

Lieutenant Governor's R-Day Message

Brothers and Sisters, 71 years ago on this day, we became a Republic. We, the people of India, constituted ourselves into a democratic republic, giving ourselves a framework to secure justice, liberty, equality and fraternity. Hence, this day holds a special place in our hearts.

We have come a long way in 71 years. We have overcome many challenges to make a success of the biggest democracy in the world, preserving its rich traditions, ethos and values. As we celebrate this Day through the year long activities and promote awareness of the fundamental duties of citizens, let us reaffirm our resolve to abide by the values laid down by our founding fathers.

Last year has been a year of momentous change for the people of Jammu & Kashmir. The abrogation of temporary provisions have removed the artificial legal and economic barriers between Jammu and Kashmir and the rest of the country and have fully integrated Jammu and Kashmir in the true sense of the term. The legal architecture and system prevailing in the rest of the country has been made applicable to Jammu and Kashmir. The people of Jammu and Kashmir now stand on the same pedestal as those in the rest of the country, with the same rights, benefits and prospects. Women and weaker sections like Scheduled Castes & Tribes, West Pakistan

Refugees and SafaiKarmacharis, now have equal democratic and economic rights. Barriers to industrial growth and trade have been removed.

On this day, I salute the bravery of our police and security forces for battling militancy and ensuring that there is public order in Jammu and Kashmir. The Nation is proud of them. We also pay homage to civilians who have fallen prey to wanton violence. Militancy remains our biggest concern as innocent youth are indoctrinated to take misguided path. Although incidents of militancy have come down drastically, the threat posed by it requires attention not only to eradicate it but also prevent loss due to it. Our valiant security personnel need to continue to be on guard to thwart any attempts to disturb peace across Jammu and Kashmir, thereby disrupting the development, growth and opportunities for peace loving people.

Jammu and Kashmir is now at the doorstep of a brighter future. As Jammu and Kashmir progresses in step with the rest of the country, there will be a boost to private investment and great opportunity for the people of Jammu and Kashmir. The economy will grow with more economic opportunities, businesses will thrive and the people of Jammu and Kashmir will gain on all fronts. 55 Central schemes for the benefit of individuals such as scholarships,

pensions, insurance schemes, income support schemes and loans will be fully implemented with 100% coverage. All toll posts in Jammu and Kashmir have been abolished from 1st January 2020. I assure entrepreneurs that the Government will take all measures to ensure that the local industry becomes competitive.

The last 1½ years have been transformative for Jammu and Kashmir in many ways. Under Governor's and President's Rule, the goal has been simple - Good Governance and Delivering Development. To provide Good Governance, a people-centric and development-oriented work culture has been introduced with a focus on results. The goal has been on timely completion of projects and delivery of benefits. In future, we will take more measures to ensure that government is run in a rule based manner with no arbitrariness or delays. Accountability will be ensured at all levels. The primary duty of government employees is public service and this will be ensured.

A lot has been done on the development front in the last 18 months. Implementation of Prime Ministers Development Programme (PMDDP) has been accelerated with substantial progress in 1½ years as compared to the previous 3 years. Work has begun on the two AIIMS, IIT, IIM, tourism projects, Jammu Ring Road, Akhnoor Road, Che-

nani - SudhMahadev road, PakalDul and Kiru hydropower projects, power transmission and distribution projects, Smart Cities, Dal lake, Jhelum Tawi Flood Recovery Project, jobs and houses for Kashmiri migrants, and rehabilitation of Displaced Persons from POK and Chamb. Many of these are either fully or almost complete such as the two big stadiums in Jammu & Srinagar, raising 4 new police battalions, improving healthcare infrastructure in districts, flyover in Srinagar and the first phase of the Jhelum flood management program. JTRP, where expenditures were less than 1% in July 2018, now has 85% projects awarded and under implementation. This demonstrates the seriousness with which work is being done.

On languishing projects, the JKIDFC has delivered remarkably. Projects as old as 25 years are being completed rapidly with almost 50% of the 2,263 projects approved to be completed by March 2020 and most of the rest by March 2021. The impact of this in terms of bridges, roads, drinking water supply schemes, sports facilities and healthcare infrastructure is visible on the ground.

