



A New Political Mandate and a Test of Delivery

A New Political Experiment and the Promise of Change

CHANDIGARH

When the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) secured a historic mandate in Punjab in March 2022, it fundamentally altered the state's political landscape. For decades, Punjab's politics had largely revolved around the Congress and the Shiromani Akali Dal, with the Bharatiya Janata Party playing a supporting role. The 2022 election, however, produced one of the most decisive verdicts in the state's history. Led by Bhagwant Mann, AAP won 92 of the 117 Assembly seats, giving the party an overwhelming majority and a clear mandate to implement its governance model. The victory represented more than a change in government. It reflected public frustration with tra-

ditional political structures, growing concerns over unemployment, corruption, education standards, healthcare infrastructure, drug abuse, and economic stagnation. The electorate voted not merely for a new party but for a new style of governance. AAP entered office with a promise to bring its Delhi governance model to Punjab. The party pledged free electricity, improved government schools, expanded healthcare access, transparent recruitment, anti-corruption measures, and a citizen-centric administration. Expectations were enormous because the scale of Punjab's challenges was equally large. The state was grappling with significant debt, declining industrial competitiveness, agricultural

stress, groundwater depletion, and concerns about youth migration. Public expectations were therefore centered not only on welfare delivery but also on structural reforms capable of generating long-term economic growth. Over the next four years, the Mann government sought to establish its governance credentials through a combination of welfare initiatives, infrastructure investments, public recruitment drives, education reforms, healthcare expansion, and administrative changes. Several flagship projects emerged as symbols of the government's agenda, including the 300-unit free electricity scheme, Aam Aadmi Clinics, Schools of Eminence, anti-corruption initiatives, and the Sadak

Suraksha Force. Supporters of the government argue that these initiatives have delivered tangible benefits to ordinary citizens. They point to reduced electricity bills, expanded healthcare access, improved school infrastructure, large-scale government recruitment, and enhanced road safety measures as evidence that governance is reaching people at the grassroots level. Critics, however, contend that Punjab continues to face serious structural challenges. Questions remain regarding fiscal sustainability, industrial growth, unemployment, law and order, drug trafficking, and the pace of implementation of certain election promises.

The story of Punjab under the AAP government is therefore not merely a story about a political party. It is a story about governance, public expectations, institutional reform, and the continuing search for a development model capable of meeting the aspirations of a rapidly changing society.



Achievements, Schemes, and Future Roadmap

The AAP government made administrative reform a priority from its first day in office. Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann emphasized transparency, accountability, and citizen-centric governance. A key innovation was the Punjab Governance Portal, which integrates citizen complaints, departmental dashboards, and grievance redressal in real time. Minister of Governance, Gurpreet Singh, stated that "Our goal is to make government accessible, accountable, and efficient. Transparency is the backbone of our administration."

"Healthcare"

The government prioritized accessible and affordable healthcare through expansion of facilities and technology integration. Aam Aadmi Clinics: 450 clinics providing free primary health-care. Virtual consultations to remote areas; 200,000 consultations in the last year. Drug Rehabilitation Programs: 25 centers targeting youth affected by substance abuse.

Employment and Skill Development



Unemployment was a key election issue. The government launched multiple programs to create jobs and improve skill levels. Major Schemes: Punjab Rozgar Portal: Connects youth with private and government jobs. Skill Punjab Initiative: 50,000 youth trained in IT,

manufacturing, and services sectors. Start-up Punjab Program: Grants and mentorship for 1,500 start-ups. Employment Minister Manpreet Singh stated that "Our focus is creating sustainable employment, not just temporary jobs. Skill development is central to our vision."

Infrastructure: Roads, Water, Electricity

Roads: 5,000 km of state highways upgraded; 1,200 new rural roads constructed. **Water:** Har Ghar Jal Yojana: Clean tap water to 1.5 million households. Modernized irrigation covering 3,00,000 acres. **Electricity:** 300-Unit Free Electricity: Provided to 2.3 million households. Solar initiatives added 500 MW of renewable energy to the grid. Energy Minister Vikramjit Singh said: "Affordable electricity is crucial for household welfare and industrial growth. We are investing in both renewable and traditional sources."

Bhagwant Mann Govt's Yudh Nashean Virudh Brings Over 90,000 Drug Abuse Victims Into De-addiction, Treatment & Recovery Across Punjab

Teachers, Parents & Communities Are The First Line Of Defence Against Drug Addiction: **Dr Balbir Singh**



Beneficiaries share experiences

The government also shared testimonies from beneficiaries. Manpreet Singh a recovered addict from Amritsar, said: "There was a time when I had almost given up on myself. The Punjab government's de-addiction centre gave me a new lease of life. The staff treated me with dignity and care. Today, I am free from addiction and looking forward to a better future. Khushbaaz Singh currently receiving treatment at Government Medical College, Amritsar, said counselling and treatment helped him focus again on family, work and a healthier future."



