentil (masur), the officials said, requesting anonymity.

MSP serves as a crucial safety net for farmers by guaranteeing them a minimum income regardless of market prices. It also helps ensure food security by encouraging farmers to cultivate certain crops, helping stabilize prices of staples such as wheat, rice and lentils.

Last year, MSP for wheat, the main winter crop, was raised by 5.5% from the previous year to ₹2,125 per quintal (100 kg), while the minimum price of masur,

Safety net

MSP serves as a vital safety net for farmers by guaranteeing them a minimum income regardless of market prices.

MSP for rabi crops over the years (in ₹/quintal)*



*Refers to marketing season that runs between October and March

Graphic by Sarvesh Kumar Sharma/Mint



one of the two key winter pulses, witnessed a significant 9.1% hike to ₹6,000 per quintal.

"MSP in the next season could be increased by around 7% for wheat and masur to ₹2,275-2,300 and ₹6,425-6,450 a quintal, respectively, compared to the current year so that FCI (Food Corporation of India),

NAFED (National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd) and NCCF (National Cooperative Consumers' Federation of India Ltd) can purchase a substantial quantity of the grain and the pulse from farmers to boost the stock," one of the officials said on condition of anonymity.

The MSP increases for barley and chana (Bengal gram) are expected to remain consistent with the previous year. While chana may see a modest 2% increase to ₹5,440-5,475 per quintal, barley could see a 6.6% hike to ₹1,850-1,900 per quintal. The Centre raised MSP of chana by 2% and barley by

6.1% for the 2023-24 rabi marketing season.

For major oilseeds such as rapeseed and mustard, MSP could be increased by 3.6%-4% to ₹5,650-5,700 per quintal, while safflower MSP could be raised by 2.6%-3% to ₹5,800-5,850 per quintal.

The rabi season contributes to almost half of India's total foodgrains output.

"The Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) has submitted its recommendations, and the cabinet note has been sent to concerned departments for their comments," the official said.

The final decision on MSP, likely next month, will rest with the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs.

The Centre sets MSP of kharif and rabi crops in June and October, respectively, based on the recommendation of CACP. The government sets MSP in line with the Union Budget 2018-19 announcement of fixing MSP at a level of at least 1.5 times the all-India weighted average cost of production to ensure adequate compensation for farmers.

Queries sent to the agriculture ministry remained unanswered.

Context: The government may raise the **minimum support price (MSP)** of six rabi or winter crops, with increases ranging from **2% to 7%**, for the **2024-25** marketing season

Minimum Support Price (MSP)

- **About:** MSP serves as a government-established rate at which crops are bought from farmers, providing them with protection against significant declines in agricultural prices.
- **Announced by:** The Commission for Agricultural Costs & Prices (CACP) recommends MSPs for **22 mandated crops and Fair and Remunerative Prices (FRP)** for sugarcane.
- **Origin of Concept:** MSP was initially introduced in **1966**, drawing inspiration from the Green Revolution.
- **Crops covered:** **7 types of cereals** (paddy, wheat, maize, bajra, jowar, ragi and barley)
 - **5 types of pulses** (chana, arhar/tur, urad, moong and masoor)
 - **7 oilseeds** (rapeseed-mustard, groundnut, soybean, sunflower, sesamum, safflower, niger seed)
 - **4 commercial crops** (cotton, sugarcane, copra, raw jute).

Factors for Recommending the MSP

- Demand and supply,
- Cost of production,
- Price trends in the market,
- Both domestic and international, inter-crop price parity,
- Terms of trade between agriculture and non-agriculture,
- A minimum of 50 percent as the margin over the cost of production,
- Implications of MSP on consumers of that product.

PM VISHWAKARMA SCHEME

(Syllabus: GS Paper 2– Government schemes)

PM Launches Vishwakarma Scheme Ahead of Lok Sabha Elections

Three million families of traditional artisans and craftsmen, primarily belonging to OBCs of lower strata and Dalit castes, to benefit from ₹13,000-cr scheme

Our Political Bureau

New Delhi: With less than a year left for the next Lok Sabha polls, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the ₹13,000-crore Vishwakarma scheme extending benefits to artisans primarily belonging to the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) of the lower strata and the Dalit castes.

