



सत्यमेव जयते

ADDRESS
OF
THE GOVERNOR OF PUNJAB
SHRI V.P. SINGH BADNORE
TO THE
STATE LEGISLATURE

Monday 1ST March, 2021

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

1. I am happy to be back with you in this august House on the opening day of the 14th Session of the 15th Punjab Vidhan Sabha. We met a year before amid celebrations on the occasion of the 550th Prakash Purab of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji and the 150th Birth Anniversary of the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi Ji. We also remembered our freedom fighters by commemorating the Centenary of the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre. My Government organized befitting functions to celebrate these events with extensive participation of people. We had also planned befitting celebrations for the 350th Birth Anniversary celebrations of the great Sikh warrior Baba Banda Singh Bahadur Ji, the Birth Centenary of Acharya Shri Mahapragya – 10th Head of Shwetambar Tera Panth and the 750th Birth Anniversary of Bhagat Namdev ji, but the year 2020 has been unusual and difficult.
2. The 400th Prakash Purab of "Hind Di Chadar" Guru Tegh Bahadur ji will however be celebrated on 1st May this year. The Government will pay a befitting tribute to the great Guru, who embodied the true spirit of secularism, by organising a grand event at Sri Anandpur Sahib. Thereafter, year-long celebrations, with due adherence to Covid precautions, shall commence, which will conclude on the Gurpurab next year.

3. Dear Members, you are all aware that the devastation caused by the pandemic Covid-19 and, thereafter the agitation against three new Farm Laws enacted by the Government of India led to quite an unprecedented situation in the State. The crisis emanating from the pandemic caused by Covid-19 was unknown and unforeseen. However, my Government has shown the requisite resilience and determination to deal with it effectively. Punjab was the first State in the country to enforce curfew alongside the lockdown in March 2020 in order to contain the spread of the deadly Coronavirus. My Government was always nimble and proactive in imposing lockdown as well as relaxing it, as the ground situation changed. As a result, the state constantly had one of the lowest number of cases amongst all states in India.
4. However, the common man was adversely impacted, and trade, business, and industry were almost devastated due to the complete shutdown. Anticipating difficulties of the common man in these trying circumstances, my Government launched four dedicated 24-hour helplines to cater to the distress of people for health and medical issues, rations, food, and movement of migrant workers. Over 24 lakh grievances received from the common man through these helplines were addressed effectively during the period of lockdown and curfew.

5. Effective steps were also taken by my Government to alleviate socio-economic miseries and stress of the distressed populations by ensuring supplies of essential commodities like food, medicines, personal protection kits, masks, and other materials required to save lives. ***Mission FATEH – a comprehensive Outreach Programme*** was launched to create awareness about Covid-19. For direct contact and immediate access to information, my Government launched the COVA app, which was downloaded by over 58 lakh people in the State, and e-Sanjeevani for tele-consultation.
6. With the support and guidance of global and national experts, scientists and doctors, my Government worked very swiftly on the strategy of Test, Trace, and Treat to minimise the spread of the virus and loss of lives in the State. When the Pandemic started, the state did not have any testing capacity for COVID-19, and samples had to be sent to the National Institute of Virology, Pune for testing. However, my Government was able to start testing at Government Medical Colleges Patiala and Faridkot in March itself. The initial capacity of 40 tests per day in each laboratory was systematically increased, and today the State is capable of handling over 26500 RT PCR tests in seven Government labs. 46 Private labs have also come up. Rapid Antigen Tests were used as per requirement, though we utilized

predominantly the more reliable RT-PCR tests. The state was able to test over 30,000 samples per day, and the testing rate remained higher than the national average at all times.

7. My Government also took immediate measures to upgrade and augment healthcare facilities, both in the public and private sectors, and established Covid Care Centres in order to manage and contain the pandemic. As many as 5238 Level II hospital beds with oxygen support were set up in the government facilities, and 2673 beds in the private facilities. 1530 ICU beds were established, including 645 beds with ventilator support. All this ensured that no patient was denied treatment due to shortage of beds.
8. Moreover, 25 Advanced Life Support (ALS) Ambulances and 300 Basic Life Support (BLS) Ambulances are available today in the state as against only 2 ALS and 240 BLS available in April 2020. Three Plasma Banks have also been established in the State. National and international health experts helped to bring in cutting edge treatment to treat COVID-19 patients in the state, such as use of high flow nasal cannulas.
9. Dear Members, the distress caused by a pandemic, such as this, can never be fully mitigated, but my Government took every possible measure to minimize its impact. It released

Rs. 90 crore from the State Disaster Relief Fund to ensure food and shelter for the homeless, underprivileged, and daily wagers. The district administrations and the Police department made all out efforts to assist the needy persons to alleviate their distress, and 29 lakh food packets were distributed by the Government. State's NGOs, religious and charitable organizations deserve special appreciation for distributing another 2 crore dry ration packets.

10. My Government authorized all Sarpanches and Presidents of Urban Local Bodies to provide emergency relief to the poor and needy persons, including food and medicines up to Rs. 50,000, out of Gram Panchayat or ULB funds.
11. In order to give relief to the poor, my Government released advance pensions of four months, amounting to Rs. 668 crore, to about 25 lakh old aged, widows, and disabled persons. Works under MGNREGS were expedited to enable over 3 lakh MGNREGS workers to earn Rs. 115 crore during this period. In addition, about 2.9 lakh construction workers were given a relief of more than Rs. 174 crore at the rate of Rs. 6000 per worker to help them during the period of lockdown.
12. Further, to mitigate the impact of COVID-19, PSPCL gave various relief to its consumers, at a cost of about Rs 500 crore. These included deferment of payment of Electricity

Bills, one percent rebate on current Energy Bills, deferment of Fixed Charges, waiver of Extension Charges, and non-revision of Security for the electricity consumers. The other relief measures taken by my government for electricity consumers were: i) Facility for Commercial and Small Power Industrial Consumers to upload their readings on PSPCL website under the "Meter Reading on trust"; ii) Payment of Electricity Bills in installments; iii) No disconnection due to non-payment of bills, and iv) Extension of Validity to submit A/A form.

13. Dear Members, my Government also bore 100 percent of the cost, amounting to Rs. 35 crore, to transport over 5 lakh migrant workers to their homes in 375 trains. Over 21,000 migrant workers were also transported to their homes through 725 special buses. The Government provided special buses to bring back the people of the State who were stuck in different parts of the country due to lockdown, including about 4000 pilgrims from Nanded and more than 2000 students from Kota.
14. Dear Members, so far about 1.8 lakh persons have been affected by the Coronavirus in the State, against more than 1.1 crore in the entire country. Of these, around 1.7 lakh persons have recovered. I am aware that some of you were also affected by this deadly virus. However, I am happy to note that the affected Members and their families have

fully recovered.

