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Article 370 was...

Modi said the common people of Jammu and Kashmir got assurance of social justice mentioned in the Constitution for first time after abrogation of Art 370. "There is a lot of enthusiasm in the whole world today about a developing Jammu and Kashmir."

Referring to the projects which he either inaugurated or laid the foundation stone for, Modi said it was a remarkable day for Jammu and Kashmir. "The projects in Jammu and Kashmir will propel holistic development of the region," he said.

The prime minister said that a record number of schools, colleges and universities were established in India in last 10 years, with 50 new degree colleges set up in Jammu and Kashmir alone.

The development projects which Modi launched or laid the foundation stone for include those related to education, railways, aviation and road sectors in Jammu and Kashmir.

While projects for other parts of the country include IITs, IIMs and central universities.

Modi also distributed appointment letters to about 1,500 newly recruited government employees of Jammu and Kashmir and interacted with the beneficiaries of various schemes as part of the 'Viksit Bharat, Viksit Jammu' programme.

He said the revocation of Article 370 was pivotal in fostering the comprehensive development of Jammu and Kashmir, asserting his government was committed to transforming the Valley into a tourist destination that could rival Switzerland.

Modi heralded a new era for the region and declared that Jammu and Kashmir is breaking free from dynastic rule, with his government now directly engaging with the populace.

During his over 30-minute speech, Modi reminisced about the tumultuous past of J-K marred by violence and separatism and commended the current shift towards a harmonious and prospering Jammu and Kashmir, attributing it to balanced development initiatives.

"We have seen the days when only disappointing news used to come from JK. Bomb, guns, kidnapping and separatism had become its misfortune. Today, we are seeing a new J-K with balanced and holistic development," Modi said in his speech which he began in Dogri language.

Despite rain, thousands of locals attended the rally. It was Modi's second visit to the Jammu region after the abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019. Earlier he had addressed a public rally in Samba district in April 2022.

Expressing his vision for a flourishing Jammu and Kashmir, Modi vowed to construct infrastructure to rival international destinations like Switzerland.

"We have pledged a developed J&K and I have full faith that we will make Jammu and Kashmir more developed and fulfill all your dreams within the next few years...We will create such infrastructure in Kashmir that people will forget going to Switzerland," he said.

The prime minister lauded the newfound spirit of the youth in the region, highlighting the transition from desolation to vibrancy in everyday life and also shared his optimism regarding investments from Gulf countries, underscoring the positive reception towards the erstwhile state.

Reflecting on the global interest ignited by the G20 event in Srinagar, Modi expressed satisfaction over the surge in tourism and devotees visiting the Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine.

"The beauty of Kashmir, traditions and culture which got highlighted during the G20 event (in Srinagar last year) had left an impression on the people and everyone wants to visit the place," Modi said expressing satisfaction over the footfall of a record number of over two crore tourists and highest number of devotees to Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine in a decade.

He said there is a lot of enthusiasm in the whole world today about a developing Jammu and Kashmir, emphasising the monumental impact of scrapping Article 370 in ushering in an era of inclusive growth and social justice.

Describing Article 370, which granted special status to Jammu and Kashmir, as the "biggest hurdle" in the development of the erstwhile state, he said the constitutional provision was the main impediment in bringing all-round development in Jammu and Kashmir and the BJP government has dismantled this wall.

Modi urged the nation to grant his party 370 seats in the upcoming Parliamentary elections, marking the significance of the Article 370 annulment.

Stating that J-K was a victim of "dynastic rule" with those at the helm of affairs only working for their self-interest, the prime minister said he is happy that the UT is getting freed of this.

"The dynastic rulers were only concerned about their own interests. They had no concern for the future of the youth and your families as they were only concerned about their own families. The government whose priority is the welfare of just one family cannot think of the welfare of the common people," Modi said in an apparent reference to Congress, National Conference and PDP who ruled the erstwhile state in the past seven decades.

