

KU begins week-long Urban Action School 2025 workshop



Srinagar Oct 14: The Department of Social Work, University of Kashmir (KU), in collaboration with ActionAid Association India, inaugurated the Urban Action School 2025 on the theme “Working People and the City.” The week-long programme provides a platform for researchers, practitioners, and students to engage with the lived realities of urban life, work, and planning in modern cities.

The initiative aims to create a platform for critical dialogue on urbanisation, planning, and the everyday challenges faced by working people in cities. It seeks to encourage young researchers and policymakers to engage with issues of equity, housing, mobility, and the right to inclusive urban spaces.

Speaking at the inaugural session, Vice-Chancellor KU, Prof. Nilofer Khan, said, “Urban development must prioritise people’s needs and social justice alongside infrastructure growth. Universities have an important role in shaping ideas that make cities more humane and inclusive.”

Dean Academic Affairs KU, Prof. Shariefuddin Pirzada, highlighted the importance of interdisciplinary learning for understanding complex urban systems, while Registrar KU, Prof. Naseer Iqbal, noted that such collaborative initiatives connect academic research with ground realities.

Delivering the keynote address, Mr. Iftikhar Hakim, former Chief Town Planner, J&K, discussed the evolution of urban planning in Srinagar and highlighted the challenges posed by rapid and unregulated expansion. Mr. Sandeep Chachra, Executive Director, ActionAid Association, reflected on the need to strengthen rights-based approaches in urban governance and policy.

Earlier, in her welcome address, Prof. Shazia Manzoor, Head, Department of Social Work KU and workshop convener, outlined the objectives of the week-long workshop and emphasized its relevance for students of social sciences and urban studies.

The event proceedings of the inaugural session were conducted by Dr. Javaid Rashid, faculty at the Department of Social Work KU. The workshop is being coordinated by Dr. Saima Farhad, faculty, Department of Social Work KU. The week-long programme features around 40 resource persons and includes a field visit and heritage walk through Srinagar city. Participants from various institutions across the country are attending the sessions.