Identify vulnerable groups, conduct regular testing for early detection of TB: Sakeena asks DCs

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo, on Thursday asked the Deputy Commissioners to identify vulnerable groups in their respective districts and conduct regular testing at these places for early detection of Tuberculosis (TB).

The Minister passed on these directions while chairing a high-level meeting held to review progress on implemenof100-Day tation Tuberculosis Elimination Campaign across Jammu and Kashmir.

Secretary Health and Medical Education, Dr. Syed Abid Rasheed Shah; Mission Director, National Health Mission; Deputy Commissioners of all districts; Director Finance Health and Medical Education; Director Health Services Jammu/Kashmir; Director Coordination New Medical Colleges; Principals of all Government Medical Colleges; CMOs of all districts and other concerned officers also attended the meeting, either in person or through video conferencing.

During the meeting, the Minister impressed upon the Deputy Commissioners and respective CMOs to intensify testing and early detection activities, par-



Minister for Health and Medical Education Sakeena Itoo chairing a meeting

tricts so that they also can achieve the status of TB free districts. She also instructed the health officials and district administrators to increase the frequency of screenings, conduct aggressive outreach programs and enhance community participation to curb spread of the disease effectively. "Involve PRIs, ULBs and local religious preachers into the campaign as they have maximum reach to far off areas as well", Sakeena said.

The Minister further called for identifying vulnerable groups in all districts, whether TB free or not. She also called for regular screening in TB free declared districts so that the TB is not relapsing there. "Continuous testing and active surveillance are essential to prevent reemergence and ensure the long-term success of elimination efforts", she maintained.

cers, particularly both the Directors of health services, to stay vigilant, conduct routine screenings and engage with at-risk populations to detect any undiagnosed cases

While reviewing different

aspects of 100 days TB Campaign, Elimination Sakeena Itoo called for deployment of mobile testing vans for door-to-door screenings in far off areas for TB testing. "Strengthen diagnostic infrastructure at the grassroots level as it is imperative for maintaining a healthy society". Sakeena said. She called for enhanced coordination among the district TB officers, ASHA workers, Anganwadi workers, local health units, local NGOs and Mohalla Committees to reinforce participation in TB prevention strategies.

The Minister also called for launching comprehensive

oration with schools, colleges

and local self-help groups to

educate people on symptoms

During the meeting, MD

NHM gave a detailed presen-

tation on the progress on

implementation of 100 days

TB Elimination Campaign

across Jammu and Kashmir.

He informed that the cam-

paign aligns with Union

achieving TB-free India by

2025 by accelerating TB

detection, treatment and

eradication efforts across

The Minister also assessed

measures being taken by

respective district administra-

tions and health department

regarding the fight against

drug menace across Jammu

and Kashmir. She called upon

the Deputy Commissioners

for maximum deterrence in

coordination with law enforce-

ment agencies so that the

vision of

Government's

country.

and preventive measures.

The Minister asked the Deputy Commissioners for formation of squads in collaboration with Colleges and Higher educational institutions to conduct regular surprise inspections in these places. "Elimination of drug menace requires a collaborative approach, involving government agencies, healthcare providers and the general public. We need to work in cohesion in ensuring that our society is free of this menace", she stated.

ace, which is destroying

future of our youth.

She reiterated that the Omar Abdullah led government is committed to safeguard the health and wellbeing of its citizens. "By addressing both the root causes and consequences of drug abuse, the government aims to foster healthier and more prosperous future for Jammu and Kashmir", Sakeena maintained.

The Minister further asked all Deputy Commissioners for rehabilitation of drug abuse victims by giving them skill and self-employment training in different courses during their time in drug de-addiction centres so that they can have employment avenues after rehabilitation. She also asked them for augmentation of infrastructure in their respective district so that this menace can be dealt with

JKGPA delegation meets Health Minister, submits demands

JAMMU: A delegation of

Jammu Kashmir Government Pharmacists Association (JKGPA), led by its President Bharat Bhushan Bhagat, along with Sushil President of JKMEF and Member of the Pharmacy Council of India, and Merajudin, of JKGPA Chairman Kashmir Province, met with the Health Minister Sakeena Itoo to present a series of demands concerning government pharmacists. Pharmacists in many Indian states have had their designation changed to Pharmacy Officer. The delegation urged the government to adopt the same nomenclature for pharmacists in Jammu and Kashmir, noting that the matter has been pending for years.

