Chandigarh, March 27:

On the directive of Chief Minister Punjab Captain Amarinder Singh, the Labour department today transferred Rs.86 crore in the saving bank accounts of 2,86,353 registered construction workers through DBT.

The Corona Virus disease (COVID-19) has gripped the whole world and in a very short span of time, more than 21,031 deaths have occurred across the world. Keeping in view the exponential spread of this deadly disease, the World Health Organization (WHO) has already declared it as a PANDEMIC DISEASE and has issued advisories to the whole world. Keeping in view the nature of work of construction workers, they are unable to work from home. Therefore, the construction workers will have to stay at home without work and wages. The survival of construction workers and their family members is at stake if they do not get work and wages.

In view of this, the Chief Minister, Punjab cum Chairman Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board had announced a temporary interim relief of Rs.3000 to each registered live construction worker immediately.

Punjab BOCW Welfare Board has processed cases of 2,86,353 beneficiaries and amount worth Rs.86.00 crores has been transferred through DBT in their saving bank accounts.
OOAT Clinics & all De-Addiction Centres to provide take-home dose for 2 weeks to registered patients

Chandigarh, March 29:

In a major relief for the victims of drug abuse during this challenging time of Novel Corona virus (COVID-19), Punjab Government has permitted 198 OOAT Clinics, 35 government de-addiction centres and 108 licensed private de-addiction centres to provide take-home dose for 2 weeks of medicine Buprenorphine + Naloxone to the registered patients of substance abuse after assessment by the psychiatrists.

Captain Amarinder Singh led Punjab Government is committed to provide healthcare services including the treatment under the drug de-addiction program. During this period of lockdown and curfew, the government has taken special initiatives to provide treatment and care to the patients of drug abuse.

To generate awareness about COVID-19 with special emphasis on social distancing amongst patients, special instructions are being issued to them to maintain the distance from each other during receiving the medicines from centres. These steps have been taken to minimize the visits of the patients of substance abuse to the centres so as to check the transmission of COVID 19.

Most of the centres are functional and distributing medicine to the patients. In last two days, average dose per patient in government centres is 11.4 tablets against daily average dose of 3.2 tablets, due to take home dose. Number of BPN tablets dispensed by government centers in last two days are around 3,09,796 tablets and by private centers are 5,68,747. During the visit to these centres the patients are given awareness about Corona virus and its preventive measures. Social distancing is being maintained and the patients are informed that in case of high grade fever, dry cough and difficulty in breathing they must report to the nearest health facility. Liaison is being maintained with the District authorities for facilitate the visit of such patients to their respective de-addiction centres and OOAT clinics. Availability of 24 × 7 medical services are also being provided through toll free helpline number 104.
FDA, Punjab Instructs Chemists to provide details of persons buying medicine of Flu, Cough & Cold

Chandigarh, April 22:

The Food & Drugs Administration, Punjab has directed all the chemists to provide information regarding sale of medicines to a person for treatment of Flu, Cough & Cold.

Giving further details, an official spokesperson said that instructions have been issued to all the Zonal Licensing Officers and Drug Control Officers in this regard. He said that concerned authorities have been directed to instruct chemists to submit the report to concerned Civil Surgeons as when they dispense the medicines either on this shop or by way of home delivery to any person for the treatment of Flu, Cough & Cold.

-------------------------

PRIVATE HOSPITALS IN THE STATE TOLD TO REFER PATIENTS WITH INFLUENZA LIKE ILLNESS TO THE GOVERNMENT FACILITIES

Chandigarh, 24 April, 2020

In order to ensure containment of COVID-19 and enhance surveillance of the disease, Department of Health and Family Welfare hereby appeals to all private hospitals in the state to refer patients with Influenza Like Illness (ILI) symptoms and Severe Acute Respiratory Infection (SARI) i.e. fever, cough, difficulty in breathing, pneumonia like symptoms to the Government Flu corners/facilities for free RT-PCR testing.

This step would ensure that not even a single suspected COVID case is missed-out for diagnosis and community transmission of this disease is prevented. He added that Department of Health & Family Welfare has already issued instructions to all the Civil Surgeons to inform private hospitals regarding this and facilitate them for sampling of such patients.
Punjab’s response has been proactive in handling the situation arising out of COVID-19 outbreak and State Government has made a detailed plan for tracking, testing and treatment of COVID-19 patients. Containment activities carried out in district SBS Nagar and SAS Nagar have been exemplary. Extensive contact tracing was done and spread of disease was controlled well in time. Five labs have been conducting COVID-19 tests and Department of Health and Family Welfare is also making active efforts to rope in more private labs approved by ICMR so that Punjab’s testing capacity may be enhanced.