15. The pandemic has been contained, but this should not be a reason to be complacent. My Government shall continue to exercise due care and caution to prevent the resurgence of this virus in the near future. It shall also continue to make every possible effort to further upgrade healthcare infrastructure in the State.
16. Dear Members, in our endeavour to contain and manage the COVID-19 pandemic, the health workers, front line workers, the police personnel, revenue officials, and all other government employees have done a commendable job. In the process, we have also lost 34 government employees. While regretting loss of precious lives, I would like to place on record my personal appreciation, and the appreciation and gratitude of my Government, for all the good work done by them.
17. Universal health cover was an important commitment of my Government. In this endeavour, the Chief Minister, Punjab launched the “Sarbat Sehat Bima Yojna” on 20th October 2019, to provide health cover of Rs. 5 lakh each to about 40 lakh families, covering nearly 70 percent of the State’s population. So far, 45 lakh individual e-cards have been generated to extend the benefits of this ambitious health insurance scheme to the beneficiary families. A

dedicated agency has been appointed to intensify the e-card generation drive, which had come to a halt during the Covid-19 lockdown. The beneficiaries, whose name figure in the database but have not yet received or downloaded e-cards, have also been allowed to avail the benefit of health services under this scheme. Till date, 5.56 lakh cashless treatments, costing about Rs. 640 crore have been provided to the entitled beneficiaries. On an average, 1500 patients are getting treated every day under the Scheme.

18. In pursuance of its assurance to establish Health and Wellness Clinics (HWCs) in the State, my Government has operationalized 2046 HWCs so far, and another 800 HWCs would be made operational shortly. In all, these centres have so far provided OPD services to over 71 lakh people in the State. Telemedicine services were started for 400 HWCs during the lockdown in March 2020 to provide medical services for people in rural areas, and till date, more than 26 thousand tele-consultations have been done through video calling.
19. My Government has also decided to establish five new medical colleges in the State at SAS Nagar, Kapurthala, Hoshiarpur, Gurdaspur and Malerkotla. The Dr. BR Ambedkar State Institute of Medical Sciences at SAS Nagar will start operation in the coming academic session, whereas the remaining medical colleges will begin their operations

after completion of requisite approval processes that are currently underway.

20. My Government urged the Government of India to establish a Regional Institute of Virology in the State, and offered to make available requisite land for this purpose free of cost. I am pleased to inform you that the approval of the Government of India has since been obtained, and the site selection for the Institute is currently underway.
21. My Government has launched the COVID-19 vaccination drive in the State on 16th January 2021. In line with the priorities decided by the Government of India, 1.22 lakh healthcare and other frontline workers have so far been vaccinated with the first dose of the vaccine as on 25th February 2021.
22. My Government has urged upon the Government of India to ensure free vaccination of all eligible persons in the State. In the event, the Government of India does not fulfil this bounden duty, my Government will go ahead and fulfil its commitment to provide free vaccination to all eligible persons in the State through its own resources.
23. In its endeavour to further provide a healthy living environment to the people of Punjab, my Government has decided to revamp the Mission Tandarust Punjab, which is aimed at ensuring clean air, potable water, and

unadulterated food in the State. The State Department of Environment will henceforth execute and monitor 10 submissions to carry out the objectives of the Mission. These are: Healthy Soils, Safe Food, Preventive Healthcare, Green Punjab, Road Safety, Khedo Punjab, Clean Water, Clean Air, Waste Management, and Paddy Straw Management.

24. Though Covid-19 is presently under control, the farmers' agitation and its resultant effect on the farming communities is causing a lot of anxiety among the common man. The farmers of the State feel that the three new farm legislations namely (a) The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020; (b) The Farmers' (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020; and (c) The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020 enacted by the Government of India do not address their concerns of stagnating incomes as a result of saturating productivity. They apprehend that these laws would disrupt the time-tested agriculture marketing systems established under the Punjab Agricultural Produce Markets Act, 1961. There are also apprehensions about the dismantling of the government procurement of food-grains at the Minimum Support Price (MSP).
25. My Government has taken these concerns of the farmers seriously. After discussions with all political parties of the

State as also the farmers' unions, this august House has twice passed resolutions on 28th August 2020 and 19th October 2020, urging upon the Government of India to withdraw these legislations, and continue with the existing MSP systems.

26. This august House also passed three amendment legislations namely, (a) the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) (Special Provisions and Punjab Amendment) Bill, 2020; (b) the Farmers' (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services (Special Provisions and Punjab Amendment) Bill, 2020; and (c) the Essential Commodities (Special Provisions and Punjab Amendment) Bill, 2020, to mitigate the anticipated adverse impact of the Central laws. These legislations are pending for Presidential assent under Article 254 of the Constitution.
27. My Government strongly feels that the enactment of these three Central laws is against the principles of cooperative federalism as Agriculture is a State subject under entry 14 of List II of Schedule 7 of the Constitution. The State Chief Minister has time and again also urged the Prime Minister to reconsider these laws, concede to the demand of the farmers, and withdraw these new Central legislations.
28. In pursuance of my Government's commitment, this House

also passed another amendment legislation titled “The Code of Civil Procedure (Punjab Amendment) Bill, 2020” to provide for non-attachment of agricultural land up to 2.5 acres, so as to secure the livelihood of the farmers. This legislation is also pending for the assent of the Hon'ble President of India.

29. Dear Members, my Government is fully alive to the concerns of the farmers in the State as they are the pivot of the State's economy. We will not let the farmers and the farm workers suffer in any manner. The Government is unequivocally committed to continuing the free supply of electricity to the farmers.
30. During the last four years, my Government has picked up every grain produced by the farmers in the last eight cropping cycles. In cumulative terms, in the last four years Rs. 2.17 lakh crore have been paid to the farmers, which is about Rs. 90 thousand crore more than what was paid to the farmers during preceding four years from 2013-14 to 2016-17.
31. During the year 2020-21, despite the challenges posed by COVID-19, my Government ensured safe, smooth, and hassle-free procurement of food-grains. The number of purchase centers were increased from 1800 to 4000, e-passes were issued to the farmers, and all necessary COVID-

19 safeguards were observed.