Guidelines for parents:

- * Spend quality time with children, especially teenagers.
- * Maintain open and friendly communication with them.
- * Stay informed about their children's social circles and daily routines.
- * Monitor behavioural changes and shifts in emotional or financial needs.
- * Encourage participation in sports, cultural and community activities.
- * Seek counselling or medical assistance at the first signs of concern.

The Bhagwant Mann Government stresses that the three integral components of tackling drug abuse are de-addiction, rehabilitation and counselling. Through the Yudh Nashean Virudh campaign, the government aims to curb the supply of narcotics, create awareness about the dangers of substance abuse and support the recovery of affected individuals.

The government's emphasis is that the fight against drug abuse is not solely about strict enforcement. Families, educational institutions, healthcare professionals and communities must work together to identify early warning signs and support affected individuals through treatment, rehabilitation and recovery. The campaign underscores that enforcement against drug traffickers and efforts aimed at prevention, treatment and rehabilitation must go hand in hand to achieve lasting success in eliminating the drug menace from Punjab.

CHANDIGARH :

As encouraging results of the Bhagwant Mann Government's anti-drug campaign "Yudh Nashean Virudh" begin to emerge, authorities emphasise that lasting success will depend not only on enforcement against drug traffickers and peddlers but also on prevention, early detection, treatment and timely intervention at the family and community levels. Launched on March 1, 2025, the Yudh Nashean Virudh campaign has evolved into one of the state's most significant anti-drug initiatives, combining strict enforcement measures with efforts aimed at de-addiction, rehabilitation and awareness generation. Punjab Health and Family Welfare Minister Dr. Balbir Singh said,

"As part of prevention and rehabilitation efforts, more than 90,000 victims of drug abuse have been admitted to de-addiction and Outpatient Opioid Assisted Treatment (OOAT) centres across Punjab between March 1, 2025, and May 2026." The figure reflects the Punjab Government's focus on treatment and recovery alongside enforcement. He added that while action against the drug menace continues across the state, teachers, parents and community members remain the first line of defence in identifying vulnerable individuals before substance use develops into addiction. "The early stages of addiction often go unnoticed, manifesting through subtle emotional, behavioural and physical

warning signs," he added. Early indicators may include sudden mood swings, irritability, declining academic or work performance, withdrawal from family interactions, secrecy about routine activities, unexplained demands for money, new social circles, disturbed sleep patterns and loss of interest in sports and other activities. Physical symptoms may include neglect of personal hygiene, fatigue, redness of the eyes, drowsiness, changes in eating habits and unexplained fluctuations in weight. Experts associated with the campaign advise families not to ignore such behavioural changes. Parents should address these concerns through calm and supportive conversations, without judgment, and

seek professional help whenever necessary. Following interventions carried out under Yudh Nashean Virudh, many individuals have successfully undergone treatment and rehabilitation and are now leading healthier lives. Manpreet Singh from Amritsar, who recovered from drug addiction, said, "There was a time when I had almost given up on myself. The Punjab government's de-addiction centre gave me a new lease of life. The staff treated me with dignity and care. Today, I am free from addiction and looking forward to a better future. My message to others is simple: recovery is possible if you take the first step." Khushbaaz Singh, who belongs to Bhikhiwind in Tarn Taran district and



is currently admitted to a de-addiction centre at Government Medical College, Amritsar, said, "The

treatment and counselling helped me overcome addiction and return to a normal life. Today, I am

focused on my family, work and a healthier future. The staff here has been very helpful.

Punjab's Water Transformation under AAP

Rebuilding the Canal Economy of Punjab. From Groundwater to Surface Water: A Strategic Shift

CHANDIGARH : Punjab's relationship with water is both foundational and fraught with contradiction. It is the land that powered India's Green Revolution, yet it is also one of the most water-stressed agricultural regions in the country today. Decades of intensive paddy cultivation, policy-driven procurement patterns, and widespread dependence on ground-

water extraction created a structural imbalance that has steadily worsened since the late twentieth century. By the time the Aam Aadmi Party formed government in 2022 under Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann, Punjab was already confronting a deep ecological emergency characterized by falling water tables, stressed aquifers, inefficient canal networks, and uneven ac-



cess to safe drinking water. Against this backdrop, the government declared water sector reform as one of its central governance priorities, promising to

shift Punjab away from groundwater dependence toward a more sustainable surface water-based system while simultaneously ensuring universal drinking

water access.