Taking on the Congress party, he said this party only believed in lip service to the armed forces and it was his government which fulfilled promises like 'One Rank One Pension', benefiting soldiers. He rounded off his address by affirming that a prosperous India is synonymous with a thriving Jammu and Kashmir.

Earlier, the PM engaged with the newly recruited government employees and beneficiaries of various schemes during which he underscored the government's commitment to a developed and inclusive future for Jammu and Kashmir.

During such an interaction with a woman from a remote area of Jammu region, the prime minister sought the support of the country's women and in making one crore women in India as 'lakhpati didis'.

The development projects which Modi launched or laid the foundation stones for projects related to education, railways, aviation and road sectors in Jammu and Kashmir.

Modi dedicated various rail projects which included a new rail line between Banihal-Khari-Sumber-Sangaldan (48 km) and flagged off the first electric train in the valley and a train service between the Sangaldan in Jammu division and Baramulla stations.

This was welcomed immediately by the National Conference president Farooq Abdullah who termed it a "big step by the railway ministry and Prime Minister Modi".

The Prime Minister said the 'New Bharat' was spending more to provide modern education to students and asserted that education and skill development have been the main focus of his government over the past 10 years.

He also said the government plans to provide drones to women's self-help groups across the country so that they can use them for agricultural activities and boost their income.

Highlighting his government's focus on the education sector, the prime minister said, "In the last 10 years, a record number of schools, colleges and universities have been constructed across the country. About 50 degree colleges have been established in Jammu and Kashmir alone while more than 45000 out-of-school children have been enrolled, with girls benefiting the most."

"Till 10 years ago, it was very difficult to think of spending huge amounts of money in the field of education and skill development. This is New Bharat and New Bharat spends more and more to provide modern education to the present generation," Modi said.

He said that earlier, the youths of Jammu and Kashmir had to go outside for higher education and professional courses but now the Union Territory "is becoming a hub of education and skill development with the establishment of various educational institutes like IITs and IIMs as per promise."

"The mission of modernising the education sector is expanding further," Modi said and referred to the inauguration of various IITs, IIMs, academic blocks, hostels, libraries, auditoriums and many such facilities across the country.

He asserted that the benefits of government schemes have reached people in every nook and corner of the country as "we ensured that no deserving person is left out".

"This was the guarantee of Modi and this is the magic of Lotus (BJP's electoral symbol)," Modi said.

About the NaMo Drone Didi Scheme, he said his government guarantee is that women would be made drone pilots.

"I was watching an interview of a sister yesterday who was telling that she did not know how to pedal a cycle but after training, she is returning home as a 'drone pilot'. The training of a large number of sisters has already started in the country and we have decided to provide drones to thousands of self-help groups," he said.

The prime minister said drones could be beneficial in agricultural activities besides boosting the income of the village women.

"In the last 10 years, India has become an economic power from number 11 to number five," Modi said.

In a rhetorical question, he asked what happens when the economic strength of a country increases. "Then the government gets more money to spend on people."

"India is providing many facilities to the poor such as free ration, free treatment, permanent houses, gas, toilet, PM Kisan Samman Nidhi. This is because India's economic strength has increased. Now we have to make India the third largest economic power in the world in the coming five years," the prime minister said.

He added that this would increase the country's ability to increase its spending manifold for the welfare of the poor, and infrastructure development and "every fam-

ily across the country, including Jammu and Kashmir, will benefit from this".

Seeking the support of the people in the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections for a third term, Modi said the BJP has set a target of 370 seats for the party and 405 for the NDA.

J&K touching new...

evenings. Youth with guitars are spending time late at night on Jhelum river fronts and time is not far when people of Jammu will spend time on the Tawi river," Sinha said.

He said today with the active support of Modi ji, J&K is on the path of peace and development.

"There is 75 per cent decline in the terrorism-related incidents and all the top commanders of terror outfits have been sent (to hell). Stone pelting is a history and local terrorist recruitment is at an all-time low," he said.

