

## Chief Secy pushes for time-bound reforms to transform Higher Education in J&K

**JAMMU, MARCH 28:** Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo today chaired a comprehensive review meeting of the Higher Education Department (HED) to strategise a forward-looking roadmap for advancing higher education and steering Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) in Jammu and Kashmir towards excellence.

The meeting was attended by the Vice-Chancellors of various Universities; Commissioner Secretary, HED; Registrars of the Universities; Director Colleges; and other senior officers of the department.

Emphasising the need for institutional accountability and time-bound reforms, the Chief Secretary directed all HEIs to formulate their own actionable plans for implementation of reform measures recommended during the 5th Chief Secretaries' Conference chaired by the Prime Minister himself. He stressed strict adherence to timelines and called for a results-oriented approach without any laxity.

He observed that these reform measures are closely aligned with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and form a strong foundation for achieving the objectives envisioned for higher education institutions in the Union Territory.

Taking a detailed review of faculty positions and student enrollment across universities and colleges, the Chief Secretary directed that faculty vacancies be filled up to at least 90 percent by August this year, underscoring that quality education hinges on adequate and competent teaching staff.

Highlighting the need for academic relevance, he called for a comprehensive audit of all courses offered by universities and affil-



ated colleges. He stressed that courses with low demand or outdated content should be phased out and replaced with emerging, technology-driven programmes that align with market needs and student aspirations.

The Chief Secretary also emphasised regular updation of curricula to reflect latest developments and research in respective fields. He instructed institutions to integrate skill-based courses with conventional academic programmes to enhance employability and industry readiness of graduates.

Focusing on professional education, he directed the Vice-Chancellors of IUST and SMVDU to undertake a detailed study of engineering colleges and schools of architecture in the UT and recommend measures to improve enrolment. He noted that these institutions possess robust infrastructure and faculty, which must be optimally utilised.

Similarly, the Vice-Chancellors of the University of Kashmir and University of Jammu were asked to assess enrolment trends in their affiliated colleges and suggest corrective measures, particularly in institutions witnessing low student intake. The Chief Secretary also reviewed the status of infrastructure development in newly established colleges and stressed expeditious completion of ongoing construction works.

During the meeting, the Vice-Chancellors presented updates on imple-

mentation of the 21 reform points identified in the Chief Secretaries' Conference. They also outlined their respective roadmaps and assured timely and effective execution of these reforms.

Earlier, Commissioner Secretary, HED, Ram Niwas Sharma presented a detailed overview of the higher education landscape in Jammu and Kashmir. He apprised the meeting of the existing faculty strength, vacancies, course offerings, seat matrix and enrolment trends across institutions.

It was informed that the Union Territory has 09 Universities and 152 Colleges, including 144 Government Degree Colleges, 03 Autonomous Colleges, 02 Engineering Colleges and 03 Private Grant-in-Aid Colleges. Additionally, there are 208 private colleges offering B.Ed, engineering, law and other programmes. It was informed that the total student enrolment across these institutions currently exceeds three lakh.

Regarding staffing, it was informed that out of 3,635 sanctioned teaching and 2,955 non-teaching posts, 3,425 teaching and 2,413 non-teaching positions are filled, with efforts underway to fill the remaining vacancies.

The meeting also held an in-depth university-wise review of key reform initiatives, including the launch of a Global Talent Return Scheme, engagement of Professors of Practice, mission mode faculty recruitment in institutions with

over 30 percent vacancies, development of delivery partnership agreements, curriculum reforms integrating emerging areas, adoption of unified digital platforms, apprenticeship-embedded degree programmes and cross-disciplinary frameworks.

Other major reform areas discussed included integration of skill courses as per UGC guidelines, implementation of vacancy-linked grants, promotion of foreign collaborations and campuses, training of at least 25 percent faculty in emerging technologies, regulatory streamlining, strengthening of quality and autonomy in colleges, development of innovation ecosystems through incubation centres, and increasing international student enrolment by 20 percent.

The reform agenda further envisages conversion of select HEIs into model finishing schools, enhancement of Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER), expansion of skill-based education, establishment of a multiversity, development of mega educational hubs and clusters, and setting up of research parks in both Jammu and Kashmir divisions.

The Chief Secretary reiterated the commitment of transforming the higher education ecosystem into a dynamic, inclusive and globally competitive sector, capable of producing skilled, innovative and employable youth by the institutions established across the districts of J&K.