32. For fair and proper distribution of foodgrains under the Public Distribution System, my Government has introduced Smart Ration Cards in the State, and so far, 38.29 lakh eligible families have been issued smart ration cards. State Department of Food and Civil Supplies has introduced Intra-state portability for distribution of rations in the State, enabling the NFSA beneficiaries to avail their entitlement from any fair price shop in the State. The number of fair price shops has also been increased by 1004 shops.
33. My Government has also initiated the process of identification of 9.5 lakh beneficiaries under the recently approved State-Sponsored Smart Ration Card Scheme for the benefit of the people who could not be included under the National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA). 1.47 crore beneficiaries are so far being provided subsidised foodgrains under the NFSA.
34. True to its commitment, and despite the financial constraints, my Government provided debt relief up to Rs. 2 lakh to 5.64 lakh small and marginal farmers, with a total relief of Rs. 4625 crore. It is also committed to provide the benefit of the existing debt relief scheme to the remaining 1.13 lakh farmers found eligible during the coming financial year, i.e., 2021-22.

35. My Government had notified the “Debt Relief Scheme” for Farm Labourers and Landless Farming Members of PACS in the year 2019. Under this scheme, a total 2.85 lakh Landless Labourers would be provided a debt relief of Rs. 520 crore during 2021-22.
36. Under the guidance of my Government, the Punjab State Cooperative Bank has introduced Debt Settlement Scheme 2020 with a view to provide relief to the borrowers who have not been able to repay their dues on time. Under this scheme, more than 50 thousand borrowers are eligible to settle their outstanding debt amounting to more than Rs. 500 crore. Likewise, the Punjab State Cooperative Agricultural Development Bank Ltd. has launched a loan restructuring scheme for the defaulting borrowers enabling them to repay their loan in easy instalments, benefitting more than 10,000 farmers.
37. To encourage the judicious use of fertilizers, 24.30 lakh Soil Health Cards have been distributed to the farmers after soil testing. Village-wise “Soil Maps” have been prepared and displayed in every village of the State to make farmers aware of the soil health nutrient status of their lands.
38. To facilitate the development of sustainable agriculture and farmers’ prosperity, my Government has notified its own “Farmer Producer Organizations Policy” to supplement the

Central Government's Policy. The Central Government's "Agriculture Infrastructure Fund" scheme is being converged with various schemes to provide additional financial support to the farmers.

39. To give a fillip to the diversification of agriculture, my Government has set-up a Centre of Excellence for Potato at village Dhogri, in Jalandhar district under the Indo-Dutch cooperation project. Further, a Pear Estate is being set-up at Verka in District Amritsar and a Litchi Estate is being established at Sujampur in District Pathankot.
40. To develop Punjab as a Seed Potato hub, the Punjab Tissue Culture Based Seed Potato Act, 2020 was enacted to promote quality seed potato production. It will facilitate the rapid multiplication of potato seed through the latest tissue culture technology using aeroponics, net houses, etc.
41. In its efforts to develop subsidiary occupations, my Government has imported H.F. bulls under Rashtriya Gokul Mission. Semen production is expected to start within 24 months and during the first year, around 8000-10,000 semen straw production is expected. As a result, exotic germplasm will be introduced into the local gene pool, resulting in up-gradation in the genetic potential of the breed.
42. My Government is establishing a "Regional Research and Training Centre for Buffaloes" at Village Booh in District

Tarn Taran, at a total cost of Rs. 20 crore. The Centre is aimed at improving the buffalo breeds through genetic improvement, and to establish an elite herd of buffalo in the State.

43. My Government is upgrading the Punjab Veterinary Vaccine Institute (PVVI), Ludhiana to GMP Norms as per WHO guidelines with an investment of Rs 32 crore. It will facilitate production of different types of vaccines to prevent prevalent animal diseases in the State. PVVI, Ludhiana has started the production of Cell Culture Classical Swine Fever vaccine with newer technology. Punjab has thus become the first State in the country to produce this vaccine.
44. My Government is also establishing a Mega Dairy project at Bassi Pathana. In the first phase, Aseptic Milk Processing & Packing Unit of 2 Lakh Litre Per Day (LLPD) capacity is being set up at an outlay Rs.138 crore. The project is likely to be completed by June 2021. After completion of the 1st phase, the capacity of the Aseptic Milk Processing Unit will be increased to 5 LLPD in the second phase.
45. A Dairy Product Innovation and Entrepreneurial Training Centre with Fermented Milk Processing, and packaging product capacity of 25 thousand LLPD expandable to 50 thousand LLPD, is being established in the Guru Angad Dev University of Veterinary Science, Ludhiana at an estimated

cost of Rs. 12.87 crore. Further, a new Liquid Milk Processing and Packaging Unit with a capacity of 1 LLPD is being established at Verka Ferozepur Dairy at an estimated cost of Rs. 13.6 crore. These initiatives will give further fillip to the development of the dairy sector in the State.

46. Dear Members, my Government has completed almost four years in office since March 2017. During this period, it has fulfilled most of its commitment made during the elections of 2017. The State's economy has been revived, investment promotion has been accelerated, law and order and communal harmony have been fully ensured, drug abuse has been contained effectively, concerted efforts have been continued to protect territorial and water rights of the State, efforts to empower women, persons with disabilities, persons belonging to Scheduled Castes and other minorities and weaker sections of society, have been redoubled and, of course, job creation and employment for the youth has received uppermost priority of my Government.
47. The outcomes of policies and programmes of my Government have been adequately acknowledged and appreciated by our citizens in the recently concluded municipal elections. The ruling Indian National Congress has got majority in 86 Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), out of 117 ULBs for which elections were held. The State administration, and the people of Punjab deserve

appreciation for peaceful elections in keeping the best democratic traditions of our country.

48. The Gross State Domestic Product has increased by 23 per cent from Rs 4.28 lakh crore lakh in the year 2017-18 to Rs. 5.22 lakh crore in the year 2018-19, and Rs. 5.75 lakh crore in the year 2019-20. Likewise, the per capita income of the State has increased from Rs. 1,54,313 in the year 2018-19 to Rs. 1,66,830 in the year 2019-20, which is 23.53 per cent higher than the national average of Rs. 1,35,050.
49. My Government has established rule of law in the State. It has ensured a congenial atmosphere for peaceful co-existence of all without any discrimination. Trade, business, industry and of course agriculture, i.e., all sectors of the economy, have been enabled to grow in a safe and secure environment with no undue external interference.
50. Following on its commitment to contain drug abuse, my Government had adopted a three-pronged strategy. The Special Task Force set up by the Government in 2017 has been successful in choking the supply of drugs to the State. It has also effectively managed and contained the rising demand for drugs through widely appreciated demand management programs namely Drug Abuse Prevention Officers (DAPO) Programme and Buddy Programme. Apart from recovering 1785 kg heroin during the last four years,

my Government has nabbed 53,161 drug peddlers and dealers. It has registered 6.23 lakh DAPOs who have contacted over one million people to make them aware of the ill-effects of drugs. Of these, 1.1 lakh people were directly involved in drug abuse. My Government has also formed around 7.5 lakh Buddy Groups, whose activities, however, remained limited this year due to the closure of educational institutions in the State as a result of the pandemic.

