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31st, August, 2022

Today's Topic Covered

1) Punjab government will reduce the 'Aartias' Commission from 2.5 percent to 1 percent...Read in Detail

2) Local Government Minister has directed the department officials to speed up the work of ongoing project cleaning of Buddha Nullah.....Read in Detail

3) Maize production down 94% in Ludhiana district, finds a study.....Read in Detail

4) Challenges of burning crop stubble.....Read in Detail

5) Paddy growers clueless about solution to stunted plant growth & illegal mining in Punjab....Read in Detail



Topic: Punjab government will reduce the 'Aartias' Commission from 2.5 percent to 1 percent

Importance: Punjab PCS Prelims and Mains

Punjab PCS Prelims: Key challenges and responses : Agriculture

Punjab PCS Mains:

- Paper 4: General Aptitude I: Topic: Geography of Punjab: Location and agriculture

What is the news?

- The Bhagwant Mann government has announced to take a historic decision ***to provide relief to the farmers of the Malwa cotton belt of the state.***
- The agriculture minister Kuldeep Singh Dhaliwal, during his recent visit to the cotton belt of Malwa, listened to the problems of the farmers and today the Punjab Cotton Factories and Ginners Association held a meeting with the minister about the problems of cotton farmers and their problems.



What is the assurance given?

- Divulging details after the meeting, Kuldeep Singh Dhaliwal said that the Punjab government will reduce the 'Aartias' Commission from 2.5 percent to 1 percent to give direct benefit to the farmers.

What is the concern shared by farmers?

- The Minister of Agriculture said that commission to 'Aartias' can not be given on cotton, according to the ratio on wheat and paddy because expenses on paddy and wheat crops include cleaning, filling, weighing and transporting etc, but as per the information given by farmers there are no such expenses on cotton in the grain markets. He said that as a result of this, the government has already reduced the market fee on cotton ***from 2 percent to 0.5 percent in the interest of the cotton farmers.***
- Farmers of cotton belt are facing a lot of problems due to natural calamities such as bad weather and diseases to the cotton crop, this decision will give some relief to the cotton farmers.
- Apart from this, the Punjab Cotton Factories and Ginners Association brought to the notice of the Agriculture Minister that for the last few years the cotton crop has been facing various diseases and the farmers of the cotton belt have shifted from cotton to paddy. They further said that many cotton factories in the state are on the brink of closure or have closed due to losses. Association appealed to the Agriculture Minister to take more cotton farmer friendly decisions to encourage cotton crop in the state.

(Source: Punjab Government)

Topic: Irrigation Project

Importance: Punjab PCS Prelims and Mains

Punjab PCS Prelims: Geographical and Agro-climatic regions, Rivers, Water resources.

Punjab PCS Mains:

- *Paper 7: General Aptitude IV: Topic: Water management*

What is the news?

- Local Government Minister Dr. Inderbir Singh Nijjar, on Tuesday, has directed the department officials to speed up the ***work of ongoing project cleaning of Buddha Nullah*** worth Rs 519 crore so that people can get sign of relief from the polluted rivulet.



Main Objective:

- The main objective of this project is to prevent contaminated water from falling into Budha Nullah. He said that before draining it to Buddha Nullah, the contaminated water will be treated through sewerage treatment Plants and the treated water can be used for agriculture.
- Due to the large-scale growth of industries in Ludhiana, Buddha nullah has polluted badly with chemicals, metal and dairies residues etc., Which poses a serious threat to people's lives. Apart from industrial waste, the sewerage water has also been draining into the Budha Nullah.
- Considering the seriousness of the matter, the state government is committed to making Budha Nullah a pollution free rivulet.

The Local Government Minister asked the officials of the Water Supply and Sewerage Board:

- To complete this project within the stipulated time, so that Buddha Nullah can be rejuvenate. He said that the Chief Minister S Bhagwant Mann led state government is committed to provide a clean & a green environment for the people and delay will not be tolerated in this regard, he emphasized.

Where Buddha Nullah in Punjab?

- The Buddha Nullah, earlier known as Buddha Dariya, is a tributary of the Sutlej.
- It is separated from the river near Koom Kalan village and rejoins it downstream after flowing through Ludhiana for 15 kilometers.

(Source: Punjab Government)

Topic: Maize production down 94% in Ludhiana district, finds a study

Importance: Punjab PCS Prelims and Mains

Punjab PCS Prelims: Key challenges and responses : Agriculture

Punjab PCS Mains:

- Paper 4: General Aptitude I: Topic: Geography of Punjab: Location and agriculture



What is the news?