He said that gone are the days when people from the neighbouring country would issue protest and hartal calendars.

"Instead, we are now issuing calendars for education and recruitment. Markets, schools, and universities now remain open throughout the year," Sinha said.

Addressing a massive crowd at Moulana Azad Stadium in Jammu, with PM Modi was on the stage, the LG said that post August 5, 2019, terrorism, separatism and injustice has ended forever.

"I welcome the modern architect of Jammu and Kashmir -- Prime Minister Narendra Modi -- to the city of temples. Due to strong and bold decision taken on August 5, 2019 by the prime minister, Jammu and Kashmir is freed from seven-decade-long pain, discrimination, terrorism, separatism and corruption," he said.

A new era of social justice and development has begun in the Union territory, he added.

Singh said that for the first time, West Pakistan refugees, PoK displaced people and the downtrodden got their share.

Sharing the development journey of J&K under PM Modi, he said that on April 24, 2022, the PM had come to Palli (Samba) and laid the foundation and inaugurated projects worth Rs 21,000 crore.

"Today, the foundation and inauguration of projects worth 32,000 crores have been done by the prime minister. I think such things have been done probably for the first time in the history of Jammu and Kashmir. In the next four months, projects worth Rs 20,000 crore will be completed. By 2025, projects worth Rs 60,000 crore launched by the prime minister will be completed," he added.

Sinha further said that all sections of society have been empowered by the PM. "Nearly 1.25 crore people have been empowered by the PM during the last few years. Backward communities have been given reservation for the first time in panchayats and local urban bodies," he said.

The LG also said the Pahari community has been given their rights without touching the rights and reservation of Gujjar and Bakerwal communities.

He said that panchayat elections will be held on time and efforts are afoot in that direction.

The LG further said that other schemes worth Rs 20,000 crore will be completed in the coming four months.

"By March, other projects worth about Rs 60,000 crore will be completed and dedicated to welfare and development of common citizens. The overall comprehensive transformation and the hustle and bustle of development in every corner of the UT is a visible proof of commitment of Prime Minister towards building a glorious, developed Jammu and Kashmir," he said.

Sinha further stated that Prime Minister has ensured social justice, equality and inclusive development mere within a short span of five years.

"Refugees from Pakistan Occupied Jammu and Kashmir and West Pakistan have got social justice after decades and now their ownership rights on land and property are being ensured. Dalits, tribals, backward classes, women and other weaker sections of the society have been empowered socially, economically and politically by the Prime Minister and if we look at the figures, about 1.25 crore deprived people have been brought into the mainstream of development," LG Sinha said and added, "For the first time in history, reservation of seats for Other Backward Classes in Panchayats and Urban Local Bodies has been provided and timely elections to Panchayats and Urban Local Bodies will be ensured."

For women empowerment, LG Sinha said, 33% seats have been reserved for the female fraternity.

Scheduled Tribe reservation has been extended to Pahari, Padari, Koli and Gadda Brahmins, he added.

"The participation of 42 lakh citizens in the Vikas Bharat Sankalp Yatra has ensured that the vehicle guaranteed by the Prime Minister reaches every family with the benefits of all the schemes. Jammu and Kashmir is among the best performing UTs/states of the country in this mass movement. Also, the outstanding performance of Jammu and Kashmir in the public campaigns like 'Azadi ke Amrit Mahotsav', 'Har Ghar Tiranga', 'Meri Mati Mera Desh' is a proof that under the leadership of the Prime Minister, Jammu and Kashmir is marching towards the golden age in Amrit Kaal," said Sinha.

Under the leadership of Prime Minister, LG Sinha said, industrialization has transformed the outlook of Jammu and Kashmir.

"So far, investment proposals worth Rs 90,182 crore have been received. Industrial investment of more than Rs 14,000 crore has either been realized on ground or related projects are in the pipeline and efforts are being made to start the projects at a rapid pace. Besides, 46 new industrial estates are being developed," said LG Manoj Sinha.