Over the four-year period from 2022 to 2026, the state's interventions in irrigation and drinking water supply have been extensive in scale and ambitious in intent. The government has consistently projected these reforms as a structural correction of historical inefficiencies, while critics and analysts view them as a work in progress whose long-term

sustainability will depend on continued investment and agricultural transformation. Nonetheless, there is broad agreement that the period marks one of the most active phases of water infrastructure development in Punjab's recent history. A defining feature of the irrigation reforms has been the revival and expansion of canal-based water distribution. Official government statements

and multiple media reports indicate that canal irrigation coverage, which stood at roughly a quarter of the total irrigated area in 2022, has increased significantly over the subsequent four years, with estimates suggesting it now covers close to three-quarters of irrigated land. This shift represents not merely a statistical change but a profound reorientation in water delivery systems.

Expanding the effective irrigation network



The scale of physical restoration undertaken during this period has been considerable. According to official communications from the Water Resources Department and widely cited media reports, thousands of kilometres of canals, distributaries, minors, and watercourses have been rehabilitated, desilted, or reactivated. In several instances, previously non-func-

tional canal stretches that had remained dry for years were brought back into operation, restoring water supply to regions that had long depended exclusively on groundwater. Government claims also suggest that over a hundred abandoned or defunct canal channels were revived, thereby expanding the effective irrigation network without the construction of entirely new large-scale canal systems. This restoration effort has been particularly significant in regions such as the Malwa belt and parts of central Punjab, where groundwater depletion had reached alarming levels. Financial investment has been a key driver of this expansion. Media-reported figures and departmental briefings indicate that approximately ₹6,700 crore has been spent between 2022 and 2026 on canal modernization, repair, lining, and augmentation works.

1,400 villages have received canal water



One of the most frequently cited outcomes of these reforms is the expansion of canal irrigation coverage from an estimated 26–27 percent of agricultural land in 2022 to nearly 78 percent by 2026, as reported in multiple official and media sources. This expansion has also been accompanied by claims that more than 1,400 villages have received canal water for



the first time since independence. While such figures underscore the scale of infrastructure outreach, they also reflect the historical neglect of certain rural areas that remained excluded from surface water systems for decades. The government has described this as a "historic correction," arguing that it marks the democratization of irrigation access across the state.

Sustainable water use



Punjab's Water Resources Minister, Barinder Kumar Goyal, has been one of the key figures articulating the government's irrigation strategy. In various official statements and budget-related briefings, he has characterized the reforms as a structural shift toward equitable and sustainable water use. He has stated that substantial financial resources have been deployed to modernize canal systems and improve water distribution efficiency, emphasizing that the goal is not only to increase supply but also to ensure that water reaches the last point of agricultural demand. In his remarks, he has highlighted that canal capacity and utilization have increased significantly during the government's tenure, and that the revival of previously defunct systems has enabled water access in areas that had remained deprived for decades.

Tap water: close to 100 percent target

Parallel to irrigation reforms, the drinking water supply sector has also witnessed substantial changes under the AAP government, primarily through the expansion of piped water infrastructure under the centrally sponsored Jal Jeevan Mission, complemented by state-level implementation strategies. According to government claims and media reports, Punjab achieved near-universal rural tap water coverage by 2023–24, making it one of the first Indian states to reach close to 100 percent household connectivity in rural areas. This represents a significant improvement compared to 2019, when only about half of rural households had access to piped water connections.

The expansion of drinking water infrastructure involved large-scale installation of household tap connections, upgradation of village-level water supply schemes, and strengthening of distribution pipelines across rural Punjab. The government also invested in improving water testing facilities and monitoring systems to ensure better oversight of quality standards. In many villages, reliance on traditional hand pumps and groundwater-based drinking sources has been significantly reduced as piped water systems became operational.

However, the issue of water quality remains a critical concern. Punjab continues to face localized contamination challenges, including salinity, fluoride, and in some areas, traces of heavy metals or other pollutants in groundwater sources. The expansion of piped supply has addressed access, but ensuring consistent quality across all regions remains an ongoing administrative and technical challenge. Policy experts emphasize that infrastructure coverage must be complemented by rigorous monitoring and treatment systems to ensure safe drinking water outcomes.

