

KU V-C to head 18-member working group on disaster management

Panel to suggest measures to help reduce risk to life, properties in the event of disasters

Srinagar, Dec 13: The University of Kashmir has constituted a high-level working group, headed by Vice-Chancellor Prof Talat Ahmad, to share amongst stakeholders all disaster-related knowledge and information generated in the varsity to help devise effective disaster management strategies and frameworks across the mountainous region of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh.

This is one of the several working groups being headed by Prof Talat to help the government and society in developing strategies aimed at reducing risk to people and infrastructure in the eventuality of any disaster.

The 18-member working group comprises top-notch administrators from the UT government, civil society members and eminent academics and researchers from University of Kashmir and other relevant institutions.

Prof Talat said the academia, in partnership with other institutions, will continue to initiate and strengthen measures so that people of the region, despite being highly vulnerable to disasters, can manage disasters with least costs to life and infrastructure.

Previously, the VC said, the University of Kashmir has been actively involved in suggesting measures for disaster management in other states like Uttarakhand during the 2013 disaster in Kedarnath.

Prof Shakil Romshoo, Dean of Research at KU—a member of the working group—said the University has generated a plethora of knowledge about various disasters that should inform policymaking on disaster management in the UTs of J&K and Ladakh.

“The University has the expertise and tools to help the UT government in developing robust disaster risk-reduction plans to respond better to disaster emergencies and to minimise loss of life and property in case of any eventuality,” he said.

The panel, according to its Terms of Reference (ToRs), will also suggest a mechanism to build a voluntary pool of disaster management activists in all institutions/agencies for an effective response system on the ground, alongside framing an action plan for building a new generation of disaster-conscious citizenry to eventually establish a culture of disaster preparedness among the people.

The working group members include CEO, Economic Reconstruction Agency J&K; Vice-Chairman, SDA, J&K Government; Chief Engineer, Irrigation and Flood Control Department; Chief Engineer, Border Roads Organisation (Beacon); Mr Amir Ali, Director, Disaster Management Department, J&K; Mr Sonam Lotus, Director, IMD, Srinagar; Dr G M Dar, Director Disaster Management Institute, IMPA; Prof A R Dar, Department of Civil Engineering NIT Srinagar; Mr Khurshid A Ganai, former IAS officer, J&K (civil society); Prof Shamim A Shah, HoD Geography Department, KU; Prof Ghulam Jeelani, HoD, Earth Sciences, KU; Dr Peerzada Amin, Department of Sociology KU; Dr Salima Jan, Director EMRC KU; Dr Mussavir Ahmad, Coordinator NSS KU, and Dr Rakesh Chandra, Department of Earth Sciences KU (Member Secretary).