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5th, July, 2022

Topic: Controlled Atmosphere (CA) storage facility for apple growers.

Importance: Himachal HPAS Prelims and Mains

What is the news?

- Himachal Pradesh Horticultural Produce Marketing and Processing Corporation (HPMC) is enhancing the capacity of its three Controlled Atmosphere (CA) stores and a few of these facilities will be ready for use this season.
- As well, HPMC is building three new CA stores in Reckong Peo (Kinnaur), Katlog (Mandi) and Rajpura (Chamba).
- There will be an additional storage capacity of about 4000 metric tons with the capacity improvement of our stores in Gumma, Jarol Tikker and Rohru.

Current Status:

- From the current capacity of these CA stores ranging

from 640 MT to 700 MT, the storage capacity in each of three CA stores will go up to around 2,000 MT.

How will that help?

- These stores will be a great location for producers who want to store their products.

Concerns over charges by apple growers:

- Apple growers have raised concerns over the charges HPMC impose vis-a-vis private CA stores.
- While private CA stores in Himachal and outside the state charge around Rs 1.35 to Rs 1.50 per kg per month, the HPMC charge Rs 2 per kg per month.
- An apple grower says that the issue has been raised with the government officials. We have been assured that the HPMC will rationalise these charges.
- From the current capacity of the three CA stores ranging from 640 MT to 700 MT, the storage capacity in each of these CA stores will go up to around 2,000 MT.

What is controlled atmospheric storage?

- Controlled atmosphere storage (also called CA storage) is a practice of storing fruits and vegetables under precisely regulated temperatures, humidity, and atmospheric conditions that are managed through optimal levels of oxygen, carbon dioxide, and nitrogen.

How does this work?

- Controlled atmosphere (CA) storage is a post harvest management practice based on manipulating the carbon dioxide (CO₂) and oxygen (O₂) concentration in the fruit

storage environment, in combination with temperature and humidity in order to maintain the quality and increase the shelf life of stored apple fruits.

(News Source: The Tribune)

Topic: Natural Farming

Importance: Himachal HPAS Prelims and Mains

What is the news?

- Natural farming has picked up in Himachal: Agriculture secretary.

Where he shared this?

- A two-day capacity building workshop on the Prakritik Kheti Khushal Kisan Yojana (PK3Y) started on Monday at Dr YS Parmar Horticulture and Forestry University in Nauni, Solan.

What he shared?

Smart agriculture

- It is time to move from chemical, rain and subsistence agriculture to sustainable and intelligent agriculture, with an emphasis on natural agriculture.
- Central Government's focus was on ensuring nutrition,

not just food security with agriculture, which is climate resilient, protects environment, enhances farmers' income, improves livelihood standards and builds up sustainable food systems.

- To achieve this, it is time to move from chemical, rainy and subsistence agriculture to sustainable and intelligent agriculture based on natural agriculture.

What does natural agriculture mean?

Natural Farming



- Natural agriculture is a system whereby the laws of nature apply to agricultural practices. This method works along with the natural biodiversity of each farmed area, encouraging the complexity of living organisms, both plants, and animals that shape each particular ecosystem to thrive along with food plants.
- Natural farming is an ecological farming approach established by Masanobu Fukuoka (1913-2008), a Japanese farmer and philosopher, presented in his 1975 book The One-Straw Revolution.

- Natural Farming is a chemical-free alias traditional farming method. It is considered as agroecology based diversified farming system which integrates crops, trees and livestock with functional biodiversity.

In India, Natural farming is promoted as Bharatiya Prakritik Krishi Paddhati Programme (BPKP) under centrally sponsored scheme- Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY).

Similarities in Natural and Organic Agriculture:

- Both natural and organic are without chemicals and more or less poisonous agricultural methods.
 - Both systems dissuade farmers from using chemical fertilizers, pesticides on plants and in all farming practices.
 - Both agricultural methods encourage farmers to use local varieties of seeds and native varieties of vegetables, grains, pulses and other crops.
- Organic and natural farming methods promote noncommercial and homemade pest control methods.

