



Cabinet approves Integration and Continuation of two schemes viz. (i) “Assistance to State Agencies for intra-State movement of foodgrains and FPS dealers’ margin under NFSA” and (ii) “Scheme for Modernization and Reforms through Technology in Public Distribution System (SMART PDS)” under umbrella scheme SARTHAK-PDS

Centre to spend Rs. 25,530 crore in next 5 years for SARTHAK PDS

Continuation of schemes to ensure last-mile delivery of Food grains with higher FPS Dealers’ commission

Government strive for intelligently optimized PDS operations through advanced technologies to ensure transparency, security and sustainability in PDS operations

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The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the continuation of the “Scheme for Assistance in Ration Transport and Handling-Income with Automation in PDS” (SARTHAK PDS) as an umbrella scheme, in the 16th Finance Commission cycle award period, with an outlay of Rs. 25,530 crore as Central share.

The CCEA has also decided to revise the norms of Central assistance for meeting expenditure incurred by States/UTs intra-state movement & handling of foodgrains and FPS dealers’ margin and continuation of the existing funding pattern of Central Assistance.

The Scheme is conceived as an umbrella scheme integrating the ongoing schemes: (i) “Assistance to State Agencies for intra-State movement of foodgrains and FPS dealers’ margin under NFSA” and (ii) “Scheme for Modernization and Reforms through Technology in Public Distribution System (SMART PDS)” to comprehensively strengthen implementation of the National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA).

SARTHAK-PDS Scheme aims to provide (a) assured financial support for intra-State movement, handling and FPS dealer’s margin, and (b) a unified, citizen-centric, intelligent and interoperable PDS architecture that ensures last-mile service delivery, minimizes leakages and strengthens the nation’s commitment to

food security under NFSA, with the merged scheme to operate up to 31.03.2031.

SARTHAK-PDS Scheme seeks to modernize, integrate and intelligently optimize PDS operations through advanced technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML), Natural Language Processing (NLP) and Blockchain, by creating standardized architectures and unified databases for real-time monitoring, AI-driven grievance and analytics systems, State Command Control Centres for data-driven oversight, and ISO-certified process frameworks to ensure transparency, security and sustainability in PDS operations.

Government of India has a social & legal commitment to the people of the nation - a dignified life by ensuring them access to food and nutritional security through the availability of adequate quantities of quality food grains. The Scheme will work towards fulfilling the Government of India's commitment to 81.35 crore persons covered under NFSA. Building on the statutory and policy framework, SARTHAK-PDS retains and streamlines the financial assistance component while simultaneously embedding it within a modern, technology-driven PDS ecosystem.

Over the past decade, the Government has implemented multiple digitization initiatives such as End-to-End Computerization of TPDS, Integrated Management of PDS (IM-PDS) and SMART PDS, along with citizen-facing applications like Mera Ration, Anna Mitra, Rightful Targeting Dashboard and Anna Sahayata, and since 1st April 2023, the SMART PDS scheme has acted as the cornerstone of technology-led reforms by enabling complete digitization of ration cards, Aadhaar seeding, FPS automation through e-PoS, online allocation and computerized supply-chain management across 36 States/UTs.

MJPS

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