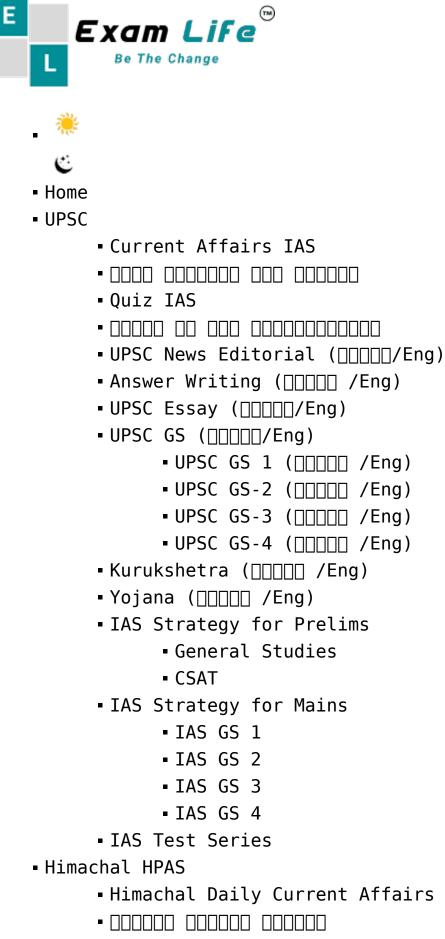
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 - What lentils are?
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 - Where Are Brown Lentils Grown in India (Masur)?
 - Top Masoor-Producing States in India:
 - Masoor is a Crop of Rabi:
 - The historical significance of lentils in India:
 - In summary:
 - QuizTime:
 - Are you Ready!
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• Mains Questions:

- Question 1:
- Model Answer:
- Question 2:

- Model Answer:
- Relevance to the UPSC Prelims and Mains syllabus under the following topics:

India Takes the Lead in masoor (brown lentils) Production: A Positive Development for Food Security and Pulse Industry

What is the news?

 India, long a major consumer and importer of lentils, is poised to claim the crown as the world's largest producer of masoor (brown lentils) in the 2023-24 crop year. This exciting news, shared by Consumer Affairs Secretary Rohit Kumar, is a result of a substantial expansion in the land area devoted to growing lentils. Let's explore the reasons behind and the impact of this notable change.

What is Crop year?

• A crop year is a period from one year's harvest to the next for an agricultural commodity.

What is the reasons behind this increase?

• Higher Acreage: The area under lentil cultivation has

registered a commendable 6% rise compared to last year and a staggering 37% jump compared to the normal area. This increase can be attributed to several factors, including:

- Increased Minimum Support Price (MSP): The government's recent decision to raise the minimum support price for lentils has provided a strong incentive for farmers to consider switching to this crop, as it promises better returns for their efforts. Government has increased the MSP of Rabi Crops for Marketing Season 2023-24, to ensure remunerative prices to the growers for their produce. The absolute highest increase in MSP has been approved for lentil (Masur) at Rs.500/- per quintal followed by rapeseed and mustard at Rs.400/- per quintal.
- Emphasizing Pulse Self-Sufficiency: The government's determined goal of achieving selfsufficiency in pulses by December 2027 has sparked a strong push for lentil cultivation through a range of schemes and programs.
- Favorable market conditions: Farmers are finding it more appealing to invest in lentil production due to the government's proactive procurement efforts and the increase in market prices.

Implications for India:

 India currently relies heavily on imported lentils to meet its demand. This increase in domestic production will help decrease reliance on imports from other countries, which will lead to more stable prices and greater food security.

- Enhanced Nutritional Security: Lentils provide a wealth of protein, fiber, and vital minerals that are essential for maintaining a well-rounded diet.
 Boosting domestic production will make it easier for people to get their hands on affordable and healthy food.
- Positive Impact on Rural Economy: The increase in lentil production will result in a boost to income and employment opportunities for farmers and individuals engaged in the agricultural value chain. This will greatly contribute to the growth of the rural economy.

