Mohali Mayor Suspended

CHANDIGARH: The Mayor of Punjab's Mohali Municipal Corporation, adjoining here, was suspended on Thursday for misusing power and causing loss to the state exchequer, an official statement said.

'Corrupt practices would not be tolerated at any cost and as part of this commitment the Mayor of Municipal Corporation of Mohali, Kulwant Singh has been suspended along with three other officers," Local Government Minister Navjot Singh Sidhu said, as per the statement.

He said the case recommending suspension of the then Commissioner has been sent to the government. Apart from this, two other officials have been chargesheeted too. Sidhu said it had come to the notice of the department the Mayor in connivance with Commissioner Rajesh Dhiman and other officials indulged in blatant misuse of his position and caused a loss to the state exchequer while making purchase of a tree pruning

Fire Safety Training Centre

CHANDIGARH: Punjab is all set to have a full fledged fire safety training centre, while a Rs 500 crore plan for strengthening the fire services in the state, Local Government Minister Navjot Singh Sidhu said on Sunday.

The plan has been submitted to the Director General of Fire Services and Civil Defence, he said, adding that the fire services sector has so far been largely ignored which accounted for numerous fire accidents in the state.

Sidhu said he recently met Director General Fire Services and Civil Defence Prakash Mishra, who said it was for the first time that a minister from Punjab has sought funds for fire safety projects and granted approval for



the opening of a fire safety training centre. He said special care would be taken by the state to ensure that no fireman went into the fire extinguishing operations without wearing an ultra-modern fire suit. He said Rs 270 crore was

sought from the central government for setting up fire stations, Rs 86 crore for purchasing aerial ladders, Rs 18 crore for fire suits, Rs 20 crore for quick response vehicles and Rs 23 crore for the training centre.

Probe Urged Into Sand Mining Auctions

CHANDIGARH: Punjab's opposition Akali Dal demanded a CBI probe into the funding of sand mining auctions of Power Minister Rana Gurjit Singh's associates by the main accused in the Rs 1,000 crore irrigation scam. It also sought an Enforce-

Akali Dal MPs Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa and Balwinder Singh Bhundur said the central agencies should also probe the release of Rs 4 crore to contractor Gurinder Singh, who was the main accused in the irrigation scam, by Rana Gurjit's ministry.

"How can the Irrigation Minis-

try release money to a contractor who is being probed and has even been arrested? The contractor's direct involvement in the sand mine auctions on behalf of Rana Guriit's associates alone can explain the undue favours given to him by the Irrigation Ministry," they said in a statement here.

Himachal To Clear Punjab **Arrears**

The Himachal Pradesh Cabinet on Thursday approved settling over half a century old electricity arrears with Punjab and Haryana in three Bhakra Beas Management Board (BBMB) projects in compliance with a Supreme Court order in terms of differential energy return.

The differential energy quantum of 13,066 million units would fetch Rs 3,266 crore to the state at an average rate of Rs 2.50 per unit, an official statement said.

Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur presided over the cabinet meeting which also approved negotiations with both the neighbouring states for payment of the entire differential energy within 10 to 12 years.

It also agreed for negotiations towards payment of liability of Rs 111.53 crore as computed by the Central government in its affidavit in equal annual instalments during the period of return of power.



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