Punjab's Education Revolution: Four Years of Transformation under AAP



CHANDIGARH :

In the four years since the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) assumed power in Punjab, the state's education sector has witnessed a transformation that officials describe as unprecedented. With a focus on infrastructure

modernization, digital learning, teacher empowerment, and student health, the AAP government has sought to create an education ecosystem that goes beyond rote learning to ensure holistic development. Punjab has historically

struggled with disparities in educational outcomes between urban and rural areas. According to official reports, many rural schools lacked basic facilities such as functional science labs, libraries, and clean drinking water. Teacher shortages and

outdated teaching methodologies compounded the problem, leaving students ill-prepared for competitive exams or higher education. Recognizing these challenges, the AAP government launched a comprehensive educa-

tion reform program in 2022, pledging to bridge gaps and improve both the quality and reach of education. Education Minister Harjot Singh Bains told reporters earlier this year, "Our vision is not limited to constructing school build-

ings. We aim to create an ecosystem where children are healthy, learning outcomes are improved, and teachers are motivated and empowered. Education should be an instrument of social change, not just a classroom activity."

From Basic Classrooms to Schools of Excellence



One of the first steps in the government's plan was to modernize school infrastructure. Over 1,500 government schools across Punjab have undergone extensive renovation, receiving upgraded classrooms, science and computer laboratories, libraries, and improved sanitation facilities. Special attention has been given to Schools of Eminence, a model introduced by the government to convert selected government

schools into centers of excellence, comparable to private institutions.

In districts like Bathinda and Mansa, media reports highlighted schools that previously had no functional science labs now equipped with fully operational laboratories, enabling students to conduct experiments and learn concepts practically. Smart boards have been installed in more than 70% of these schools, and digital teaching tools are being integrated into everyday classroom instruction.

The focus on infrastructure is not limited to classrooms alone. Government initiatives have also prioritized sports facilities, with several schools now offering indoor complexes and well-maintained playgrounds. Clean drinking water, electricity, and functional toilets have been installed in all targeted schools, addressing long-standing health and hygiene concerns.

Digital Learning: Bridging the Urban-Rural Divide



The AAP government's education policy has strongly emphasized technology. The integration of digital learning platforms and smart classrooms has been a major focus. According to state education reports, around 70-80% of government schools now have internet connectivity, allowing students in rural areas access to the same resources as those in urban centers. E-learning platforms offer interactive lessons, virtual labora-

tories, and AI-based career guidance.

Teachers have been trained to use these digital tools effectively. Continuous professional development programs ensure that educators are not only familiar with the technology but are also able to leverage it to enhance learning outcomes. "Digital classrooms are leveling the playing field for rural students," said Minister Bains. "They now have the same opportunities for interactive learning and access to knowledge as their urban counterparts." The adoption of digital learning has had a tangible impact on academic outcomes. State-level assessments have shown a 15-20% improvement in mathematics and science scores among government school students, reversing years of stagnation in academic performance. Students from rural districts who previously struggled with conceptual understanding are now performing on par with urban peers.

The Backbone of Reform

The government has emphasized that high-quality education requires well-trained and motivated teachers. Over 13,000 teachers have been recruited and trained in modern pedagogical methods, including digital teaching, interactive learning, and classroom management. Annual workshops, skill-building sessions, and exposure visits to countries like Finland and Singapore have been conducted to ensure teachers are equipped with global best practices. Bains stressed the centrality of teacher development in the reform program: "Teachers are the backbone of education. Empowered teachers can transform classrooms and inspire students. Punjab is investing heavily in ensuring our educators are equipped to meet the challenges of modern education."



Rising Enrolment, Learning Outcomes and the Shift in Public School Perception

Beyond infrastructure upgrades and digital classrooms, one of the most significant indicators of Punjab's education reforms under the Aam Aadmi Party government has been the shift in public perception of government schools. For decades, government schools in the state were seen as a fallback option for economically weaker families. However, official data and media reports over the past two years suggest that this perception is gradually

changing, driven by improvements in teaching quality, facilities, and student outcomes. According to figures shared by the Punjab Education Department, enrolment in government schools has increased by approximately 10 to 12 percent since 2022. This reversal is particularly significant because Punjab, like several other states, had been witnessing a steady migration of students toward private schools. Education officials attribute this change to im-

proved infrastructure, better-trained teachers, and increased trust in government institutions. Education Minister Harjot Singh Bains has described this trend as a "vote of confidence from parents." In a recent interaction, he said, "When families begin choosing government schools over private ones, it reflects a deep structural change. We are not just improving schools, we are restoring faith in public education."

Linking Wellbeing to Learning

A defining feature of Punjab's education policy has been the integration of health initiatives into schools. The government launched annual health screening programs, covering approximately 1.8 million students over four years. These programs identify early health issues, including anemia and malnutrition, and ensure timely intervention. Mid-day meals have been fortified with proteins, vitamins, and minerals to improve student nutrition. Health awareness campaigns, counseling services, and adolescent health education have been incorporated into the curriculum. Such initiatives have not only improved physical wellbeing but also reduced absenteeism and enhanced learning outcomes.