Citing Jammu Kashmir Government order no. 457HME of 2023 dated June 2, 2023, which created the post of Technical Officer Pharmacy in GMC Jammu, the association demanded the creation of similar posts in all District and Sub-District Hospitals to ensure fair treatment of pharmacists in the health

Many pharmacist positions remain unfilled across various institutions in Jammu and Kashmir, ed an increase in Junior



JKMEF meeting with the Health Minister Sakeena Itoo.

leading to staff shortages and affecting healthcare delivery. The association emphasized the need for urgent recruitment to improve health services.

In line with the

Pharmacy Act of 1948, the

delegation called for phar-

macy education up to the graduate level to be regulated by the Jammu Kashmir Pharmacy Council instead of the Jammu Kashmir Paramedical Council. They urged the formation of a dedicated board to oversee pharmacy education and examinations. The delegation sought the creation of new posts such as Block Pharmacy Officer, District Pharmacy Officer, and Senior Pharmacist at Primary Health Centers (PHCs) and Community

Health Centers (CHCs).

Additionally, they request-

Pharmacist posts at Non-Tribal Primary Health Centers (NTPHCs), CHCs. Sub-District Hospitals (SDHs), and District Hospitals to enhance medical care services.

Retired pharmacists previously received RMP registration, but the practice has been discontinued for unknown reasons. The delegation urged the government to reinstate this registration to ensure justice for retired pharmacists.

The Health Minister, Sakeena Itoo attentively listened to the deputation and assured that their demands reviewed.

Other members accompanving the delegation included Surjeet Rajan, Tejinder Singh (Public Secretary, JKMEF), Sahil, Vinod Kumar, Madan Lal Sharma, Bahadur Singh,

Along with theme NVD-2025 let us also take to Slogan new voters were made to raise in 2011

Very 25th January is observed in India as National Voters Day (NVD) as per decision taken in 2011 by Election Commission of India [25th Jan is also foundation day (25-01-1950) of Election Commission of India] with the objective of increasing voter enrolment & awareness. In 2011 the newly enrolled electors were given a badge with the slogan "Proud to be a Voter-Ready to Vote" and were made to pledge: "We, the citizens of India, having abiding faith in democracy, hereby pledge to uphold the democratic traditions of our country and the dignity of free, fair and peaceful elections, and to vote in every election fearlessly and without being influenced by considerations of religion, race, caste, community, language or any inducement". Theme for NVD 2025 has also been " Nothing like Voting . 1 vote for sure", which was also the theme for NVD 2024 &for NVD $2023 \dots$

Election Commission of India had vide communication 491 /ECI/LET/FUNC/SVEEP-I/NVD/2024 Dated 2nd Jan addressed to Chief Secretaries of All States/ UTs requested to direct all staff & officers in Government Departments/PSUs take the NVD *pledge at around 11:00 AM or at any suitable time during the day, on 25th January,2025, *<"We, the citizens of India, having abiding faith in democracy, hereby pledge to uphold the democratic traditions of our country and the dignity of free, fair and peaceful elections, and to vote in every election fearlessly and without being influenced by considerations of religion, race, caste, community, language or any inducement">.It is not out of place to mention here that , though late, it was decided in 2011 only to regularly celebrate (rather we should use the term 'observe') NVD every year by also placing a theme in common domain & so there after also have been :Theme 2022 : 'Making Elections Inclusive, Accessible and Participative Theme 2021: "Making Our Voters Empowered, Vigilant, Safe and Informed" Theme 2020: "Electoral Literacy for Stronger Democracy" Theme 2019: "No Voter to be left behind" Theme "Assessable Elections" Theme 2017: "Empowering Young and Future Voters" Theme

2016: "Inclusive and qualita-

tive participation" Theme

2015: "Easy Registration,

Easy Correction" Theme-2014

Ethical Voting Theme 2013-

"inclusion'.

A Look Through

Vow to defeat suchwho believe in exploiting economic compulsions of 'others'This Jan 25 2025 WE have celebrated 15th NVD. Vow to defeat 'those' voter seekers who believe in exploiting economic compulsions of 'others'. Reach educationally & economically weaker citizens to make them aware of their vote power.

