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6th January 2021

Topic: Agriculture

What is the news?

- After a dry period, the non-seasonal rain in the Malwa region brought smiles on the faces of farmers.
- Dr Gurjinder Singh Romana, a scientist at the Agricultural University of Punjab, Bathinda Regional Research Centre, said rain benefits all rabies crops, including wheat.

Why does rainfall matter?

- Dr Romana said that without rain, growing wheat would not germinate.
- Rainfall was also beneficial for standing mustard, gram and barley crops in the southern Punjab and adjacent Haryana fields.
- The agronomist also said that even though it was cold in the Malwa belt right now, the dry frost was not

considered beneficial for the crops.

- ***The rain had washed off the frost.***

Dr Manoj Kumar, responsible for development at the Ministry of Agriculture, said farmers were concerned, this time, as there had been no rainfall so far. With the sudden rain across the Malwa Belt, there was hope for a good crop.

About Rabi Crop:

- Rabi crops are crops planted in winter and harvested in spring in India.
- The term is derived from the Arab word for “spring”, which is used in the Indian sub-continent, where it is the spring harvest (also known as the “winter harvest”).
- The opposite of the Rabi crop is the Kharif crop which is grown after the rabi and Zaid (zaa-id) crops are harvested one after another respectively.

Rabi Season:

- The Rabi crops are planted around mid-November, preferably after the end of the monsoon rains, and the harvest begins in April/May. Crops are grown either with rainfall that has percolated into the soil or using irrigation.
- The principal crop of rabies in India is wheat, followed by barley, mustard, sesame and peas. Peas are harvested early, since they are ready early: Indian markets are flooded with green peas from January to March, culminating in February.

How is precipitation affecting crops?

- While regular rainfall is usually critical to plant health, excessive or low rainfall can be harmful or devastating to crops.
- Drought can kill crops and increase erosion, while too wet weather can result in harmful fungal growth. Plants require different amounts of rain to survive.

(Source: The Tribune and other)

Topic: – Education in Punjab

What is the news?

- Gurdaspur, Ferozepur for obtaining campus varsities.

Objective:

- To improve the reach and quality of technical education, the Punjab Government is bringing in legislation in the coming Budget session to set up two state campus universities in Gurdaspur and Ferozepur.

Other initiatives:

Placement cell

- The Punjab government will begin a study and placement

cell abroad on 15 February.

- The cell will be set up in Mohali in the form of a pilot project. In the next phase, talks are underway with foreign universities to obtain an academic visa.

Under what program was that cell set up?

- The cell was formed under the Punjab Ghar Ghar Rozgar and Karobaar Mission for aspirants interested in studying abroad.

Besides, the construction work to set up Skill University at Chamkaur Sahib would be completed this year under the first phase after the IKG PTU, Kapurthala, sanctioned Rs 120 crore for the project.

Actions to enhance the quality of education:

- Various steps like checking large-scale copying during the exams by installing CCTVs, improving enrolment in the government polytechnic colleges and industrial training institutes to 87 per cent, introducing the dual system of training in ITIs and setting up of 19 new ITIs.

Actions to protect the Punjabi language:

- By focusing on the Punjabi language, the department translated technical training books into Punjabi. Besides, a bank of more than 25,000 questions in the Punjabi language has been sent to the Directorate General of Training, Government of India, for setting

question papers in Punjabi for students from the state.

- Earlier, the question material was only in English and Hindi.

Important:

- Meanwhile, the state government is set to celebrate the 400th birth anniversary of Guru Teg Bahadur from April 28 to May 1 on the theme of 'Guru Teg Bahadur-Hind Di Chadar'

About Punjab Ghar Ghar Rozgar and Karobaar Mission:

Punjab Cabinet Committee in its meeting dated 3.10.18 decided to establish Punjab Ghar Ghar Rozgar and Karobar Mission (PGRKAM) as well as get it registered as Society as per the Memorandum of Association (MoA) placed before the Cabinet Committee. PGRKAM was registered as Society on 25.10.18 under Societies Registration Act, 1860.

- To create the necessary framework to facilitate Wage and Self-employment for the unemployed people of the State of Punjab.
- To improve employability through skill training/skill up-gradation.
- To identify areas having potential for employment generation and to harness that potential with government intervention.

The office of PGRKAM is located at Punjab Mandi Board, sec 65-A SAS Nagar Mohali.

(Source: The Tribune)

Topic: – Health

What is the news?

- Punjab livestock manager Harbinder Singh Kahlon said an advisory had been issued for “surveillance of commercial poultry farms and backyard poultry farms to detect unusual mortality in birds”.

What is Bird flu or Avian Flu?

- Avian influenza refers to the disease caused by infection with avian (bird) influenza (flu) Type A viruses.

How does avian influenza spread?