---------

In just one month, more than 60,000 new drug-addict patients registered under de-addiction program

- Health Department Instructs Private hospitals and chemists to report detail of patients having flu symptoms
- Online OPD services initiate through e-Sanjivani app

Chandigarh, April 25:

Witnessing the overwhelming response across the State, more than 60,000 new drug-addict patients have been registered under de-addiction program in just one month during the lockdown.

Keeping in view the increasing number of patients, the opening time of OOAT clinics has been fixed at 8 am. On the directives of Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh, special attention was being paid to all the key programs of the health department including drug de-addiction program.

Flu corners have been established in government hospitals to take samples of suspected corona patients. All private hospitals in the state have been asked to refer the patients those have flu symptoms to government hospitals so as to prevent the spread of Corona virus as earliest. Free RT-PCR testing will be conducted of all patients with flu symptoms such as fever, cough, respiratory problem, pneumonia etc. at these flu corners.
To check the spread of Corona at the public level, the Health & Family Welfare department has issued the instructions to all the districts to ensure that not a single suspected patient of COVID-19 would be missed in screening campaign. He said that apart from the private hospitals, all the chemists have been directed to provide details of sale of medicines which can use for treatment of flu, cough & cold with the information of the buyer.

The Punjab Government has also taken a public interest initiative to ensure uninterrupted health services to the people of the state in the wake of COVID-19 epidemic. The Punjab Government has launched Integrated Telemedicine Solution, e-Sanjivani-Online OPD Services (Doctor to Patient) developed by C-DAC Mohali. The initiative aims to provide maximum online OPD services to the people especially in rural areas. It provides a platform for the people to connect with the network of specialist doctors through video conferencing.

----------
Punjab Government issues advisory regarding use of Air-conditioning in Residential/Commercial & Hospital

Chandigarh, April 25:

The Punjab Government today issued advisory regarding the use of Air-conditioning in Residential/Commercial & Hospital in the wake of COVID-19 pandemics.

The Punjab Government said that with the onset of summer season in the past few weeks, concerns with regard to the safety and usage of Air conditioners/coolers etc. in the wake of COVID-19 pandemics have been raised. The Air-conditioning systems generally work on the principle of recirculating the air inside the room and in the current COVID-19 situation, there are apprehensions that the air conditioning poses a threat to other people especially in large facilities such as malls, offices, hospitals, health centres etc. The State has therefore decided to come up with an advisory to allay all such apprehensions and concerns with regard to safety and usage of Air conditioning/coolers etc. in different settings.

In resident application recirculation of cool air by Room Air Conditioners must be accompanied by outdoor air intake through slightly open windows and exhaust by natural ex-filtration. The room temperature should be set between 24-27 degrees Celsius and the relative humidity should be maintained between 40% - 70%. The Air conditioners should be serviced often so as to keep the filters clean. Exhaust fans can be installed in the rooms containing a large number of people so as to create a negative pressure in the room and ensure the entry of fresh air in the premises. The circulated air inside the room should be vented out frequently.

It is advisable to prevent dust entry and maintain hygiene. Evaporative cooler tanks must be cleaned and disinfected and the water drained and refilled frequently. The evaporative air coolers must be cleaned and disinfected at regular intervals. The water tank should be emptied and then wiped gently with a soft cloth, sponge and warm water to eliminate moldy residue that may have built up since the previous cleaning. The tank can also be washed with mild soapy water and then flushed out with clean water. He said that for the cooling pads and air vents, a mixture of 50-50 water and
vinegar should be used to soak and rinse the pads and the vents. Evaporative coolers must draw air from outside to ensure good ventilation.

The spokesperson further said that fans should be operated with windows kept partly open. If an exhaust fan is located at a nearby location then it must be kept running to exhaust air for better ventilation.

In commercial and industrial facilities, the best action to limit the risk of spread of COVID-19 infection through air is to ventilate the indoor environments with outdoor air as much as possible. Mechanical ventilation systems and air conditioning systems, which provide ventilation, can perform this function more effectively than simply opening the windows, because they improve the quality of the outdoor air with filtration. If fresh air is not provided, it is advisable to introduce a fresh air duct attached to a central inline fan filter unit and distribute the fresh air by grilles into the space or near the indoor units in case of multiple cassette or multiple hi-wall units.