Four Years of Employment Transformation in Punjab

A Political Promise Recast as an Employment Mission

CHANDIGARH :

When the Aam Aadmi Party formed the government in Punjab in March 2022 under Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, it entered office with one of the most politically sensitive and economically complex mandates in the country. Punjab's youth population was aspirational but deeply anxious about employment. Migration, especially to Canada, Australia, and Gulf countries, had become a defining social trend. Government

recruitment processes were widely criticized in previous decades for allegations of opacity, delays, and irregularities. At the same time, the private sector in the state was not expanding at a pace sufficient to absorb the growing workforce. Against this backdrop, employment was not just a policy issue; it was a defining political promise. Over the next four years, the AAP government placed employment at the centre of its governance narrative. It repeatedly

described its approach as a "jobs-first model," combining large-scale government recruitment, skill development expansion, labour welfare strengthening, and efforts to attract industry investment. According to official statements issued during government reviews and widely reported in the media, the state claims to have delivered more than sixty-five thousand government jobs during this period, alongside several lakh total employment opportunities through

direct and indirect channels. These figures have become the backbone of the government's claim that it has restructured employment governance in Punjab. Government recruitment formed the most visible and politically significant part of this transformation. Across departments including education, police, health, power, and local government bodies, recruitment drives were conducted on a large scale. Education alone accounted for a substantial

portion of hiring, with more than sixteen thousand posts filled in teaching and administrative roles. The police department added over twelve thousand personnel through structured recruitment processes. The government has consistently emphasized that these recruitments were conducted through transparent, merit-based systems, largely digitalized to reduce human discretion and middlemen interference. Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann has frequently stated in public

addresses that recruitment processes under his government were designed to restore trust in public employment, claiming that examinations and selections were conducted without major allegations of corruption or large-scale irregularities, a contrast he often draws with earlier decades. While the headline number of government jobs is widely cited, the broader employment narrative extends beyond the public sector. The government has repeatedly claimed

that more than five lakh employment opportunities were generated in total when combining government jobs, private placements, industrial hiring, self-employment facilitation, and skill-linked job outcomes. These figures are drawn from official briefings and departmental reports and are often used to highlight that employment creation is not limited to direct recruitment but includes wider economic activity stimulated by policy interventions.



Skill Development and Training

A central figure in communicating this broader employment strategy has been Aman Arora, the Minister for Employment Generation, Skill Development and Training. Arora has consistently argued that Punjab's employment model has shifted from passive job allocation to active job creation and employability building. In his public statements, he has emphasized that the government's objective is not only to provide jobs but to ensure that young people

possess the skills required for evolving industries. He has repeatedly said that Punjab should become a state where youth do not feel compelled to leave in search of livelihood, framing employment policy as a tool to reduce migration pressure and strengthen local economic ecosystems. Under his leadership, skill development programs have expanded through institutional frameworks such as the Punjab Skill Development Mission.

Record collection of labour welfare cess

Alongside employment generation, labour welfare and governance have also undergone notable changes under Labour Minister Tarunpreet Singh Sond. One of the most cited indicators of reform under his tenure has been the record collection of labour welfare cess. According to official figures reported in media coverage, the state recorded cess collections rising to approximately three hundred ten crore rupees

in the most recent financial cycle, the highest in four years. Sond has attributed this increase to improved compliance systems, digitization of labour records, and stronger enforcement mechanisms that reduce leakages and improve transparency. He has argued that better compliance ensures that funds intended for workers are actually collected and redirected toward welfare schemes.

Long-term employment sustainability

The employment story in Punjab is also closely linked to industrial policy and investment inflows. The government has argued that improved governance and recruitment transparency have helped strengthen investor confidence. Industrial expansion is seen as critical because long-term employment sustainability depends not only on government hiring but on private sector absorption capacity. Reports from state briefings

indicate that Punjab has attracted significant investment commitments since 2022, particularly in manufacturing, agro-processing, logistics, and services sectors. These investments are expected to generate employment opportunities over time, although their full impact will be realized gradually rather than immediately. Digital transformation has been another important component of employment governance.



Chief Minister's Health Insurance Scheme... Transforming Healthcare in Punjab

CHANDIGARH : Healthcare is one of the most critical determinants of a state's overall development. In Punjab, where a significant portion of the population faces the dual challenges of lifestyle-related diseases and lack of access to quality medical care, the need for a robust healthcare infrastructure has always been pressing. Recognizing this need, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government, after assuming office in 2022, launched the Chief Minister's Health Insurance Scheme (CMHIS) with

the objective of providing universal health coverage to the citizens of Punjab. According to official reports on the Punjab Health Department's website, the scheme is designed to cover a wide spectrum of medical treatments, ranging from major surgeries and critical illnesses to specialized treatments for cardiac, neurological, and cancer-related conditions. The initiative aims to reduce out-of-pocket medical expenses, which have traditionally pushed many families into financial distress.

