

## Punjab Current Affairs 2020

### Punjab Smart Ration Card Scheme

Punjab Government has launched Smart Ration Card Scheme under NFSA which has been rolled out on 12 September 2020 by CM Captain Amarinder Singh.

The state government of Punjab had already given its approval for replacement of blue cards under the Atta-Dal scheme with new smart ration cards.

As per the orders of State government, the Atta Dal Scheme has been renamed as Smart Ration Card Scheme.

This new scheme will cover 1.41 crore beneficiaries as per the new list. CM also announces a new state funded scheme to provide subsidized ration to 9 lakh beneficiaries not covered under NFSA.

Smart Ration Card will be used for withdrawing the food grains from the Fair Price Shops (FPS) through e-PoS machines without carrying any additional document.

The details of the family can be fetched at Fair Price Shops just by swiping the smart ration card at the ePoS machines. The biometric authentication after the card swipe will be required for food grain withdrawal.

One of the major benefits of the smart ration cards will be that these card would be intra-state portable, meaning the smart ration card holder would be able to withdraw food grains anywhere in the state irrespective of their permanent resident district.

Deputy Commissioners of all the districts in the state would be responsible for the re-verification of the beneficiaries. Punjab govt. has initiated process of making smart ration cards with chip to distribute subsidized ration to BPL families.

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### Kifayati LED Bulb Yojana 2020

Punjab State Power Corporation Limited has launched the Kifayati LED Bulb Yojana 2020 to provide viable power solutions to the people hailing from below poverty line (BPL), scheduled caste (SC) & backward classes (BC) backgrounds.

PSPCL has allocated a total amount of Rs. 8.63 crore for this Kifayati LED Bulb Yojana to distribute for LED bulbs at the earliest.

In the Kifayati LED Bulb Yojana, each existing eligible consumer from BPL, SC and BC categories, availing electricity subsidy having sanctioned load upto 1 KW would be provided with 2 LED bulbs at Rs. 30.

### Benefits of PSPCL Kifayati LED Bulb Yojana

- The LED bulbs to be given in this low price Led bulb scheme consumes 80% to 90% lesser electricity.
- LED Bulbs given under PSPCL Kifayati LED Bulb Yojana are long lasting with upto 20,000 hours of running time.
- There is no chance of catching fire.

- These LED bulbs to be given by PSPCL are environment friendly.
- No use of Mercury like CFL Bulbs.



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### **Punjab Ghar Ghar Rozgar Yojana**

The state government of Punjab has launched Ghar Ghar Rozgar Yojana, an employment and skill training scheme. Under this employment generation scheme, jobless candidates can apply online at Ghar Ghar Rozgar Portal.

Unemployed candidates can check latest uploaded jobs for job-seekers and can apply at the same Ghar Ghar Rozgar Portal.

Ghar Ghar Rozgar Yojana Portal not only provided the list of all government jobs available but also the private job vacancies.

As of 09 August 2020, there are more than 4500 companies / employers registered on the Ghar Ghar Rozgar Yojana Portal while more than 8 Lakh job seekers are also registered.

### **Punjab Silage Baler cum Wrapper Machines Subsidy Scheme**

The state government of Punjab has launched a new subsidy scheme for Silage Baler cum Wrapper Machines. The scheme would provide 40% subsidy to farmers on the purchase of Automatic Silage Baler and Wrapper Machines.

The scheme will be implemented by the Punjab Dairy Development Board.

The main objective of Silage Baler cum Wrapper Machines Subsidy Scheme is to promote the dairy farming sector in the state and make it more advanced and profitable.

The scheme is an effort to modernize the production and maintenance of green fodder in the state.

According to the state government, the scheme will not only help increasing the green fodder area but also reduce the cultivation of crops like wheat and paddy which will further help in increasing the ground water level in the state.

Under this scheme, the farmer who buys Silage Baler cum Wrapper Machines will be able to get a subsidy of up to Rs. 5.60 Lakh by the government.

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### **Punjab Free Smartphone Scheme**

Punjab Free Smartphone Scheme or Captain Smart Connect Scheme 2020 is a new scheme announced by the state government of Punjab to provide 50 Lakh free smartphones to class 11th and 12th Students.

The Government under the Captain Smart Connect Scheme is providing free smartphones to eligible youth along with free 4G data for one year.

The free smartphone scheme in Punjab was announced in 2016 election manifesto but was not launched immediately.

Named as Captain Smart Connect, the free smartphone scheme in Punjab is aimed at providing students with easy digital access to educational content online.

After a wait of more than 3 years, the Captain smart connect free smartphone scheme has been launched and in the first phase of the scheme, smartphone have been distributed to girl students.