In healthcare facilities, the probability of spread of infection is higher especially in COVID-19 wards or isolation centres. It is therefore recommended that the air-conditioning system in these facilities should be isolated and different from rest of the hospital or the building so as to prevent the re-circulation of air which may be containing the droplet nuclei having virus. He said that in certain settings, where a separate air conditioning is not possible/feasible, exhaust air is likely to contain particles carrying the virus and hence a suitable technique should be deployed to prevent the spread of infections. The treatment of exhaust air can be done by HEPA filtration or by chemical disinfection of the exhaust air from COVID-19 patient room by bubbling the exhaust air through a “Diffused air aerator tank” (preferably of non-metallic material) holding a 1% sodium hypochlorite solution. He said that exhaust Air can also be treated by exposing it for 45 minutes to a temperature of 75° Celsius to inactivate the SARS-CoV. Due to the possibility of presence of active viral particles on the exhaust systems, it is advised to follow suitable personal and environment protection protocols during any maintenance activity on the exhaust system.

In resource constrained settings, certain make-shift Isolation enclosures can be designed to provide the necessary protection from the COVID-19 viral particles. This could be a temporary makeshift cubicle or tent constructed out of a skeleton structure (of plastic or metal) and plastic sheet or canvas covering.
A quarantine centre shall be well ventilated and preferably be maintained at a negative or neutral differential pressure. When mechanical ventilation is resorted to, it shall be a once through system (non-recirculatory system) that provides a “clean to dirty” (towards the patient and away to the exhaust) air flow pattern.

“The offices use different types of air conditioning, ie, Window/ Split air conditioners to centralized air conditioning to coolers during summer seasons and the employers are advised to refer to relevant section in this advisory depending upon the type of air conditioning installed in their offices”.

----------------------
Punjab Government issues advisory on maintaining hygiene & sanitization while carrying out works under MGNREGA

Chandigarh, April 26:

The Punjab Government today issued the advisory on maintaining the hygiene & sanitization while carrying out works under MGNREGA in the wake of COVID-19.

The Government of Punjab has imposed severe restrictions on free movement of people in the larger public interest of controlling the spread/transmission of Corona virus through the imposition of curfew in its all 22 districts. The Government has, however, allowed essential activities, including works under MGNREGA, to continue/start with an objective to minimise the hardships. However, a meticulous compliance of the guidelines essential to prevent the spread of Corona virus shall be ensured.

According to guidelines, the supervisory Sarpanch/GRS/mate shall meticulously follow the instructions with regard to the permissible works under the MGNREGA as well as with regard to the area where the work has been allowed to start. The supervisor may develop a comprehensive work-plan in a manner that he/she can alter the time of reporting for work at the work-site as well as day’s stoppage of work of MGNREGA workers in a manner that though they complete the daily work-cycle but at the same time, reporting/see off is staggered. Similarly, the work-area shall be allocated at the work site in a manner that the social distancing norm of at least 1 meter is maintained between the MGNREGA workers.

MGNREGA workers having fever or other symptoms such as cough/shortness of breath shall be encouraged to stay at home and seek medical advice. MGNREGA workers shall be advised not to indulge in any handshakes or hugs to greet/see-off each other. MGNREGA staff shall further be advised not to roam unnecessarily at the work site and to work from their allotted area/site only.

All, including Sarpanch/GRS should wear cloth masks at all times. The masks shall be worn in a manner that it snugly covers the nose as well as the mouth. The cloth mask should be washed with soap and water daily after use. Availability of water with soap in adequate quantity to be ensured at the worksite. Encourage the MGNREGA workers to wash the hands with soap for
at least 40 seconds by applying the soap gently on the palm and back of the hand including web spaces between the fingers and space as well as between the finger & the thumb and the wrist wherever and whenever the opportunity to wash the hands is available. However, a two-hourly hand wash is recommended. The hands should be mandatorily washed with soap and water, as prescribed above, before starting the work and after the end of work.

A MGNREGA worker suffering from high fever/cough/sneezing/difficulty in breathing should voluntarily report the same to supervisor as well as seek immediate medical advice for timely detection and treatment. MGNREGA workers should not share their lunches/snacks with each other in order to prevent cross-infection.

In case someone is diagnosed as COVID-19 with whom one had a contact during work, there is no need to panic. One should report to the Helpline No. 104/State Control Room No. 01722920074/08872090029, detailing the exact nature of exposure so as to assist the medical facility to undertake further necessary actions.

-------------
Aggressive efforts being made to trace high & low risk contacts of COVID-19 patients

99.9 percent contacts already traced

Instructs Civil Surgeons to ensure the Health Care Facilities in Govt. & Private Hospitals

Chandigarh, May 9:

The Captain led Punjab Government will soon achieve the Operation Fateh as the teams of health department are being made the aggressive efforts to trace the high and low risk contacts of COVID-19 patients across the State so as to prevent the spread of corona virus among the populations.