- Though the state government had assured farmers of MSP on ***maize crop in 2014, its production has witnessed 94 per cent decline in Ludhiana district in the past seven years.***
- While the area under the maize crop has shrunk by 83 per cent, the yield has dipped by 64 per cent in the district as compared to 2015-16. The yield and production of maize remained lowest in 2021-22.

What does the study convey?

- A study of the Agriculture Department on the crop patterns pointed out that the area under maize has decreased from 7,000 hectares in 2015-16 to 1,200 hectares in 2021-22, which is 82.86 percent less.
- While the production of maize has reduced from 40,000 metric tonne (MT) in 2015-16 to only 2,500 MT in 2021-22

(reduction of 93.75 per cent), the yield has plunged from 5,719 kg per hectare in 2015-16 to 2,048 kg per hectare, a decline of 64.19 per cent. The official figures indicated that after touching its peak in 2015-16, the area, yield and production of maize has decreased in seven years.

- From 7,000 hectares, 5,719 kg per hectare yield and 40,000 MT production in 2015-16, the maize, which can be grown as a single crop in a year or two to three crops in the same year with both short and long-duration varieties, reduced to 1,000 hectares, 3,320 kg per hectare yield and 3,000 MT production in 2016-17.
- In 2017-18, the area under maize remained 1,000 hectares, yield slightly increased to 3,823 kg per hectare and production also went up to 4,000 MT.
- It continued its upward trend in 2018-19 as well, when the area increased to 1,300 hectares, yield improved to 3,925 kg per hectare and production augmented to 5,100 MT. However, 2019-20 saw a decrease in the maize area of 1,000 hectares, yield went up to 4,168 kg per hectare, and production decreased to 4,200 MT. In 2020-21, the area again remained 1,000 hectares, yield improved to 4,834 kg per hectare, and production further scaled up to 4,800 MT.

(Source: The Tribune)

Topic: Challenges of burning crop stubble

Importance: Punjab PCS Prelims and Mains

Punjab PCS Prelims: Key challenges and responses : Agriculture

Punjab PCS Mains:

- Paper 4: General Aptitude I: Topic: Geography of Punjab: Location and agriculture
- Paper 7: General Aptitude IV: Topic: Environmental pollution

What is the news?

- AAP government announced an incentive of ***Rs 2,500 per acre for not burning crop stubble, farmers may end up receiving only Rs 500*** for the environment-friendly practice.



Reason:

- This is so because the BJP-led Centre has refused to be a part of an AAP government's proposal for giving a subsidy of Rs 1,500 per acre to farmers who do not burn stubble. Even the AAP government in Delhi is reportedly

wary of being part of the scheme.

- In its proposal sent to the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM), the Punjab Government had said it would ask the Centre to contribute Rs 1,500 to the subsidy. But it has refused.
- It seems that the Delhi Government, too, is apprehensive of the scheme, which has been blocked by the Delhi Lt Governor. The Delhi Government is reportedly concerned about drawing flak for subsidizing Punjab farmers, while leaving out those from Haryana.

What was the proposal?

- The proposal to provide farmers with an incentive of Rs 2,500 per acre is unlikely to fructify. The state government alone will contribute its share of Rs 500 to the subsidy amount. Initially, the government was mulling increasing the state's share of the subsidy.
- Given the state's finances, it is unlikely that the government could bear any additional financial burden. The Rs 500-per-acre subsidy will cost Rs 365 crore to the exchequer," a senior government officer said.

Some New Regulations:

- The government has decided farmers will get a subsidy after they have purchased the machinery and uploaded details online; earlier, subsidy was paid to machine manufacturers.
- The state not to give subsidized machines to custom hiring centers (CHCs), which earlier got 80% subsidy; it was under the garb of CHCs that money was siphoned off.
- Cooperative societies can machines at 80% subsidy; farmers will have to engrave in bold the manufacturer's code, machine code and type of machine on the body of

the machine.

- 60,000 applications for subsidized 32,100 in-situ stubble management machines.
- 71,304 farm fires reported between Sept 15-Nov 30, 2021.
- 83,002 stubble-burning incidents in 2020.

Way forward to combat this:

- The state government, however, is thinking of giving additional subsidy on diesel to be used in stubble management machines. The proposal is still at the drawing board stage, but a part of taxes imposed on retail fuel would be waived for farmers, it has been learnt.