"The aspirations of youth of Jammu and Kashmir are connected with the aspirations of the nation. From 2021-22 to January 2024, 8 lakh 34000 youth have been provided self-employment opportunities. In government jobs, recruitment has been done on more than 34,000 posts on the basis of merit and recruitment process is going on for 12,000 other posts. Similarly, approval has been accorded to fill more than 4000 vacant posts in Jammu and Kashmir Police here yesterday on 19th of February. More than 8 lakh women have become entrepreneurs by joining more than 87,000 self-help groups," Sinha said, adding that under PM Modi's leadership the speed of project completion in Jammu and Kashmir has increased ten times than before. More than 92,000 projects have been completed in the last financial year and more than one lakh projects will be completed in this fiscal.

Before 2019, only 40 e-services were available in Jammu and Kashmir, but today more than 1100 public services are being extended to the common citizens. The farmers of Jammu and Kashmir are today at the fifth position in the entire country in terms of their monthly earnings. Besides, 29 projects are being implemented under the Holistic Agriculture Development Program at a cost of Rs 5013 crore which will bring a radical change in lives of 13 lakh families.

The whole world is witness to the fact that the Prime Minister has given every citizen, of Jammu and Kashmir, the right to live as per their wish in the past five years. 'Error incidents have reduced by 75% and local recruitment has ended. The strike calendars have stopped to be published. The administration is now publishing the calendar of education and employment. Stone pelting has now become the thing of past. Markets and schools remain open throughout the year. The common man is enjoying night life in Kashmir Valley. In the districts where, earlier, there used to be fear in the evenings, now cinema halls and restaurants are running till late night. Jammu and Srinagar cities are being seen as new models of urban transformation.

Centuries ago Jammu and Kashmir, the crown jewel of India, was considered as the center of knowledge. You have restored that ancient glory, said LG Sinha, adding that the ecosystem of two-two premier institutions like AIIMS, IIM, IIT, NIPT, IIMC, centers of Industry 4.0 technology skilling, innovation and invention has empowered the youth by providing new strength to the education sector of Jammu and Kashmir. This city of temples has become the only region where there are AIIMS, IIT, IIM, Central Universities.

Today Jammu and Kashmir stands at par with the leading UTs/states of the country on health parameters.

The Prime Minister has created such a Jammu and Kashmir which is eager to make its full contribution towards developed India by acquiring new capabilities in a very short span of time. Jammu and Kashmir is making new achievements every day in the field of business, science, technology, art, culture and sports and is moving towards the pinnacle of peace and prosperity. This is the Jammu and Kashmir of your dreams, Sinha said, adding this is Jammu and Kashmir of PM Modi's resolutions.

PM inaugurates AIIMS...

J&K has more than doubled from 500 to 1300," he said, highlighting that "there were no PG medical seats in J&K before 2014 and today there are 650 PG medical seats in the Union Territory".

He said 35 new nursing and paramedic colleges are also coming up in the region which will lead to a considerable increase in nursing seats as well.

On inaugurating AIIMS Jammu, the prime minister said the Union government has added 15 new AIIMS in the last 10 years, including two in J&K alone.

"After the commissioning of AIIMS Jammu, people of Jammu will no longer have to leave for Delhi to avail specialised medical treatment, which will help them save valuable time and resources," he said.

The prime minister highlighted the rapid speed of transformation of infrastructure in all the sectors of the country.

He reiterated his vision of India to become Viksit Bharat by 2047 and appealed to

the people to work towards that vision.

He said a Viksit Jammu & Kashmir is a pre-requisite to Viksit Bharat and the various developmental and upliftment projects of the central government in J&K are aimed at fulfilling that vision into reality.

Lt Governor Manoj Sinha thanked the Union government for fulfilling many long-cherished aspirations of the people of J&K, be it in bringing development and benefits of central schemes to the marginalised sections or in provisioning two AIIMS to the region.