Main differences between natural and organic agriculture:

- In organic agriculture, organic fertilizers and manures like compost, vermicompost, cow manure, etc, are used and added to farmlands from external sources.
- In natural farming, neither chemical nor organic fertilizers are added to the soil. In fact, no external fertilizers are added to soil or given to plants.
- In natural agriculture, the decomposition of organic matter by microbes and earthworms is encouraged directly at the surface of the soil itself, which progressively

adds nutrition to the soil over the period.

- Organic farming still requires basic agricultural practices such as tillage, inclination, manure mixing, weeding, etc.
- In natural agriculture, there is no ploughing, no tilting of the soil and no fertilizer, and no weeding is done as it would be in natural ecosystems.
- Organic farming is still expensive due to the requirement of bulk manures, and it has an ecological impact on surrounding environments; whereas, natural agriculture is an extremely low-cost farming method, completely molding with local biodiversity.
- There are numerous working models of natural agriculture all over the world, Zero Budget Natural Agriculture (ZBNF) is the most popular model in India. This comprehensive, natural, and spiritual farming system is developed by Padma Shri Subhash Palekar.

(Source: The Tribune and Ugaoo)

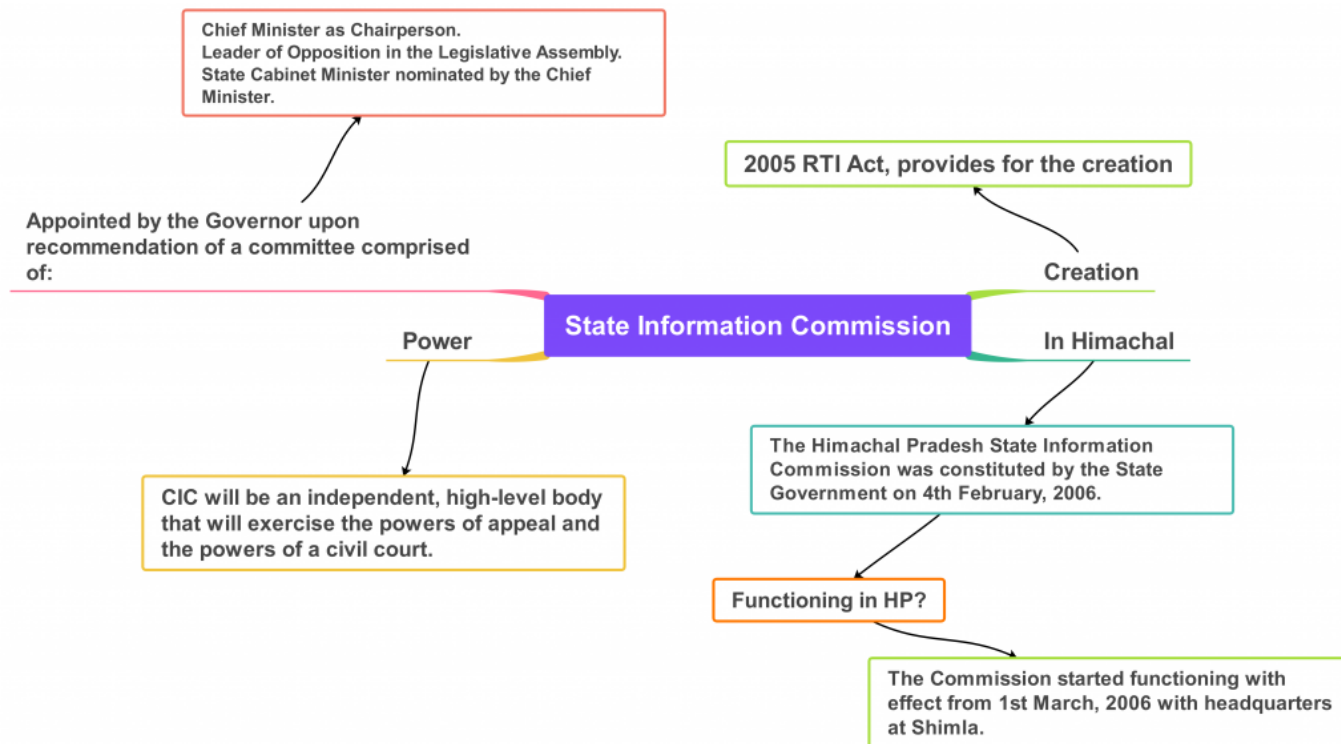
Topic: Polity

Importance: Himachal HPAS Prelims

What is the news?

