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20th August 2019.

Topic:- Geography (Infrastructure and Floods).

1) News:- Few civil engineers, dept ill-equipped to tackle floods.

- Administrative failure:- With the state reeling under a flood crisis, the Irrigation Department, which is responsible for taking flood-control measures, seems to be non-serious on the issue as over half of its technical staff posted in the field is unqualified to deal with the problem.
- The situation reached to the level that at one point of time Amarjit Singh Dullat was posted as Chief Engineer, Canals, despite the fact he was a qualified electrical engineer.

Shedding away responsibility to Private Contractors:-

- When it comes to flood-control measures like cleaning of

drains, timely maintenance of protection bundhs, it is entirely a civil work and has nothing do with the faculty of mechanical engineering.

Background: -

- The Irrigation Department used to have a huge mechanical wing in the beginning as the work to dig and construct new canals was in a full swing. So a large amount of machinery, including digging equipment and trucks, were used. However, by the 1990s the department completely stopped using any machinery on its own and started outsourcing the work to private contractors.
- Even then the department kept on recruiting mechanical engineers for a decade. It was in 2011 that the department changed its recruitment rules and stopped hiring mechanical engineers.
- For the past several years, the department has started posting these mechanical engineers even on posts on which civil expertise was required.

The dependency of the Irrigation Department on outsourcing: -

1. Over half of the Irrigation Department's technical staff hold a mechanical engineering degree and are unqualified to do deal with the flood-like situation.
2. Measures like cleaning of drains, maintenance of bundhs involve civil work.
3. Besides, the department doesn't use any machinery on its own and outsources work to private contractors.

(Source:TheTribune)

Question:- Is it lack of coordination between the departments or shedding away the responsibility?

Topic:- Investment in Punjab.

2)News:- No new incentives, but easy norms for investors in the state.

Context:- No new financial incentives will be given to those looking at an investment at Punjab. Instead what the investors can look forward to is a friendly land leasing policy, labour reforms and a self-regulatory mechanism to turn the state into a top investment destination.

- As Punjab gets ready to host the first investment summit by the Capt Amarinder Singh government in December.

Easy norms:-

According to its Industrial Policy:-

1. Punjab offers subsidy on capital and interest for start-up @8% pa.,
2. fixed power rate for five years,
3. reimbursement of net state goods and services tax,
4. 100 per cent exemption from electricity duty and stamp duty, among other incentives.

Topic:- Education.

3)News:- 2,842 Class VIII students miss the second chance, won't be promoted.

Context:- Health of Education system in Punjab.

- After removing the no-detention policy for Classes V and VIII, the School Education Department has decided not to promote 2,842 students of Class VIII in government schools this time. The students had failed in the second chance to clear the exam, provided to them two months after they failed in the annual exam conducted by the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) in March this year.
- After over 10,000 students of Class VIII failed to score the minimum 33 per cent marks, they were given another chance in May. In all, 2,842 of these students failed to pass the exam. The department has decided not to promote them.
- In pursuance to the amendment in the RTE, the examination for Classes V and VIII will be conducted by the Punjab School Education Board (PSEB) in place of the SCERT from this year. Instead of the SCERT(State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) Punjab), the PSEB will determine and fix the criteria for passing the examination as per its policy, says a notification of the School Education Department, sent to all district education officers of the state.

(Source:TheTribune)

Topic:- Important Personality.

4)News:- Worship Him on the Martyrdom Day of Sant Harchand Singh Longowal Ji.

About Sant Harchand Singh Longowal Ji:-

- Harchand Singh Longowal (2 January 1932 – 20 August 1985) was the President of the Akali Dal during the Punjab insurgency of the 1980s. He was known affectionately as “Sant Ji”. He had signed the Punjab accord, also known as the Rajiv-Longowal Accord along with Rajiv Gandhi on 24 July 1985. The government accepted the demands of Akali Dal who in turn agreed to withdraw their agitation. Less than a month after signing the Punjab accord, Longowal was assassinated by the Sikh militants opposed to the accord. (Government Website).

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QUIZ: -

Question1:- Choose correct about Industrial Policy of Punjab:-

1. Punjab offers capital and interest subsidy for start-up @10% pa.
2. Fixed power tariff for 3 years.

1. Only 1
2. Only 2

3. Both
4. None

Question 2:- What is the theme of Earth Day 2019?

(Random Question From Current Affairs)

1. Protect our species.
2. End Plastic Pollution
3. Environmental and Climate Literacy
4. None

Answers :-

- Q1:-4
- Q2:- 1

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