Challenges and the Road Ahead:

- Although there is reason to be optimistic about the projected increase in lentil production, there are still some challenges that need to be addressed:
 - Improving rural infrastructure and storage facilities is essential to minimize post-harvest losses and ensure a smooth market supply.
 - Market Fluctuations: It is crucial to maintain government support and implement measures to stabilize prices in order to safeguard the interests of farmers and prevent sudden price swings.

 Promoting sustainable agricultural practices is crucial for maintaining soil health and long-term productivity, especially with the growing cultivation of lentils.

In summary of News:

 India has the potential to emerge as the top lentil producer globally, which offers a great chance to improve food security, boost rural livelihoods, and encourage sustainable agricultural practices. By addressing the existing challenges and capitalizing on this momentum, India can truly emerge as a global leader in lentil production, reaping benefits for its food security, economy, and nutritional well-being.

Lentils: A Nutritional Powerhouse from Ancient Times

What lentils are?



(Pic:Exporters India)

 Lentils are tiny seeds that come from the legume family. They have a unique shape resembling a lens and a delicious earthy taste. Packed with protein, fiber, and essential nutrients, they have been a staple food for centuries across various cultures.

Preferred Climatic Conditions:

Lentils are a crop that can adapt and flourish in a wide range of climates. They typically have a preference for:

- Perfect Season: The best temperatures for growth fall between 18°C and 30°C. These plants are hardy enough to withstand frost and can even flourish during the winter in certain areas.
- •Optimal Rainfall: A yearly rainfall of

approximately 10 inches is considered ideal, although they can tolerate dry periods to some degree. Too much moisture or waterlogging can cause harm.

Types of Soil Needed:

Lentils can thrive in different soil types, but they tend to excel in:

- It is important to ensure that the soil has good drainage to avoid any issues with root rot. Loamy soils provide a perfect balance of air circulation and water retention.
- Optimal Nutrient Uptake: Maintaining a pH level around 7 is recommended for maximizing nutrient absorption.

Regions where lentils are grown:

Lentils are grown all over the world, and some of the top producers are:

- Canada is a prominent producer in North America, renowned for its cultivation of green and red lentils.
- India has emerged as a prominent player in lentil production, with a special focus on brown lentils,

also known as masoor.

- Turkey holds the title of being the largest producer of red lentils worldwide.
- Australia is known for being a top producer of lentil varieties such as Pardina and Eston.

Where Are Brown Lentils Grown in India (Masur)?

India is indeed a major player in lentil production, particularly for brown lentils (masoor). These are grown in various parts of the country, but some regions stand out as leading producers:

Top Masoor-Producing States in India:

- Uttar Pradesh: The undisputed champion, responsible for over 40% of India's total masoor production. The Bundelkhand region within Uttar Pradesh is especially known for its masoor cultivation.
- Madhya Pradesh: Comes in second, contributing roughly 27% of the national output. Masoor thrives in areas like Malwa Plateau and Bundelkhand region.
- West Bengal: Holds the third spot, accounting for around 8% of masoor production. Cultivation is concentrated in districts like Birbhum and Burdwan.

- Bihar: Contributes another 8% of India's masoor, with farming mainly occurring in the Gangetic plains and Chotanagpur plateau.
- Jharkhand: Produces approximately 5% of the total masoor, with favorable conditions in districts like Palamu and Ranchi.
- Other notable mentions include Rajasthan, Assam, Uttarakhand, Odisha, and Chhattisgarh, although their production volumes are lower compared to the top five states.

Masoor is a Crop of Rabi:

- In India, masoor, also known as lentil, is grown in the winter, between November and December. This is why it is called a Rabi crop.
- Masoor dal is red in colour; it is split masoor and does not have any skin. The whole masoor is brown in colour.

