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Assembly polls in...

said that under the guidance of PM Narendra Modi, a big change is seen in Jammu and Kashmir which is in line with the vision of a New India.

"As far as the democratic process is concerned, the delimitation process has started. After its completion, we will hold the (assembly) elections."

"Some people have said many things, but I want to tell you that I had given assurance in Parliament that the statehood of Jammu and Kashmir will be restored. Once the situation in Jammu and Kashmir becomes normal, the statehood of Jammu and Kashmir will be restored," he said.

Shah said some people want to create confusion in the minds of the people of the valley and he wants to request everyone not to fall into their trap.

He said democracy has reached the lowest level of society after the implementation of the panchayati raj system and that is why some people are worried.

He said Jammu and Kashmir can be developed only through democracy, and people can be happy and youths can get jobs also through democracy.

"But to sustain democracy, peace is necessary in Jammu and Kashmir. I want to appeal to the youths of Jammu and Kashmir not to get instigated by the statements of vested interests. I want to tell the youths to have faith in Prime Minister Narendra Modi, have faith in the Jammu and Kashmir administration," he said.

Shah said some people are spreading lies for their narrow political interests.

"I want to appeal to everyone, especially the youths to ask these people some questions. Those who are saying that the valley's land will be usurped, they should be asked whose land has been taken away so far. By spreading such lies, they are trying to put a barrier in the development of Jammu and Kashmir."

"Those who were saying that violence will increase, they should be asked whether violence has gone up or reduced. They had said no investment will come, but the fact is that already Rs 12,000 crore investment has come. Tourists arrivals have also gone up and Jammu and Kashmir is marching towards development," he said.

Shah said many changes have taken place in Jammu and Kashmir under the initiative of the local administration and the guidance of the prime minister.

"I want to tell everyone, especially youths, youths of the valley, to give attention towards development and be part of the development process," he said.

The home minister said till August 2019, when Article 370 was abrogated, Jammu and Kashmir was electing 87 MLAs and six MPs and only three families were ruling the erstwhile state.

"Now, 30,000 people's representatives (panchayat members) are serving the people. The benefits of the implementation of the Panchayati Raj Act are before the people of Jammu and Kashmir. There has been speedy development after the implementation of the Act," he said.

The home minister said some political parties are hurt that the panchayati raj system has been implemented and these people have said that the law and order situation has deteriorated after the abrogation of Article 370.

Some people have gone to the extreme and said that until Article 370 is restored, the law and order situation in Jammu and Kashmir can never be good, he said.

"I want to tell all of them that there has been a 40 per cent reduction in relation-related incidents and a 57 per cent reduction in deaths since Article 370 was abrogated. It shows that peace has no connection with the change."

"Peace has a connection with the administration. When people get good administration, people get involved with the administration," he said.

Congratulating the people of Jammu and Kashmir on the release of the first "District Good Governance Index", Shah said the development is not only important for the union territory but for the entire country.

"A start has been made from Jammu and Kashmir and it will slowly reach every part of the country. This will pave the way for a healthy administration in every district," he said.

He said good governance has no meaning if the impact of administration is missing at the district level.

Lauding the Jammu and Kashmir administration's efforts, Shah said that the union territory stood within the fifth rank among all states and union territories in implementing central government development schemes like providing electricity, LPG gas connections, toilets, 100 per cent vaccination, oxygen supply and setting up oxygen plants.

"People are getting direct benefits. Therefore, naturally, the middlemen are upset. Modi is clear that people of Jammu and Kashmir should get clean administration without any intervention of the middlemen," he said.

Shah said Jammu and Kashmir has tremendous potential for tourism. But the way some leaders are making statements shows that they don't want the tourism sector to grow.

"I want to tell them there is no impact of your statements. In this winter, there have been record tourist arrivals in Jammu and Kashmir. This number will keep growing in the coming days," he said.

The home minister said everyone knows that tourism has a direct connection with employment, but by making such statements, a conspiracy has been hatched so that fewer tourists come and the youth get fewer employment opportunities.

"I want to tell those people who had to go to Pakistan or other foreign countries to study medicine that from independence to 2014, Jammu and Kashmir had just four medical colleges with 500 seats. Now, nine medical colleges have been built, 15 nursing colleges set up and 1,100 MBBS seats and 600 paramedical seats are available," he said.

He added the administration is working to provide five lakh jobs to the local youths in the coming years.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi has made the best industrial policy ever for Jammu and Kashmir, under which investments of about Rs 50,000 crore is going to come in Jammu and Kashmir and that will provide employment to five lakh youths," he said.

The home minister said on one hand, investments during last 70 years was Rs 12,000 crore.

However, he said, in a single year, MoUs for investments worth Rs 12,000 crore have been signed and ground breaking ceremonies worth Rs 2,000 crore have also taken place.

"Today, I once again want to tell my young friends, especially the young friends of the valley that you should walk on the path of development laid by Modi. No one can stop Jammu and Kashmir from becoming the most developed region of the country," he said.