Many other iconic projects have also moved ahead. The long pending Shahpur Kandi project on Ravi is under construction and will irrigate 32,000 ha by 2023. The Ratle and Kiru projects will generate almost 1500 MW of

power in 5 years. The Ujh project, which is in the final stages of sanction, will irrigate another 32,000 hectares. We should soon get a gas pipeline to Jammu and then going to Srinagar. We will build 2,000 km roads under PMGSY by March, 2020. Two metro transit projects in Jammu and Srinagar have been finalized and the Elevated Light Rail Systems here will revolutionise the urban landscape of the two capital cities. The Metropolitan Region Development Authorities in Jammu & Srinagar, covering over 2,000 sqkms each, have finalized large regional development plans with over 100,000 units of new housing in a modern, metropolitan environment. Two iconic IT Towers are being built in Srinagar and Jammu which will generate thousands of jobs and also be a landmark on the skyline of the cities.

The Dal-Nageen lakes are being revived to their pristine glory through a multipronged approach including construction of a western foreshore road, developing Dole Demb and three locations for houseboats with bio-digesters, modern STPs for affluent treatment and beautification of the water front.

Strengthening grassroots democracy is part of the goal of good governance. Governance is best administered at local levels. We have held elections to Panchayats, Block Development Councils (BDCs) and municipal bodies; and

transferred funds, functions and functionaries. Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) have an opportunity now to develop model villages to realize Gandhiji's dream of modern villages in a developed India. To make these bodies more effective, the honorarium of BDC Chairpersons has been fixed at a reasonable level with a superior status. We have a responsibility to make these new decentralized structures succeed. Government will establish Digital Village Centers (DVCs) at Gram Panchayats across Jammu and Kashmir equipped with IT infrastructure and connectivity. The second Phase of "Back to Village" (B2V2) Programme was successfully conducted from 25th to 30th November, 2019, to assess the functionality of Panchayati Raj Institutions and follow up on B2V held earlier in May. This special initiative has been appreciated by all. The 74th Constitutional Amendment strengthens Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) and devolves power to them. ULBs are being strengthened by devolving and decentralization of powers and responsibilities. Following the ULB elections, these bodies have received Rs. 1,180 Crore grants so far and will get Rs. 1,335 Crore more. These empowered bodies are going to be the institutions which will transform the urban landscape.

36 Union Ministers visited Jammu and Kashmir last week and undertook extensive tours of districts covering 60 different lo-

cations. The outreach programme covered five themes, viz., delivering development in President's Rule and thereafter, 100% coverage of 55 beneficiary oriented schemes, infrastructure development, good governance and rule of law with equality of opportunity to all and rapid industrial and economic growth in all sectors with a focus on incomes and employment. More such visits are being planned later.

Last year, the Honorable Prime Minister visited Leh, Jammu and Srinagar. Not only did he inaugurate and lay the foundation stones of projects worth over Rs 35,000 crores; he also laid down a vision of progress and prosperity for Jammu & Kashmir. In June 2019, the Hon'ble Union Home Minister came and emphasized upon the importance of prioritizing individual centric development programmes including pensions, scholarships, animal husbandry and horticulture programmes, handloom and handicraft schemes, so that the benefits flow to even the smallest households. We are moving ahead steadily to fulfill this vision. We have sanctioned over 1.3 lakh new pension cases in the last year. Jammu and Kashmir is prone to a variety of natural calamities. The untimely snowfall in November and the rains in December, 2019 have caused losses to farmers.

For Full Text Visit
Kashmirobserver.net

From Front page...

Republic Day: Kashmir Wrapped

Meanwhile, government forces and Jammu and Kashmir police are searching vehicles and frisking travellers at different parts of the city to ensure peaceful celebration of 1st RD function after the state was downgraded and divided into two Union Territories (UTs).

Inspector General of Police (IGP), Kashmir range, Vijay Kumar said that all necessary security measures are in place to conduct RD in the valley.

He said additional Central Paramilitary Forces (CPMF) have been deployed in Kashmir, including Srinagar, to foil any attempt to disrupt RD functions on Sunday.

He said police is using latest gadgets to keep a close surveillance in the valley, particularly in Srinagar.

