



India's Pulses Imports in FY24 Hit 6-Year High

For Prelims: [Pulse crops](#), [\(PM-AASHA\)](#), [Minimum Support Price \(MSP\)](#), [Indian Council of Agricultural Research \(ICAR\)](#), [hidden hunger](#)

For Mains: Current trends of India's Pulses production and imports, Issues regarding India's pulses import, and related government initiatives.

Source: [ET](#)

Why in News?

India's **pulses imports skyrocketed 84%** in fiscal 2024, reaching a **six-year high**. This jump follows **lower production** and the government's **decision to waive import duties** on red lentils and yellow peas.

What is the Current Status of Pulses in India?

■ India's Pulses Production Status:

- India is the **largest producer** (25% of global production), **consumer** (27% of world consumption), and **importer** (14% of pulses) in the world.
- Pulses account for **around 20% of the area under foodgrains** and contribute around **7%-10% of the total foodgrains production** in the country.
- Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Karnataka are the **top five pulses-producing states**.

The production of pulses during the last three years and in 2022-23 (as per third advance estimates) are given as under:

Year	Production (Lakh Tonnes)
2019-20	230.25
2020-21	254.63
2021-22	273.02
2022-23*	275.04

* As per third advance estimates

■ India's Pulses Import Status:

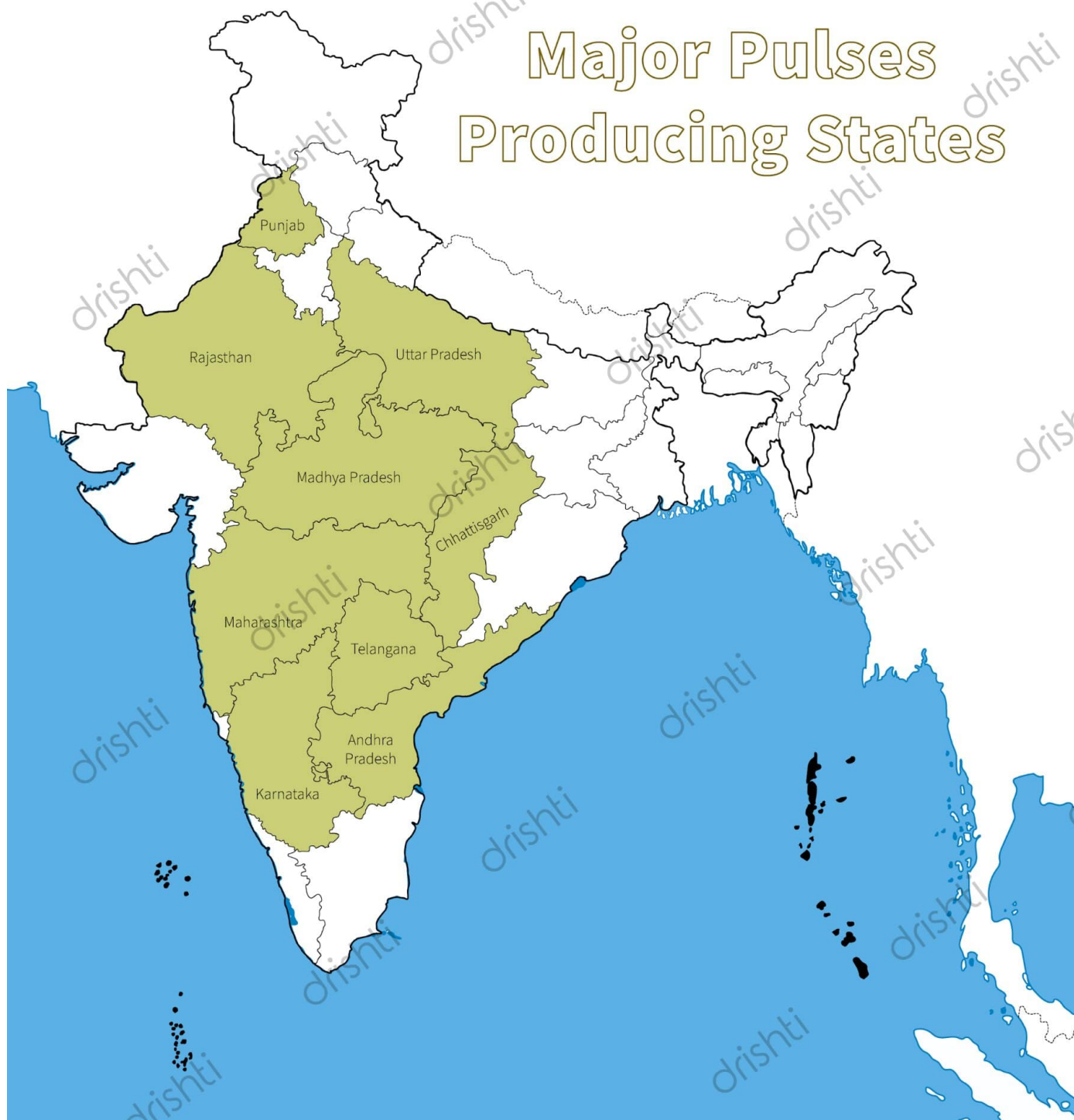
- India imported **4.65 million metric tons of pulses** in the fiscal year 2023-24 (up from **2.53 million tons in 2022-23**), the highest since 2018-19.
 - In value terms**, imports of pluses jumped 93% to USD 3.75 billion.
- Red lentil imports, particularly from Canada, doubled to 1.2 million tons.
- Duty-free imports from December onwards led to a rise in yellow pea imports from Russia and Turkey.
- The South Asian nations including India, usually **import pulses from Canada, Myanmar, Australia, Mozambique, and Tanzania**.