## DC Srinagar reviews functioning of Aadhaar Centres, setting up of Centre of Excellence-CSC

**HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS JAMMU, MAR 28**

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo on Saturday reviewed the progress of Mandatory Biometric Updates for Aadhaar in a meeting held here at Meeting Hall of the DC Office Complex.

He also reviewed the functioning of Aadhaar Centres and the status of establishment of a Centre of Excellence under Common Services Centres (CSC) in the district.

The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner, Mir Imtiaz Ul Aziz, SP headquarter, Umar Shah, Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar, SDM East, Zubair Ahmad, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Umar Gulzar, District Social Welfare Officer, Dr Mukhtar Ahmad, District Statistics & Evaluation Officer, Shah Ismail Bangroo,



Chief Education Officer, District Informatics Officer, Medical Superintendents of various City Hospitals, all Tehsildars, Project Manager, UIDAI, District Coordinator CSC E-Governance and other concerned.

At the outset, the Deputy Commissioner was given a detailed overview of the progress on Mandatory Biometric Updates for Aad-

haar cases, particularly those involving applicants above 100 years of age. He also underscored the importance of data analysis to achieve time-bound Aadhaar saturation in the district. The DC further directed that all Aadhaar Centres be made fully functional to ensure greater convenience for the public.

While reviewing the status of infrastructure and preparedness for the establishment of the Centre of Excellence-CSC, the DC instructed the concerned Officers to complete all requisite arrangements and ensure that the Centre is made operational at the earliest to benefit the people.

The DC also stressed the importance of effective coordination among line departments and the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) to ensure seamless functioning of Aadhaar Centres and timely achievement of targets in the district.

## NTEP Pulwama organises Shivirs under TB Mukht Bharat Abhiyaan - 100 Days Campaign

**HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS JAMMU, MAR 28**

As part of intensified activities under the TB Mukht Bharat Abhiyaan - 100 Days Campaign, the National TB Elimination Programme (NTEP) Pulwama is conducting a series of Shivirs across the district, with a focused approach on screening vulnerable populations through Ayush-

man Arogya Mandirs (AAMs).

These outreach camps are being organised in identified high-risk areas to ensure early detection of tuberculosis (TB) cases among vulnerable groups, including the elderly, malnourished individuals, persons with co-morbidities, household contacts of TB patients, and other socio-economically disadvantaged sections of the popu-

lation.

During the Shivirs, active screening is being carried out through symptom identification, community interaction, and mobilisation of individuals for further diagnostic evaluation. Presumptive TB cases are being promptly referred to nearby health institutions for confirmatory testing, including X-ray examination and other advanced diagnostic facilities available

under the programme.

In addition to screening, the camps are serving as an important platform for generating awareness about TB symptoms, prevention, and the importance of adherence to complete treatment. Information regarding free diagnostic services, treatment, and nutritional support available under NTEP is also being disseminated among the public.

## 'Nasha Mukht Abhiyan' campaign held at SMC Headquarters

**HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS JAMMU, MAR 28**

In a significant initiative aimed at addressing the growing concern of substance abuse, the Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), in collaboration with the J&K Police Youth Development and Rehabilitation Centre, organised a "Nasha Mukht Abhiyan" (Drug-Free Campaign) at the SMC Headquarters, Karanagar.

The programme was inaugurated by the Commissioner, SMC, Fazlul Haseeb, who attended the event as the Chief Guest. The event was also attended by the Joint Commissioner (Administration), Nuzhat Qureshi, and Joint Commissioner, Suhail UI Islam.

The campaign was held to raise awareness about the harmful effects of drug abuse and to encourage collective action towards building a healthy and drug-free society.

While addressing the gathering, the Commissioner expressed serious concern over the rising incidence of substance abuse and its far-reaching consequences for individuals, families, and society at large.

He emphasised that drug addiction poses a serious social and public health challenge and called for co-ordinated and sustained efforts from government institutions, law enforcement agencies, civil society organisations, and the community to effectively curb the menace.

The Commissioner further highlighted the critical role of awareness and pre-



ventive interventions in addressing the issue, stating that initiatives such as the Nasha Mukht Abhiyan serve as important platforms for educating citizens about the severe health, psychological, and socio-economic consequences associated with substance abuse. He also stressed the need to actively engage youth through awareness programmes, counselling services, and rehabilitation support mechanisms to safeguard the future of society.

The awareness programme was coordinated and organised by the Health Officer, SMC, Dr. Fauzia Habib, as part of the Corporation's sustained

commitment to addressing critical public health and social challenges and sensitising communities about the increasing threat of drug addiction, particularly among the youth.

