

Punjab govt mulls cancelling exam held in Jan to recruit patwaris

The Punjab revenue department has recommended cancellation of the examination held to recruit 1,200 patwaris in January this year. The move comes in the wake of the ongoing investigations into the selective leakage of question papers of various job selection examinations held by Panjab University, Chandigarh, on behalf of the Punjab government.

The first stage of the patwari recruitment examination was held on January 24 in which over 1.25-lakh candidates had appeared. More than 11,000 candidates were shortlisted for the second and final stage of the examination on February 21. However, the process was put on halt after various examinations held by the PU for Punjab came under the scanner.

The vigilance bureau (VB), which is investigating the cases of selective leakage in various examinations, has registered three FIRs, each for a different recruitment process. One FIR is with regard to the recruitment of SDOs and junior engineers in the department of local government in November 2015; the other two deal with the filling up of several posts in Punjab State Civil Supplies Corporation (PUNSUP) in March-April 2015 and Punjab Urban Planning and Development Authority (PUDA) in November 2015.

SELECTIVE LEAKS

During the initial investigations, the VB found that question papers in these tests were selectively leaked allegedly by a contact in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh. However, the VB has now discovered another similar module active in Najafgarh in Haryana.

During the interrogation of one Pawan Sharma of Talwandi Sabo—who was a conduit for supplying question papers to candidates appearing for the local government department job test—it came to the fore that the question papers had also been leaked for patwari examination.

Sharma, who was arrested by VB on June 13, told the agency that as many as 20 aspiring patwaris who had paid money were taken in a van from Sunam to a school in Najafgarh where they were shown the question paper and asked to memorise it. These candidates were among those selected in the first test. Each of these candidates had paid up to Rs 25 lakh for the whole “package”—giving them access to the question papers for the first and the second stages of exam.