■ Pulses:

- **Temperature:** Between 20-27°C
- **Rainfall:** Around 25-60 cm.
- **Soil Type:** Sandy-loamy soil.
- These are the major sources of protein in a vegetarian diet.
- **Being leguminous crops,** all these crops except arhar help in restoring soil fertility by fixing nitrogen from the air. Therefore, **these are mostly grown in rotation with other crops.**
- **Pulses** are **grown throughout the agricultural year.**
- **Rabi Pulses (contribute over 60%):** Gram (chickpea), Chana (Bengal gram), Masoor (lentil), Arhar (pigeon pea).
 - **Rabi crops require a mild cold climate** during the sowing period, during vegetative to pod development- cold climate, and during maturity/ harvesting - warm climate.
- **Kharif Pulses:** Moong (green gram), Urad (black gram), Tur (arhar dal).
 - Kharif **pulse crops** require a warm climate throughout their life from sowing to harvesting.



Major Pulses Producing States



What are India's Initiatives to Boost Pulses Production?

▪ National Food Security Mission (NFSM)-Pulses:

- The NFSM-Pulses initiative, led by the Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, operates in 28 States and 2 Union Territories including Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.
- **Key Interventions Under NFSM-Pulses:**
 - **Assistance to farmers** through States/UTs for various interventions.
 - Cropping system demonstrations.
 - Seed production and distribution of **HYVs/hybrids**.
 - Additionally, the establishment of **150 Seed Hubs** for Pulses has significantly contributed to increasing the availability of quality pulse seeds.

▪ Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay SanraksHan Abhiyan ([PM-AASHA](#)) Scheme:

- This comprehensive umbrella scheme (**launched in 2018**) comprises three components:
 - **Price Support Scheme (PSS):** Procurement from pre-registered farmers at **Minimum Support Price (MSP)**.
 - **Price Deficiency Payment Scheme (PDPS):** Compensates farmers for price differences.
 - **Private Procurement Stockist Scheme (PPSS):** Encourages private sector participation in procurement.
- **ICAR's Role in Research and Variety Development:**
 - The **Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)** plays a pivotal role in enhancing the productivity potential of pulse crops through **research and development** efforts. The ICAR focuses on:
 - **Basic and strategic research on pulses.**
 - Collaborative applied research with **State Agricultural Universities.**
 - Development of **location-specific high-yielding varieties** and production packages.
 - During the period from 2014 to 2023, an impressive **343 high-yielding varieties** and hybrids of pulses have been officially recognised for commercial cultivation across the country.

