

## HIMACHAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

### NEW POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

1. HP Cabinet decided to provide **10 percent reservation for Economically Weaker Sections** of the society in Class -I, II, III and IV posts in government sector. The decision would benefit those candidates whose family gross income is below Rs. 4 lakhs and were not covered under existing scheme of reservations for the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and the Other Backward Classes.
2. **'Himachal Pradesh Industrial Investment Policy 2019** unveiled, aimed at redressal of issues impeding industrial growth and ensure simplification of procedures, key physical and social infrastructure, human resource development, access to credit and market. It also aimed at promoting 'Ease of Doing Business' by digitization of all processes and to promote self certification.
3. **Himachal Pradesh Film Policy 2019** approved aimed at promoting rich cultural heritage and scenic beauty of the state through films by providing incentives and extending facilities to film producers.
4. **Honorarium of office-bearers of panchayati raj institutions increased**. The Cabinet decided to enhance the honorarium of office-bearers of panchayati raj institutions from April 1. The Zila Parishad chairperson will get an honorarium of Rs 12,000 per month from the present Rs 11,000 while the vice chairperson will get Rs 8,000 and Zila Parishad member Rs 5,000 in place of Rs 4,500. Similarly, the chairperson, Panchayat Samiti, will get Rs 7,000 per month, vice-chairperson Rs 5,000 and member of the Panchayat Samiti Rs 4,500. The honorarium of the pradhan of a gram panchayat will be enhanced to Rs 4,500 and that of up-pradhan to Rs 3,000. Gram Panchayat members will get Rs 250 instead of Rs 240 per meeting with a maximum of two meetings in a month.

### HIMACHAL PRADESH MAKES GPS DEVICE MANDATORY FOR TREKKERS

The Himachal Pradesh (HP) government has made it compulsory for trekkers to carry a GPS (Global Positioning System) device to tackle any exigency. This decision was taken at a review meeting on preparedness for the monsoon chaired by Shrikant Baldi, Additional Chief Secretary cum -Pr. Secretary to Jai Ram Thakur, Chief Minister, HP.

#### Key Highlights

**Need:** Being a disaster-prone state, it is essential for Himachal Pradesh to pay special heed to disseminating weather advisories as well as installing early warning systems in state. It is also important to restrict trekking and other yatras undertaken in state during adverse weather.

**Significance:** Since it would be made mandatory for trekkers to carry a GPS device with them, they could now be provided all possible help in case of any emergency.

#### Other Provision:

1. Early Warning Systems will soon be installed in Kullu district and Dalhousie town of state.
2. Towns of Rampur and Mandi have been zeroed in for setting up of relief and rescue base of National Disaster Response Force (NDRF).
3. NDRF is a specialised force constituted under the Disaster Management Act, 2005. It is responsible for purpose of specialist response to a threatening disaster situation or disaster.

### MOU SIGNED FOR GOLF COURSE AND SKILL UNIVERSITY IN STATE

State government has signed an MoU with the CM Corps for developing a golf resort in Kangra district and another MoU with Takshinda Foundation for establishing an international skill university in the state.

## INVESTORS MEET TO BE HELD IN DHARAMSALA IN NOVEMBER

After returning from foreign tour CM Jai Ram Thakur told the media that the state government received a positive response from entrepreneurs in Germany and the Netherlands for investing in agriculture, horticulture, food and fruit processing, tourism and hydel sectors and entrepreneurs in both countries were keenly interested to invest in the state. He said he also invited businessmen in other countries and urged to take part in an investors meet to be held in Dharamshala in November.

## DIVERSIFICATION OF AGRICULTURE

### MoU signed with JICA for mushroom cultivation centre

CSK HP Agriculture University and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to set up Rs 5 crore model "Shitake Cultivation Training Centre" (SCTC) in the university. University will help train farmers for the cultivation of 'shitake' mushroom, popularly known as Japanese mushroom, and its promotion for increasing their income.

**Fact to know:** 'Shitake' mushroom is used for boosting immune system, lowering blood cholesterol levels, treating diabetes, eczema, cold and flu, prostate or breast cancer and as an anti-ageing agent. It is also used for treating hepatitis B, herpes, high blood pressure and stomach ache.

## FOUR -FOLD INCREASE IN AREA UNDER COFFEE CULTIVATION

The efforts to promote coffee cultivation in the temperate zone have started yielding the results and the area under the coffee plantation has increased four times from 7.34 hectares in 2014 -15 to 30.12 hectares in 2018-19.

