



NATIONAL FARMERS' DAY – SPECIAL EVENT

NEWS: *National Farmers' Day is celebrated every year on December 23 to honour farmers' contributions to the Indian economy*

WHAT'S IN THE NEWS?

About the National Farmers' Day

History and Origins: It was established in 2001 and it commemorates the birth anniversary of Chaudhary Charan Singh, India's fifth Prime Minister, known for his advocacy for farmers' rights. He served as Prime Minister from 1979 to 1980 and was instrumental in land reforms, agricultural productivity improvements, and securing farmers' rights.

Importance

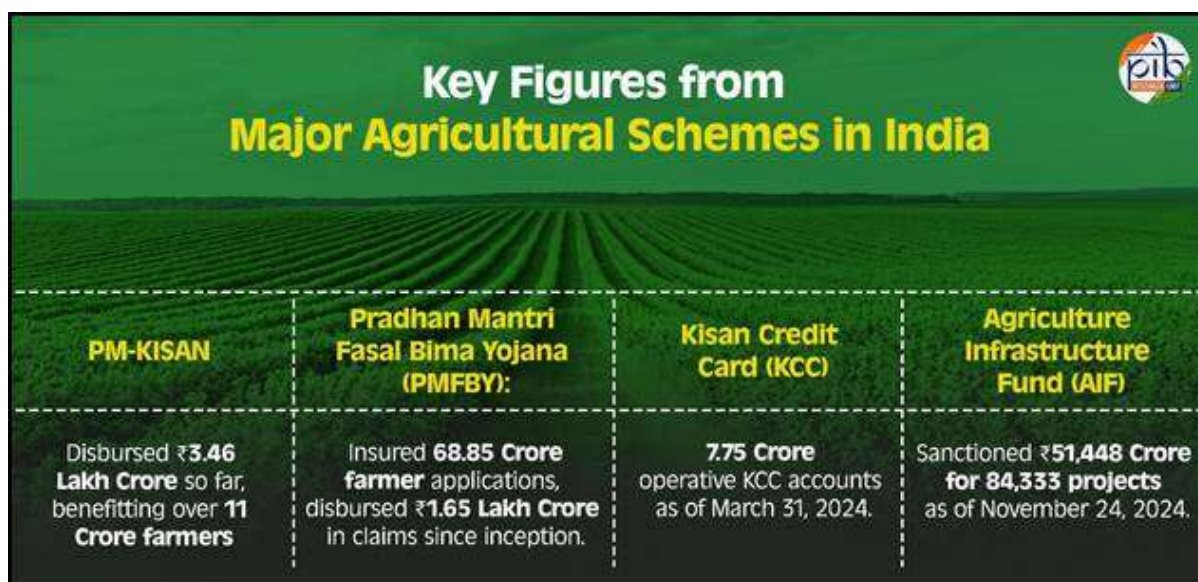
Farmers are the backbone of India's prosperity, contributing significantly to food security, rural economies, and national progress.

India's agricultural sector employs nearly half of the population and contributes **17.7% to the GDP (GVA)**.

In 2023-24, India achieved a record foodgrain production of 332.2 million tonnes, showcasing farmers' dedication.

National Farmers' Day honors the contributions of farmers and highlights their critical role in India's economy.

It highlights the challenges faced by farmers, including fair pricing, climate change, and the need for modern agricultural technologies.



Government Initiatives for Farmers

Increased Budget Allocation for Agriculture: The government significantly increased the budget for agriculture from Rs. 21,933.50 crore in FY 2013-14 to Rs. 1,22,528.77 crore in FY 2024-25.



Namo Drone Didi: Empowers women SHGs with drones for agricultural services like pesticide application (₹1,261 crore for 2024-26).

Soil Health Card Scheme: Aims to improve soil health and promote efficient fertiliser use (over 24.60 crore cards issued).

Clean Plant Programme (CPP): Enhances quality and productivity of horticulture crops with disease-free planting material (₹1,765.67 crore).

Digital Agriculture Mission: Supports digital initiatives to boost agriculture, including crop estimation surveys and infrastructure (₹2,817 crore).

Pradhan Mantri Kisan MaanDhan Yojana (PM-KMY)

Launched on 12th September 2019, PM-KMY provides security to vulnerable farmer families by offering a monthly pension. Farmers between the ages of 18 to 40 contribute monthly to the scheme, which is matched by the government. The Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) manages the pension fund. As of 25th November 2024, over 24.66 lakh farmers have enrolled in the scheme, offering a financial safeguard during their old age.

Modified Interest Subvention Scheme (MISS)

The Modified Interest Subvention Scheme (MISS) provides concessional short-term agri-loans with a 7% interest rate on loans up to ₹3.00 lakh, plus an additional 3% subvention for timely repayment, reducing the effective rate to 4%. Since 2014-15, institutional credit flow to agriculture has nearly tripled from ₹8.5 lakh crore to **₹25.48 lakh crore** by 2023-24. The disbursement of easy and concessional crop loans has more than doubled, with the interest subsidy through KCC increasing 2.4 times to ₹14,252 crore in 2023-24.

Kisan Credit Card (KCC)

Introduced in 1998, the Kisan Credit Card (KCC) scheme provides farmers with easy access to agricultural inputs and cash for their production needs. In February 2019, RBI extended the KCC facility to Animal Husbandry and Fisheries for their working capital requirements. As of 31st March 2024, there are **7.75 crore operative KCC accounts**.

Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF)

The Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF) Scheme, launched in 2020 under the Atmanirbhar Bharat Package, supports sustainable agriculture by financing infrastructure projects across India. It provides loans up to ₹2 crore with a capped interest rate of 9%, along with a 3% annual interest subvention and reimbursement of credit guarantee fees for up to seven years, ensuring affordability for beneficiaries. As of 24th November 2024, ₹51,448 crore has been sanctioned for 84,333 projects under AIF.

Challenges

Climate Change: Unpredictable weather, droughts, and floods reduce crop yields and cause financial instability.

Access to Credit: Many farmers struggle to obtain affordable credit due to high interest rates and complex procedures.

Price Fluctuations: Fluctuating crop prices and high input costs negatively impact farmers' income.



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Limited Access to Technology: High costs and lack of infrastructure prevent farmers from using modern farming techniques.

Infrastructure Gaps: Lack of roads, storage, and cold storage facilities leads to transportation and post-harvest losses.

Conclusion:

As India continues to develop and urbanize, it is crucial to remember the vital role that farmers play in the nation's progress.

Therefore, addressing the challenges is crucial for ensuring the sustainability and growth of the agricultural sector.

Government schemes ensure financial security, enhance productivity, and promote sustainable growth for farmers.

Ongoing initiatives aim to empower farmers, improve infrastructure, and set the stage for a resilient agricultural ecosystem, vital for India's growth and development.