Officials from the J&K Police Youth Development and Rehabilitation Centre also interacted with the participants and shared valuable insights on preventive strategies, early identification of substance abuse, and the availability of counselling and rehabilitation facilities for individuals affected by addiction. They emphasised the importance of community participation, family support, and timely intervention in effectively addressing the challenge of drug

addiction.

The programme witnessed enthusiastic participation from SMC officers, officials, and other stakeholders, reflecting a strong collective commitment towards strengthening public awareness and supporting initiatives aimed at protecting society from the harmful effects of substance abuse.

The event concluded with participants taking a collective pledge to actively contribute towards eliminating the menace of drugs and to spread awareness within their respective communities, reaffirming a shared resolve to work together in building a healthier, safer, and drug-free society.

## ADDC Shopian chairs monthly District NCORD meeting

**HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS JAMMU, MAR 28**

Additional District Development Commissioner Shopian, Dr. Nasir Ahmed Lone today chaired the monthly District Level NCORD meeting to review the progress of ongoing anti-drug initiatives and measures aimed at curbing drug trafficking and substance abuse in the district.

At the outset, the ADDC assessed the status of enforcement and preventive measures and emphasized strengthening inter-departmental coordination to effectively tackle the drug menace.

The meeting also reviewed progress under the Nasha Mukht Bharat campaign and sought action taken reports from concerned departments.

Reviewing enforcement efforts, it was informed that drug enforcement has been intensified across the district. The ADDC directed for further strengthening tracing mechanisms to identify supply chains in the district.

Drug Control Department was instructed to ensure close monitoring of chemist shops and conduct

routine inspections to prevent misuse and illegal sale of substances.

On awareness and prevention, the ADDC instructed the Education Department to conduct regular awareness programmes in schools and colleges. Reviewing health interventions, the Health Department was directed to enhance counselling, training and treatment services.

## District Level Training for District, Charge officers for Census-2027 continues on Day 2 at Shopian

**SHOPIAN, MARCH 28:**

The second day of the District Level Phase-I training programme for District and Charge Officers for Census-2027 (Houselisting & Housing Census & Population Enumeration) was conducted today at the Meeting Hall, Mini Secretariat, Shopian.

During Day 2, the training commenced with detailed sessions on HLB (House Listing Block) carving through HLB Creator and preparation of layout maps. The programme further covered CMMS modules including training management, generation of appointment letters and ID cards, logistics, printing and data entry modules.

The participants were also trained on preparation of Village/Town/Charge Registers, followed by practical sessions on the use of dashboards in CMMS for monitoring purposes.

The concluding session focused on self-enumeration, including its process, demonstration and the role of informants, enumerators and supervisors. The sessions were conducted through theory, demonstration and practical exercises to ensure hands-on understanding and effective field-level implementation.



The training programme forms part of the preparatory activities for Census-2027, which is a constitutional and statutory exercise conducted under Article 246 (Union List) and the Census Act, 1948.

The officers were informed that Census is the most credible source of demographic and socio-economic data, covering population characteristics, economic activity, literacy, education, housing and household amenities, urbanization, migration, disability and other key indicators.

It provides grassroots-level information essential for planning and implementation of welfare schemes, resource allocation and delimitation of constituencies, thereby playing a vital role in nation-building.

It was highlighted that the Census will be conducted in two phases, with Phase-I (Houselisting & Housing Census) scheduled from 01 to 30 June 2026 and Phase-II (Population Enumeration) from 09 to 28 February 2027.

The officers were further briefed that Census-2027 marks a major shift towards digital data collection through the "Census 2027-HLO" mobile application.

Self-enumeration has also been introduced for the first time, wherein citizens can submit their own data digitally, which will be verified by enumerators before final submission.

The training was imparted by master trainers and resource persons including Joint Director, Arun Kumar (National Trainer), Assistant Director, Rohini Pokhrel (Nodal Officer), District Coordinator, Naveen Raghav (Census Officer Shopian) and District Coordinator, Ajay Singh (Census Officer Pulwama).

The programme witnessed participation of senior officers including ADDC, Dr. Nasir Ahmad Lone, ADC, Dr. Zakir Faaz, ACR, Shakoor Ahmad Dar, DSEO, Bilkeesa Zahoor, District Information Officer, Showkat Hussain Ganie, Tehsildars, CEO MC and other district and charge level officers and officials.