The Vision Behind CMHIS

The scheme reflects AAP's broader commitment to social welfare and public health, principles that have defined its governance model in Delhi and are now being adapted for Punjab. In his statement during the scheme's launch, Punjab Health Minister Balbir Singh Sidhu highlighted, "Our government believes that healthcare is a fundamental right. CMHIS is our promise that no Punjabi should avoid medical treatment due to financial constraints."

Scope and Coverage

CMHIS provides financial assistance for hospitalization up to ₹15 lakh per family per year, covering both pre- and post-hospitalization costs. The scheme is designed to be inclusive, covering families from all economic strata, including those below the poverty line, small traders, and salaried workers who do not have any prior health insurance. According to a government press release from 2023, the scheme also incorporates cashless treatment facilities across over 350 empaneled hospitals statewide.

Integration with Technology

One of the defining features of CMHIS is its digital health infrastructure. The government has implemented an online portal and mobile application to allow beneficiaries to track claims, locate empaneled hospitals, and receive real-time updates on treatment approvals. This technological integration not only increases transparency but also minimizes delays in availing medical services.

Initial Impact

Within the first year of its implementation, CMHIS enrolled over 3 lakh families, according to official statistics. By the end of the fourth year, this number had risen to nearly 10 lakh families, making Punjab one of the fastest states in India to achieve such wide-reaching health insurance penetration. Early media reports highlighted individual success stories that underscore the scheme's potential to change lives.

Public Reception

The Chief Minister's Health Insurance Scheme has received a mixed but largely positive response. While beneficiaries and patient advocacy groups have lauded the initiative for increasing access to quality healthcare, some experts have suggested that further expansion is required, particularly in ensuring coverage for outpatient treatments and chronic disease management.

Expanding Healthcare Access



-Hospitalizations Covered: Over 1.2 lakh hospitalization cases have been covered since inception.

-Financial Assistance Provided: Total claims reimbursed exceed ₹450 crore, preventing catastrophic medical expenses for thousands of families.

-Empaneled Hospitals: The scheme has expanded its network to over 350 hospitals, including tertiary care centers in Ludhiana, Amritsar, Patiala, and Jalandhar.

Over its four-year tenure, the AAP government has emphasized that CMHIS is not just an insurance scheme but a transformative healthcare initiative aimed at bridging the rural-urban healthcare divide.

Critical Treatments Supported



-Cardiac Surgeries: 18,500 procedures funded across state hospitals.

-Cancer Treatments: 6,800 patients received financial support for chemotherapy, radiotherapy, and surgical oncology.

-Kidney Transplants and Dialysis: Nearly 3,200 procedures facilitated with cashless access.

CMHIS covers a wide range of procedures. Some of the key interventions funded under the scheme include:

Minister Dr. Balbir Singh stated in a recent press conference, "We prioritized the most life-threatening illnesses first. Over 70% of claims have been for critical and high-cost treatments. CMHIS is saving lives and protecting families from financial ruin."

Rural Penetration



One of the most significant achievements of CMHIS has been its reach in rural areas. In districts like Mansa, Bathinda, and Fazilka, the scheme has empowered families who previously had to travel long distances for medical treatment.

-Rural Beneficiaries: 62% of enrolled families reside in rural or semi-urban areas.

-Gender Inclusivity: Women and children constitute 53% of total beneficiaries, reflecting focused attention on maternal and child health.

Integration with Digital Health Systems



The online portal and mobile application have been key enablers of efficiency: Citizens have praised the scheme for reducing out-of-pocket expenditure and providing peace of mind.

-Claim Approvals: Average approval time reduced from 10 days to 48 hours.

-Transparency: Beneficiaries can track the status of claims, hospital admissions, and reimbursements.

-The government has conducted over 150 awareness camps.

