

DC Kathua reviews arrangements for Pulse Polio Campaign

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, JUNE 06

Deputy Commissioner Kathua, Rajesh Sharma, today chaired a meeting of the District Task Force to review preparedness for the National Immunization Day (NID) Pulse Polio Campaign scheduled to be held on June 28, 2026.

Chief Medical Officer Dr. Vijay Raina informed that 1,02,737 children in the 0-5 year age group have been targeted for administration of Oral Polio Vaccine (OPV) during the campaign. He further apprised that an estimated 1,30,476 vaccine doses would be required to achieve the desired coverage.

The meeting was informed that 561 vaccination booths would be established across the district and 2,244 booth team members deployed for the immunization drive. As part of the strategy to ensure complete coverage, 100 high-risk areas have been identified, while transit vaccination points have been planned to cover children on the move. Special focus will also be laid on migratory and nomadic populations.

It was further informed that after the booth-based



activity on June 28, house-to-house immunization and verification rounds would be conducted on June 29 and 30 to ensure that no eligible child is left out.

Reviewing the preparations, the Deputy Commissioner directed all departments to extend full support to the Health Department and ensure seamless coordination for the successful conduct of the campaign. He stressed the need for intensive IEC activities and active involve-

ment of educational institutions, community leaders and other stakeholders to maximize public participation. The Deputy Commissioner further directed officers to ensure adequate manpower deployment, maintenance of the cold chain, effective field-level supervision and focused coverage of high-risk and migratory population pockets. He emphasized meticulous micro-planning, close monitoring and timely reporting to achieve 100 percent immunization

coverage.

Calling upon all stakeholders to work in unison, the Deputy Commissioner underscored the importance of the campaign in sustaining the district's polio-free status and safeguarding every child against the disease.

IAS Probationer Nidhi; District Immunization Officer Dr. Vaasna; District Health Officer; Chief Education Officer; Block Medical Officers and other concerned officers attended the meeting.

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In a significant initiative aimed at strengthening educational leadership, child development, and women empowerment, the BDIKIDS Theatre in Education Foundation has formally constituted the BDIKIDS National Council of Advisors (BNCA) for the tenure 2026-2031, appointing Mr. Mumtaz Ahmed, IPS (Retired) as the Honorary Chairman of the Council.

The decision was taken during a high-level organizational meeting convened under the chairmanship of Mr. KK Bhardwaj, Chairman of the BDIKIDS Theatre in Education Foundation, at Jammu. The meeting was attended by Mr. Deepak Virdhi, Managing Director, and Mrs. Sudha Thakur, Director, who deliberated upon the Foundation's long-term educational vision and developmental framework. Several distinguished advisory members also participated virtually from their respective locations and extended their valuable consent, suggestions, and professional guidance for the constitution of the Council.

The newly constituted BDIKIDS National Council of Advisors (BNCA) brings together eminent personalities from the fields of governance, psychology, education, legal affairs, teacher training, arts & culture, and institutional administration to provide strategic guidance and professional expertise for educational and social development initiatives.

The following distinguished members have been nominated to serve on the Council:

Mr. Mumtaz Ahmed, IPS (Retd.) – Former IPS Offi-



cer, appointed as Honorary Chairman and Chief Advisory Incharge – Governance, Policy & Institutional Affairs.

Dr. Roshan Lal Dahiya – Professor of Psychology, University of Delhi, designated as Advisory Incharge – Child Psychology & Mental Wellbeing.

Dr. Ritu Sekhri – Department of Psychological Science, Christ University, NCR-Delhi, designated as Advisory Incharge – Psychological Sciences & Learning Development.

Dr. Arvinder Singh ANN – Former Additional Secretary, Jammu & Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture & Languages, designated as Advisory Incharge – Arts, Culture & Language Development.

Mr. Parshotam Dass Gouria – Retired Chief Education Officer and Former Principal, DIET, entrusted with the responsibility of Advisory Incharge – Teacher Training & Academic Administration.

Mr. Tanvir Ahmad Wani – Retired Senior Principal, designated as Advisory Incharge – School Leadership & Community Educational Development.

Mr. Rehmatullah Dev – Retired Senior Principal, appointed as Advisory In-

charge – Educational Administration & Institutional Guidance.

