

**FOR FARMS AND FARMERS:****ON LAUNCHING OF RAJIV GANDHI KISAN NYAY YOJANA****Income support serves a purpose, but the farm sector needs a lot more**

The Rajiv Gandhi Kisan Nyay Yojana launched by Chhattisgarh last week aims to supplement the income of the State's 18 lakh rice, maize and sugarcane farmers by ₹10,000 to ₹13,000 per acre, through direct cash transfers. Besides the Centre's PM-KISAN scheme that provides ₹6,000 to farm families owning less than five acres of land, Telangana, Odisha and Andhra Pradesh have similar cash transfer programmes for farmers. For balancing the interests of the consumer and the farmer, India has an extensive Minimum Support Price (MSP) regime which works in combination with the PDS. But the efficiency of neither MSP procurements nor the PDS is uniform across the country. The Centre says it fixes MSPs at 1.5 times the cost of production for farmers, but this calculation is not free of controversy. Last year, several States including Chhattisgarh and BJP-ruled U.P. and Haryana questioned the Centre's MSP calculations. Though food is a universal necessity, those who produce it languish at the bottom of the economic pyramid.

These income support schemes target land owners, and bypass tenants and labourers. In Chhattisgarh, there is preliminary evidence that tenants managed better rates from owners last year after the government gave incentives over and above MSPs to farmers. The State is now designing a cash transfer scheme for landless labourers, according to Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel. But these interventions are only palliative and cannot address the underlying problem, which is the non-remunerative nature of farming. A more market-driven approach has often been proposed as the solution, and the agriculture-related components in the Centre's response to the economic crisis caused by the pandemic appear to toe that line. However, many previous arguments about the agriculture economy have been rendered questionable by the pandemic. The food supply chain crisis in the U.S. is instructive. Considered supremely efficient, it ended up with wasted produce and unmet demand as the pandemic erupted. India's agricultural management must take into account such fresh learning from the pandemic, and vulnerabilities arising out of supply chain-dependent food security. The list of pre-existing morbidities in the agriculture sector is also long, including messy land records, unscientific and unsustainable crop patterns, market linkages that make the farmers vulnerable to exploitation by officials and middlemen, inadequate irrigation, adoption of technology, conflict with wildlife, and changing weather and climate patterns. For now, the Centre must announce the MSPs for the current season at the earliest — late announcements have added to the uncertainties for the farmers in recent years. The creation of a buoyant agriculture sector will take much more, and those efforts must be made on a war-footing.

**Meanings of Difficult Words :**

- ❖ **supplement** (verb) – increase, make larger, augment, expand, boost.
- ❖ **besides** (preposition) – apart from, excluding, other than; in addition to.
- ❖ **own** (verb) – possess, have, have to one's name.
- ❖ **Minimum Support Price (MSP)** (noun) – it is a form of market intervention by the Government of India to give guaranteed price and assured market to the farmers and protect them from the price fluctuations and market imperfections. The guaranteed price and assured market are expected to encourage higher investment and in adoption of modern farming practices.
- ❖ **Public Distribution System (PDS)** (noun) – The Public Distribution System (PDS) in the country facilitates the supply of food grains and distribution of essential commodities to a large number of poor people through a network of Fair Price Shops at a subsidized price on a recurring basis.
- ❖ **procurement** (noun) – collection, acquiring, purchase.
- ❖ **controversy** (noun) – disagreement, dispute, argument.
- ❖ **necessity** (noun) – (essential) requirement, prerequisite.
- ❖ **interest** (noun) – advantage, benefit; concern.