On 28 July 2020, CM Captain Amarinder Singh of Punjab govt. has decided to start 1st phase of Free Smartphone Distribution Scheme. In this first phase, around 50,000 smartphones would be given to students of govt. schools which are studying in class 11th or 12th.

All the students will be required to submit a self certification form. This form will ensure that the youth beneficiaries of this scheme are already not in a possession of smartphone and they really requires it.

Punjab free smartphone scheme is expected to benefit a total of 1,74,015 Class XII students of government schools in the first phase. The first phase of the captain smart connect scheme would be completed by November 2020.

### **Punjab Ayushman Bharat Sarbat Sehat Bima Yojana**

Punjab state government has launched Ayushman Bharat Sarbat Sehat Bima Yojana for farmers. In this scheme, each farmer is entitled to cashless health insurance cover of Rs. 5 lakh per family per year.

The state govt. has started toll free number 104 for farmers to avail benefits of Punjab Ayushman Bharat Sarbat Sehat Bima Yojana.

Already registered farmers should contact the market committee offices for the following purposes:-

- Verification of names of farmers.
- To get e-cards.
- To get names of family members added.
- Information regarding government hospitals.
- Information regarding private hospitals.

All the farmers who want to avail Punjab Ayushman Bharat Sarbat Sehat Bima Yojana for Farmers should contact their respective market committee offices.

This scheme is functional for other category people of the state for which the hospital list & beneficiary list is still available at the official website. Similar to the process for other people, farmers also needs to get their e-cards prepared to avail cashless treatment at hospitals.

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### **Punjab Kisan Credit Limit Scheme**

Punjab government has launched Kisan Credit Limit Scheme 2020 for animal breeders. In this scheme, pashupalaks like cattle bearers can make their Kisan Credit Limits just like agricultural farmers.

Under this scheme, every cattle breeder would be granted Rs. 3 lakh amount per family at 4% rate of interest.

The Kisan Credit Limit Scheme would immensely benefit the small and landless cattle breeder farmers. Now to avail loan upto Rs. 1.6 lakh, the security in the form of land would not be necessary.

The main objective of this scheme is to promote animal husbandry (pashupalan). On the pattern of farming community, a new mechanism of bank credit limits on easy rates has been started for the ease of the cattle breeders of the state.

This Punjab Kisan Credit Limit Scheme will enable pashupalaks to cover daily expenses incurred expenses incurred on feed of animals, medicines, water and electricity bills.

Every cattle breeder can decide their own credit limit in accordance with their own comfort. The only pre-requisite to become eligible beneficiary would be the availability of cattles or animals.

### **Punjab Bhai Ghanhya Sehat Sewa Scheme**

Punjab government invites Bhai Ghanhya Sehat Sewa Scheme (BGSSS) online application form 2020-21. This scheme provide cashless health insurance coverage of Rs. 2 lakh per family per year in empanelled hospitals of Punjab & Chandigarh.

Bhai Ghanaiya Sehat Sewa Yojana is a self contributory social health insurance scheme running successfully since 2006.

Bhai Ghanhya Sehat Sewa Yojana will benefit members of cooperative societies like farmer families, cooperative bank account holders and employees of departments in Punjab.

To mark the official launch of the BGSSS, Minister Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa has distributed health cards to 11 beneficiaries.

The state govt. has tied up with New India Assurance Company Ltd. and MD India Health Insurance TPA Limited for implementation of BGSSS.

As this is a continuously running scheme, more than 3 lakh people have already availed the benefits of this scheme.

### **Punjab Apni Gaddi Apna Rozgar Scheme**

Punjab state government has started Apni Gaddi Apna Rozgar Scheme 2020 for unemployed youth. Under this Apni Gaddi Apna Rozgar Yojana, the government will provide subsidy on purchase of vehicles.

The main objective is to create Rojgar or self employment opportunities to enable people to earn their livelihood.

All the jobless youths can now avail subsidy on loans for purchase of 3 wheelers / 4 wheelers vehicles.

The modalities of Apni Gaddi Apna Rozgar Scheme 2020 have been worked out by the state government of Punjab.

The study of model of state like Maharashtra, Karnataka and West Bengal is being carried out where subsidy on purchase of vehicles is given for self employment is provided.

The revamped version of Apni Gadi Apna Rojgar Scheme is launched because the eligible beneficiaries were finding it difficult to arrange the margin money and get the vehicle financed from banks.

Earlier, the Department of Employment Generation and Training had entered into agreement with web based cab providers like Ola / Uber and vehicles were to be arranged by the driving partners at their own cost.

