

# THE TIMES OF INDIA

## **PBTI declared state agency for analytical services**

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Chandigarh: In a major push to its fight against food adulteration, water contamination and environment issues, the state government has notified Punjab Biotechnology Incubator (PBTI) — a first-of-its-kind multi-sectoral high-end facility in the public sector — as the state agency for analytical services in agriculture, food, water and environment sectors. The move will facilitate quicker analysis of samples, followed by speedy action on defaulters under the Tandrust Punjab Mission.

At present, the samples are analysed by the respective departments — health, agriculture, pollution control board and water supply — of the state government. However, most of the laboratories are facing shortage of infrastructure and manpower, causing delay in the analysis of samples. Due to non-availability of high-end facilities, these departments are forced to avail the services of external laboratories at higher rates.

A meta study on food-testing laboratories system in India by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) released earlier this year had laid bare the gap in laboratories ratio in Punjab and had called for improving the capabilities of existing laboratories within the states to cater to the ever-increasing requirements.

The government has made mandatory the use of PBTI's analytical services for all its departments including boards, corporations, societies and cooperatives. The use of private laboratories has been allowed only for services not available with the PBTI.

The charges for these services have been approved by the governing council of the society headed by the chief secretary and the same can be paid by various departments without any tendering process.

“This is the state government's a step towards providing safe food, water and environment under the Tandrust Punjab Mission,” said PBTI chief executive officer (CEO) Dr Ajit Dua. The

CEO added that all the departments/ boards will get top analytical services under one roof which can be availed without any tendering process, thus saving time and resources in addition to access to quality services.

PBTI is equipped with high-end facilities like trace analysis for pesticides, drugs and heavy metals, food additive analysis, adulterants analysis. The lab also facilitates authenticity testing of honey and basmati rice.