

Chief Secretary chairs review meeting on Drug De-addiction and Rehabilitation in Ladakh

Leh, May 19, 2026: Chief Secretary, Union Territory of Ladakh, Shri Ashish Kundra, today chaired a high-level meeting to review the current status of drug addiction, rehabilitation measures, awareness initiatives, and enforcement actions in the Union Territory. The meeting focused on strengthening the de-addiction framework through coordinated efforts involving health institutions, police, education departments, social welfare agencies, and civil society organizations.

Ms. Padma Angmo, Consultant Psychiatrist, informed the meeting that opioid-related cases in Ladakh have shown a concerning rise, with 101 new cases reported during the past year and 237 follow-up cases currently under treatment. She further stated that patients suffering from Hepatitis-C linked complications are being provided medicines and diagnostic tests free of cost, though many patients fail to return for regular follow-up consultations.

Ms. Padma Angmo emphasized that awareness programmes conducted so far are beginning to show positive impact and stressed the need to further normalize treatment at de-addiction centres by removing the stigma associated with seeking help. She noted that one of the major challenges is the lack of regular follow-up by patients after initial treatment and counselling. She also expressed concern over the increasing number of female substance abuse cases and recommended the formation of dedicated female outreach and counselling teams to facilitate easier access to support services.

The Chief Secretary reviewed the functioning and occupancy status of de-addiction facilities in Leh and Kargil districts. He also assessed the status of cases being handled at the District De-addiction and Counselling Centres (DDACs), including treatment capacity and rehabilitation mechanisms. Shri Kundra emphasized that greater focus must now shift from data collection to concrete solutions and long-term intervention strategies.

The Chief Secretary directed the Police Department to strengthen action against drug peddlers and improve enforcement mechanisms, questioning the continued rise in cases despite ongoing operations. He also stressed the importance of bridging gaps in treatment accessibility and rehabilitation support systems.

Reviewing the role of NGOs and community organizations, Shri Kundra instructed that de-addiction centres should function under a structured and integrated framework with proper medical supervision. He also discussed expansion of bed capacity and rehabilitation infrastructure with the concerned departments.

Secretary, Social Welfare Department, Shri Shashanka Ala, who joined the meeting virtually, informed that arrangements are being made for additional facilities at Mahabodhi Hospital. The Chief Secretary directed the concerned departments to prepare a comprehensive integrated action plan within one week, including a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for coordinated intervention. He also instructed for the establishment of a dedicated helpline number to facilitate easier public access to counselling and rehabilitation services. Emphasizing community participation, he suggested that trained teams should conduct home visits for counselling and early intervention wherever required.

Shri Kundra further directed the Education Department to intensify awareness campaigns among parents and students through Parent-Teacher Meetings (PTMs), schools, colleges, and other educational platforms. He called for special awareness drives, including posters and social media campaigns, to spread information regarding prevention, symptoms, counselling, and treatment facilities.

The Chief Secretary also reviewed the status of night patrolling and enforcement measures and instructed that a comprehensive follow-up meeting be convened within one week involving LBA, religious organizations, NGOs, and other stakeholders. He emphasized that the strategy must focus on three major pillars- awareness and dissemination, prevention and police prosecution, and treatment and rehabilitation management. The suggestion of establishing a mobile team for homecare facility was also discussed and endorsed.

The meeting was attended by Secretary, PHE & IFC, Shri Shurbir Singh; Secretary, School Education, Ms. Bhanu Prabha; DIG Leh-Kargil Range, Dr. Kaushal Sharma; Consultant Psychiatrist, Ms. Padma Angmo; representatives from NGOs; and officers from concerned departments.

It was agreed that drug abuse is on the rise and people don't come forth on account of the stigma attached to the issue. Chief Secretary directed that a comprehensive action plan be prepared for a review and discussion at the level of Honourable Lieutenant Governor within ten days.