51. For the treatment of drug users, my Government established 35 Government and 137 private de-addiction centers in the State. Besides, 199 Government OOAT clinics have been established in which more than 6.3 lakhs people have registered themselves for outdoor treatment.
52. My Government also launched "Operation Red Rose" in the year 2020-21 to counter the menace of illicit liquor in the State. Till date, 1545 FIRs have been registered, more than 1.43 lakh litre of illicit liquor has been detected and 12.3 lakh kilogramme of Lahan has been recovered and destroyed.
53. Apart from action on drug and liquor related crimes, my Government has effectively contained other crimes as well to ensure peace and amity in the State. It has arrested and neutralised 2687 members of various criminal gangs in the

State. The State Police has busted 37 terrorist modules, and arrested 221 terrorists. The Government is pursuing due legal action to bring all those involved incidents of sacrilege, and disrespect to any religion, to justice, and it shall spare no efforts to punish the perpetrators of such a crime.

54. The members of this august House are aware that never before has employment generation received the kind of attention my Government has given to this important albeit neglected task. From March 2017 till date, more than 16 lakh youth have been facilitated in getting employment, both in the private and government sectors as well as through self-employment. These include self-employment for about 10 lakh youth; 5.7 lakh jobs in the private sector; and about 60,000 jobs in the Government. 22 District Bureaus of Employment and Enterprise are fully functional, and are performing the onerous task of facilitating and preparing the youth for appropriate jobs.
55. Since March 2017, on an average, my Government has facilitated jobs and employment for 1100 youth every day. Besides, my Government has created 977 lakh man-days under MGNREGA during the last 4 years, which are 160 lakh man-days i.e., 190% more than the average achieved during the previous regime.

56. With a view to promote greater competition in the transport sector, and create more employment opportunities for the youth, my government has decided to award 7000 new bus permits, of which 3000 permits have been issued, and the remaining 4000 permits would be given during the course of this year.
57. Employment generation and availability cannot be increased to the satisfaction of the youth until industrial investment in the State is raised and speeded up. The pandemic had surely interfered in the efforts of my Government to promote new industrial investments, but the State still received 462 investment proposals with a proposed investment of about Rs. 6300 crores with prospective employment to about 43,000 persons.
58. Overall, my Government has received 1784 investment proposals with a proposed investment of about Rs. 71,000 crores having employment potential of about 2.82 lakh in about 4 years from April 2017 to January 2021. Investment has been received in key sectors such as Agri & Food Processing, Manufacturing, Automobile, Education, Petrochemicals, Real Estate, Tourism and Infrastructure and from various countries and regions such as USA, UAE, Japan, South Korea, Germany, Singapore, France, UK, New Zealand, Spain, and Denmark. Recently, the Punjab Bureau of Investment Promotion (Invest Punjab) has been recognised

as Top Performing State Investment Promotion Agency by the Government of India with a 100% score across all parameters.

59. To ease the regulatory burden for the industries, the Punjab Right to Business Act, 2020 was enacted, empowering the District Bureau of Employment and Enterprise headed by the Deputy Commissioners to issue certificate of in-principle approval within 3 working days to new MSME units being set up in Industrial Parks, and within 15 days to those being set up in Industrial Zones. Till date, more than 19 MSME units have been given approval under this law in different districts of Punjab.
60. Dear Members, you may be happy to note that Punjab was selected as one of the 5 States to pilot the project financed by the World Bank for enhancing the productivity of MSMEs. The Government is working closely with the World Bank and the Government of India to prepare a detailed project for this purpose.
61. In order to give a boost to the industrial development in the State, several industrial parks are being developed by my Government. A world-class state of the art Hi-Tech Cycle Valley is being developed in an area of 383 acres at Dhanansu, District Ludhiana with an approximate investment of Rs. 500 crore, which would attract new

investors not only from within the country but also overseas. M/s Hero Cycles is setting up an Anchor Unit in 100 acres of this Industrial Park for the manufacturing of Mobility Solution like Bicycles and E-Bikes, along with its ancillary units.

62. My Government is also setting up an Integrated Pharmaceutical Park in an area of around 130 acres at Wazirabad in Fatehgarh Sahib District as a greenfield project to give an impetus to the emerging needs of the Pharmaceuticals sector in the region.
63. A Mega Food Park has been set up by my Government on 100 acres of land at Laddowal, Ludhiana with an investment of Rs. 118 crore. A food testing laboratory and a solid waste management facility are being set up as a common resource, and pre-cleared plots are being offered to entrepreneurs for setting up food processing units. So far, nine companies have set up businesses in this Food Park.
64. My Government has also made available more than 1100 acres of land in Rajpura for the development of an Industrial Manufacturing Cluster as part of the Amritsar Kolkata Industrial Corridor project.
65. The Industrial infrastructure of various Industrial Focal points is being upgraded regularly. My Government has planned to incur Rs. 175 crore for upgradation of common

infrastructure, such as roads, street lights, drainage, sewerage, etc. in these focal points.

66. To mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on industries, the period falling between 01.03.2020 to 31.08.2020 has been treated as zero periods for all intents and purposes, and no interest or penal interest has been charged by PSIEC for this period. PSIEC has also allowed an additional period of 6 months for the commencement of production without any extension fee for the lime lost due to the pandemic.
67. My Government has also notified a One-Time Settlement Policy to allow entrepreneurs of promoted and loanee companies the last chance to settle their dues with PSIDC and PFC. A One-Time Amnesty Scheme has also been notified by the Government for boiler users to get their boilers regularized, in case they were operating without following the provisions contained in the Boilers Act, 1923, and the Indian Boiler Regulations, 1950.
68. My Government has implemented the One-Time Settlement Scheme for VAT and CST for tax demands upto FY 2013-14. The scheme envisages a relief of Rs. 121.06 crore to 49,647 VAT dealers, with up to 100 percent relief in interest and penalty.
69. The adversities of COVID-19 pandemic, also made the

industries in Punjab to explore new potential areas in technical textiles. With the encouragement and facilitation of my Government, the textile industry of Ludhiana diversified into manufacture of PPE Body Coveralls and N-95 masks for protection against COVID-19. From a zero base, today there are 141 approved body overall PPE manufacturers and 16 N-95 mask manufacturers in the State.