- Dr SS Guleria has sworn in as Information Commissioner of the State Information Commission here today.
- The swearing-in ceremony took place in Raj Bhawan with Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar. Chief Secretary Ram Subhag Singh conducted the proceedings.

About State Information Commission



- The 2005 law on the right to information provides for the creation not only of the Central Information Commission, but also of a State Information Commission at State level.
- All States have set up State Information Commissions through official Gazette Notifications.
- The RTI Act overrides the Official Secrets Act, 1923.

The Himachal Pradesh State Information Commission was constituted by the State Government on 4th February, 2006 in exercise of powers conferred by subsection (1) of section 15 of the Right to Information Act, 2005. The Commission started functioning with effect from 1st March, 2006 with headquarters at Shimla.

- CIC will be an independent, high-level body that will

exercise the powers of appeal and the powers of a civil court.

- It deals with complaints and appeals concerning offices, financial institutions, public sector businesses, etc., under the responsibility of the government of the State concerned.

OBJECTIVES:

- To empower the citizens.
- To promote transparency and accountability.
- To contain corruption.
- To enhance people's participation in the democratic process.

COMPOSITION:

- The Commission is composed of a Chief Information Commissioner of the State and a maximum of ten Information Commissioners of the State.
- The number of State Information Commissioners varies from one state to another state.

Appointed by the Governor upon recommendation of a committee comprised of:

- Chief Minister as Chairperson.
- Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Assembly.
- State Cabinet Minister nominated by the Chief Minister.

They should be eminent public figures with extensive knowledge and experience of law, science and technology, social services, management, journalism, mass media or administration and governance.

- Should not be a Member of Parliament or Member of the Legislature of any State or Union Territory.
- Should not hold any other office for profit or related to a political party or carrying on any business or profession.
- Where the Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Assembly has not been recognized as such, the Leader of the single largest group in opposition of the Government in the Legislative Assembly shall be deemed to be the Leader of the Opposition.

TENURE:

- The State Chief Information Commissioner and a State Information Commissioner shall hold office for such term as prescribed by the Central Government or until they attain the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier (RTI amendment 2019).
- The State Information Commissioner is eligible for appointment as State Chief Information Commissioner but cannot hold office for more than a total of five years including his term as State Information Commissioner.
- The salary, allowances and other conditions of service of the Chief Information Commissioner of the State and a State Information Commissioner are those prescribed by the central government (RTI amendment 2019).
- They cannot be varied to his disadvantage during the service.

(News Source: The Tribune)

Topic: Paragpur, the first heritage village

Importance: Himachal HPAS Prelims and Mains

What is the news?

- Paragpur, the first heritage village situated in the foothills of the Dhauladhar in the Kangra Valley near Dehra Gopipur, 70 km from Palampur, needs attention.

Reason:

- The village got the heritage village tag 25 years ago, but no development has taken place there. This village reflects the essence of an earlier era.
- Mature buildings, fine work, remarkable architecture and old shops are the core of the heritage zone. But with the passage of time, some of the historic buildings are decaying.
- In 1997, the state government had promised to come out with a master plan for the development of the village. A high-level committee was also constituted to submit its report to the government so that it could be developed as a major tourist destination, particularly for foreigners.
- However, no headway was made and the condition of the village turned from bad to worse. Most streets are in poor shape, water is overflowing on roads, there is no arrangement to clean the roads and streets regularly and heaps of garbage can be seen everywhere.

Challenges shared:

- In 1997, the government had promised to come up with a master plan for the development of the village.
- A committee was also constituted to submit its report to the government so that it could be developed as a major tourist destination.

However, no progress has been made and the condition of the village has worsened.

About Paragpur:

- Founded in the late 16th century by the Kuthiala Soods in memory of Princess Prag Dei of the Jaswan royal family, Pragpur well deserves its heritage village tag. With its winding cobbled lane, mud-plastered walls and slate-roofed houses.
- In 1997, certified it as a Heritage Village, making it the first such village in India.

(Source: The Tribune & thebetterindia)

Some More HP News:

- Hyatt Regency Dharamsala Resort has been awarded as Himachal's Best Luxury Resort-2022 by Hotel Critics and Bloggers' Association.

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