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### **Punjab Govt Signed MoU with IIT Ropar for Skill Development**

Punjab government has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) – Ropar, for Skill Development in Chandigarh.

The MoU will assist the IIT's technical education department to become an academic mentor for the state's engineering colleges at Gurdaspur and Ferozepur, Sri Guru Gobind Singh Skill Institute at Chamkaur Sahib, five government polytechnics and 10 government ITIs.

The institute will help the state in developing a model ITI and a model polytechnic.

### **Punjab CM launched surveillance app 'Ghar ghar nigrani' app to detect COVID-19**

Punjab Chief Minister launched mobile based app 'Ghar ghar nigrani' app through video conference to conduct house-to-house surveillance in the state to eliminate the COVID-19 pandemic.

The app had been developed and designed in-house by the Health Department, and had been field tested in Patiala and Mansa.

The survey captures a person's full medical conditions for the previous week and his / her co-morbidities (one or more additional conditions often co-occurring with a primary condition)

This app enables the state to further develop a database for its COVID containment strategy and create targeted interventions for the community.

The survey will be conducted by Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) workers and community volunteers

### **Punjab Government launched “Cova Punjab” mobile app to spread awareness on Coronavirus**

Punjab Government launched “Cova Punjab” mobile application to spread awareness and precautions to be taken against coronavirus. The application was developed by the Department of Government Reforms and Public Grievances in consultation with the Health & Family Welfare Department.

The application provides options to check for symptoms as provided by the government from time to time and preventive care advisories.

The application also suggests the nearest hospital where people can report in case they show symptoms of the virus.

The dynamic map on the app is provided with a real-time counter which will help citizens updated about the status of the spread of corona in the state.

The Cova Punjab application can be downloaded from Android Play Store and iOS (iPhone Operating System) AppStore.

### **Punjab became the 1st state to impose curfew after lockdown fails**

Punjab government ordered an indefinite curfew across the state. With this, it becomes the 1st state in the country to take drastic measure to stop the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19).

After Punjab, the Chandigarh Union Territory (UT) Administration has also imposed curfew in the city to check the spread of virus.

The word ‘Curfew’ means keeping people off the streets for pre-decided hours. Any violation is met with a fine or arrest. Curfew includes complete closure essential services in addition to Section 144.

Only administration & police personnel are allowed on the street. The district administration is exempt from action, once the curfew is enforced.

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### **Vini Mahajan became the First Woman Chief Secretary of Punjab**

Vini Mahajan became the Chief Secretary of Punjab on 26th June 2020. With this, she became the First Woman to hold the position of Chief Secretary in Punjab.

She replaced Karan Avtar Singh who took over as Special Chief Secretary for Governance Reforms.

Vini Mahajan is also the First Woman Officer to hold the post of Deputy Commissioner in the state of Punjab. She became the Deputy Commissioner of Ropar district in 1995.

After completing 12th from Modern School, New Delhi, she completed her graduation in Economics from Delhi University’s Lady Shri Ram College. She pursued her Post Graduation from Calcutta’s Indian Institute of Management (IIM Calcutta).

She has numerous academic achievements under her name that includes the likes of National Talent Search Scholarship, Roll of Honour from IIM Calcutta, etc.

In the Punjab State Government’s response to the global COVID-19 pandemic, she has played an important role by steering various initiatives as a Chairperson of the Health Sector Response and Procurement Committee of the Punjab Government.

She has held the post of Director in the Union Finance Ministry's Department of Economic Affairs in 2004-05.

### **No Fees for Govt. Schools in Punjab for This Year**

The state government of Punjab has announced that the government schools in the state will not charge any admission, re-admission and tuition fees for this session because of the COVID 19 crisis. The state government has also decided to move the court against the fees charged by the private schools in the state.

The Chief Minister of Punjab has also announced that provisional admission is being given to 31000 Class X students to Class XI since no internal assessment could be done for them on account of the deadly pandemic.

To solve the issues going on, the state government has also announced Rs 5100 cash prize for each of the 335 students who scored 98% plus in the Class XII examinations.

In Punjab, it is being observed that the admission in the government schools is increasing now.

This year, an increase 13% has been observed in the admission process and this has been made possible because of the various initiatives undertaken by the state government to improve the education system such as recruitment of good teachers, hiring teachers for the schools in the border areas, the introduction of smart schools, etc.

### **Punjab government launched "Cova Punjab" app**

Punjab government recently launched a mobile application called "Cova Punjab" to spread awareness about the precautions to be taken against coronavirus.

The application has been developed by the Department of Government Reforms and Public Grievances in association with the Health and Family Welfare Department.

The mobile application has options to check for symptoms provided by the government.