70. Dear Members, Punjab is a land of enterprise and innovation. In order to leverage this inherent potential of the Punjabis, my Government introduced the Punjab Student Entrepreneurship Scheme. Under this scheme, all universities, colleges, polytechnics that have incubators on campus will provide for 20% attendance relaxation, and 4% grace marks in academic courses for students who pursue entrepreneurship and innovation during their studies.
71. To give further impetus to the start-up ecosystem in the State, my Government has decided to establish the Punjab Innovation Mission, which is one of its kind. It is private sector led but supported by the Government. To achieve the objectives of Punjab Innovation Mission, a Punjab Innovation Fund of Rs. 150 crore is proposed to be set up to invest in early-stage start-ups in the State.
72. My Government has also joined hands with the Global

Alliance for Mass Entrepreneurship to start an accelerator programme for MSMEs to amplify entrepreneurial dynamism, and enable a conducive entrepreneurship ecosystem. The first cohort of 23 entrepreneurs is successfully undergoing the acceleration programme in Ludhiana.

73. In order to support and nurture start-ups in IT & ITeS, which are developing innovative products and services in the specified domains, my Government partnered with Ministry of IT Government of India, STPI, Indian School of Business, Punjab Technical University, TiE Chandigarh, Chandigarh Angel Network & others to set up a Centre of Excellence in STPI Mohali at a cost of Rs. 21 crore.
74. Dear Members, provision of power subsidy to the industry has been one of the many initiatives of my Government to boost industrial investment and production in the State. After the notification of the Industrial and Business Development Policy, 2017, the Government has provided power subsidy of Rs. 6010 crore to the industry. It has helped in revival of industries in the State, as is evident from increase in industrial power consumption by 23.18 percent. Overall, the power demand of the State has increased from 44244 million units in 2016-17 to 56769 million units in 2019-20, showing an increase of 28.30%.

75. The Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) is a key driver in investment promotion. For ease of doing business, my government has substantially reduced the physical touchpoints between an entrepreneur and regulatory departments by undertaking business process reforms. It has also undertaken several labour reforms, while ensuring no adverse impact on the rights of workers.
76. My Government has issued a notification under the Punjab Shops and Commercial Establishments Act, 1958, allowing Shops and Commercial Establishments to remain open 24x7 for 365 days in a year. This will not only boost the economy, but will also generate more employment.
77. The Factories Act, 1948 has been amended to increase the threshold limit of the number of workers from 10 to 20 workers, which will benefit the industry. Compounding of offenses has also been incorporated in the law. The Punjab Factory Rules, 1952 have been amended to allow technical institutes to certify building plans.
78. My Government has also made a provision of fixed term employment through a notification on 6th August 2020 under the Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 1946. The workers hired under fixed-term contracts will be entitled to all benefits in proportion to the period of their service.

79. My Government has also raised the threshold limit of 20 workers to 100 workers for the application of the Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 1946. The industrial establishments having less than 100 workers will henceforth be exempt from getting their standing orders certified.
80. Further, the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 has been amended to increase the threshold limit of 100 to 300 workers. This will exempt industries from taking prior permission before the closure or retrenchment if they employ less than 300 workers.
81. The Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 2020, has been amended to increase the threshold limit of 20 to 50 workers for the applicability of the Act. This will give the much-required flexibility to the industries as well as the contractors in terms of getting the License Registration.
82. My Government has disbursed a sum of Rs. 34 crore to 18,500 beneficiaries under various Welfare Schemes of the Punjab Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board, and another Rs. 15 crore has been disbursed to 6545 beneficiaries under various Welfare Schemes of the Punjab Labour Welfare Board during the last year.
83. In keeping with the need to conserve water, my Government has operationalized the State Water Regulatory Authority under the Punjab Water Resources (Management and

Regulation) Act, 2020. As a result, the NOC's for setting up factories in dark and over-exploited blocks, which were previously issued by the Central Ground Water Authority, would now be considered and issued by the State Water Regulatory Authority.

84. My Government is regularly monitoring the progress of the Shahpur Kandi Dam Project. 40 percent of the work has been completed, and all major works are likely to be completed by December 2021. Power generation from this project is expected to begin from September, 2022.
85. For utilization of water from the UBDC system in the Majha region of the State, my Government has approved a revamping project of Rs. 327 crore, of which Rs. 72 crore has been spent during the current financial year so far. The project is expected to be completed by 31st March 2023.
86. In 6 blocks of Kandi Area, 72 new deep tube-wells will be installed by 31st March, 2021 at a cost of Rs. 30 crore to irrigate 3600 hectare area. This year 502 new deep tube-wells will also be installed in Kandi Areas of SAS Nagar, Ropar, SBS Nagar, Hoshiarpur and Pathankot district at a cost of Rs. 196 crore, which will irrigate 21 thousand hectare area.
87. My Government has revamped the State's mining policy with major changes to enable effective e-auction of mining

blocks in strategically established clusters through progressive bidding instead of the earlier process of auction of individual mines. The policy aims at usage of new technology like QR codes, RFID, CCTV cameras, and IT integration of mines for their better management. Rs. 250 crore has been received as mining revenue during the year 2020-21 so far.

88. Dear Members, as per its commitment, my Government has provided 1.74 lakh smart mobile phones to the boys and girls studying in 12th standard in all Government schools of the State under the Captain Smart Connect Scheme. This helped address the possible digital divide due to the unavoidable online education that had to be introduced because of Covid-19. My Government will continue the scheme and provide another 2 lakh smartphones to all the boys and girls studying in 12th standard in government schools in the State next year, i.e., in 2021-22.
89. My Government's flagship Learning Enhancement Programme, 'Padho Punjab, Padhao Punjab' has been launched in all government schools from class 1st to 12th to ensure age, and class appropriate levels of learning in a time-bound manner. The learning level of students has started improving through this programme. The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) brought out by Pratham

shows a significant improvement in the learning level of students of Punjab. Further, the Board results for the year 2019-20 for class 10+2 have improved to 96.95 percent from 88.36 percent in the year 2018-19, and these have improved more than 28 percent over three years.