- ❖ **languish** (verb) – suffer, experience hardship; be abandoned, be neglected, be forgotten.
- ❖ **bottom of the pyramid (BOP)** (phrase) – the concept ‘Bottom of the Pyramid’ was first used by US President Franklin D Roosevelt in 1932, while talking about the poor people who are often forgotten because they live at the bottom of the economic pyramid. Bottom of the pyramid, also called the base of the pyramid, is a phrase in economics that refers to the poorest two-thirds of the economic human pyramid.
- ❖ **bypass** (verb) – avoid, keep out of, dodge, circumvent, get round.
- ❖ **incentive** (noun) – (financial) stimulus, impetus; concession.
- ❖ **over and above** (phrase) – in addition to, as well as, besides.
- ❖ **design** (verb) – originate, create, plan, formulate, think up.
- ❖ **intervention** (noun) – involvement, interference.
- ❖ **palliative** (adjective) – relating to an action aimed to mitigate/lessen a problem (without addressing the basic reason).
- ❖ **address** (verb) – tackle, deal with, attend to, try to sort out.
- ❖ **underlying** (adjective) – fundamental, basic, primary.
- ❖ **non-remunerative** (adjective) – non-profitable/ unprofitable, non-lucrative, unrewarding, unfruitful, unhelpful.
- ❖ **market-driven** (adjective) – determined by on what and how much people want to buy.
- ❖ **pandemic** (noun) – the worldwide spread of a new disease; The illness spreads around the world and typically affects a large number of people across a wide area.
- ❖ **toe the line** (phrase) – do things as per someone else’s expectations; to adhere to the expectations/rules; meet/conform to a standard.
- ❖ **render** (verb) – make, cause to become; cause to be, leave.
- ❖ **food supply chain** (noun) – a food supply chain or food system refers to the processes that describe how food from a farm ends up on our tables (from farm to fork). The processes include production, processing, distribution, consumption and disposal.
- ❖ **instructive** (adjective) – revealing, explanatory, telling, informative.
- ❖ **supremely** (adverb) – extremely.
- ❖ **end up** (phrasal verb) – come/appear, find oneself (to a particular course of action in the end).
- ❖ **produce** (noun) – (natural) products, foods.
- ❖ **unmet** (adjective) – not achieved, not fulfilled.
- ❖ **erupt** (verb) – break out, start suddenly, flare up.
- ❖ **take into account** (phrase) – consider, note, bear in mind, take account of.
- ❖ **learning** (noun) – knowledge, understanding, insight.
- ❖ **vulnerability** (noun) – weakness/ defencelessness, frailty, susceptibility.
- ❖ **arise out** (verb) – result, occur, stem (from).
- ❖ **morbidity** (noun) – an unhealthy state; abnormal/gloomy condition; the quality of being morbid.
- ❖ **messy** (adjective) – (of a situation/ condition) chaotic, confused, disorganized, difficult to deal with.
- ❖ **unsustainable** (adjective) – flawed, defective, baseless, irrational (pattern/ method which disrupts the balance of nature and then exhausts all of natural resources).
- ❖ **vulnerable** (adjective) – exposed to, at risk, unprotected/unguarded.
- ❖ **exploitation** (noun) – taking advantage, making use, ill treatment, unfair treatment.
- ❖ **middlemen** (noun) – broker, agent, intermediary.
- ❖ **irrigation** (noun) – the process of (artificially) supplying water to farm land to grow crops & plants.
- ❖ **add to** (verb) – increase, magnify, intensify, amplify.
- ❖ **uncertainty** (noun) – unpredictability, unreliability, riskiness/precariousness.
- ❖ **buoyant** (adjective) – optimistic, confident, hopeful; lively, high-spirited.
- ❖ **war-footing** (noun) – a state of preparedness (for war).

## DANGER IN THE AIR: ON PIA FLIGHT CRASH

**The PIA crash is a reminder that the aviation industry provides little margin for error**

From a “we are comfortable now, established on ILS 25L” that soon led to a repeated declaration of “Mayday”, the partial transcript of air traffic control conversation that is available offers an insight into the catastrophic end to PK-8303. The Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) flight, from Lahore to Karachi, with 91 passengers and eight crew, was operated using an Airbus A320-214, an aircraft type that is one of aviation’s reliable and modern workhorses. Initially, while visual evidence, as photographs and video footage, offered some clues about what might have overwhelmed the pilots of the nearly 16-year-old jetliner, it is the recovery, later, of the crucial blackboxes that is significant. In the backdrop too is the offer of full technical assistance by the manufacturer, Airbus, and the involvement of western air safety agencies and Pakistan’s inquiry team. These factors will aid investigators in getting a handle on the series of events. May 22, the day of the accident — there are two survivors — also marked the 10th anniversary of another air disaster, the crash of IX-812, an Air India Express flight on the Dubai-Mangaluru sector.

Air safety commentators point in a relevant direction. Though authorities in Pakistan and PIA, an established flag carrier, have detailed the plane’s technical, flight and maintenance history, there is a swirl around the operator’s not-so-impressive air safety record. There is also another core and related issue. The COVID-19 pandemic has scorched commercial airline operations and balance sheets, but with airline managers across the world attempting to give wings to their fleets after prolonged grounding, experts highlight a key phrase: ‘no half measures’. The necessity of flying machines being returned to service after a complete maintenance check and, more importantly, aircrew being allowed at the controls only after key proficiency checks in a full flight simulator have to be stressed repeatedly. This is a subject that aviation regulators can ill-afford to overlook, and a challenge too, given that it is airlines with deep pockets or with access to financial lifelines that can bridge such issues. The tragedy in Pakistan has also spotlighted another long-standing safety concern. The crippled jet’s fiery end, while on approach, in a densely populated neighbourhood lining the airport, highlights the danger of buildings and obstacles affecting airline operations and safety. In India, the authorities concerned have often glossed over High Court orders to demolish structures around aerodromes that violate stringent guidelines laid down by the International Civil Aviation Organization. In the interest of aviation safety, airline crew do deserve a comfort margin and, in an extreme event, every chance at pulling off a Sully as the world wished the PIA crew to have done.