- Wild waterfowl such as geese and ducks are natural reservoirs of the influenza A virus and are key to the ecology of these viruses.
- Many of these birds are carriers of viruses without being affected, they excrete them in their faeces.
- As birds fly and can excrete while flying, the virus can spread across a large area.
- From migratory birds to poultry and land birds and at times to pigs, horses, cats and dogs.

When humans are contaminated?

- People were known to contract avian influenza in a live bird market in Hong Kong in 1997.
- It was an H5N1 strain.
- Further spread into Southeast Asian countries.

Cause:

1) Displacement of infected migratory birds and poultry.

2) Illegally traded birds.

- Subsequently, other strains such as H5N2 and H5N8 jumped out of animals into humans and became a global public health concern.

Important:

- It is easy to spread from human to human, according to the WHO.
- But Bird to Human when humans are in close contact with living and dead infected birds.
- The death rate per H5N1 strain is 6 out of 10 confirmed cases resulting in death.

India:

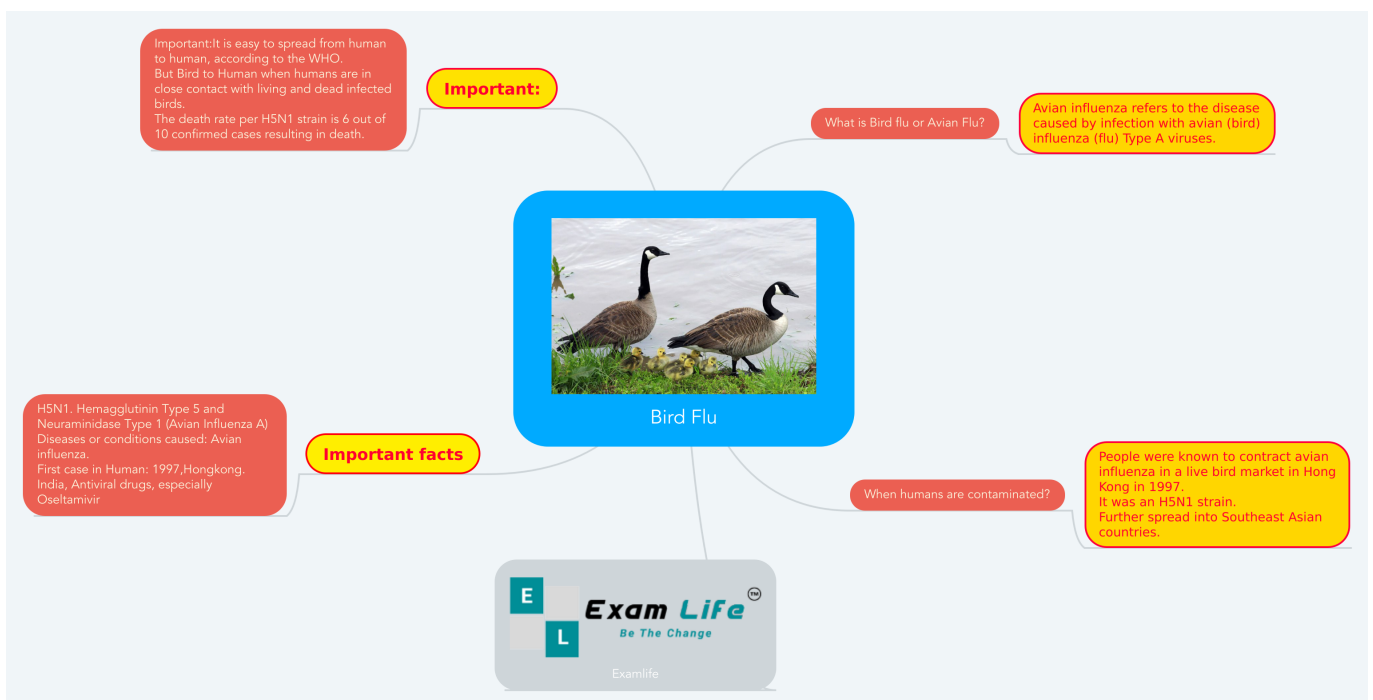
- From 2006 to 2015: Only 25 cases of H5N1 in 15 states spread when the epidemic started in Gujarat and Maharashtra.

Main Symptoms:

- Respiratory Distress.
- Cough.
- Sore throat.

Vaccine:

- The U.S. FDA approved a vaccine for H5N1 in 2007.
- India, Antiviral drugs, especially Oseltamivir improve the survival rate of a human, according to the Union Health Ministry.



Important facts for Punjab PCS Prelim:

- **H5N1**. Hemagglutinin Type 5 and Neuraminidase Type 1 (Avian Influenza A)

- Diseases or conditions caused: Avian influenza.
- First case in Human: 1997, Hongkong.
- India, Antiviral drugs, especially Oseltamivir

(Source: Indian Express)

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