Adv. Balwan Singh – Advocate, High Court of Jammu & Kashmir, designated as Advisory Incharge – Legal Affairs, Compliance & Governance.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. KK Bhardwaj, Chairman of the Foundation, stated that the formation of BNCA represents a visionary step toward strengthening educational quality, institutional excellence, teacher empowerment, and community-based educational transformation. He emphasized that the Foundation remains committed to creating meaningful opportunities in the areas of child development, women empowerment, teacher training, educational innovation, psychological wellbeing, and skill development.

Mr. Deepak Virdhi, Managing Director, highlighted the Foundation's commitment to bridging educational gaps through innovative learning approaches, teacher capacity building, and sustainable community engagement. He remarked that the newly constituted advisory council would significantly contribute toward enhancing the quality and outreach of educational initiatives.

Mrs. Sudha Thakur, Director, emphasized the importance of nurturing inclusive learning environments and empowering women through education, awareness, and skill-based opportunities. She reiterated the Foundation's commitment to holistic child development and community welfare. In his remarks, Mr. Mumtaz Ahmed, IPS (Retd.), Honorary Chairman of BNCA, expressed confidence that collective expertise and collaborative leadership would play a crucial role in strengthening educational systems and ensuring sustainable developmental opportunities for children, educators, women, and society at large.

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The Foundation reiterated that the principal objective of the BDIKIDS National Council of Advisors (BNCA) shall be to support and strengthen initiatives related to child development, women empowerment, educational excellence, teacher training, psychological wellbeing, community participation, and socially impactful educational interventions.

SCERT Jammu concludes 3-Day Workshop on Strengthening Pedagogical Autonomy of Teachers

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JAMMU, JUNE 06

The State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) J&K, Divisional Office Jammu successfully concluded a three-day workshop on "Strengthening Pedagogical Autonomy of Teachers for Designing Dynamic and Flexible Learning Experiences."

The workshop, organized by the Department of Teacher Education, was in direct alignment with the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCF-SE) 2023 and SARTHAQ Task No. 157.

The programme brought together teachers from all ten districts of Jammu Division along with faculty members from various DIETs, providing a collaborative platform to explore innovative, learner-centred and context-responsive pedagogical practices.

The workshop was formally inaugurated with the lighting of the ceremonial lamp, followed by a formal welcome address extended by Ms. Arti Gupta, Head, Department of Teacher Education, who highlighted the significance of empowering teachers as reflective practitioners and autonomous professionals. Ms. Kavya Sharma, Coordinator of the programme, presented the concept note, outlining the rationale, objectives and expected outcomes of the workshop. An overview of the programme was presented by Vinod Bhat, Head, AU-II.

The inaugural session



concluded with an insightful address by Joint Director, SCERT, Divisional Office Jammu, who emphasized the pivotal role of teacher autonomy in fostering meaningful learning experiences and nurturing critical thinking, creativity and innovation among learners. She underscored the need for shifting classroom practices from textbook dependency towards competency-based, inclusive and experiential learning approaches. She further emphasized that students' interest and engagement largely depend on the teacher, who must be well-prepared, reflective and empowered with pedagogical autonomy to adopt diverse teaching approaches that cater to learners' needs and foster meaningful learning experiences.

Over the course of three days, participants engaged in a series of expert-led sessions covering diverse themes including Pedagogical Autonomy in the context of NEP 2020, Art Integrated Pedagogy, Digital Integration, Toy-Based Pedagogy, Project-Based

Learning, Inclusive Education, Flexible Pedagogical Pathways and Student Counselling and Well-being. The sessions were conducted by distinguished resource persons including Amit Sharma, Yogesh Kumar, Vivek Jandial, Shazia Koser, Dr. Sunita and Dr. Rohini Sharma.

The workshop adopted highly participatory methodologies such as collaborative group work, brainstorming sessions, peer review, lesson plan redesign activities and experience-sharing sessions. Special attention was given to the unique educational needs of Jammu & Kashmir, including multi-grade classrooms, the educational needs of migratory communities and inclusive education for CWSN. A significant outcome of the workshop was the collaborative development of recommendations aimed at informing future SCERT guidelines on guided pedagogical autonomy.

In a special intermission to mark World Environment Day, participants paused to take a collective

pledge, committing to participate actively in environmental conservation and sustainable development by embedding green practices into their daily routines.