This 2025 NVD is the 15th National Voters Day and so this voters day it is time to introspect how far the "efforts' have been able to make one feel meaningfully concerned about one's right to vote as aduty towards the fellow citizens so as to give a 'selfless' democratically elected parliamentary system of governance and! Constitution of India (i

Bharat) as a was adopted on 26-11-1947 has been the modern world's most deliberated on & elaborately drafted document for a sovereign democratic republic where in provision had also been kept for modifications/ amendments after the same is put in practice to comply with the needs / clarification which might not have been noted that closely while drafting the constitution but of course without going in conflict with the basic structure/spirits as enshrined there in which do reflect from the preamble, fundamental rights & directive principles; with Supreme Court there to subject the actions of the executive & legislature to review for being within the spirits of constitution and Institution of President of India kept there as part of Parliament to protect, preserve and defend the Constitution on oath in terms of Art-60 of the Constitution which along with Art-394 became effective from 26-11-1949 itself (the day Constitution of India was adopted & enacted by the Constituent Assembly to constitute India into a Sovereign Democratic Republic) where as other articles became effec-26-01-1950 Commencement day, the day

we celebrate as Republic day). There has also been the need for carrying on with some process of promoting awareness in every citizen about the power of one's vote& importance of must casting the vote during elections but with utmost care so as to elect a representative with honest intentions to serve the people of India. So has been the decision of ECI to celebrate the NVD in 2011 (though late). Ethical Voting has also been the Theme- 2014 which is spirited in voting without fear / without racial and or communal considerations, voting without economic allurement and being truthfully serious about a candidate's suitability.

Every voter citizen must reiterate pledge to be the first to stand in the 'Q' at any opportunity for voting and considerations before a voter could be like (i) how to select a candidate to vote ;(ii) should one vote in the national interest or only more for self interest keeping in view socio communal yardsticks and (iii) should or should not vote for a candidate who has been changing loyalties or has recently changed loyalties after being once elected? These questions particularly test with Theme-2014 "Ethical Voting"

So often people are found discussing in private about the political parties also depending upon some alleged criminals / alleged economic offenders for success during elections.

It was somewhere in late 1980s that Shri Rajiv Gandhi was reported as having being asked by a lady that why does political parties like Congress give tickets to persons with criminal background / economic allegations. Mr Gandhi had been quoted as having said that a person who claims a ticket with hundreds of locals cannot be denied ticket without detailed case study/giving opportunity to defend but the same person when comes to seek vote from "you", if bad, can be rejected by a voter without explaining the reasons for denial. So voter citizen ,is a 'supreme' judge. Some people have also been suggesting for introducing a provision for negative voting but instead the provision of NOTA (None out of Above) has been introduced.

Those who proposed have not been satisfied with NOTA but Political parties did not oppose(may be since NOTA puts no bad candidate to relative disadvantage).A common voter is less supposed to know real negatives of all candidates so NOTA may appear messaging that said voter does not believe in electoral system before him. So still there is scope to remove NOTA. It would be better to give voter the option to elect someone or to ensure that a bad candidate (as per one's knowledge) is put to some disadvantage by casting a negative vote by pressing a button marked as NTC (Not This Candidate)i.e NTC will bea negative vote there by reducing his / her votes by one. So, there should be two buttons with every candidate sym-

bol i.e YES and /NTC.

This day we have very very few social or community bodies independent of the political masters to guide the common masses as regards their rights and jurisdictions over the public representatives.

Not only replacing NOTA with NTC, let us along with carrying on with the theme " Nothing like Voting, I vote for sure" also go back to the slogan on the badge given to the newly enrolled voters in 2011 and vow to carry with that so as to defeat those vote seekers who are being accused of believing in exploiting the economic needs of some voter citizens like indirectly buying their vote with material allurements like shoes, saris, cash etc. Reach the educationally & economically weaker citizens & make them aware of the power of Some from the present

"politician family" may not like interest of Indian people / Nation process must be started in this direction. We Indians have to save the soul of the democratic system that Indian "elders' had conceived &drafted as the constitution of India. People must rise above all personal interests to ensure that their elected representatives are forced / impressed upon to see that among other things the provision of NOTA (none of the above) is replaced with NTC (Not this Candidate).

(The writer is Senior Journalist and analyst J&K

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: As the United Nations Organization (UNO) has declared 2025 as the international year Cooperatives under the theme 'Cooperatives build a better Minister world'. Cooperative, Agriculture Production and Rural Development departments, Javed Ahmad Dar, on Thursday said that the Jammu and Kashmir has made significant strides in strengthening Cooperative sector for welfare and progress of farmers and rural communities

He said that special focus is being given on the cooperative sector globally and J&K is also keenly focusing on promotion of the sector and all serious efforts shall be made under the theme, decided by UNO.