It's estimated the scheme will benefit about three million families of traditional artisans and craftsmen across one and a half dozen small-time occupations. They include weavers, goldsmiths, blacksmiths, laundry workers, barbers, carpenters, boat-makers, small tool makers, potters, cobblers and masons.

Inaugurating the scheme and a modern India International Convention and Expo Centre 'Yashobhoomi' in Dwarka here on Vishwakarma Day, the prime minister said he was dedicating it to "every labourer, every Vishwakarma (artisan) of the country". The day also marked Modi's 73rd birthday.

The prime minister underlined that his government was committed

to giving due recognition to the marginalised people.

On the occasion, Modi also unveiled 18 customised stamp sheets covering the 18 traditional



ADEQUATE EMPOWERMENT

Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the launch of the PM Vishwakarma scheme is part of the government's efforts to ensure all vulnerable and backward sections of society are adequately empowered

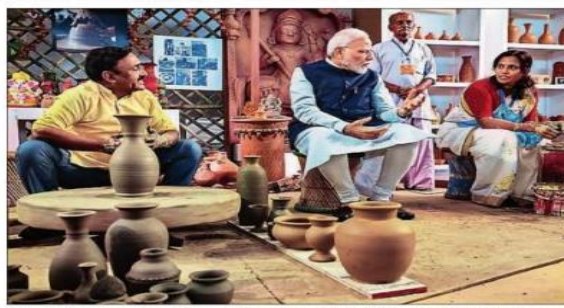
trades whose workers are covered under the scheme, along with a toolkit e-booklet on the Vishwakarma scheme.

The prime minister urged the artisans and craftsmen to buy Made in India toolkits from shops which are GST-registered.

He said that people should support 'Vocal for Local' during the forthcoming festivals.

Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the launch of the PM Vishwakarma scheme for craftsmen and artisans is part of the current government's efforts to ensure all vulnerable and backward sections of society are adequately empowered. Collateral-free loans of up to ₹3 lakh per beneficiary will be extended to craftspersons at a subsidised interest rate under the scheme.

It offers enterprise development loans of ₹1 lakh (first tranche with a repayment period of 18 months) and ₹2 lakh (second tranche with a repayment period of 30 months). Sitharaman said the beneficiaries will get the loans at a concessional interest of 5% and the government will extend an interest subsidy of 8%. The credit guarantee fees will be borne by the government.



PM at India International Convention & Expo Centre in New Delhi on Sunday – PTI

'DEDICATING IT TO EVERY LABOURER OF THE COUNTRY'

Inaugurating the scheme and a modern India International Convention and Expo Centre 'Yashobhoomi', the prime minister said he was dedicating it to 'every labourer, every Vishwakarma (artisan) of the country'

ON 'PM'S INSTRUCTIONS' Exhibition, Mainly for Spouses of G20 Leaders: EAM



THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: On the day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi

launched a scheme, dedicated to the 'Vishwakarmas' of the country, external affairs minister S Jaishankar on Sunday said that an exhibition, especially for the spouses of the G20 leaders, was set up earlier this month to showcase the works traditional artisans produced over thousands of years. The minister was speaking at the PM Vishwakarma event, which he attended via video conference from Thiruvananthapuram. He said PM Modi felt we should show the world leaders and especially their spouses, the Indian culture and tradition. – ANI

'CASTE CENSUS' REMINDER Another Election Jumla: Congress Slams Modi



HYDERABAD: Congress on Sunday attacked PM Modi over the launch of the PM Vishwakarma Yojana,

alleging that he is "offering yet another election jumla (gimmick)" but continues to be "selectively silent" on the issue of caste census. Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said the people "won't be fooled again" and it is time for "Prime Minister Modi's retirement". In a post on X, Ramesh said, "Demonetisation and a flawed GST followed by a sudden lockdown during Covid-19 have been the biggest destroyers of micro and small enterprises in India." – PTI

Context: Recently, in observance of 'Vishwakarma Jayanti,' the Prime Minister of India launched the 'PM Vishwakarma scheme, allocating Rs 13,000 crore to support traditional artisans.