90. My Government has notified a Smart School Policy, and has converted 9658 out of the total 19,000 Government Primary, Middle, High, and Senior Secondary Schools into smart schools. English as a medium of instruction has been introduced in nearly 15,000 Government Primary, Middle, High, and Senior Secondary Schools covering 3.72 lakh students.
91. My Government has given a strong thrust on digital education. To provide digital education in government schools, 16,589 classrooms (54 percent) have been converted into smart classrooms by providing e-Content, and requisite digital teaching aids such as projectors and computers. Also, 3502 tablets have been provided to the students and schools to facilitate e-learning.
92. Pre-primary classes introduced by my Government in its primary schools have been widely appreciated. Over 3.29 lakh children have enrolled in 12,921 schools. This, along with other measures for quality improvement of education has helped to increase the enrolment in government schools

by 14.9% by the year 2020-21.

93. My Government established the Jagat Guru Nanak Dev Punjab State Open University at Patiala on the occasion of the 550th Birth Anniversary of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji. The University has become functional despite the challenges posed by the pandemic. Likewise, the Sports University at Patiala and Guru Teg Bahadur State Law University, Tarn Taran have also been established.
94. The Department of Technical Education and Industrial Training is establishing 19 new ITIs in the State. To make training relevant to industry needs, about 8500 seats have been created under the Dual System of Training. For this, the Department has tied up with reputed industries like Hero Cycles, Trident Ltd., Avon Cycles, Swaraj Engine Ltd., Mahindra & Mahindra, Federal Mogul Patiala, Godrej & Boyce Ltd. Mohali, International Tractors Ltd. (Sonalika), etc.
95. Further, the enrolment in Government Polytechnics and ITIs has gone up this year by 45% and 60% respectively as compared to the year 2019-20. In addition, 37 skill development centres have also been established during the year 2020-21, raising the total number of the centres to 322. These centres have imparted skills to 30,000 youth during the year 2020-21.

96. With the persistent efforts of my Government, the Ministry of Civil Aviation, the Government of India, and the Indian Air Force have given in-principle approval for the construction of the International Civil and Cargo Terminal at Indian Air Force Station, Halwara over 161 acres of land which has been acquired for this purpose.
97. My Government has also decided to develop a "Centre of Excellence" through a Technical Hub for Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) set up for electrical and mechanical aggregates of civil and military aircraft, aircraft engine components, and avionic components at Patiala Aviation Complex (PAC). These are expected to start their operations by 31st March 2021. The runway at Patiala Aviation Complex has been recarpeted, and lights are also being installed to enable night flying.
98. Dear Members, the demand for building rural infrastructure has also been widespread, but it became more pronounced during the last year of the pandemic. My Government has re-oriented its rural transformation strategy with a clear focus on the development of local contextually relevant infrastructure, and the creation of more local jobs. It has completed the Phase-1 of the Smart Village Campaign (SVC) covering 16,843 rural infrastructure works with an expenditure of Rs. 752 crore, and has launched Phase-2 of the Smart Village Campaign with an anticipated expenditure

of Rs. 2775 crore. 48,910 Rural Infrastructure works are currently underway in over 13,000 villages.

99. My Government has repaired 28,815 kms of link roads at a cost of Rs. 3278 crore so far. The repair of 6162 kms of roads is currently underway with an estimated cost of Rs. 834 crore, and these are likely to be completed by 30th June 2021. In addition, 1000 narrow culverts and bridges on rural link roads are being upgraded with an expenditure of Rs. 216 crore, and these will be completed by 30.06.2021.
100. My Government has further planned up-gradation of 3362 Kms of Rural Roads connecting Educational Institutions, Medical Facilities, and Rural Markets at an estimated cost of Rs. 2600 Crore.
101. Under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, the State has already incurred the expenditure of Rs. 1069 crore till 15th February 2021, which is the highest ever so far. With this, 3.20 crore man-days have been generated employing 8.39 lakh households.
102. A campaign for cleaning all village ponds across the State was launched by my Government ahead of the monsoon season in May 2020, and more than 15,000 works of ponds were taken up. Out of this, de-watering was completed in 12,300 ponds, and desilting was done in 7420 ponds. This not only provided employment opportunities to the poor

people reeling under the impact of COVID-19 but also significantly improved the cleanliness of villages.

103. Further, to resolve the issue of wastewater disposal in villages, a special campaign has been initiated for rejuvenation and remodelling of the ponds. In this endeavour, 190 works have been taken up with a cost of nearly Rs. 50 crore.
104. The major thrust of my Government is to improve the health and quality of life of the citizens of the State, and an important step in this direction is the provision of potable piped water supply and sanitation facilities to all rural households in the State. To achieve this objective, my Government had launched "Har Ghar Pani, Har Ghar Safai Mission". Having already spent Rs. 1450 crore on the development of rural drinking water supply & sanitation in the last three and a half years, the Government has provided an outlay of Rs. 1900 crore for this purpose in 2020-21.
105. My Government has already provided a source of piped drinking water supply to 99.5% of the rural habitations. It is now focused to ensure that potable piped drinking water reaches each and every rural household by 31st March, 2022. In pursuance of this objective, piped water supply has already been provided to 24.86 lakh rural households, with

over 7 lakh connections added this year despite the lockdown due to Covid-19. The total coverage of rural households with piped drinking water supply today stands at 71%.

106. In order to ensure long term sustainability of water supply in rural areas, my Government has further decided to focus more on surface-water based drinking water supply schemes, especially in the water quality affected and water scarce areas of the State instead of the water supply schemes based on groundwater.
107. One surface water supply scheme covering 39 quality affected villages in Nurpur Bedi Block of District Rupnagar was commissioned in 2019 at a cost of Rs. 25 crore, and another multi-village surface water supply project covering 85 villages in the quality affected blocks of Bagha Purana and Nihal Singh Wala, of District Moga has recently been commissioned at a cost of Rs. 220 crore. Further, work has started on 3 new large multi-village surface water supply schemes in the affected areas of Districts Patiala and Fatehgarh Sahib at a cost of Rs. 383 crore, covering 408 villages with a population of 4.95 lakhs. These projects are likely to be completed by December, 2022.
108. My Government is installing 188 Arsenic and Iron Removal Plants (AIRPs) based on Nano-Material Arsenic Adsorption Technology of IIT Madras in 236 Arsenic-affected villages in

the border Districts of Amritsar, Tarn Taran, and Gurdaspur at a cost of Rs 60 crore.

