PUNJAB GOVERNMENT HAS SUCCESSFULLY COUNTERED COVID THREAT DURING WHEAT PROCUREMENT

Food Department followed all social distancing norms and health protocol during wheat procurement and transfer of foodgrains to other states through trains

Sanitized vehicles involved in the transportation of food grains

Despite the grave threat posed by pandemic, the Punjab government has successfully managed to curb the spread of Corona during the country's largest wheat procurement process, which has resulted in not a single case of Corona spreading through the mandis in the state.

This was stated by Spokesperson of Punjab Food and Civil Supplies Department. He said that the state's Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Department Punjab had projected the arrival of 135 lakh MT of wheat in the state's mandis and thousands of people were needed to carry out such a huge procurement process posing a challenge to ensure their health and safety.

Spokesperson said that so far 126 lakh metric tonnes of wheat has been procured which is more than 94% of the total procurement target.

Mr. Ashu said that in view of the health challenge posed epidemic of Covid-19, to ensure the health and safety of the all farmers, government employees, labourers, truck drivers and others involved in procurement process, state government had increased number of purchase centers to 4000.

As part of various measures during this mammoth procurement season in which 5000 officers/employees of Punjab Government, 25000 Arhatiyas, about 30000 Paledars and more than 28000 Truck drivers were involved strict social distancing protocols including adhering to 2 meter distance and box marks of 30 feet by 30 feet were followed in the mandis.

The bidding time for wheat was fixed by the government from 10.00 am to 6.00 am during the season.
Wheat bidding instructions have been strictly followed while keeping proper distance while bidding. Apart from this, the officers and employees of the Food and Civil Supplies Department were also insured in view of Covid 19.

He said that the masks were provided to the labor to ensure their health. Procurement agencies / representatives of Mandi Board kept a close watch on the health of labor in the mandis.

Instructions were followed to transport wheat on a route from one mandi to one storage point and to sanitize it from time to time, and also to the truck driver/helper to wear a mask to cover his face.

Apart from this the instructions of the health department are also being followed by the all during the procurement.

The Punjab Government has so far transported 34 lakh metric tonnes of wheat and rice in 1501 special trains including 25.75 lakh metric tonnes of rice and 11.75 lakh wheat to ensure food security of the country and help other states during the lockout and curfew.

Apart from a large number of government officials and employees, a large number of paledars were also involved in this work for which the department had also made arrangements for their health protection.

Due to strict compliance of the instructions of the health department during the season, no incident of corona outbreak took place during this procurement.

He said that vehicles employed in transportation of food grains in order to ensure the food security of the country during the lockout and curfew of the procured wheat, were also fully sanitized.
Despite all the difficulties, the Punjab government had distributed wheat and pulses to more than 60% beneficiaries in the state under PMGKAY. And also distributed more than 15.25 lakh food packets to the needy people during the lockdown.