What are the Reasons Behind India's Dependence on Pulses Imports?

- **Shifting Cropping Patterns:**
 - Traditionally, farmers in India practised crop rotation with pulses. However, in recent decades, there has been a shift towards cultivating **water-intensive cereals** like rice and wheat due to the following reasons.
 - Rice and wheat are staples in most Indian diets, leading to a rise in consumption demands.
 - Government incentives like **higher margins over the average cost of production in MSPs** and **assured procurement for these crops.**
 - Availability of better irrigation facilities in some areas.
- **Lower Profitability:**
 - Pulses often **offer lower returns per hectare** compared to cereals. This discourages farmers from planting them, especially on fertile and irrigated land.
- **Climate Challenges:**
 - **Erratic rainfall and droughts** can **negatively impact** pulse production, which are generally rain-fed crops.
- **Limited Technological Advancements:**
 - Compared to cereals and cash crops, research and development in pulse and higher susceptibility to diseases and pests.

What can be Done to Ensure India's Self-Sufficiency in Pulses?

- **Boosting Domestic Production:**
 - Offering minimum support prices (MSPs) for pulses that are competitive with other crops like rice and wheat.
 - Providing **subsidies** for seeds, fertilisers, and other agricultural inputs specific to pulses.
 - Offering **crop insurance** schemes to mitigate risks associated with weather fluctuations.
- **Promote Crop Rotation:**
 - Encouraging the farmers to integrate pulses back into their cropping patterns by highlighting the long-term benefits of crop rotation for soil health and sustainable farming.
- **Develop High-Yielding Varieties:**
 - Investing in **research and development of drought-resistant**, high-yielding pulse varieties suited to different regional conditions.
 - Encourage the adoption of these improved varieties through farmer training and extension programs.
- **Improving Irrigation Infrastructure:**
 - Expanding irrigation facilities to areas suitable for pulse cultivation, particularly **drought-prone regions.**
 - Promoting **water-efficient irrigation** techniques like **drip irrigation** to conserve water.

- **Mitigating Price Fluctuations:**
 - Improving **storage facilities** for pulses to minimise post-harvest losses and **ensure price stability** throughout the year.
 - **Streamline Supply Chain Management: Enhance efficiency in the supply chain to reduce transportation costs and minimise price manipulation by middlemen.**
- Promotion of Alternative Protein Sources:
 - Encouraging **dietary diversification** (addressing **hidden hunger**) by promoting the consumption of protein-rich alternatives like lentils, millets, and even eggs.

What is NAFED?

- National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd. was established on the auspicious day of Gandhi Jayanti on 2nd October 1958.
- It is registered under the Multi-State Co-operative Societies Act.
- It is an apex organization of marketing cooperatives for agricultural produce in India.
- It is currently one of the largest procurers of agricultural products like onions, pulses, and oilseeds.

Drishti Mains Question:

Q. Highlight the current status regarding India's dependence on the import of pulses. Discuss the challenges regarding India's self-sufficiency in pulses production and the possible solutions.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims:

Q. With reference to pulse production in India, consider the following statements: (2020)

1. Black gram can be cultivated as both kharif and rabi crop.
2. Green gram alone accounts for nearly half of pulse production.
3. In the last three decades, while the production of kharif pulses has increased, the production of rabi pulses has decreased.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 2 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: (a)

Mains:

Q. How did India benefit from the contributions of Sir M. Visvesvaraya and Dr. M.S. Swaminathan in the fields of water engineering and agricultural science respectively? (2019)

Q. Explain various types of revolutions, took place in Agriculture after Independence in India. How have these revolutions helped in poverty alleviation and food security in India? (2017)