### Meanings of Difficult Words :

- ❖ **little/no margin for error** (phrase) – it is used to describe the range of uncertainty or options available in planning a future action – in which errors might occur (or some parameters are misjudged/miscalculated). You try to account for the possible errors and include them in the plan.
- ❖ **mayday** (noun) – an occasion to broadcast distress over a life-threatening emergency by ships & aircrafts.
- ❖ **transcript** (noun) – written version/ copy, reproduction, record/text.
- ❖ **insight** (noun) – understanding, revelation, realization/recognition.
- ❖ **catastrophic** (adjective) – destructive, ruinous, disastrous.
- ❖ **crew** (noun) – a group of people working on an aircraft, ship, etc.
- ❖ **workhorse** (noun) – a machine which works dependably for a long period of time.
- ❖ **overwhelm** (verb) – defeat, beat, overpower, quell, crush; overburden, beset/ trouble.
- ❖ **jetliner** (noun) – a large, commercial jet plane (carrying a lot of passengers).
- ❖ **blackbox** (noun) – the flight data recorder and cockpit voice recorder, or black boxes as they are often called, store data about planes. They can provide vital information in air accident investigations.
- ❖ **backdrop** (noun) – situation, scenario, context.

- ❖ **offer** (noun) – proposal, approach, suggestion, submission.
- ❖ **get a handle on** (phrase) – to get a clear understanding of something in order to deal with it.
- ❖ **point** (verb) – be turned in; cite.
- ❖ **flag carrier** (noun) – an airline that is registered in a particular state (country).
- ❖ **flight** (noun) – flight path, trajectory, track.
- ❖ **swirl** (noun) – a number of something moving in a spiral manner.
- ❖ **not-so-impressive** (adjective) – not very good.
- ❖ **pandemic** (noun) – the worldwide spread of a new disease; The illness spreads around the world and typically affects a large number of people across a wide area.
- ❖ **scorch** (verb) – devastate, afflict, affect adversely; burn, melt, dry up.
- ❖ **balance sheet** (noun) – a statement that shows the financial condition of a company at a particular point in time.
- ❖ **give wings to** (phrase) – encourage, motivate, inspire, foster, assist.
- ❖ **fleet** (noun) – a group of vehicles (buses/aircrafts/ships) work together under an organisation.
- ❖ **grounding** (noun) – an act of taking/putting the aircraft out of service.
- ❖ **highlight** (verb) – underline, underscore, emphasize.
- ❖ **half measure** (noun) – a policy/action which is only partly effective.
- ❖ **necessity** (noun) – (essential) requirement, prerequisite.
- ❖ **at the controls** (phrase) – if a person is at the controls of a machine/equipment, he/she is operating it.
- ❖ **proficiency check** (noun) – an assessment of a person's skills and knowledge in a particular operational area. For example, pilots are required to undertake proficiency checks to ensure they continue to be competent conducting particular kinds of operations.
- ❖ **flight simulator** (noun) – a training system/device (software and hardware) that trains airplane pilots and crew members by simulating flight conditions.
- ❖ **stress** (verb) – emphasize, draw attention to, highlight.
- ❖ **ill-afford** (verb) – unable to afford (bear/sustain) something (and so it is very important to prevent something from happening because it would be embarrassing and cause problems (if it happens)).
- ❖ **overlook** (verb) – miss, fail to notice; disregard, neglect/ignore.
- ❖ **deep pockets** (plural noun) – affluence, prosperity/well-being, riches.
- ❖ **lifeline** (noun) – support, helping hand, life belt, sustenance.
- ❖ **bridge** (verb) – join, link, connect, unite.
- ❖ **spotlight** (verb) – focus attention on, highlight, draw attention to, underline, underscore.
- ❖ **long-standing** (adjective) – persistent, prevailing, continuing (for a long time).
- ❖ **crippled** (adjective) – malfunctioned, damaged, crashed.
- ❖ **fiery** (adjective) – uncontrollable, ungovernable.
- ❖ **approach** (noun) – (of an aircraft) an act of descending (going down) for landing.
- ❖ **neighbourhood** (noun) – (surrounding) area, region, district/country.
- ❖ **line** (verb) – border, edge, be positioned.
- ❖ **gloss over** (verb) – conceal, cover up, hide.
- ❖ **stringent** (adjective) – strict/stern, severe, tough/rigorous.
- ❖ **interest** (noun) – advantage, benefit.
- ❖ **lay down** (phrasal verb) – formulate, stipulate, set down.
- ❖ **pull off** (phrasal verb) – achieve, succeed in, accomplish.
- ❖ **Sully** (noun) – Chesley “Sully” Sullenberger, an American retired Air Force fighter pilot and airline captain. He is best known for his role as pilot in emergency landing of US Airways Flight 1549 on the Hudson River, New York in which all 155 passengers and crew survived (it happened on January 15, 2009).
- ❖ **to have done** (phrase) – it is mentioning about something (an action) that should have been done at some indefinite point in time in the past before another point in time in the past.