PM Vishwakarma scheme

- **About:** It is a pioneering scheme designed to uplift individuals skilled in traditional craftsmanship, particularly from the OBC community.
- **Aim:** To strengthen and nurture the **Guru-Shishya parampara or family-based practice** of traditional skills by artisans and craftspeople working with their hands and tools.
 - Improving the quality, as well as the reach of products and services of artisans and craftspeople and ensuring that the Vishwakarmas are integrated with the domestic and global value chains.
- **Features:** The artisans and craftspeople will be provided recognition through PM Vishwakarma certificate and ID card, **Credit Support up to Rs.1 lakh (First Tranche) and Rs.2 lakh (Second Tranche) with a concessional interest rate of 5%.**
 - The Scheme will further provide Skill Upgradation, Toolkit Incentives, Incentive for Digital Transactions and Marketing Support.
 - The scheme will provide support to artisans and craftspeople of rural and urban areas across India.
 - **18 traditional trades will be covered in the first instance under PM Vishwakarma.**

PROJECT CHEETAH

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Env & Eco)

Cheetah project on the right path of success: govt. report

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Four of the six criteria established for assessing the short-term success of India's cheetah reintroduction programme have already been met, a government report said on Sunday. Released on the completion of one year of the programme, the report said the initial progress had followed a favourable trajectory well within the envisioned limitations. The project is on the right path to becoming a successful large carnivore conservation, translocation, and population-establishment endeavour, it said.

The Cheetah Action Plan, published last year, lists six short-term success criteria: survival of 50% of the introduced cheetahs for the first year; establishment of home ranges in the Kuno National Park; successful cheetah reproduction in the wild; survival of wild-born cheetah cubs past one year; successful first-generation



Spot assessment: The government says the project has followed a favourable trajectory within the limitations. ANI

breeding; and cheetah-based revenues contributing to community livelihoods. The report noted that the project achieved 50% survival; establishment of home ranges; birth of cubs; and direct revenue contributions to local communities through the engagement of cheetah trackers and indirect appreciation of land value in surrounding areas.

India's ambitious initiative to reintroduce cheetahs after their extinction in the country marked its first anniversary on Sunday.

Kuno National Park

- **Situated:** Between the Aravallis and the Madhav National Park, Kuno serves as an important wildlife corridor
- It was notified as a **sanctuary in 1981** and then upgraded to a **national park in 2018**.
- **Area:** 750 kilometers of pristine wilderness.
- **Vegetation:** The tropical dry deciduous forest mainly consists of *Anogeissus pendula* (Kardhai), *Senegalia catechu* (Khair) *Boswellia serrata* (Salai), and associated flora.

Context: A government report reveals that recently, **four out of the six criteria** set for evaluating the **short-term success of India's cheetah** reintroduction program have been achieved.

Project Cheetah

- **About:** It is India's cheetah relocation program. This is the first intercontinental reintroduction of a wild, large carnivore species.
- **Began on:** 17 September 2023
- **Authorities** - The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) is the apex body entrusted with the implementation of Project Cheetah.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of the forest, environment, and climate change.
- **Historic cheetah in India** - Asiatic Cheetahs were once abundant in India but the last cheetah in the country died in 1952.
- **Reintroduced cheetah** - The animals brought from Namibia and South Africa are the Southeast African cheetahs.
- **IUCN Status**
- **African Cheetah** – Vulnerable
- **Asiatic Cheetah** – Critically endangered (Iran)

THE CHEETAHS ARE COMING

HOW MANY?

20
8 from Namibia
+ 12 from SA



WHERE?