### Key Highlights

1. The Agriculture department had launched a pilot project to introduce coffee cultivation in 2014. The Central Coffee Institute, Chikmagalur, Karnataka, had recommended two varieties of coffee, Arabica and Robusta, for cultivation and provided sufficient quantity of seeds for plantation during February and March.
2. The Agriculture Department has provided 73,780 plants for coffee cultivation in Kangra, Mandi, Hamirpur, Bilaspur and Una.
3. Coffee can emerge as a major cash crop in the lower hills and can be grown on wasteland without any environmental fallout.

## OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

1. Wageningen University in the Netherlands wants to cooperate in post-harvest research and agro-food robotics in the state.
2. MoU was signed between the state and Frankfurt Innovation Zentrum (FIZ) at Frankfurt, Germany to explore areas of collaboration in the fields of Ayurgenomics (Ayurveda and Genomics), Precision medicine and Precision agriculture.
3. MoU for better apple productivity: Progressive Growers Association of Himachal Pradesh signed an MoU with the Indo-Italian chambers of commerce and industry for transfer of latest varieties of apple plant material and machinery to farmers to increase fruit productivity. The MoU was signed by the PGA president Lokinder Bisht, general secretary and the secretary general of Indo-Italian chamber of commerce and industry, Claudio Maffioletti. PGA would get virus-free apple plant material from the certified nursery from Italy.

## JUSTICE V RAMASUBRAMANIAN APPOINTED CHIEF JUSTICE OF HP HIGH COURT

Justice Dharam Chand Chaudhary has been officiating as Chief Justice of the HP High Court after Justice Surya Kant was elevated as the judge of the Supreme Court recently.

**Facts to know:** In the year 1966, the Delhi High Court Act was enacted by the Government of India and w.e.f. **1 May 1967**, the Central Government of India extended jurisdiction of the said Act to the Union Territory of Himachal Pradesh, replacing the Court of Judicial Commissioner by the Himachal Bench of Delhi High Court, at Shimla. On 18 December 1970, the State of Himachal Pradesh Act was passed by Parliament and the new state came into being on 25 January 1971 and established its own High Court with headquarters at "Revenswood" Shimla. M.H. Beg was appointed first chief justice of HP High Court.

## ALREADY DELAYED, RENUKAJI DAM PROJECT COST ESCALATES

Already mired by delay in land acquisition, the 40 MW Renukaji dam project cost has been revised to Rs 7,050 crore from Rs 4,596.76 crore based on 2018 price calculation.

### Key Highlights

1. The Centre had signed the agreement with the Chief Ministers of Haryana, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan for the construction of 148-metre-high Renukaji dam on the Giri river, a tributary of Yamuna in Sirmaur district last year.
2. A multipurpose project of national importance, the dam will supply 23 cubic metres per second water to the basin states, including Delhi, once it's complete.
3. Dam would store 0.404 million acre-foot of live water provide 40 MW for Himachal alone as per the agreement.
4. Project is under Himachal Power Corporation Ltd (HPCL)

## REHAB SCHEME FOR MINOR RAPE, CHILD ABUSE VICTIMS

The state government will launch a scheme for rehabilitation and extending support to minors who have been victims of rape and child abuse. Besides counselling, they will get an assistance of Rs 7,500 per month till the age of 21.

It aims at restoring self-confidence and dignity of the victims of child abuse through intensive counselling, financial security, skill upgradation, rehabilitation and livelihood support.

## HIM CARE YOJANA

Him Care scheme has been started by the State Government for the families who do not come under the Ayushman Bharat -Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana. Under this scheme, provision of free treatment facility of five lakh rupees for hospitalization is provided. 4.34 lakh families have registered themselves till January 1, 2019 under the Himachal Health Care Scheme - Him Care Yojana and so far more than 16 thousand beneficiaries have received free treatment facilities of Rs. 15.32 crores.

### Eligibility Criteria

1. This scheme can be availed by paying only 365 rupees for single women, more than 40 percent of handicap persons, senior citizens who are more than 70 years old, Anganwadi workers, Anganwadi helpers, Asha workers, mid-day meal workers, government, autonomous institutions, society, board and corporation part-time workers, contract employees and outsourced employees.
2. No premium will be taken for registration from BPL, registered Ration-card holders and MNREGA workers who have done 50 days or more work in the previous year.
3. The person who is not a regular government employee or a retired employee can make his card under this scheme by giving only Rs. 1000.

## WORK FOR GAGGAL AIRPORT EXPANSION EXPEDITED

The state government has expedited the work for expansion of the Gaggal airport. A meeting was held between the district administration of Kangra and officials of Airports Authority of India (AAI). It has been said that a case was being prepared for acquisition of about 400-hectare land for the expansion of the airport. Sources here said that the revenue officials have estimated that an amount of about Rs 500 crores might be required to acquire 40 hectares of land for the expansion of the Gaggal airport.