(Source: The Tribune)

Topic: Paddy growers clueless about solution to stunted plant growth

Importance: Punjab PCS Prelims and Mains

Punjab PCS Prelims: Key challenges and responses : Agriculture

Punjab PCS Mains:

- *Paper 4: General Aptitude I: Topic: Geography of Punjab: Location and agriculture*

What is the news?

- ***Agricultural experts may have decoded the mystery behind the dwarfing of paddy,*** but farmers are clueless about the next step. One question weighing on their mind is: whether or not recommendations given by experts will work at this stage when the damage has been widespread?



Aim behind Study:

- The aim behind the research was to identify the cause and develop varieties resistant to southern rice black-streaked dwarf virus. The damage caused by the virus is irreversible. – AS Dhatt, director (research), PAU.

Framers Concern:

- A team of the Agriculture Department visited my fields. On examining the crop, experts said 90 per cent of it has been damaged. I am waiting for officials to guide me on what to do next. In case there is a solution, I

should be told so that I can sow another cash crop. My hard work has gone down the drain. If no solution is found within a week, I will plough my field.

- One Farmer shared that I neither sprayed urea nor pesticides. I want to ask the experts whether or not spraying will help at this stage. If nothing works, farmers will have to bear the losses. In that case, the state government should compensate the farmers

According to Punjab Agricultural University (PAU) scientists:

- Southern rice, black-streaked dwarf virus transmitted by white-backed plant hopper is the cause behind the stunted growth of paddy plants.
- PAU has recommended to farmers to spray insecticide. I doubt it will work now as the size of the plants is very small.

(Source: The Tribune)

Topic: Illegal mining in Punjab

Importance: Punjab PCS Prelims and Mains

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- *Paper 7: General Aptitude IV: Topic: Environment – Conservation, environmental pollution, and degradation, Water management- Issues in India, Definition, nature,*

types, and classification of disasters, Natural Hazards.

What is the news?

- The ***Punjab and Haryana High Court*** have asserted that ***illegal mining was rampant in both Punjab and Haryana.*** The assertion came as the High Court made it clear that an attack on teams by the accused involved in illegal mining could not be overlooked.



HC takes note of Chakki railway bridge damage:

- The HC has taken judicial note of the destruction of the railway bridge over Chakki rivulet connecting Pathankot with Joginder Nagar “during the floods again owing to illegal mining as conjointly stated by the parties before the court”
- The Bench of Chief Justice Ravi Shanker Jha and Justice Arun Palli directed the authorities and the “parties” to the litigation to place on record the steps initiated by the state in the matter “especially as regards the site

of Chakki Railway Bridge”

- Justice Jasjit Singh Bedi of the High Court also made it clear that the concession of anticipatory bail could not be granted to a person allegedly involved in an attack on a mining team. “On being caught, the accused get aggressive and violent. This kind of conduct with public servants cannot be condoned at any cost,” Justice Bedi added.

Recent incident:

- Justice Jasjit Singh Bedi of the High Court also made it clear that the concession of anticipatory bail could not be granted to a person allegedly involved in an attack on a mining team.
- On being caught, the accused get aggressive and violent. This kind of conduct with public servants cannot be condoned at any cost.
- The assertion comes at a time when both the states have been claiming adoption of stringent measures to check the menace. Turning down the bail plea of a tractor-trailer owner facing the allegations of attempting to run over a mining team, Justice Bedi added the petitioner was duly and specifically named in the FIR.

What was the allegation?

- The allegations were that he interfered with the functioning of the mining department officials after coming to a spot where a tractor-trailer, stopped and searched, was allegedly found containing river sand.
- Justice Bedi added, releasing the petitioner on anticipatory bail at the current stage would even otherwise hamper the investigation, which was required to be taken to the logical conclusion. “Therefore, the

custodial interrogation of the petitioner is certainly warranted”.

- The petitioner-accused in the case was seeking bail in an FIR registered on April 8 for obstructing a public servant in the discharge of his public functions and other offenses under Sections 186, 353 and 34 of the IPC and the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act at Naraingarh police station in Ambala district.
- Opposing the bail plea, the state counsel had added that the accused did not deserve the concession of anticipatory bail as he was, in fact, a part of the mining mafia. Only recently, an occurrence had taken place at Nuh in Haryana where a DSP had been run over by persons belonging to the mining mafia and similar occurrences had taken place in Punjab as well.

(Source: The Tribune)

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