

Sarthak-PDS Scheme

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance | Schemes

Why in News?

Recently, the Union Cabinet has approved the Sarthak-PDS, with an outlay of Rs 25,530 crores.

- **Sarthak-PDS** - Scheme for Assistance in Ration Transport and Handling-Income with Automation in PDS.
- **Integration** - It is an *umbrella scheme* integrating two existing programmes
 - Assistance for intra-state movement of food grains and Fair Price Shop dealer margins under *the National Food Security Act (NFSA)*.
 - The *SMART-PDS* initiative focused on technology-driven reforms.
- **Implementation period** - It will be implemented for five years from *April 2026 to March 2031* under the 16th Finance Commission cycle.
- **Objectives** - To support state governments' distribution of Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY).

Features

- **Modernising PDS** - To strengthen and modernise the Public Distribution System (PDS) for the effective implementation of the PMGKAY.
- **Remuneration enhancement** - To enhance the remuneration of fair price shop dealers, which had remained unchanged for several years.
- **Transport & Handling Support** - State agencies struggled with the costs of moving grains from FCI warehouses to districts and Fair Price Shops.
- The Central government will now provide financial support to cover these costs.
- **Unified Database** - The scheme also proposes unified databases and state-level command and control centres for efficient operations.
- **Technological Reforms** - It focuses on
 - Digital transformation of the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS),
 - Ration card digitisation,
 - Aadhaar seeding,
 - E-pos-enabled fair price shops, and
 - Platforms including Mera Ration and Anna Sahayata.
- **Technologies used** - It will use technologies such as
 - Artificial intelligence (AI),
 - Machine learning (ML),

- Natural language processing (NLP), and
- Blockchain for better supply-chain management, monitoring, and grievance redressal.
- **Significance** - The initiative is expected to improve transparency, reduce leakages, ensure efficient food grain distribution, and strengthen food security for beneficiaries across India.

Reference

[Business Standard| Sarthak-PDS Scheme](#)

