Syllabus subtopic: Issues related to direct and indirect farm subsidies and minimum support prices; Public Distribution System objectives, functioning, limitations, revamping; issues of buffer stocks and food security; Technology missions; economics of animal-rearing.

News: Less than 3% of this season’s sanctioned amount of pulses and oilseeds have actually been procured so far under the oncehyped PMAASHA scheme, Agriculture Ministry data show.

Prelims and Mains focus: About PM-AASHA, its significance and challenges in its implementation

Background
Arrivals of these crops began in October and will end by February. A total of 37.59 lakh metric tonnes of procurement had been sanctioned under the Centrally funded scheme.

However, only 1.08 lakh tonnes have been procured so far, according to data placed in the Lok Sabha on Tuesday. In fact, of the eleven States that opted for the scheme this season, procurement has not even started in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha.

About PM-AASHA
The PMAASHA or Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay Sanrakshan Abhiyan, was announced with great fanfare in September 2018, as an effort to ensure that farmers growing pulses, oilseeds and copra actually get the minimum support prices they are promised for their crops each year.

Apart from initiatives to allow cash payment to farmers or procurement by private traders, PM-AASHA’s main feature was a price support scheme whereby Central agencies would procure pulses and oilseeds directly from farmers.

The Centre had budgeted ?15,053 crore over two years to implement the scheme apart from an additional government credit guarantee of ?16,550 crore for agencies undertaking procurement.

The main crops covered under the scheme this season are moong, urad, arhar, groundnut and soyabean.

Challenges
The late arrival of the monsoon means that harvests and crop arrivals also began slightly later than expected, especially for arhar or tur dal, so procurement is likely to continue, though tapering, until February.
Increasing MSP is not adequate and it is more important that farmers should get full benefit of the announced MSP.