Kuno National Park, Madhya Pradesh
(Kuno National Park will have a 600-hectare fenced enclosure to house the Cheetahs)

What is the carrying capacity of Kuno?
21
Cheetahs



What is the long-term population size expected? **50+**

Are there similar relocation programmes? South Africa to Malawi, Mozambique

Could it share its space? Yes, with Asiatic lions

Are there threats? Yes, with Kuno's existing leopard population

India, Brazil begin talks to resolve sugar-related trade dispute at WTO

PTI

feedback@livemint.com

India and Brazil have started talks to mutually resolve a sugar-related trade dispute at the World Trade Organization (WTO). As part of the solution the South American nation may share ethanol production technology with New Delhi, an official said.

Brazil is the world's largest producer of sugarcane and ethanol. It is also a leader in the technology used for ethanol production.

"A few rounds of talks have been held as part of our efforts to resolve the dispute. We

have also held inter-ministerial meetings here. Brazil is saying that they will share with us technology for ethanol (production). It is a positive thing," the official said.

Ethanol is used to blend with oil to power vehicles. Use of ethanol, extracted from sugarcane as well as broken rice and other agri-produce, will help the world's third largest oil consumer and importing country cut its reliance on overseas shipments.

India currently is 85% dependent on imports for meeting its oil needs. Using ethanol also helps cut carbon emissions. There is a target of



As part of the dispute resolution, Brazil may share ethanol production technology with India.

BLOOMBERG

20% ethanol blended petrol by 2025.

India would also have to offer something as part of the mutually agreed solution

(MAS) to resolve the dispute at the Geneva-based multilateral body.

Recently India and the US have ended six trade disputes

and also agreed to terminate a seventh.

As part of the solution, while New Delhi removed retaliatory duties on eight American products like apples and walnuts, the US is providing market access to Indian steel and aluminium products without levying extra duties.

The official said India is also following a similar process for other complainants of the sugar dispute at the WTO.

In 2019, Brazil, Australia and Guatemala dragged India to the WTO's dispute settlement mechanism alleging New Delhi's sugar subsidies to

farmers are inconsistent with global trade rules.

A WTO dispute settlement panel on 14 December, 2021, ruled that India's support measures for the sugar sector are inconsistent with global trade norms.

In January 2022, India appealed against the panel's ruling at the WTO's appellate body, which is the final authority to pass rulings on disputes.

The appellate body, however, is not functioning due to differences among countries on appointments of members to the body.

Brazil is the largest pro-

ducer and exporter of sugar in the world. India is the second-largest producer.

Brazil, Australia and Guatemala had complained that India's support measures to sugarcane producers exceed the de-minimized level of 10% of the total value of sugarcane production, which according to them was inconsistent with the WTO's Agreement on Agriculture.

They had also flagged India's alleged export subsidies, subsidies under the production assistance and buffer stock schemes, and the marketing and transportation scheme.

Context: Recently, India and Brazil initiated discussions to amicably address a trade dispute concerning sugar at the World Trade Organisation (WTO), and as a recent development in this resolution effort, the South American nation is considering sharing its ethanol production technology.

Key Points of Dispute

- **In 2019**, Brazil, Australia, and Guatemala dragged India into the WTO's dispute settlement mechanism alleging that New Delhi's sugar subsidies to farmers are inconsistent with global trade rules.
- **In January 2022**, India appealed against the panel's ruling at the WTO's appellate body, which is the final authority to pass rulings against such disputes.
 - **Brazil is the largest producer** and exporter of sugar in the world. **India is the world's second-largest producer.**
- **Brazil, Australia, and Guatemala**, which are **members of the WTO**, had complained that **India's support measures** to sugarcane producers exceed **the de minimis level of 10 percent** of the total value of sugarcane production.
- **According to WTO rules**, a WTO member or member can file a case in the Geneva-based multilateral body if they feel that a particular trade measure is against the norms of the WTO.

Ethanol

- **About:** Ethanol serves as a fuel additive for vehicles when blended with oil.
- **Derived from:** Sugarcane, broken rice, and various agricultural products.
- **Dependency:** Its utilization can assist India, the world's third-largest oil consumer and importer, in reducing its dependency on foreign oil supplies, currently standing at 85 percent.
- **Use of Ethanol:** using ethanol in fuels contributes to a reduction in carbon emissions.
- **India's Target:** To achieving a 20 percent ethanol blend in petrol by the year 2025.