There were 1762 COVID-19 cases have been reported till date and at present, health facilities are being provided to 1574 active cases. 11078 contacts were identified who came in contacts of COVID patients, of these cases 11056 have already been traced by the Health department which is 99.9 percent contact tracing. Dedicated teams of health department are tirelessly working to trace the every suspected person so that affected person should be put under treatment and testing process without any delay.

49.5 percent (5487) of the contacts were at high risk and 50.5 percent (5591) of contacts were at low risk. 3.1% (340) of the contacts were hospitalized, 82.9% (9181) were put under home quarantined and 14 percent (1555) contacts had completed the quarantine period so far.

Out of the contacts traced (11056), 1.2% (128) were symptomatic (74 high risk and 54 low risk). Samples were collected in 63.1 percent (6972) contacts in which 3.4 percent (380) were found positive and 44.1 percent (4873) were negative out of the total contacts traced.

Teams of Health Department is continuously working like warriors at the front line in this war and constantly providing the standardize health facilities
to the patients whether they are in isolation centres or in quarantine centres. Now, quarantine centres are being established at the block level in all districts so that people should be kept under surveillance near to their villages.
952 persons discharged today as per Revised Discharged Policy

Chandigarh, May 16:

As many as 1257 persons have been declared cured by the State Government, out of which 952 have been discharged today as per Revised Discharged Policy and its good news, most of returnees from Nanded have been discharged from the isolation centres.

The Captain Amarinder Singh led State Government is gear up to tackle any emerging challenge regarding the outbreak of COVID-19. There have been 1946 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the state while 50,613 persons have been tested so far, out of which 46,028 are found negative.

There are four districts with six containment zones where more than 15 cases of COVID-19 have been reported which are SAS Nagar, Jalandhar (2), Patiala (2) and Pathankot.

Underling the achievement of Health department, he said that cure rate of the state is about 64 percent and only 657 cases are active as on today. Sample positivity is 4 percent while mortality rate has been recorded at 1.6 percent which is below National Average.

Government is well prepared to battle the Corona virus pandemic in the State and aggressive efforts are being made to trace and screen every single suspected person so as to prevent the spread of corona virus among the people. State government is committed to provide standardize treatment services to Covid-19 patients and for this purpose nearly 5000 isolation beds have been identified in Government Health facilities. All critical COVID patients will go to Government Medical Colleges and two private Medical Colleges. Testing had increased to 1654 per million which is above National average with 1500 to 1800 tests per day.
There is adequate supply of PPE kits, N95 masks and triple layer masks which is being provided to all districts and Government Medical Colleges.

Online OPD services through eSanjeevani App

Beneficiary-Mr. Jagdeep Singh, Amritsar

This is 3 time I took consultation for this app for me and my family. It's truly an amazing app. Today I have took the consultation for my baby through this app with doctor Rupinder Kaur from Faridkot. She listened my whole problem patiently and guide me very well and I easily download the prescription. Previous I easily got the prescribed medicine which was effective too.

Today also doctor treated and guided me very well....and I am fully satisfied from her side...!!

-----------------

About 1,94,528 persons diagnosed with hypertension put on treatment in 2019-20

- Hypertension & diabetes are major co-morbid conditions contributing to higher risk of mortality in Covid-19 infection

Chandigarh, May 17:

About 12,64,713 individuals have been screened in 2019-20 under the Non-Communicable Diseases Screening Program, out of which approximately 1,94,528 persons diagnosed with hypertension and all patients immediately put on treatment by the Health Department.
In wake of Covid-19, all civil surgeons have been directed in to ensure the supply of medicines to patients as hypertension and diabetes are major co-morbid conditions contributing to higher risk of mortality in Covid-19 infection. It's observed world over, that co-morbidities like Hypertension and Diabetes, put the patient on higher mortality risk if uncontrolled. State Government is providing the free of cost medicines to the patients those are on treatment for hypertension and diabetes as advised by MOs and RMOs. It is necessary to keep focus on COVID 19 related activities, continuing to provide essential medicines is also important to minimize an increase in morbidity and mortality from these health conditions.

Medicines are also being delivered at door steps of such patients through frontline workers/ volunteers during the period of the restricted movement so as to ensure the safety. Community Health Officers have been issuing the medicine for at-least 4 weeks at a time and up-to three months depending on the availability of medicines. All medicines are being rationally distributed among patients keeping in view that there should be no shortage in govt. hospitals. Instructions have been issued that Primary healthcare team at Sub Centre level, including Health Wellness Centres must be encouraged to follow the patients on treatment for hypertension and diabetes. “Staff at districts has been asked to convey message for the need of Healthy and a Low Fat and Low Salt Diet and promotion of Exercise and Yoga”.