### Key Highlights:

- Gaggal airport is the busiest domestic airport in the state. It receives four flights a day during peak season.
- At times, one-way airfare from Dharamsala to Delhi goes up to Rs 19,000 to Rs 21,000.
- Experts are of the view that the airfares on the Delhi-Dharamsala route were high as only 70-seat planes can land here due to shorter airstrip.
- In case the airport was expanded, bigger planes would be able to land bringing down the airfares.

## BEAS SHRINKS DUE TO RECKLESS MINING

The water level of the Beas is shrinking year after year near Rakkar in Dehra Gopipur. It is so low that one can even cross the riverbed on foot. The reckless mining has shrunk the river at many places. Tributaries of the Beas like the Neugal, Binwa, Bhira, Awa and Mol khuds are also shrinking every year as sand and stone mining is the biggest threat.

**Problem:** The existence of dozens of drinking water supply and irrigation schemes, which get water from the Beas, is under threat as the mining mafia has damaged the water supply lines at many points. Several bridges are also in danger.

### Key Highlights:

1. Till September 2017 before the Assembly elections, over 30,000 cases of illegal mining were detected in the state due to which state suffered a loss of Rs 24,000 crore.
2. The government has also cancelled the mining lease agreements on the directions of the NGT and the High Court. However, the illegal mining is going on unchecked at Rakkar.

## PANCHAYATI RAJ IN HIMACHAL PRADESH: UPDATE

- At present there are 12 Zila Parishads, 78 Panchayat Samities and 3,226 Gram Panchayats constituted in this State.
- The Gram Panchayats have been made the appointing authority in respect of Tailoring Teacher, Panchayat Chowkidar and Part-time Water Carriers in Primary schools and Jal Raksak.
- Zila Parishads are authorized to appoint Assistant Engineers, Personal Assistants, and Junior Engineers. The services of regular Junior Accountant has been placed under the Zila Parishad cadre.
- The existing Panchayat Sahayaks has been designated as Panchayat Secretary (Contract) by abolishing the post of Panchayat Sahayak.
- The ownership and maintenance of primary school buildings has been transferred to Gram Panchayats. Gram Panchayats have been empowered to collect the land revenue from the land owners/ right holders and Gram Panchayats will use the collected land revenue at their own level.
- Gram Panchayats have been authorized to impose various taxes, fees and fines and also to borrow money/ raise loans for creation of income generating assets.
- Before grant of any lease for mining of minerals, a resolution from the concerned Panchayat has been

made compulsory. Panchayats have been empowered to prepare plans.

- Gram Panchayats have been also authorized to grant permission for erection of mobile communication towers and to levy fee.
- Gram Panchayats have also been empowered to hear and decide the application for maintenance under section 125 of the Cr.P.C.1973 and can grant a maintenance allowance not exceeding `500 per month. Cess of `1.00 per bottle of liquor sold in the rural area will be collected and transferred to the Gram Panchayat for utilization in the developmental activities
- As per the recommendations of the 5th State Finance Commission, **Rs.194 crore were provided to PRIs during 2018 -19. It is proposed to enhance this allocation to Rs.210 crore during 2019 -20.** In addition, an outlay of Rs.45 crore for Zila Parishads and Panchayat Samitis during.
- Based on the **recommendations of the 14th Finance Commission, an outlay of Rs.548 crore is proposed to PRIs during 2019 -20 as against Rs.407 crore for 2018 -19**

### **“LOKTANTRE PRAHARI” SAMMAN RASHI : NEW SCHEME**

During emergency, a large number of people in Himachal Pradesh were also arrested without assigning any reason. They were sent to jail and tortured. As a token of our respect for such persons, CM has announce an annual “Loktandre Prahari” Samman Rashi of Rs.11,000 to all such persons in Budget Speech 2019 -20.

**Fact to know:** The Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA) was a controversial law passed by the Indian parliament in 1971 giving the administration of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and Indian law enforcement agencies super powers - indefinite preventive detention of individuals, search and seizure of property without warrants.

### **STATE LEVEL COMMAND AND CONTROL CENTRE**

In budget speech CM has announced a State level Command and Control Centre to be established during 2019 -20. This centre will be known as “**Lok Suraksha Kendra**”. With the establishment of this Centre, a large number of services will be provided, **in case of emergency, from a single platform using Information Technology**. This Centre will help in surveillance of traffic movement, crowd management, criminal activities, disaster management etc. with the help of CCTV cameras.