The historical significance of lentils in India:

Lentils have been a long-standing staple in Indian cuisine, playing a vital role in both cultural traditions and providing essential nutrition:

- Archaeological findings indicate that lentil cultivation has been practiced in India for thousands of years, dating back to at least 2000 BCE.
- Lentils hold a significant place in religious customs, being included in traditional offerings and prasad during Hindu festivals and pujas.
- Symbol of Good Fortune: Lentils have long been associated with positive energy and are believed to attract prosperity and abundance.
- Lentils are an important component of the Indian diet, particularly for vegetarian communities, as they are packed with protein and essential nutrients.

In summary:

 Lentils are loved and enjoyed by people all over the world due to their versatility, health benefits, and rich history. With India's rise as a global leader in lentil production, this humble legume is set to play an even more significant role in ensuring food security and promoting wellbeing.





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Category: General Studies

Which soil type is best suited for lentil cultivation?

O Clayey soil with high water retention

O Sandy soil with excellent drainage

O Loamy soil with balanced aeration and moisture

O Rocky soil with minimal organic matter

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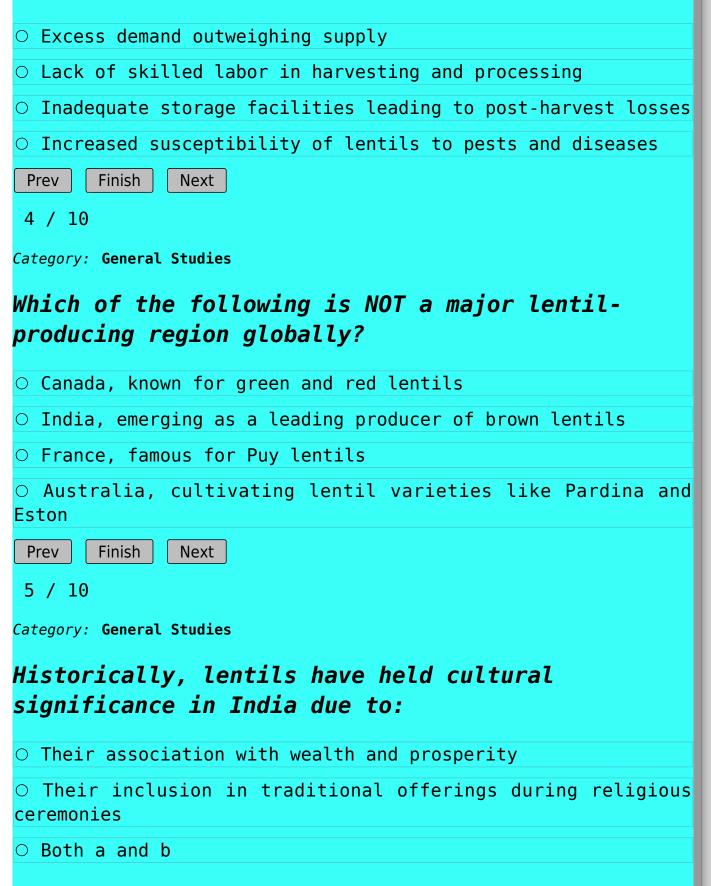
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Which of the following factors is NOT cited as a reason for the projected increase in India's lentil production in the 2023-24 crop year?

\odot Increased Minimum Support Price (MSP) for lentils
○ Focus on achieving pulse self-sufficiency by December 2027
\odot Decline in market prices of other pulse crops
\odot Introduction of new, high-yielding lentil varieties
Prev Finish Next
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Category: General Studies

What potential challenge does India face with rising lentil production?