WHO – supported IHCI (India Hypertension Control Initiative) project involving five districts (Bathinda, Gurdaspur, Hoshiarpur, Mansa and Pathankot) is doing well and has been extended to all the districts.

Punjab leads India with 78 percent Recovery Rate of COVID-19 Patients

• Death rate of COVID-19 patients is 1.8 percent which is less than National rate

• Only the containment zone and no red/orange/green zones
Chandigarh, May 19:

With the tireless efforts made by the State Government, Punjab became the leading State in India to battle Corona virus by achieving 78 percent recovery rate of COVID-19 patients.

Captain Amarinder Singh led Punjab Government is well prepared to battle the Corona virus pandemic under which 1,57,13,789 persons have been screened by teams of Health department in the month of April, 2020. Out of this, 9,593 were found to have symptoms and referred for further management and sampling. There have been 1980 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the state so far and 52,955 persons have been tested out of which 48,813 are found negative. Out of 1980 COVID-19 patients, 1557 cases were cured which is among highest recovery rate in India.

State government has defined only the containment zone and now, no red/orange/green zones. Containment zone is an area around epicenter of 15 cases or more in a village/ward. It can also be a small group of adjacent villages/wards. Then there should be a buffer zone which will be a concentric area around containment zone and the radius of buffer zone may be up to 1 KM. Period of containment would be of minimum 14 days. If in last week there is no new case or one new case it shall be opened. Otherwise period of containment would be extended by one week at a time.

Punjab has conducted 40236 COVID-19 tests till date

Chandigarh 12th May

State of Punjab has completed Noval Coronavirus (COVID-19) testing of 40236 people as on toady 12th May, 2020. The state has increased its testing per million figures to 1298 per day as on 12th May, 2020. This is better than the national average of 1067 tests per million per day.
Punjab has followed an effective approach towards testing in the state. The state has formulated its testing strategy in consultation with medical experts from the state, experts from Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi and Johns Hopkins University, USA. Punjab has rapidly ramped up its testing rate by increasing its lab capacities. The state had tested 20,000 samples by 2nd May, following which moving forward at higher pace the state did the next set of 10,000 tests in just 5 days, crossing the mark of 30,000 tests by 7th May. The Government is using its Government Medical College laboratories at full potential to test the Covid-19 suspected cases. Apart from these, Government of India institutions like IMTECH Chandigarh and PGI Chandigarh have also been roped in for testing. Some ICMR approved private labs have been roped in by the Department of Health and Family Welfare to increase the testing capacity of the state.

The purchase orders for the procurement of ‘3 MGI-SP960 Automated High Throughput RNA Extraction System’ has been made by the Department of Medical Education and Research for 3 Government Medical Colleges. The state also plans to commence testing at 4 State Government labs - RDDL-NZ Jalandhar, GADVASU Ludhiana, Punjab Biotech Incubator Mohali, and State FSL Mohali. Apart from this, labs are being set up at 4 Central Government institutions- IISER Mohali, NIPER Mohali, NABI Mohali, and PU Chandigarh.

A proposal has also been sent by the Department of Health and Family Welfare, Punjab to Government of India to set up 4 new labs in the District Hospitals at Barnala, Roopnagar, Ludhiana and Hoshiarpur. Additionally, a proposal to procure 15 TruNaat machines has been moved. Punjab Government is also considering to start the CBNaat testing in Patiala and Faridkot. Government Labs are also going in for pool testing in low prevalence areas to enhance the testing capacity in the state. So far, approximately 7435 pool tests have been conducted in the state.
For the purpose of surveillance, around 111 Flu Corners are collecting the samples for testing and around 161 teams are working in the field for the sample collection. All the medical personnel have been given proper training to ensure smooth sample collection process. All required protective gear, such as PPE Kits/N-95 masks have been provided to all healthcare workers to ensure their complete safety. In order to facilitate the screening, 379 Rapid Response Teams (RRT), comprising of Medical Officers/Multi Purpose Health Workers/Staff Nurse have been deployed to conduct active surveillance and identification of people with Influenza like Symptoms (ILI) or Severe Acute Respiratory Illness by house-to-house visits. The State has also made use of innovative testing techniques such as use of mobile Sample collecting Kiosks. These kiosks are being placed at 124 locations all across the state.

-----