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4th January 2021

Topic: - Education

What is the news?

• School education has been among the highest performing in Punjab in meeting the challenges of the COVID-19 outbreak this year.

Important:

- For the first time, it all had to be done online. In addition to internet on regular computers, exercises have been designed for smartphones.
- The Punjab School Education Board (PSEB), which targets more than 60 lakh students in approximately 25,000 schools, has faced unprecedented challenges in enrollment, teacher training, teaching and interaction between teachers and students.

Actions Taken & Challenges:

- The first obstacle was the preparation of teachers to teach computer science.
- The department featured "Ghar Baithe Sikhiya" for digital education through television and radio channels and YouTube.
- Teachers have learned to use the Punjab Educare application and training sessions have been held at the Indian School of Business.
- The second barrier was the unavailability of smart phones, especially for poor students. A small section had none in its family.
- To date, about 1.3 lakh students in class XII have received smartphones in two phases by Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh.
- A big number of students in the junior classes have been left out.

Some Findings:

- The department reported a 2.1 lakh increase in student enrollment this year. A study, 'Making Quality Education Accessible to All: Policy Perspective on School Education in Punjab' by Punjab University Rural Centre, Kauni (Muktsar), indicated that the closure of schools could lead to "huge dropouts" from schools.
 - Most of the students who turned to public schools were from private schools that had closed.
- A section of teachers stated that the table was not as rosy as the department claims. The Democratic Teachers' Front has stated that public schools have a shortage of at least 30,000 teachers.
 - It added that going by the ideal teacher-taught ratio of 1:30, Punjab needed at least one lakh more teachers. The department stated that almost 35,000 recruits had been

made in the past year and that the process was ongoing.

(Source: The Tribune)

Topic: - Forest Cover

What is the news?

• Forest cover in the state has grown steadily by 11.63 square km this year, in addition to planting 60 lakh of young trees under various schemes.

Recent Report:

• State of India Latest Forest Cover report (released in 2020 by the Government of India), the total forest vegetation cover in the state had gone up by 11.63 sq km, suggesting the programs implemented by the government were yielding results.



Initiatives:-

- To commemorate Guru Tegh Bahadur's 400th Parkash Purab, 60 lakh plants were planted under various schemes in more than 6,986 villages throughout the state this year.
- More than 19.5 lakh of high-quality clone plants were

planted by farmers under submission on agro-forestry on their fields.

According to a report by The Times of India, in Phillaur and Chak Sarkar forests, the department introduced 'rosewood' — a high-value tree crop and planted nearly five lakh Sheesham plants and other trees along Beas and Satluj rivers.

Plant survival was nearly 71 percent.

Forests in Punjab:

- The forests of Punjab belong to three groups tropical spruce(thorn) forests, dry tropical deciduous forests and subtropical pine forests which are classified into seven different types.
- •With a large portion of the state's land under agriculture, there is little opportunity to expand the area.
- That is why, in addition to bringing wastelands and degraded land under forest cover, the Forestry Department also encourages farmers to start Agroforestry in agricultural fields.

(Source:-Timesnow)

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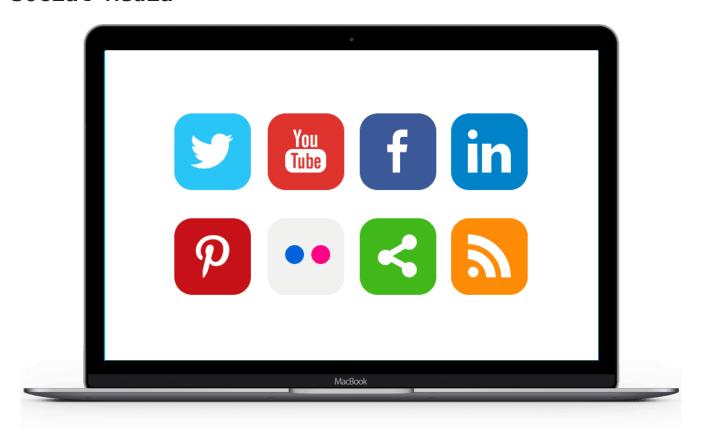
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