The workshop culminated in a valedictory session during which participants shared their feedback, highlighting their experiences, key learnings, insights and professional gains from the programme. The session was followed by the distribution of certificates and a reflection on the innovative pedagogical models and action plans developed during the workshop. The event was strengthened by the dedicated coordination and support of the organising team. A formal vote of thanks was presented by Dr. Sunita, Associate Coordinator.

The workshop stands as a significant step towards strengthening teacher autonomy and contributing meaningfully towards the realisation of the goals of Viksit Bharat and Sustainable Development Goal 4 on Quality Education.

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Deputy Commissioner Kathua Rajesh Sharma today chaired a meeting to review the progress achieved under the Smart Metering Programme and the Prime Minister Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana (PM-SSBY) in the district.

The Deputy Commissioner took a detailed review of the targets assigned and achievements recorded under both flagship initiatives aimed at improving power sector efficiency and promoting clean energy adoption.

Regarding the Smart Metering Programme, it was informed that against the monthly target of 8,740 consumer connections, smart meters have been installed on 7,138 connections so far.

The DC directed the concerned officers to expedite the pace of installations and ensure that the remaining targets are



achieved within the prescribed timeline. He stressed the need for effective field-level monitoring, public awareness and close coordination among implementing agencies to avoid delays.

The DC emphasized that smart metering is a key reform initiative for improving energy efficiency, reducing transmission and distribution losses and ensuring accurate billing. He instructed the officers to address bottlenecks and work in mission mode to achieve full coverage as per

the implementation plan. The meeting also reviewed the progress of the Prime Minister Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana. It was informed that against the target of 4,100 rooftop solar installations, 2,031 installations have been completed in the district so far.

The DC directed the concerned departments to intensify awareness campaigns regarding the benefits of rooftop solar systems and the incentives available under the scheme. He stressed the importance of facilitating

eligible households through simplified procedures and timely approvals so that more beneficiaries can avail the benefits of the flagship programme.

Rajesh Sharma called upon all stakeholders to make concerted efforts for achieving the prescribed targets under both schemes in a time-bound manner. Among others, IAS Probationer Nidhi, ACR Vishav Partap Singh, CPO Ranjeet Thakur, XEN JPDCL Mohammed Shafi and other concerned officials were also present.

Formulation of GIS-Based Master Plan for Udhampur Town discussed

UDHAMPUR, JUNE 06: A preliminary meeting of stakeholders was today held here at the Conference Hall DC Office Complex to discuss the modalities for preparation of the Draft local area plan under the GIS-based Master Plan for Udhampur town and its adjoining areas.

The meeting was attended virtually by MLA Udhampur West Pawan Kumar Gupta and MLA Chenani Balwant Singh Mankotia, former DDC Council Chairman Lal Chand.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Prem Singh, PO Poshan Subash Dogra, Assistant Commissioner Revenue Dr. Umesh Shan, Chief Planning

Officer Uttam Singh, district officers and other stakeholders were present during the meeting.

Dr. Sakshi, representing the Project Coordinator from the Centre of Urban Planning for Capacity Building, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, also joined the meeting virtually. She delivered a detailed PowerPoint presentation outlining the roadmap of the project and the key parameters for formulation of the Local Area Plan.

The presentation focused on planned urban growth, environmental sustainability, improvement in quality of life, economic prosperity and the



development of efficient infrastructure and public services. It was informed that Udhampur town and its peripheral areas meeting the pre-

scribed parameters would be incorporated into the final Master Plan after taking into consideration the suggestions and inputs of elected

representatives and stakeholders.

The meeting was further informed that a comprehensive survey process would soon be initiated for the collection of vital data required for scientific and evidence-based planning. The identified gaps and issues would subsequently be placed in the public domain to seek suggestions and feedback before finalisation of the plan.

MLA Udhampur West stressed the need to address various pressing urban issues through the planning process. He underscored the importance of meticulous and people-centric planning, stating that the pro-

posed plan should be formulated in a manner that strengthens urban infrastructure without adversely affecting existing facilities and the people dependent upon them. He also called for an extensive, data-driven survey to ensure effective and sustainable planning.

MLA Chenani emphasized the need to take into account the developmental requirements of the areas adjoining Udhampur town to ensure their systematic and balanced growth in the future. He stressed the importance of wide publicity and called for seeking inputs and suggestions from all stakeholders.