109. My Government has constructed 3.9 lakh toilets during the last four years as against 1.57 lakh toilets constructed during the previous ten years. The State is now free from open defecation both in rural and urban areas. In all, my Government has provided Rs 863 crore to incentivize 5.75 lakh rural beneficiaries to construct individual household toilets to make Rural Punjab free from Open Defecation.
110. Punjab has been declared the first State in the country to cover all rural schools with piped water supply connections at a cost of Rs 5.77 crore. Similarly, Rs 38 crore has been spent on the construction of about 8500 toilets in rural schools and Anganwadis in the State. This is aimed to ensure that children in rural areas are safe and healthy and imbibe the need for good health and hygiene in their formative years.
111. Mahatma Gandhi Sarbat Vikas Yojna (MGSVY), launched by my Government in the year 2018 with the singular objective of inclusive growth of the most distressed and vulnerable populations, has been largely successful. 11.05 lakh persons who participated in the Sarbat Vikas Camps have so far received the requisite relief and benefits under different socio-economic programmes of the Government.

112. For farmers and landless workers who are in cultivating possession of Government land for 12 years or more, my Government has enacted the "Punjab (Welfare and Settlement of Landless Marginal and Small Occupant Farmers Allotment of Land) Act, 2020". The Act aims to provide ownership rights to the said occupants on payment of a minimal price.
113. Unfortunately, despite having the best land records in Punjab as compared to any other State in the country, we do not have land records of residential houses and lands situated within 'Lal Laker' in the villages. The residents of villages thus have no ownership records of their properties, and, as a result, neither are they able to monetize, nor can they transfer it for any other purpose except in an informal or non-formal manner. My Government has now decided to confirm the ownership rights of all those permanent residents of rural areas, and issue them a statutory ownership certificate by enacting a new legislation. In this regard, the 'Mission Lal Laker' is being launched to complete the task in a time-bound manner.
114. My Government is committed to the equitable development of urban areas. Under Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation – AMRUT Mission, my Government is undertaking projects amounting to Rs. 2785 crore in 16 Towns of the State, which includes

24x7 Surface Water Supply Schemes in Jalandhar and Patiala, Rejuvenation of Buddha Nallah in Ludhiana, and that of Badi Nadi & Chhoti Nadi in Patiala.

115. The cities of Ludhiana, Amritsar, and Jalandhar are being developed as Smart Cities and as a special case, the holy city Sultanpur Lodhi has also been given the status of Smart City. Under this Mission, my Government is undertaking works amounting to Rs. 1216 crore.
116. Dear members, all 163 towns and cities of Punjab have been declared Open Defecation Free by the Ministry of Urban Housing, Government of India on 2nd October 2018. Moreover, out of these, 84 towns and cities have been certified as ODF+ and 48 have been certified as ODF++ cities, which are higher level third party certifications. The remaining 31 town and cities are also expected to be certified as ODF+/ ODF++ shortly.
117. My Government had initiated an Urban Mission Project in 2018 in 133 towns for providing Water Supply, Sewerage & STP. Out of the total project cost of Rs. 2108 crore, projects of about Rs. 1945 crore are under implementation, and are expected to be completed by 31.12.2021. Under this project, 451 km of Water supply lines, 871 km of Sewerage pipes, and 26 Sewage Treatment Plants of 411 MLD have already been installed.

118. My Government is also implementing the World Bank Assisted Canal Based Drinking Water Supply Projects in Amritsar and Ludhiana. These projects are expected to cost about Rs 1928 crore.
119. Under Phase-I of the Punjab Urban Environment Improvement Programme (PUEIP), local area development works amounting to Rs. 298 crore were started, of which works amounting to Rs.169 crore have been completed. Phase- II of PUEIP was started in the year 2021, whereunder 4216 works amounting to Rs. 1098 crore are under implementation in 163 ULBs in the State.
120. In order to provide proprietary rights to all those living in slum areas of the towns and cities of the State, my Government has enacted a new legislation titled "The Punjab Slum Dwellers (Proprietary Rights) Act, 2020". Implementation of the Act has begun with the launch of a new scheme called 'Basera' and, we hope to give ownership rights to over one-lakh slum dwellers living in the State during the current year.
121. My Government has enacted new legislation titled "The Punjab Management and Transfer of Municipal Properties Act, 2020" to ensure fair and proper management of municipal properties in the State. The Act also envisages conferring proprietary rights upon the occupants who have

been in possession of municipal properties for 12 years or more. This is aimed to secure the livelihood of small and marginal businesses in the municipal towns of the State.

122. For developing industrial and residential estates, a new and more progressive Land Pooling Policy has been formulated by my Government. Under this policy, for every 1 acre of land to be acquired for residential purposes, 1000 sqyds. of residential plots and 200 sq yds. of commercial land shall be offered to the landowners. Similarly, for the acquisition of 1 acre of land for the development of an industrial estate, 1100 sqyds. of industrial plot and 200 sq yds. of commercial land shall be given to the landowners.
123. To mitigate the adverse impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, my Government has extended several reliefs to the land developers and allottees by the Urban Development Authorities in the State. These include a waiver of interest on auctioned properties, rescheduling of instalments, and extension in the period of construction. An amnesty scheme was offered to the developers who had defaulted in payment of EDC and other charges.
124. The commitment to the poor and disadvantaged populations of the State made by my Government need not be reiterated. Unfortunately, the Government of India has been hesitant in providing liberal funding for the

programmes aimed at the poor and disadvantaged groups. It had withdrawn from the Post-Matric Scholarship Scheme for Scheduled Caste Students by transferring the liability to the State in March 2017. The liability of Punjab had thus increased from Rs. 60 crore to about Rs. 800 crore per annum. This adversely affected 32 percent of the Scheduled Caste population of the State and, to mitigate this impact, my Government notified the 'Dr. BR Ambedkar SC Post Matric Scholarship Scheme'. However, subsequently the Government of India reintroduced the Post-Matric Scholarship Scheme for SC Students from the academic session 2020-21 by fixing the State share at 40 percent instead of earlier 10 percent (approx.). My Government has adopted the new scheme, and requested the Government of India to implement it from 1st April 2017 and provide the State with requisite assistance to meet the liabilities of the previous years. They have not yet agreed. I would like to reiterate that no SC student in Punjab eligible under the scheme shall bear the burden of any part of the non-refundable fees.

125. Under the Ashirwad scheme, financial assistance of Rs. 409 crore has been provided to 1.94 lakh SC, BC and EWS beneficiaries up to January 2021.
126. For the benefit of minority category students, my Government is implementing three scholarship schemes in

the State in the DBT mode – Pre-Matric Scholarship Scheme, Post-Matric Scholarship Scheme, and Merit-cum-Means Based Scholarship Scheme for technical and professional courses.