O Their medicinal properties
Prev Finish Next
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Category: General Studies
India's projected rise in lentil production is partly attributed to:
\odot Expanding cultivation in arid regions with minimal rainfall
\odot Increased focus on planting lentils during the monsoon season
\odot Introduction of new lentil varieties adapted to higher temperatures
○ Growing emphasis on lentil cultivation in states like Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka
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Category: General Studies
Lentils thrive in moderate rainfall but can also withstand:
O Excessive flooding and waterlogging
\odot Prolonged periods of drought and arid conditions
O Frequent hailstorms and strong winds
\odot High humidity and tropical temperatures
Prev Finish Next
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Category: General Studies

The ideal temperature range for optimal lentil

growth is:	
○ 5°C to 15°C	
○ 18°C to 30°C	
○ 28°C to 35°C	
○ 38°C to 45°C	
Prev Finish Next	
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Category: General Studies

Which climatic condition is NOT ideal for lentil cultivation?

\odot Cool season with temperatures between 18°C and 30°C
O Moderate rainfall around 10 inches annually
O Excessive moisture or waterlogging
O Well-drained loamy soil with neutral pH
Prev Finish Next
10 / 10
Category: General Studies
Which type of lentil is India expected to become the world's leading producer of?

○ Green lentils	
○ Red lentils	
○ Brown lentils	
○ Black lentils	
Prev Finish	

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Mains Questions:



Question 1:

Analyse the variables that are driving India's anticipated ascension to the world's largest

lentil producer in the 2023-24 crop year. Discuss the probable effects of this development on (a) food security, (b) the rural economy, and (c) India's position in the global pulse market.

Model Answer:

Factors Contributing to the Rise:

- Increased Minimum Support Price (MSP): The government recently raised the MSP for lentils, which has encouraged farmers to switch to this crop because it gives them much better returns than other pulses.
- Focus on Pulse Self-Sufficiency: India wants to be self-sufficient in pulses by December 2027. To help them reach this goal, they have many plans and programmes in place, such as giving farmers money, giving them advice, and giving them seeds.
- Good Market Conditions: Strong demand for lentils in the United States and rising prices due to problems in the global supply chain have made the crop even more appealing to farmers.
- Increase in Cultivation Area: Thanks to good weather and government programmes, the amount of land used for growing lentils has grown a lot in states like Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka.

Implications for:

a) Food security:

- Less reliance on imports: India currently gets a lot of its lentils from other countries. If local production goes up, the country will depend less on imports. This will keep prices stable and make sure that everyone has access to this important protein source.
- Better nutrition: lentils contain a lot of protein, fibre, and important minerals, making them an important part of a healthy diet, especially for people with low incomes. More food produced in the United States will make it easier for people to get healthy, affordable food, which will improve their general health and nutrition.

b) Rural Economy:

- Increased Income for Farmers: When farmers grow more lentils, they get better returns, which makes their finances more stable and improves their economic well-being.
- Job Creation: More work is needed at every stage of the value chain, from planting and gathering to processing and selling. This will create jobs and improve the quality of life in rural areas.
- Development of Rural Infrastructure: To keep up with the increased production, better storage facilities, transportation networks, and irrigation systems will be needed. This will require investments in rural infrastructure, which will help rural businesses grow even more.
- c) India's Role in the Global Pulse Market:

- As a Major Exporter: If India increases production, it could become a major exporter of lentils on the world market, which would have an effect on costs and help with efforts to ensure food security around the world.
- Increased Market Share and Prestige: This possible change in the global pulse trade could make India a more important player on the world stage, which would improve its image and economic power.

However, it is important to acknowledge potential challenges and take proactive measures to address them. These include:

- Post-harvest losses due to inadequate storage facilities and inefficient logistics.
- Market fluctuations and potential price crashes if production surpasses demand.
- Environmental impact of increased land use and potential overuse of agricultural inputs.

By addressing these challenges, India can maximize the benefits of its burgeoning lentil production, ensuring food security, boosting the rural economy, and establishing itself as a leading player in the global pulse market.

Question 2:

"The increase in lentil production in India brings up a range of possibilities and obstacles. Analyze these carefully and propose governmental actions to increase the advantages and decrease the hazards.

