

J&K Housing Board registers record performance in execution of PMAY (U)

By
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Reforms, weeding out black sheep lead to better results

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JAMMU, Apr 27: After weeding out black sheep and adopting reforms for the mode of payment, Jammu and Kashmir Housing Board has registered record performance in execution of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) in the J&K Union Territory.

Record amount of funds were released in favour of the PMAY (U) beneficiaries in Jammu and Kashmir in the year 2021-22, thus helping more than 44 thousand eligible beneficiaries to get their houses constructed under the scheme.

Official sources told the Excelsior that Rs 140 crores were released in favour of the beneficiaries under PMAY (U) during the last financial year whereas in the previous five years, only Rs 80 crores was released earlier.

This record performance was achieved mainly because of the reforms adopted following approval of the State Level Sanctioning and Monitoring Committee (SLSMC) under PMAY (Urban), held under the Chairmanship of Chief Secretary in November last year and also weeding out of some black sheep in the J&K Housing Board.

While elaborating, sources said that SLSMC approved modification of several guidelines such as releasing 25 percent funds as mobilization advance to all, release of funds directly to the beneficiaries from SNA Account through PFMS on receipt of approved lists from the concerned Deputy Commissioners and revision of the Government order number 1713-GAD of 2018, etc.

Besides, sources added, termination of services of more than a dozen employees of the J&K Housing Board, who were allegedly involved in malpractices and had not been performing satisfactorily, greatly helped the executing agency to streamline the system and perform better.

It may be recalled that the CID, J&K, vide No.CID/SS/DI/2020/CS/398-99, dated 11-03-2022, addressed to Chief Secretary J&K, mentioned about serious corruption/floating of PMAY (U) norms by one Hakim Muzamil (State Level Technical Consultant) to bestow undue benefit under the scheme upon ineligible beneficiaries. Subsequent to this, Housing and Urban Development Department, vide Order No. 148 HUD of 2020, dated 20-05-2020, appointed Managing Director J&K Housing Board as Inquiry Officer to conduct an in-depth enquiry regarding the issue.

The Managing Director submitted his report vide No. HB/458, dated 29-05-2020 wherein it was mentioned that Hakim Muzamil had grossly violated the norms of PMAY in district Srinagar. Subsequently Hakim Muzamil was disassociated from PMAY scheme by the J&K Housing Board vide Order No. HB/2503-04, dated 28-08-2020, on the instruction of Housing and Urban Development Department. In addition, the Deputy General Manager, Housing Unit II Srinagar was also issued show cause notice.

Simultaneously, the Housing and Urban Development Department constituted an independent Inquiry Committee vide Order No 161 JKUT-HUDD of 2020, dated 27-08-2020 to look into the irregularities in the implementation of PMAY(U) in Kashmir division. The report submitted by the Inquiry Officer, vide No DULB/Estt/22406, dated 26-12-2020, unearthed a deep and well-knit conspiracy of Hakim Muzamil to extend undue benefit to ineligible persons under the scheme resulting in loss to State exchequer and depriving eligible person of their right.

The Inquiry Officer, in his report, mentioned that Muzamil Hakim, working as SLTC, had highjacked all the record of the scheme and complaints about his malafide intentions were received from MC Magam, Qazigund, Habak, Lal Bazaar, Zadibal and other areas of Srinagar city. Even at some places, people complained that for releasing the genuine staged payment in their favour, they had to pay under hand cuts to them.

In a subsequent report pertaining to Srinagar city, submitted vide No. DULB/Estt/2738-29, dated 17-02-2021, the Inquiry Officer provided details of the payments made to ineligible beneficiaries. As per this report, Rs 10.78 crores were paid to 1247 ineligible beneficiaries, including 235 who were not traced.

According to Managing Director, J&K Housing Board, Mohammad Shahid Saleem Dar, out of 16144 cases approved earlier in Srinagar, 13265 were rejected after de-weeding of ineligible beneficiaries, which speaks of floating of PMAY (U) norms by some black sheep, whose services in the Housing Board have been terminated now.

Further, he added, the matter in this regard was also forwarded to CBI and Crime Branch and all record pertaining to the scheme was also handed over to both the agencies for the registration of case.