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Punjab Deploys Quick–Response Codes to Stamp Out Property–Tax Fraud

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— *Categories: Real Estate*

Punjab's Excise Department has taken a technology–first leap in tax administration, rolling out Quick–Response (QR) codes on property–tax notices to choke off fake and duplicate challans. Beginning 15 July, some 2.5 million coded bills have been dispatched to households and businesses across every district part of a wider push to digitise revenue collection and restore public trust. Under the new protocol, each notice is scanned at the doorstep by field inspectors, and the data is uploaded instantly to a central, tamper–proof database, ensuring that every rupee demanded is traceable to the government ledger.

Director General (DG) Excise Umar Sher Chatha says the programme's primary goal is to "eliminate the parallel market in counterfeit tax challans." For years, property levies in Punjab have been vulnerable to forged documents and "ghost" receipts that siphoned money away from provincial coffers. By embedding QR codes two—dimensional barcodes that store secure, encrypted information each assessment can be verified on the spot with a simple smartphone app. The system flags any alteration or duplication immediately, closing a loophole that has long enriched middlemen while starving municipal services of cash.

The initiative also promises to widen the tax net. Officials estimate that millions of properties remain off the rolls either through under—declaration or because legitimate owners avoid the bureaucracy altogether. As inspectors fan out with scannable notices, every scan creates a digital footprint, exposing unregistered properties and prompting automatic follow—up. The move aligns with a centre—right economic doctrine: broaden base, lower evasion, and allow honest taxpayers to carry a lighter burden instead of chasing higher rates. Transparent billing, department insiders argue, will make it harder for corrupt officials to "negotiate" assessments and easier for property owners to contest errors with documented evidence.

Crucially, the reform dovetails with Punjab's broader digitization agenda linking land records, municipal databases, and payment gateways into a single ecosystem. Once operational, taxpayers will be able to verify dues, pay online, and receive digital receipts, squeezing out the grey economy where fake challans once thrived. If the pilot succeeds, officials plan to extend QR coding to vehicle registration and excise duties, effectively creating a cradle—to—grave audit trail for provincial revenues. For a province often criticized for lax enforcement, the high—tech pivot could mark a turning point: a future where transparency is default, fraud is costly, and the public sees tangible returns from every tax rupee spent.