World Trade Organization (WTO)

- **About:** It is the only global international organization dealing with international Trade between nations.
- **Set up:** In 1995, the GATT under the Marrakesh Agreement.
- **Headquarters:** Geneva, Switzerland.
- **Members:** 164 members and **India is a founding member** of WTO.

For IAF, Made-in-India: why the new C295 aircraft are a big deal

AMRITA NAYAK DUTTA
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 15

THE INDIAN Air Force (IAF) on Wednesday received the first of its 56 new Airbus C295 aircraft which will replace its ageing Avro-748 fleet.

The C295, which is in transport configuration and is fitted with an indigenous electronic warfare suite, will be flown from the Airbus facility in Seville, Spain, to Delhi by a joint IAF-Airbus crew.

Air Chief Marshal V R Chaudhari said the "momentous" day marked the beginning of a new era in which military aircraft would be manufactured in India.

Roles and capabilities

According to Airbus, the C295 is a versatile tactical transport aircraft that can perform a variety of missions — carrying troops and

veillance and reconnaissance to signals intelligence, armed close air support, medical evacuation, VIP transport, and airborne fire-fighting. It is also equipped for air-to-air refuelling of fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters.

Powered by two Pratt & Whitney turbo-prop engines, the aircraft can cruise at altitudes up to 30,000 ft, and carry up to 9 tonnes of payload or up to 71 troops at a maximum cruise speed of 260 knots (about 480 km/h). It has short take-off & landing (STOL) performance from unpaved, soft, and sandy/grass airstrips, Airbus says on its website.

Acquisition and delivery

The acquisition of 56 C295s to replace the legacy Avro fleet at a cost of Rs 21,935 crore was finalised in September 2021. The first 16 aircraft will be assembled in Seville; the second aircraft is due to be delivered in May 2024, and the remaining 14 at the rate of one each month until August 2025. These aircraft



The first C295 aircraft which was delivered on Wednesday at the Airbus facility in Seville, Spain. Express

The other 40 aircraft will be manufactured and assembled in partnership with Tata Advanced Systems Limited (TASL) at a Final Assembly Line (FAL) in Vadodara, Gujarat.

Six IAF pilots have received training, and 20 maintenance crew members are currently being trained in Seville, officials said. Three more batches of IAF personnel are

Importance of the aircraft

The acquisition is significant because of two reasons.

First, the replacement of the Avros, which were acquired in the 1960s, will provide fillip to the IAF's role of carrying troops and material to different parts of the country. The IAF also operates C-130J Super Hercules aircraft in the medium category, and the giant C-17 Globemaster III for medium and heavier loads, which it had acquired from the United States.

Second, the acquisition sets into motion India's first-ever 'Make in India' aerospace programme in the private sector. State-owned Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) has so far had the monopoly over manufacture of military aircraft in India. This will boost India's aerospace sector with 15,000 high-skill jobs and 10,000 indirect jobs over the next 10 years.

The indigenous factor

Barring major components such as the engine and avionics, which have been sourced

there will be a transfer of manufacturing technology to TASL by Airbus on most other components, so that 95% of the aircraft could be made in India within the next few years.

The aircraft will be equipped with indigenous radar warning receivers and missile approach warning systems developed by Bharat Electronics Limited. The countermeasure dispensing system has been provided by Bharat Dynamics Limited.

The airframe of the medium transport aircraft will involve more than 14,000 parts and components, and around 3,500 parts will be industrialised progressively every year by Tata, depending on the capability of the Indian supply chains to reach the stated level of indigenisation.

It is expected that the 32nd aircraft, which is scheduled for delivery in the first quarter of 2029, will be almost fully Indian.

The European defence major will provide spares support for 10 years, and performance-based logistics for five years, ensuring the availability of 85% of the fleet for the IAF

Status of manufacturing

The 40 C295s to be made in India at the Vadodara factory are scheduled for delivery to the IAF between 2026 and 2031.