The home minister urged youths of the valley to focus on the development initiatives undertaken in the Union Territory and said they should participate in the development process, the political process and in the democratic process and make their future bright.

Referring to the outcomes of the DGII, Shah said the achievements of Jammu and Kashmir will reach every state and this will lead to healthy competition of good governance in every district of the country.

"The district is an important unit if good governance is to be taken to the grassroots level in true sense and unless there is good governance at the district level, then it has no meaning," he said.

He said the competition between districts through the Good Governance Index will be of great benefit to the general public of Jammu and Kashmir.

The District Good Governance Index of Jammu and Kashmir covers 10 sectors of governance and 58 indices with 116 data items, which include, agriculture, services, commerce and industry, human resources, environment, justice and public safety, social welfare and development.

"In every sector, Jammu and Kashmir has attempted to provide direct benefits to beneficiaries in two years and it is natural that middlemen will be angry, but we are not afraid of their displeasure," he said.

Record 6,568 new...

district. There are 39,113 active cases in the Union Territory, while the count of recoveries stand at 34,728, the officials said.

Every stateless day...

Tarigami said the people of the Union territory were being denied the right of participation and representation which was one of the fundamental principles of good governance.

"One of the principle fundamentals of good governance is participation and representation, a right which continues to be denied to the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Releasing such indexes is intended to help the government in optics-wise," he said.

Gulmarg, upper reaches...

town to the valley, also recorded about two inches, while the nearby south Kashmir town of Kokernag received an inch of fresh snowfall, they said.

There are reports of snowfall in other areas in the upper reaches of the valley as well, they said.

Meanwhile, the minimum temperature at most places in the valley last night settled above the freezing point. The mercury was several degrees above the normal for this time of the season at most places, the officials said.

Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, recorded a low of 2.3 degrees Celsius - down from 2.8 degrees Celsius the previous night, they said.

Gulmarg recorded a low of minus 6.5 degrees Celsius - a degree up from the previous night.

Palhalgam, which serves as the base camp for the annual Amarnath yatra, recorded a low of minus 2.4 degrees Celsius - same as the previous night, they said.

The officials said Qazigund recorded the minimum of 0.2 degrees Celsius, while the nearby south Kashmir town of Kokernag recorded a low of minus 1.9 degrees Celsius.

The mercury in Kupwara in north Kashmir settled at a low of 1.4 degrees Celsius.

2021 watershed year...

the ceremony, he presented GOC-in-C's appreciation to 40 units and GOC-in-C's Certificates of Appreciation to 26 units for their overall 'outstanding' and 'distinguished' performance in the command theatre.

The GOC-in-C's Appreciation were given for performance of units in Operation Meghdoot, Operation Rakshak, Operation Northern Borders, and other operations in the command.

The GOC-in-C's Certificates of Appreciation were given for performance of units in Operation Snow Leopard, which was launched after China refused to move back and restore status quo ante in eastern Ladakh.

The ceremony was a solemn occasion to appreciate and recognise the professionalism in operational roles performed by the units during their tenure in northern Command, a defence spokesman said.

The army commander praised all ranks of the northern command for their dedication and devotion to duty in the highest traditions of the Indian Army.

He also conveyed his heartfelt gratitude to the brave men who laid down their lives in internal security challenges.

Ban on physical...

considering the present situation, facts and circumstances, as also the inputs received in a series of virtual meets on Saturday, the Commission said it has decided that no roadshows, padayatras, cycle, bike or vehicle rallies and procession will be allowed till January 31.

Since contesting candidates for Phase 1 elections will be finalised on January 27, the Commission has decided to allow "physical public meetings" of the political parties concerned and contesting candidates in designated open spaces with a maximum of 500 persons or 50 per cent of the capacity of the ground or the prescribed limit set by state disaster management authorities (SDMA), whichever number is lesser, from January 28 till February 8", excluding the 48-hour silence period.

Similarly, since contesting candidates for Phase 2 elections will be finalised on January 31, the Commission decided to allow physical meetings of the political parties concerned and contesting candidates from February 1 till February 12 (excluding the silence period).

The EC has already granted relaxation for the political parties to the extent that indoor meetings of a maximum of 300 persons or 50 per cent of the capacity of the hall or the prescribed limit set by SDMA is allowed.

It cautioned that the video van events should not cause inconvenience to the people and should not be a hindrance to smooth flow of traffic.

It will be the responsibility of the district election officer concerned to identify and to notify the designated spaces in advance for the events.

The EC issued the orders after it held a review meeting with the Union Health Ministry through virtual mode. The Commission also held virtual meetings with chief secretaries, chief electoral officers and health secretaries of Goa, Manipur, Punjab, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh.

The poll panel held a comprehensive review of the present situation with respect to status and projected trends of the Covid pandemic in the five poll-going states.

The Commission also reviewed vaccination status and action plan for expeditiously completing vaccination for first, second and booster doses for eligible persons amongst polling personnel. The poll panel will now review the situation on January 31.

PM asks districts...

and effectively transform 112 most under-developed districts across the country.