Punjab Power Sector Emerges as Key Achievement of Mann Government

Government Claims 90% Households Receiving Zero Bills Alongside Major Investments in Generation and Distribution

CHANDIGARH : By any measure, the power sector has emerged as one of the most closely watched areas of governance during the four-year tenure of Punjab's Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government led by Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann. When the government assumed office in March 2022, it inherited a sector burdened by legacy issues ranging from high subsidy commitments and ageing infrastructure to concerns over power procurement costs and the need to strengthen transmission and distribution networks. Four years later, the government claims to have delivered a combination of consumer relief, infrastructure expansion, institutional reforms and capacity augmentation that has significantly altered the landscape of electricity generation and distribution in Punjab. The power sector occupies a unique place in Punjab's economy and politics. Agriculture, industry and households alike depend heavily on reliable electricity. Punjab's vast irrigation network relies on power-intensive tubewells, while the state's manufacturing clusters require uninterrupted supply to remain competitive. For ordinary households, electricity is one of the most visible indicators of government performance. Recognising this reality, the AAP government placed power reforms and consumer relief at the centre of its governance agenda. The most

and politically significant intervention of the government has been the implementation of the free electricity scheme for domestic consumers. Shortly after assuming office, the government announced 300 units of free electricity per month for every household. The scheme became operational from July 2022 and quickly evolved into one of the largest consumer subsidy programmes in the state's history.

Most recognisable achievements...

The free power scheme was not merely a welfare initiative; it also represented a political statement. The AAP government positioned itself as a government committed to reducing the financial burden on ordinary families. In a state where electricity bills constitute a major household expense, the scheme became one of the administration's most recognisable achievements. Yet consumer subsidies alone do not define the story of Punjab's power sector during the last four years. Perhaps the most consequential structural intervention was the state's acquisition of the 540 MW Goindwal thermal power plant. In January 2024, Punjab State Power Corporation Limited (PSPCL) acquired the privately owned thermal plant for approximately Rs 1,080 crore after the company operating it entered insolvency proceedings.

90 per cent of households receiving zero electricity bills...

According to government claims made during the completion of four years in office, nearly 90 per cent of households in Punjab are now receiving zero electricity bills under the scheme. The government argues that the initiative has provided substantial financial relief to middle-class and lower-income families at a time when inflationary pressures have affected household budgets across the country. Supporters of the scheme describe it as a direct transfer of economic benefit to citizens, reducing monthly expenditure and increasing disposable income. Critics initially questioned the sustainability of the programme and warned that such a large subsidy could place an additional burden on the state exchequer. However, the government has consistently maintained that administrative reforms, better financial management and improvements in power sector operations have enabled it to sustain the scheme while simultaneously investing in infrastructure. Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann has repeatedly argued that the state's power sector has improved financially despite extending free power benefits to the majority of consumers.

Lowest costs for acquiring a thermal generation...

The acquisition was described by the government as a historic decision.

Officials argued that it marked the first instance of a state government purchasing a private thermal power plant. The government emphasised that the acquisition price worked out to roughly Rs 2 crore per

megawatt, which it described as among the lowest costs for acquiring a thermal generation asset in the country.

For the government, the purchase represented more than an expansion of generation capacity. It symbolised a reversal of a long-standing trend in which public assets were often privatised. The administration argued that public ownership of the plant would reduce long-term procurement costs and

strengthen Punjab's energy security. Government estimates

summer months when electricity consumption rises sharply.

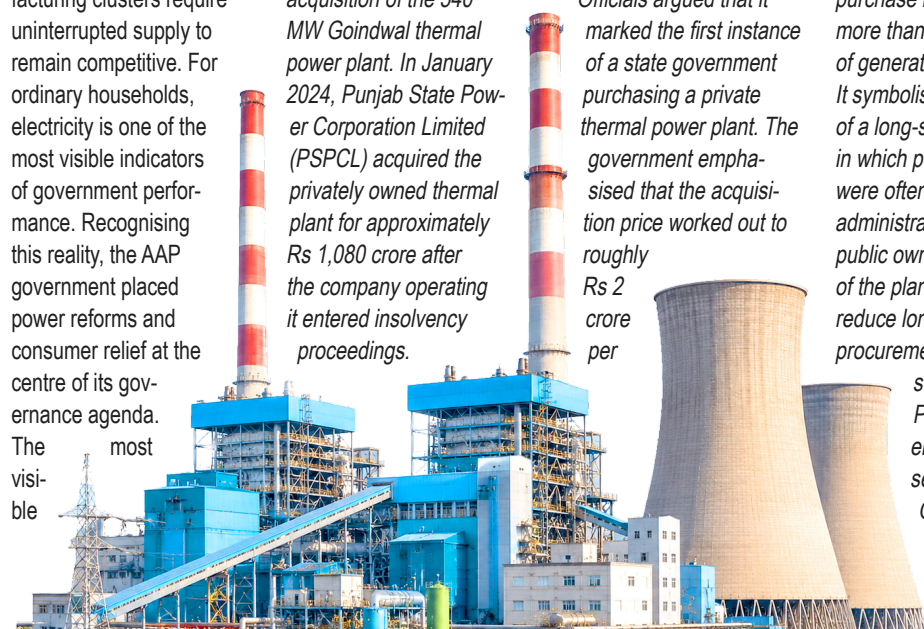
Rs 25,000 crore for upgrading the power network...