The application also suggests the nearest hospital and will spread awareness by sharing travel and preventive care advisories.

### **Punjab reduced govt employees retirement age to 58 years**

The retirement age of Punjab government employees will be reduced to 58 years from 60 years currently, a move intended to offer more employment opportunities to young people.

The announcement in this regard was made by state Finance Minister Manpreet Singh Badal while presenting a Rs 1.54 lakh crore budget for 2020-21.

The government will also implement the 6th Pay Commission recommendations in 2020-21 and for this, a sum of Rs 4,000 crore has been earmarked in the budget.

The state government announced to waive Change of Land Use (CLU) charges for two years for the new industries coming up outside the municipal limits and slash the "mandi" fee on vegetables from 4%-1%.

### **Punjab launched "Ghar Ghar Nigrani" Mobile Application**

Punjab Government has launched “Ghar Ghar Nigrani” mobile application to undertake house to house surveillance to eliminate COVID-19 pandemic which to be used as a tool for early detection and testing of COVID-19 and prevent community spread.

With the help of the application, the Punjab Government is to cover all the persons that are below the age of 30 years.

The survey will cover persons that have influenza like illness. Currently the survey is conducted in 518 villages.

The survey has found that 4.88% have been found to be hypertensive, 0.14% are having kidney disease, 0.64% are suffering from heart disease and 0.13% are suffering from cancer and another 0.13% are suffering from TB.

According to Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the state has 2,887 COVID-19 cases. OF these 2,259 have been cured, migrated or discharged.

### **Punjab passed resolution against farm ordinances**

Punjab Government passed a resolution against the farm ordinances of the central government. In June 2020, the Union Government of India had issued three ordinances as follows

#### **(i) Farmer Produce Ordinance, 2020**

It was promulgated in June 2020 to provide barrier-free trade of farmers produce outside the markets that are specified under State Agriculture Market Laws. It allows intra-state and inter-state trade of farmers.

#### **(ii) Essential Commodities Ordinance**

The ordinance amended the Essential Commodities Act. Under the ordinance, the essential commodities such as pulses, oil seeds, onion, potatoes are excluded from the act. According to the act, the centre can include or exclude any commodity and declare it essential. This is mainly to make the commodities available to consumers.

#### **(iii) Farmers Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Ordinance, 2020**

The ordinance provided a framework to empower and protect the farmers with reference to sale and purchase of farm products. The provisions of the ordinance override the state APMC laws.

### **Online lottery scheme sales banned by Punjab govt to check illegal sales**

Punjab state government has banned the sale of all types of online lottery schemes under section 5 of the Lotteries (Regulation) Act 1998 in order to check for illegal sales.

The act will not only check illegal lottery business but will also boost Punjab’s tax and non tax revenue.

The Punjab cabinet gave its approval to prohibition of sale of computerised & online lotteries & online scheme tickets promoted through the internet by any state in India or by a foreign country.

### **Punjab to honour cops under ‘Appreciate and Commend’ scheme**

Punjab DGB has launched the ‘Appreciate and Commend’ scheme in order to boost the confidence of police officers who work extraordinarily and the best cops will be awarded every month.



Under this scheme, the nominations of the best police will be sought from police chiefs of various districts by the 25th of every month, and these will be screened by a committee consisting of senior police officers and the awardees name would be announced by the 5th of every month.

During the inauguration of the scheme 15 police personnel were awarded for their performance. The awardees included 2 Inspectors, 6 Sub Inspectors, 3 Assistant Sub Inspectors, 1 head constable and 3 constables.

The performance of the cops had been rated based upon action against terrorists & gangsters, the arrest of proclaimed offenders, a large number of NDPS recoveries, property forfeiture in NDPS cases, spreading drug awareness, investigation of sensitive cases, community policing initiatives & police station management.

### **Punjab govt presented ₹1.54 lakh cr budget for FY20-21**

Punjab Finance Minister has presented Rs ₹1, 54,805 crore budget for financial year 2020-21 in the state assembly. The budget proposed revenue receipts of Rs 88,004 crore and revenue expenditure of Rs 95,716 crore for fiscal year 2020-21 while revenue deficit for financial year 2020-21 will be Rs 7,712 crore and the fiscal deficit will be Rs 18,828 crore respectively.

The budget earmarked ₹100 crore for giving 10 lakh free smartphones to the youth.

The retirement age of state government employees has been reduced from 60 to 58. Those who have turned 59 will retire on March 31 this year and those who are 58 will retire from September 30. The financial outgo on account of reducing the retirement age would be ₹3,500 crore.