Official sources said that sharp shooters from different security agencies have been deployed around the S K Stadium and other sensitive places in the city.

Drones are also being pressed into service to keep a close vigil on pedestrian and vehicular movement in the city, particularly in the areas adjacent to stadium.

We have already intensified foot and night patrolling in areas around five km from stadium to thwart any militant attempt to cause any disturbance, sources said.

The main road near the stadium has been closed and sniffer dogs and metal detector were pressed into service in the main cricket stadium, nearby school and other adjacent buildings.

Large number of security personnel were deployed in and outside the stadium to prevent any disturbance. Government forces have also set up bunkers on the road and only those having valid passes are allowed to enter the area.

In early 90s militants were firing rockets and grenades towards Bakshi stadium during RD and Independence Day functions. However, later due to unprecedented security arrangements there was no such attack after 1996 when civilian government headed by Dr Farooq Abdullah took over.

For the past few years RD and ID functions are being held at S K Stadium instead of Bakshi stadium which is under renovation.

Senior police officials visited Hari Singh High Street (HSHS) this afternoon to review the security arrangements. Roadside vendors were also not allowed to put up their stalls in most city areas. Police also asked vendors, who were occupying footpath on Amira Kadal bridge not to put up their stalls today and tomorrow.

Additional security men had also been deployed in the Gantaghar and historic Lal Chowk, the nerve centre of the summer capital.

Similar security measures are in place in other parts of the Kashmir valley, where RD functions will be held at all district, tehsil and block headquarters tomorrow.

US Envoy Urges India To Release Detained

permitted regular access by our diplomats, and to move swiftly to release those political leaders detained without charge," Alice Wells said as she described the visit by US ambassador and other foreign diplomats to the Valley as "a useful step".

Wells, who has just returned from a trip to Asia besides attending an event in the national capital, said India's broadening strategic horizons over the past two decades have resulted in a shift away from a passive foreign policy to the one that advances Indian interests more vigorously.

"Whether it's in our growing maritime and naval cooperation, the Quad, India's Act East Policy, there's virtually no daylight

in our approaches to the Indo-Pacific," she said. Deputy National Security Advisor Matt Pottinger's remarks at Raisina Dialogue endorsing an Indo-Pacific region stretching from California to Kilimanjaro only further reinforced the strategic convergence, she added.

With continued progress on defence cooperation, peacekeeping operations, space, counterterrorism, trade, people-to-people initiatives, and more, she said the quality and frequency of India-US naval cooperation, especially the information sharing, have reached unprecedented levels.

Jaish's Qari Yasir, 2 Associates Killed

firing and have been hospitalized. The IGP said the police had been getting regular inputs about an IED attack in Srinagar or its surroundings.

"We were getting the names of Burhan and Yasir. Moosa, a buddy and a second in-command of Yasir was also with him and we are sure once we identify the bodies, one of them will be Yasir as we had inputs about his presence there," he said, adding Yasir and Moosa belong to Pakistan, while Burhan was a local.

Lt Gen Dhillon said with the killing of the three militants "a major incident on January 26 has been averted".

"The JeM Module was active and was planning to do something sensational on the Republic day," he said.

He said the operation was still on. The GoC said after the last year's Pulwama IED attack, the JeM leadership was targeted and neutralised totally, but the group was trying to resuscitate itself.

"Pakistani militants were coming and they were trying to revive Jaish... But, the Jaish has now been cleaned out yet again once for all. As regards, the HM, its top leadership has also been eliminated in Kashmir valley. The leadership of Al-Badr and Lashkar-e-Toiba was non-existent. So, as of today, most of the leadership of militants in Kashmir, including Pakistani militants, is more or less eliminated," he said.

On a question of the number of militants in the valley, the IGP said about 125 militants were active in the valley, out of which maximum were locals. Asked about the infiltration along the Line of Control (LoC), the GoC said Pakistan and its army was trying to infiltrate more militants inside Kashmir.

"But, our Army is giving them a befitting reply. Not only the Pakistani militants, but Pakistani army has suffered so many losses that on December 27 last year, Pakistani DGMO requested Indian DGMO to minimize the offensive. Our DGMO accepted the Pakistani request, but Pakistan has not mended its ways and is still infiltrating militants," Lt Gen Dhillon said.