Model Answer:

Opportunities:

- Enhanced Food Security: Reduced reliance on imports, improved price stability, and increased access to this critical protein source for all segments of the population will boost India's food security situation.
- Boosted Rural Economy: Increased revenue for farmers, employment creation across the value chain, and increased demand for rural infrastructure will all contribute considerably to rural economic development.
- Agriculture Diversification: Growing lentils encourages farmers to branch out from traditional crops, reducing reliance on a single source of revenue and increasing agricultural resilience.
- Strengthened Global Standing: Emerging as a significant lentil producer and potential exporter can help India cement its position as a leader in the global pulse market, increasing its economic and agricultural significance.

Challenges:

- Infrastructure and Storage Limitations: Inadequate storage facilities and inadequate transportation networks can result in large post-harvest losses, nullifying the benefits of higher production.
- Market fluctuations: Unstable prices caused by probable overproduction or external factors might have a negative influence on farmers' incomes and

market confidence.

- Environmental Concerns: Extensive land use for lentil production, combined with potentially excessive fertiliser and pesticide use, might pose environmental risks such as soil degradation and water contamination.
- Sustainability Considerations: Ensuring sustainable agricultural practices, such as soil conservation and water management, is critical for preserving long-term productivity and mitigating environmental repercussions.

Policy measures to maximise benefits and mitigate risks:

- Invest in rural infrastructure: Build cold storage facilities, improve transportation networks, and ensure efficient grain handling along the value chain to reduce post-harvest losses.
- Implement price stabilisation mechanisms. Implement buffer stock systems, minimum purchase guarantees, and market intervention methods to control prices and protect farmers' interests.
- Encourage sustainable practices, such as organic farming, water conservation, and integrated pest management, to reduce environmental damage and ensure long-term sustainability.
- Support Value Addition and Processing: Encourage lentil processing industries, value-added goods such as lentil flour and pasta, and market diversification to maintain consistent demand and

higher profits for farmers.

- Invest in R&D: Conduct research to produce highyielding, drought-resistant lentil varieties, as well as promote efficient irrigation and agricultural technology to maximise productivity and resource utilisation.
- Encourage collaboration by promoting farmer cooperatives, partnerships with commercial firms, and knowledge sharing between farmers and researchers to guarantee successful adoption of best practices and sustainable approaches.

By implementing these policy measures, India can capitalise on the enormous potential of its growing lentil output. Striking a balance between maximising economic gains and mitigating environmental hazards will pave the path for long-term success in this sector, thereby contributing to both food security and sustainability.

Remember: These are just sample answers. It's important to further research and refine your responses based on your own understanding and perspective.

Relevance to the UPSC Prelims and Mains syllabus under the following topics:



UPSC Prelims:

- Direct factual questions: Which country is expected to become the world's largest producer of lentils in the 2023-24 crop year? (Answer: India)
- What is the main reason for the recent increase in India's lentil production? (Answer: Increase in MSP, focus on pulse self-sufficiency)
- General awareness questions: Which pulse is India expected to become the leading producer of, and what is its significance in Indian cuisine and culture? (Answer: Brown lentils (Masoor), symbol of prosperity and used in religious offerings)
- What are some potential challenges India might face with increased lentil production? (Answer: Inadequate storage, market fluctuations, environmental impact)

UPSC Mains:

• Essay questions: "Analyze the factors contributing to India's projected rise as the world's leading lentil producer and discuss the economic, social, and environmental implications of this development."

- "Critically examine the opportunities and challenges presented by India's increasing lentil production. Suggest policy measures to maximize the benefits while mitigating the potential risks."
- General Studies Paper-III (Economy):
- Discuss the role of Minimum Support Prices (MSP) in promoting agricultural production and achieving self-sufficiency in pulses. Use the example of lentil production to illustrate your points.

Analyze the impact of increased agricultural production on rural development and livelihoods, focusing on the case of lentil cultivation in India.

• General Studies Paper-I (Geography)







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