127. Under Pre-Matric Scholarship Scheme for Minority, Rs. 76.14 crore have been credited into the bank accounts of 4.68 lakh students through DBT during 2020-21. Under Post-Matric Scholarship Scheme for minority Students, Rs. 30.18 crore has been credited into the bank accounts of more than 56 thousand students through DBT mode, and under Merit-cum-Means based Scholarship for Minorities, Rs. 6.45 crore have been credited into the bank accounts of 2404 students through DBT during 2020-21.
128. After having reserved 50 percent seats for women in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) in 2017, my Government has taken a landmark step of notifying 33 percent reservation for women in government jobs. Besides, it has also launched a new scheme called 'Mata Tripta Mahila Yojna' for the holistic development of women-headed households. The scheme aims to identify critical gaps in assistance to the families and provide for the same. The scheme is likely to provide benefits to nearly 8 lakh women-headed households in the State.

129. My Government has also launched a new scheme called 'Punjab Divyangjan Sashaktikaran Yojana (PDSY), to empower persons with disabilities to ensure that they become financially independent. Here again, the scheme aims to identify critical gaps in assistance to persons with disabilities and provide for the same. 6.50 lakh people with disabilities are expected to benefit under this scheme.
130. For the benefit of old-aged, widows, and disabled persons, my Government had raised the monthly pension from Rs. 500 per month to Rs. 750 per month in July 2017. It has also worked to ensure that all eligible persons were given pensions regularly every month. The monthly pensions of Rs. 750 per person are now being given regularly to about 25 lakh beneficiaries without any disruption or delay. The Government has spent an annual average amount of Rs. 1747 crore on social security pensions during the last four years as against an average of Rs. 633 crore during the previous four years.
131. For promotion of sports, my Government increased the incentives for sports persons, and enhanced expenditure on sports infrastructure in the States. The expenditure on this account during the current financial year is anticipated to be Rs 32 crore.
132. The disruptions in transportation and connectivity due to

the COVID-19 pandemic caused a major setback in my government's efforts on seeking greater participation of NRIs in the State's growth. The two major initiatives in this regard namely, the Friends of Punjab aimed at development of rural infrastructure with active participation of NRI, and the Connect with Your Roots (CYR), remained almost suspended during the year 2020-21, but efforts would be doubled to re-energise these programmes during the next years. The Government has however appointed 30 Honorary Coordinators in different countries to highlight, and bring to its notice the issues faced by Punjabi NRIs.

133. My Government has decided to increase the Freedom Fighters pension from Rs. 7500 per month to Rs. 9400 per month w.e.f. 01-04-2021. It has also provided 2% reservation to Freedom Fighters in the allotment of plots and houses by Punjab Government agencies. The eligible heirs of Freedom Fighters have been given a reservation of 1% for admission into the state medical and technical colleges and also for the direct recruitment posts in state government jobs.
134. There is a provision of medical reimbursement for the Freedom Fighters (Self), incurred as an indoor treatment in Government as well as in private hospitals. My Government has decided to extend this facility to Freedom Fighter's widows and after the death of the Freedom Fighter's widow,

to the unmarried or unemployed daughters of Freedom Fighters.

135. My Government has also decided to provide free bus travel facilities in Roadways or PRTC buses to the Freedom Fighters and their Legal Heirs, i.e., sons, daughters, grandsons, grand-daughters w.e.f. 07-12-2020.
136. My Government has also issued a notification exempting the Freedom Fighters and their Legal Heirs (Sons daughters/ grandsons /grand-daughters) from the toll tax on state highways on the production of identity cards issued to them by the Government w.e.f. 15-10-2020.
137. My Government has launched a scheme called "Guardians of Governance" by engaging 4300 ex-servicemen, wherein their services are being used to ensure effective implementation of government schemes at the grassroots level.
138. My Government has notified the Punjab State Data Policy, 2020, which is a comprehensive policy for data governance and management. It will ensure that the government data is secure, safe and complies with all norms of data privacy.
139. In August 2020, my Government brought in a Policy for a Public Grievance Redressal System (PGRS). The online portal set up to implement this policy has empowered the citizens to file and track their grievance from anywhere, including

the 516 Sewa Kendras, which have been opened in rural and urban areas to offer 327 government services.

140. For the security of the media persons, my Government decided to cover 5052 scribes under the Accident Insurance Scheme. 4510 yellow identity cards were issued to recognized journalists across the State during the year 2020. We are also implementing a Pension Scheme for veteran accredited journalists.
141. The Punjab Prisons Development Board Act, 2020, and the Punjab Prisons Development Board rules have been notified on 17.04.2020 and 20.11.2020 respectively, under which my Government constituted a Punjab Prisons Development Board under the chairmanship of the State Chief Minister. This Board will help the Department to revive prison industries, generate revenue for the welfare of prisoners, inculcate skills in prisoners and introduce new avenues for prisoners' rehabilitation.
142. My Government is fully conscious of its commitments to the employees. Initially, these could not be met because of constraint of resources, and the pandemic COVID-19 further aggravated the situation. The role of State Government employees needs to be appreciated, not only in diligently and faithfully carrying out the tasks assigned to them, but also for the discipline and understanding displayed by them. The Government would soon meet its commitments to the employees.

143. Dear Members, the achievements of my Government fully reflect its commitments to the people of Punjab in the year 2017. It has pursued a policy of growth with equity and ensured a peaceful Punjab for coexistence of all without any discrimination. The pro-poor initiatives, and decisions of the Government are clearly discernible. Free Power to the Farmers (over 14.23 lakh AP Consumers), Debt Relief to Farmers and Landless Workers (5.64 lakh farmers and 2.85 lakh landless workers), Free and subsidised Power to Domestic Consumers (24.31 lakh DS consumers) Health Cover to all (about 40 lakh families), Social Safety and Security (pensions to over 25 lakh persons); special schemes of financial assistance to 8 lakh Women Headed Households, and 6.50 lakh PwDs, and subsidised rations to 1.47 crore persons having 38.29 lakh smart small ration cards are some of the singularly targeted direct actions of the Government in this regard. These shall be continued, and the Government is committed to complete the remaining tasks also to meet all its commitments to the people of Punjab. On the other hand, the people of Punjab are also looking at all of you in ensuring that their aspirations are fulfilled. I am sure you will seize this opportunity, and work collectively to make Punjab a stronger, prosperous and peaceful State. I convey my best wishes to all of you.

JAI HIND !