The prime minister said various ministries and departments of the government have prepared a list of 142 districts that are not so much lagging in development but are weak on one or two parameters.

He stressed the need to work with the same collective approach as is being done in the aspirational districts.

This is a new challenge for all the governments - the government of India, the state government, the district administration, and the government machinery. Now we have to complete this challenge together," Modi said.

The prime minister told the DMs that seeing the successes achieved in the aspirational districts, the country has now expanded its targets further.

The prime minister drew the attention of the officers towards the changed mindset and reiterated that today, the country's goal is to achieve 100 percent saturation of services and facilities.

"We have a long way to go compared to the milestones we have achieved so far and have to work on a much bigger scale," he said and called for time-bound targets for taking roads to all the villages of the districts, Ayushman Bharat cards, bank accounts to every person, Ujjwala gas connection, insurance, pension housing for everyone.

Modi also pitched for a two-year vision for every district.

He suggested that every district can identify 10 tasks to be completed in the next three months to improve ease of living for common people.

Similarly, five tasks may be associated with the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, he added.

The prime minister said the country is witnessing a silent revolution in the form of Digital India and no district should be left behind in this.

He pointed out the importance of digital infrastructure reaching every village and becoming a means of door-step delivery of services and facilities.

Modi also asked NITI Aayog to devise a mode of regular interaction between the district DMs.

During the interaction, the district magistrates shared their experience which has led to the improvement of the performance of their districts on a host of indicators.

The prime minister sought direct feedback from them about the key steps taken by them which have resulted in success in the districts, and about the challenges faced by them in this endeavour.

He also asked them about how working under the aspirational districts programme has been different from their work done earlier.

The officers discussed how JanBhagidari has been a key factor behind this success, and also spoke about increased inter-departmental coordination and the benefits of data-driven governance.

The CEO of NITI Aayog, Amitabh Kant, gave an overview of the progress and implementation of the Aspirational District programme and mentioned how it leveraged competitive and cooperative federalism, driven by a Team India spirit.

The Rural Development Secretary gave a presentation on a mission to uplift 142 selected districts, on the lines of the focussed work done in the aspirational districts.

The Centre and states will work together to uplift these identified districts by addressing the pockets of under-development, the Prime Minister's Office said in a statement.

Addressing the officials, Prime Minister Modi noted that when the aspirations of others become your aspirations, when fulfilling the dreams of others becomes the measure of your success, then that path of duty creates history.

"Today we are seeing this history being made in the aspirational districts of the country," he added. The prime minister noted that convergence is a major reason for the country's success in the aspirational districts.

All resources are the same, government machinery is the same, officials are the same but the results are different, he pointed out.

He noted that during the last four years, Jan-Dhan accounts have increased by 4-5 times in almost every aspirational district. Almost every family has got a toilet and electricity has reached every village, he said.

A new energy has been infused in people's lives, he added.

The chief ministers of states such as Gujarat, Karnataka and Chhattisgarh also participated in the interaction. The interaction was aimed at taking direct feedback about the progress and status of implementation of various government schemes and programmes.

Interacts with 5...

District Baramulla in achieving the better results within the given resources.

Deputy Commissioner Baramulla apprised Prime Minister about the initiative and the platform provided by NITI Aayog which identified the critical gaps and ensured the multi-stage monitoring besides, raising the stakes of the field functionaries from front line worker to Deputy Commissioner in achieving the targets.

Deputy Commissioner Baramulla highlighted the achievements made in sectors like Agriculture and Water Resources, Health and Nutrition, Skill Development and Financial Inclusion and Basic Infrastructure. The systematic governance systems, better coordination, excellent convergence of funds and functionaries created an environment for better result oriented implementation of the schemes yielding desired outcomes which is reflective of the change in the lives of the common masses, Bhupinder Kumar added.

Later, CEO NITI Aayog Amitabh Kant appreciated the efforts and tremendous progress made by Baramulla during this period amongst the Aspirational Districts.

It is worth to mention here that District Baramulla has secured three times awards

worth Rs. 19.00 Crores through challenge mode in the Champions of Change initiative of NITI Aayog.

The event was virtually attended by the Chief Ministers of the States and Lt. Governors of UTs including Lt. Governor Manoj Sinha and Union Ministries.

Staying at isolation...

the government said foreign arrivals, who test positive, will still have to undergo home quarantine for seven days even after they test negative, and undertake RT-PCR test on the eighth day of arrival in India.

The revised guidelines came into effect from Saturday.

Earlier the norm was that travellers coming from any country, including those considered 'at-risk', would be managed at an isolation facility and treated according to the standard protocols, the government said.

In the revised guidelines, this clause that mandated staying at 'isolation facility' upon arrival, has been removed.

The government said passengers found to be symptomatic during screening will be immediately isolated and taken to a medical facility.

If tested positive, their contacts shall be identified and managed according to norms, it said.

CRIME REPORT

Inter-state gang of thieves busted; 12 theft cases solved, 77 Tolas gold worth Rs 35 lak