Apart from above, for the Punjab state govt employees, 6% dearness allowance (DA) was announced along with the implementation of the 6th Pay Commission recommendations in 2020-21.

For the education sector, a sum of Rs 13,092 crore allocated with a proposal of free education for all students in government schools up to Class 12. Currently, education is free for all students up to Class 8 and it is free up to Class 12 only for girls.

Free transportation facility for primary schools students will also be provided and for this ₹10 crore earmarked.

The state government has also proposed a debt waiver to landless farm labourers and Rs 520 crore has been allocated for the same.

Rs 4,675 crore earmarked for health sector.

The fee levied on the sale and purchase of agriculture produce on fruits and vegetables i.e. "mandi fee" will be reduced from 4% to 1%.

A proposal to waive Change of Land Use (CLU) charges for two years.

The budget projected outstanding debt of Rs 2,48,236 crore for 2020-21 as against 2019-20 revised estimates of Rs 2,28,906 crore.

State government proposes to set up two agriculture colleges at Gurdaspur and Balachaur.

### **Punjab celebrated Holi Mohalla festival**

Hola Mohalla is the annual Sikh festival celebrated on the following day of the festival Holi at Sri Anandpur Sahib, Punjab. The festival will be celebrated for 3 days from March 10 to 12, 2020.

The festival aims to physically strengthen Sikh community by holding acrobatic military exercises and mock battles.

The festival holds an annual fair which was initiated by Guru Gobind Singh ji, the 10th sikh guru.

In this festival, the Sikh community performs wrestling, mock sword fights, turban tying, bareback horse-riding, standing erect on two speeding horses, tent pigging etc., which is then followed by the music and poetry competition.

On the third day of the celebration a long procession will be led by Panj Pyaras (collective name given to 5 Sikh men), which starts from Takth Keshgarh Sahib & passes through various important gurudwaras like Quila Anandgarh, Lohgarh Sahib, Mata Jito Ji and ends at the Takht.

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### **Punjab prohibits online supply of food from FBOs not possessing hygiene rating**

Punjab government's Food and Drug Administration has prohibited Online Food Supply Aggregators related to those Food Business Operators who are not possessing hygiene rating, by invoking provisions under Section 18(1)(a) of food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 to ensure safe food to public.

It also prohibits OFSAs from sourcing the food from FBOs where rating is less than three out of five.

The prohibition orders would be effective for one year beginning April 30, 2020.

### **Punjab govt promulgated 'Punjab Good Conduct Prisoners Amendment Ordinance, 2020'**

Punjab state government promulgated 'The Punjab Good Conduct Prisoners (Temporary Release) Amendment Ordinance, 2020'. As per new provisions, the temporary release of the prisoners has been allowed beyond the maximum period of 16 weeks in a calendar year.

Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa, Chandigarh, Cooperation and Jails Minister, announced that the measures have been taken in view of containing the spread of COVID-19, with the intention to decongest the jails.

The condition of the temporary release being availed of, on quarterly basis also stands waived.

The Punjab Government in March 2020, had given parole or interim bail to around 6,000 prisoners in order to decongest the jails across Punjab to combat COVID-19.

The govt had earlier released around 3,000 undertrial prisoners on 6 week interim bail from various prisons across the state and the period of their release set to finish, the Government has now decided to extend the parole of convicts and interim bail of undertrial prisoners further by 6 weeks.

The decision was taken by the Government panel, chaired by Justice Rakesh Kumar Jain of the Punjab and Haryana High Court who is also the Executive Chairman of Punjab State Legal Services Authority.

The panel noted that readmitting of such a large number of undertrials back in the jails has massive risk & can defeat the entire purpose of releasing them. It suggested that the concerned judicial

officers should extend the interim bail by another six weeks or further till the notification under the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897, remains in force.

The government panel had recommended to carry out amendment in 'The Punjab Good Conduct Prisoners (Temporary Release) Act, 1962' to enable the release of convicts on parole for more than six-week in a calendar year, the Government has taken the decision by introducing an ordinance.

### **Asia's First Continuous Galvanized Rebar Production Facility Inaugurated in Punjab**

Asia's first Continuous Galvanized Rebar (CGR) Production Facility has been inaugurated near Gobindgarh, Punjab launched by Madhav KRD Group in association with International Zinc Association (IZA) with the support of Hindustan Zinc Limited.

The facility will produce the new Continuously Galvanized Rebar (CGR).

The annual capacity of the facility is over 30,000 tonnes.

Under the brand "JYOTI", the facility will manufacture ZNCOAT TEMPCORE TMT bars.

Jyoti is the first of its kind in Asia to apply CGR technology with enhanced life and low maintenance cost.

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