The Minister said that computerisation of 537 Primary Agricultural Cooperative Societies (PACS) at a cost of Rs. 1746.27 lakh has significantly strengthened cooperative sector in Jammu and Kashmir.

Highlighting the importance of digitization of PACS, the Minister said that it has enhanced operational efficiency, improved transparency and promoted financial inclusion, ensuring better service delivery for farmers and rural communities

Under the Central Ministry, a series of transformative initiatives including UT level Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP), have been imple-

JK makes significant strides in strengthening

Cooperative sector: Javed Dar

Minister for Cooperative Javed Ahmad Dar at a meeting.

mented to modernize and expand cooperative institutions across the region. Improving healthcare access to the people, establishment of 46 Pradhan Mantri Jan Aushadhi Kendras (PMJAKs) through PACS have been established, making quality medicines available at affordable rates and reducing healthcare costs for rural pop-

The Minister added that the further strengthened with the of 144 Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samriddhi Kendras (PMKSKs), which act as one-stop agricultural service hubs. "These centers

ADMISSIONS OPEN

provide farmers with highquality seeds, fertilizers and expert advisory services to boost agricultural productivity and sustainability and empower farmers with the necessary resources and knowledge,' asserted the Minister. In a major step towards dig-

ital inclusion, 480 Common Service Centers (CSCs) have been established through PACS, bridging the ruralurban digital divide. "These Cooperative network has been centers offer access to online government services, e-governance platforms, banking, and financial assistance, ensuring seamless service delivery to rural populations" Minister said.

Additionally, 61 PACS have been transformed into Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) to enhance market access and bargaining power for farmers

The Minister said that six PACS have been identified for godown construction to enhance storage capacity, minimise post-harvest losses and improve food security besides comprehensive updation of cooperative society records on the National Cooperative Database (NCD) Portal, ensuring greater transparency and efficiency.

He added that successful

efforts are being made for revival of defunct cooperatives besides modernisation. About six cooperative super bazaars have been upgraded with seven more planned for construction. Besides, Thirteen cooperative mini-super bazaars are also under development at block headquarters. Infrastructure impro have been extended to the education sector, with smart classrooms and science labs established in five cooperative schools, added the Minister.

Special campaign launched to celebrate birth centenary of Bharat Ratna Atal Bihari Vajpayee



BJP District Jammu President, Adv Rajesh Gupta speaking in a meeting

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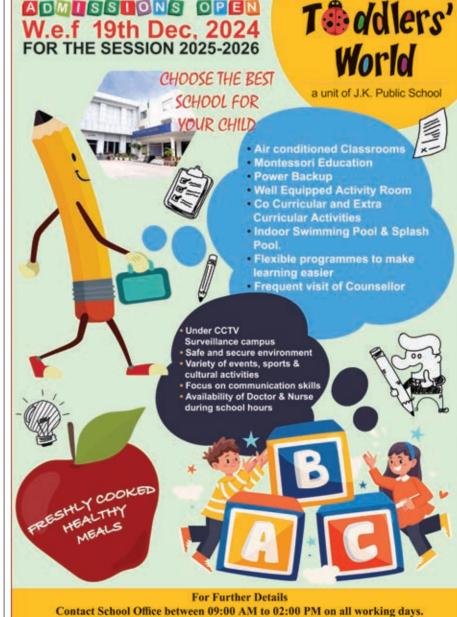
JAMMU: A meeting was held on Thursday under the chairmanship of District Jammu President Advocate Rajesh Gupta, in which the Bharatiya Janata Party has started a special campaign to make the birth centenary year of Bharat Ratna Atal Bihari Vajpayee memorable

Under this campaign, photos, videos, motivational experiences and speeches related to Atal ji will be compiled, which will run till 25th December

Atalji's dream of developed

India is currently being realized by the Modi and Yogi government. District and Mandal level social media teams will also be added to take the program to a wider level.

The main objective of this initiative is to take Atalji's thoughts and ideals to every household, so that the new generation can get inspiration from his personality and contribution. District convener Sunil Kumar Raina, Ramesh Gupta, Ravi Sharma, Vikrant Gupta and Rahul, five Mandal presidents were also present in the meeting.



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