Last year, TASL set up a factory in Hyderabad where the manufacture of major airframe components such as fuselage and tail started in July this year. These sections of the aircraft will be transported to the Vadodara facility next year, where they will be fitted with the engine and avionics and other critical components sourced by Airbus from other global firms, and readied for testing and delivery.

The factory in Vadodara will have a capacity of producing 12 aircraft per year — the same as the Airbus final assembly line in Spain.

Earlier this year, Jorge Tamarit, head of the C295 programme in India, had told The Indian Express that this is the first time that Airbus is building a complete production system outside Spain.

LONGER VERSION

Context: Recently, the Indian Air Force (IAF) took delivery of the initial C295 aircraft out of the 56 slated to replace its ageing Avro-748 fleet, directly from the Airbus production site in Seville, Spain.

C295 Aircraft

- **About:** It is a new-generation **tactical airlifter** in the light and medium segment that will replace the ageing Avro aircraft of the Indian Air Force.
- **Built by:** Airbus, a European multinational aerospace corporation.
- **Capacity:** 5-10 tonne capacity with contemporary technology.
 - It is robust and reliable but also highly versatile in terms of the number of different missions it can perform.
- **Features:** The aircraft, with a flight endurance of up to 11 hours, can carry out multi-role operations under all weather conditions.
- **Replacement:** Indian Air Force's ageing fleet of Avro-748 planes

Cabinet approves expansion of Ujjwala Yojana

Context: Recently, the center approved the expansion of **PM Ujjwala Yojana** over three years from Financial Year 2023-24 to 2025-26.

PM Ujjwala Yojana

- **Launched:** May 2016.
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.
- **Objective:** To make clean cooking fuel such as LPG available to the rural and deprived households that were otherwise using traditional cooking fuels such as firewood, coal, cow-dung cakes, etc.
- **Target:** LPG connections to 5 crore women members of BPL households.
- **Beneficiaries:** Women beneficiaries from 7 more categories- SC/ST, PMAY, AAY, Most backward classes, tea garden, forest dwellers, and Islands.

Initiatives to expand LPG coverage

- **PAHAL (Pratyaksh Hastantarit Labh):** Instead of providing LPG cylinders at subsidized price, those were sold at market price, and applicable subsidy was directly transferred to individual's bank account electronically.
- **GIVE IT UP:** Instead of removing subsidies forcefully, people were encouraged to voluntarily surrender their subsidies.



Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana 2.0

to benefit 1 Crore more families

Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana 2.0 highlights:

Stove and first refill Free with deposit free connection for all

- Acceptance of Aadhaar as a valid document for address and identity
- Ujjwala connection for adult female of migrant and non-migrant poor families
- Self declaration accepted as family and address proof for migrants

Delhi has joined several Indian states in banning glue pads for rodent control. But what about poison?

Context: The Delhi government announced directives to **ban the manufacture**, sale, and use of **glue pads which is a common** but one of the most cruel methods to kill rodents.

- Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttarakhand, **prohibited the practice** after receiving guidance from the **Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI) in 2011**.

Key Points of Ban Glue Pads

- Rat poison, a commonly **used alternative to glue pads**, is also one of the most inhuman ways of dealing with rodent infestation.
- The **ban on glue pads serves as a reminder** that poisoning rats threaten predators who feed on their carcass but isn't regulated.
- Rat poison, along with glue strips, was observed to be the **worst for 'rat welfare'** in a January 2023 Oxford University study.
- "**Anticoagulant poisons**, which interfere with blood clotting and kill rats through hemorrhaging, can lead to extreme suffering.
- **According to Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry**, 91 percent of the birds tested positive for two or more different types of **anticoagulant rodenticides**, with SGARs **brodifacoum, bromadiolone and difethialone found** most frequently

Glue Pads

- **About:** It is a pest control device **that uses a strong adhesive** to trap rodents, insects, and other small animals.
- It is typically **made of a cardboard or plastic base** with a layer of sticky glue applied to the top.
- **How it works:** When an animal steps on the glue pad, its feet and body become stuck. The animal is then unable to escape, and it eventually dies from dehydration or starvation.

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