The Goindwal acquisition reflected a broader shift in the government's approach toward strategic energy assets. Rather than relying exclusively on market procurement, the administration sought to expand direct control over generation infrastructure. In policy terms, this represented one of the most significant developments in Punjab's power sector in recent years. Alongside generation expansion, the government launched a major programme aimed at strengthening transmission and distribution infrastructure. Officials approved a comprehensive action plan valued at more than Rs 25,000 crore for upgrading the power network. The initiative

was designed to improve electricity reliability, reduce technical losses and prepare the grid for future growth in electricity demand. One of the notable outcomes cited by the government is the expansion of available transmission capacity. State authorities report that power import capability increased substantially during the period, allowing Punjab to draw larger quantities of electricity from external sources whenever required. This enhancement has improved operational flexibility and reduced vulnerability during demand surges.

Transmission and distribution systems

Infrastructure investments have included new substations, transformers and network modernisation projects. PSPCL has undertaken extensive work to strengthen the distribution network across urban and rural areas. Officials argue that these investments have contributed to improved reliability and reduced system stress during peak load conditions. The government's emphasis on infrastructure is particularly significant because Punjab's electricity demand has continued to rise.



A Four-Year Report Card of Enforcement Reform and Political Contestation...

Chief Minister Mann claimed that over 95,000 arrests were made under anti-drug operations

CHANDIGARH :

When the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) swept to power in Punjab in March 2022 under Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, it inherited a state where law and order was widely described as complex and fragile—shaped by decades of insurgency legacy, rising organised crime networks, cross-border drug trafficking routes, and recurring episodes of gang violence. Four years later, the government's own narrative presents a sharply contrasting picture: one of intensified policing, aggressive crackdowns on gangsters, technology-led policing reforms, and claims of improved public safety indicators. Yet independent assessments, opposition criticism, and NCRB-linked data interpretations continue to present a more nuanced and contested reality.

At the core of the government's claim lies a sustained crackdown on organised crime. According to official briefings released by the state leadership, more than 1,100 criminal gangs have been dismantled since 2022, and thousands of arrests have been made in connection with drug trafficking and organised extortion networks. A government performance report presented by Chief Minister Mann in 2026 claimed that over 95,000 arrests were made under anti-drug operations, while large quantities of narcotics and illegal assets worth hundreds of crores were seized in enforcement drives targeting the narcotics economy.

Dial-112 emergency response system

One of the most frequently cited achievements by the state government is its claim of strengthening policing response systems and reducing visible street crime. The introduction and expansion of the Dial-112 emergency response system has been positioned as a major reform. With hundreds of new emergency response vehicles equipped with GPS tracking and digital communication tools, the government argues that police response times have improved significantly, dropping from earlier averages of over half an hour to under 15 minutes in many regions. Officials describe this as a structural shift from reactive policing to rapid response policing, especially in rural areas where accessibility had historically been a challenge.



Hundreds of drones and weapons have been intercepted

Another major pillar of the government's law and order narrative is its emphasis on drug control, framed as central to Punjab's security challenge. The state's flagship campaign against narcotics trafficking has resulted in large-scale seizures and arrests, alongside attempts to dismantle supply chains linked to cross-border smuggling routes.

Authorities have repeatedly highlighted the use of drones for smuggling from across the international border as a new security threat, prompting the deployment of counter-drone measures and coordinated border surveillance systems. Government statements suggest that hundreds of drones and weapons have been intercepted in recent enforcement cycles, signalling a shift in the operational nature of policing in border districts. However, the law and order discourse in Punjab cannot be separated from its political contestation. Opposition parties have consistently argued that despite the government's claims, incidents of gang violence, targeted killings, and organised crime remain a concern. Reports in national media during the early phase of the AAP tenure pointed to high-profile criminal incidents and gang rivalries that continued to challenge policing capacity. Critics have questioned whether arrests and crackdowns reflect improved law and order or merely heightened enforcement visibility.



modernization of equipment...

The Mann government has also attempted institutional reforms within the police force itself. Recruitment drives,

modernization of equipment, expansion of cybercrime units, and increased mobility of police stations through new vehicles and digital infrastructure have been repeatedly highlighted as indicators of administrative reform. In addition, the state has promoted a "zero tolerance" policy towards gangster culture, attempting to break perceived political-criminal nexuses of the past. Yet law and order in Punjab continues to remain a politically charged subject. Incidents involving gang violence, targeted attacks, and allegations of administrative lapses periodically revive debates about whether enforcement has translated into sustained deterrence.

