

## **L-G Vinai Kumar Saxena reviews functioning of Drug Deaddiction Centres in Ladakh**

### ***Orders massive crackdown on drug suppliers, integrated rehabilitation support and intensified anti-drug awareness campaign***

**Leh, May 27:** In the wake of the alarming rise in cases of drug abuse in Ladakh and the growing concerns around it, Lieutenant Governor, Shri Vinai Kumar Saxena, today chaired a comprehensive meeting with senior government officials, members of civil society organisations, religious organisations and NGOs to review the situation and the functioning of Drug Deaddiction Centres (DDACs) in Ladakh.

In recent months, there has been an alarming rise in drug abuse cases in Ladakh, particularly among youth, minors and even girls. A large number of migrant labourers, too, have been found indulging in substance abuse.

During the meeting, the LG was informed that since April 2025, the Psychiatry OPD at SNM Hospital, Leh, registered 101 new opioid-related cases with 237 follow-up cases, 25 cannabis-related new cases with 39 follow-up cases, and 15 polysubstance abuse cases with 40 follow-up cases. It was also informed that 64 substance abuse patients tested positive for Hepatitis C.

During the deliberations, the youth wing president of Ladakh Buddhist Association (LBA) pointed out the unavailability of hard liquor in the liquor stores, due to which many individuals were increasingly turning towards substance abuse and narcotic drugs. He suggested expanding the product range and making hard liquors available in the existing wine shops. Further, psychiatrists also highlighted cases where individuals habituated to daily alcohol consumption often displayed violent and delirium-like behaviour in the absence of alcohol in Ladakh, and were not responding effectively to medication. Taking note of this, L-G assured to review the existing excise policy in Ladakh.

Taking a strict note of the situation, L-G Shri Saxena issued a slew of directions, which include:

- Identifying and dismantling the supply chain of narcotic substances. Ladakh Police to adopt a zero-tolerance policy against drug suppliers and traffickers.
- Random checking of vehicles at key entry points into Ladakh, including Zoji-La and Sarchu, to prevent the smuggling of narcotic substances into the region.
- Random search of local taxis to be carried out. Vehicles to be impounded if taxi drivers are found indulging in drug trafficking.
- Constant monitoring and surveillance at vulnerable areas, including schools and colleges, and tourist places.
- The emergency helpline number “112” to function as an integrated helpline for parents and patients seeking rehabilitation and treatment support.
- Wide publication of the helpline no. 112, to encourage affected families to seek timely assistance.
- Constitution of dedicated teams comprising a social worker, nurse and attendant to respond to calls made on the helpline number.
- Concerned DDACs would facilitate the transportation of patients through a dedicated vehicle for treatment and rehabilitation.
- Drug Deaddiction Centres would be rechristened with a more suitable and socially sensitive name.
- Separate facilities and rooms would also be created for female patients and juveniles at DDACs and rehabilitation centres.
- Collating comprehensive and consolidated data on substance abuse from hospitals, civil society organisations and private clinics to prepare a comprehensive database of patients, to formulate an effective long-term strategy to tackle drug abuse.
- Introducing skill development and vocational training programmes for recovering patients to help them reintegrate into society and earn sustainable livelihoods after discharge.
- Mass awareness campaign against drug abuse across Ladakh, June 1 onwards.

“Drug menace is a serious threat to the future of our youth and society. We must work collectively and relentlessly to eliminate this challenge from Ladakh. Have directed the DGP to take strict action against drug suppliers and peddlers, while at the same time ensuring counselling, treatment, rehabilitation and social reintegration for affected individuals,” L-G Shri Saxena said. The L-G also directed authorities to maintain strict vigil in vulnerable areas, including schools and colleges, and emphasised the need to sensitise parents through regular support group meetings and awareness programmes.

The L-G was informed that DDACs are also conducting awareness camps, workshops, peer education programmes and outreach activities under preventive initiatives. Through various outreach programmes, more than 16,000 people have been reached, while 337 OPD patients have received treatment, and 53 patients have recovered successfully. Several pledge programmes were also organised under the Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyaan to promote a drug-free society.

It was also decided to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Mahabodhi Karuna Charitable Hospital for the utilisation of its facilities for the rehabilitation of substance abuse patients. Meditation and retreat-based healing sessions would also be introduced at the facility.