He said the ceasefire violations were taking place on the LoC and the army was giving a befitting reply to the Pakistani aggression.

"There are militants at the launch pads across the LoC and they are trying to infiltrate, but we will foiling their attempts," the Army officer said.

CASO Carried Out In Chadoora

and house to house searches launched, they said, adding many suspected persons were questioned.

However, so far no contact was established with militants, they said, adding the operation was still going on when the reports last came in. Early this week, similar CASO was conducted in another village in Chadoora though no one was arrested.

2G Mobile

Internet Restored

Union Territory. On January 18, the administration restored prepaid mobile services in the Valley and resumed 2G mobile data service on whitelisted websites across the Jammu division.

The 301 sites approved include search engines and those associated with banking, education, news, travel, utilities and employment.

There was no word yet on resumption of high-speed broadband and leased-line services in the Valley.

A decision on that will be taken at an appropriate time after accessing the situation, officials said on Saturday.

The 2G mobile internet services will be available on postpaid as well as prepaid phones.

According to a notification issued by the home department of the Jammu and Kashmir administration, social media applications will continue to remain out of bounds for the Valley's residents.

Internet services, landline and mobile phones were snapped across Jammu and Kashmir on the eve of the Centre's announcement to scrap special status of the erstwhile state and its bifurcation into Union Territories on August 5.

While most of the services except mobile internet were restored in Jammu within a week, Kashmir witnessed restoration of landlines and postpaid mobile services and internet facilities for essential services like hospitals in phases.

Though the restoration of mobile internet was welcomed by people, many said it will not be of much help due to low-speed connectivity.

Yawar Nazir, a resident of Srinagar city, said: "The restoration is welcome news. But what are we going to do with these low speeds in the times of 4G or 5G? We cannot access websites. It is taking ages to open a website."

Another resident Mehraj-ud-din said the restoration of low-speed internet "meant nothing" for students.

"The internet ban has affected our education. It has especially affected those who had to seek admissions and to take part in various examinations. Now, even as the internet has been restored, what good will come out of it as the speeds are very low. We cannot access most of the websites," he said.

Another user Aaishan Ahmad said many people in the Valley were using social media platforms to be in touch with their loved ones abroad.

"They will still have to go for expensive phone calls. Who can imagine such a thing happening in a digital age?" he said. With PFI inputs

And Muzaffar Beig Is Awarded

whom died in 2019-were posthumously awarded the Padma Vibhushan.

The list had 141 awards-seven Padma Vibhushan, 16 Padma Bhushan and 118 Padma Shri. Thirty-four of the recipients were women. Notable recipients of the Padma Vibhushan included boxer MC Mary Kom and classical singer Chhannulal Mishra. Other Padma Bhushan recipients are industrialist Anand Mahindra and sportsperson PV Sindhu.

Article 370 Revocation Integrated J&K

now stand on the same pedestal as those in the rest of the country, with the same rights, benefits and prospects. Women and weaker sections like Scheduled Castes & Tribes, West Pakistan Refugees and Safai-Karmacharis, now have equal democratic

and economic rights. Barriers to industrial growth and trade have been removed," LG said.

"Jammu and Kashmir is now at the doorstep of a brighter future. As Jammu and Kashmir progresses in step with the rest of the country, there will be a boost to private investment and great opportunity for the people of Jammu and Kashmir. The economy will grow with more economic opportunities, businesses will thrive and the people of Jammu and Kashmir will gain on all fronts," he added.

LG said that militancy remains the biggest concern as innocent youth were being indoctrinated to take misguided path. He said although incidents of militancy have come down drastically, the threat posed by it requires attention not only to eradicate it but also prevent loss due to it.

"Our valiant security personnel need to continue to be on guard to thwart any attempts to disturb peace across Jammu and Kashmir, thereby disrupting the development, growth and opportunities for peace loving people," Murmu said.

The LG said that 55 Central schemes for the benefit of individuals such as scholarships, pensions, insurance schemes, income support schemes and loans will be fully implemented with 100% coverage. He said that all toll posts in Jammu and Kashmir have been abolished from 1st January 2020.

"I assure entrepreneurs that the Government will take all measures to ensure that the local industry becomes competitive. Under Governor's and President's Rule, the goal has been simple - Good Governance and Delivering Development. To provide Good Governance, a people-centric and development-oriented work culture has been introduced with a focus on results," Murmu said.

"The goal has been on timely completion of projects and delivery of benefits. In future, we will take more measures to ensure that government is run in a rule based manner with no arbitrariness or delays. Accountability will be ensured at all levels. The primary duty of government employees is public service and this will be ensured," he added.

In his message, the LG highlighted the major achievements of the UT admin and the Central government. He highlighted the progress made in health, education, tourism, power and other sectors.

He also reiterated government's commitment to make the Union Territory prosperous and peaceful.

"The constitutional changes have opened new vistas of development. We need to capitalize on the opportunities. The initiatives already taken for putting Jammu and Kashmir on the path of sustained development shall be given a further push," the LG said.

"However, our efforts alone can't make the difference. People need to come forward and supplement the initiatives of the Government. We will take Jammu and Kashmir to the path of rapid growth and development as envisioned by our Prime Minister. Let us all join hands to build a new Jammu and Kashmir," he added.

He said these were historic times as Jammu and Kashmir was seeing a new dawn.

"A dawn which promises hope, a dawn which will bring prosperity, a dawn which will lead to progress and a dawn which will usher J&K towards peace. The best way to overcome misgivings is to reaffirm our commitment to abide by the values of our Republic," Murmu said.

WD Brings More Snow, Rain

warned that there could be isolated heavy rain and snow in the Kashmir valley on January 28 which could affect air and surface traffic.

Meanwhile, Gulmarg, the world famous ski resort in north Kashmir, was coldest in the valley after the minimum temperature was recorded minus 9.8 degree. The entire Gulmarg and other heights, including famed snow slopes are under four to six feet of snow, still waiting for skiers and other adventure lovers. The maximum temperature there was 2.4 degree, lowest in the valley.

He said Kupwara, also in north Kashmir, was second coldest at minus 6.8 degree followed by gateway of Kashmir, Qazigund minus 6.4 degree, Kokernag minus 5.8 degree and world famous health resort of Pahalgam minus 4.2 degree.

He said the minimum temperature was minus 16.2 degree at Leh, where majority water bodies remained frozen.

The sky would be partly to generally cloudy sky and the maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 0 degree and minus 15 degree respectively during the next 24 hours at Leh.

Geelani Gets Health Check-Up

of Geelani had appealed people organize special prayers with regard to the health of ailing leader. Last month Geelani was put on oxygen after he developed acute chest disease called Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD).

Timber Smuggler Slapped With PSA

notorious jungle smuggler against whom several cases of timber smuggling stand registered.

He was recently booked under Forest Act, official sources said.

7 OGWs Arrested In Bandipora: Police

and ammunition were recovered from their possession," Senior Superintendent of Police Rahul Malik told reporters.

Presenting the arrested persons before the media, he said they were under surveillance for some time.

"They were working for both LeT and Hizbul Mujahideen outfits and were not only providing shelter to the militants but were also helping them by arranging logistics, transport and finance," the officer said.

Asked whether they were planning an attack on the R-Day in the district, Malik said that is a matter of investigation.

"They are being questioned to know their plans," he said.

The arms and ammunition recovered from them included two pistols, two Under Barrel Grenade Launchers (UBGL), three rocket-propelled grenades, three UBGL grenades and 500 rounds of AK assault rifles, another police official said.

JKP Gets Max 108 Gallantry Medals

the total four of these top category decorations announced this time.

These numbers have enabled the JK Police to win a lion's share of 108 medals out of the total 290 gallantry awards declared on the eve of January 26, as per the Union Home Ministry.

It is one of the highest tally of gallantry medals won by a police force in recent times, a senior officer in the security establishment said.

The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) that is also deployed in the UT for counter-militancy duties apart from being the lead force in anti-Naxal operations continued its streak of getting the largest multi-theatre gallantry medals as it has been decorated with 75 PMG and a PPMG (posthumously) for CoBRA commando Utpal Rabha.