"The last five years have witnessed a transformation in J&K especially in improving the health, education, security and infrastructure landscape of the region which is evident in the decline of terrorism by 75 per cent and growth of investment and new opportunities," he said.

Sinha also pointed out that "under the leadership of Modi, J&K has become the only region in India having AIIMS, IIT, IIM and other institutions of eminence".

Union Minister Jitendra Singh highlighted the importance that the government has given towards enhancing infrastructure development in the country and especially in J&K.

He said many of these development projects were very ambitious from the start and credited the prime minister for pro-actively pursuing them to ensure that development reaches the last mile.

The AIIMS Jammu is set to offer comprehensive medical services, with an expected daily footfall of 2000-3000 patients in the outpatient department. The Phase-1 consists of establishing 750 beds, including 193 ICU beds catering to trauma care, general care and super-specialties, an official spokesman said.

He said AIIMS Jammu plans to build approximately 50 departments, encompassing both general and specialised care.

Advanced facilities like Nuclear Medicine, 20 Modular OTs, MRI and CT Scan operating round-the-clock will ensure that humane and continuous care is readily available, he said.

Additionally, the spokesman said AIIMS Jammu's dedicated two-storey 'Aayush Block' with 30 beds alongside other facilities and partnerships, reflects a holistic healthcare approach merging traditional and modern medicine to enhance regional health outcomes.

AIIMS Jammu will have an annual intake of 100 students for its MBBS programme and 60 students for nursing. It will also introduce post-graduate programmes in Medical, Dental (MD/MS/MDS), Nursing, Super Specialisation programmes (DM/MCh), Doctorate (PhD) degrees, and more in the future.

With 54 per cent of its faculty and nearly 80 per cent nursing officers being women, AIIMS Jammu prioritises women empowerment through equal opportunities, supportive work environments and gender-sensitive policies, the spokesman said.

Law to provide...

Jammu and Kashmir Local Bodies Laws (Amendment) Act, 2024 (2 of 2024), the Central Government hereby appoints the 20th day of February 2024, as the date on which the provisions of the said Act shall come into force," according to a notification issued by Union Home Secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalla.

The act aims to uphold the principles of fairness and inclusivity in local governance, thereby addressing long-standing disparities and ensuring justice for OBCs. "With this... justice will be ensured to the citizens of Other Backward Classes of Jammu and Kashmir for the first time after 75 years of Independence," according to the statement of objects and reasons of the legislation.

The act states that in future, all local body polls will be conducted by a State Election Commission consisting of a State Election Commissioner, instead of the Chief Electoral Officer of Jammu and Kashmir.

The State Election Commissioner shall not be removed from his office except in manners and on grounds as a judge of a high court and the conditions of service of the State Election Commissioner shall not be varied to his disadvantage after his appointment.

"The Jammu and Kashmir Local Bodies Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2024 seeks to amend certain provisions of the Jammu and Kashmir Panchayati Raj Act, 1989, the Jammu and Kashmir Municipal Act, 2000 and the Jammu and Kashmir Municipal Corporation Act, 2000 in consonance with the provisions of the Constitution," according to the statement of objects and reasons of the legislation. The act was passed by Parliament recently.

Farooq congratulates PM...

a big challenge for Kashmiris. "Also, the stocks that would go from here used to get stuck on the Jammu-Srinagar national highway.

"The electric train will be fruitful for us as it will boost our businesses. Though we were expecting it to be completed by 2007, our region is tough and they had to construct tunnels," the former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister added.

Modi, who is on a visit to Jammu, dedicated various rail projects in Jammu and Kashmir to the country on Tuesday, including a new rail line between Banihal-Khari-Sumber-Sangaldan (48 km) and the newly-electrified Baramulla-Srinagar-Banihal-Sangaldan section (185.66 km).

The prime minister also flagged off the first electric train in the valley and a train service between the Sangaldan and Baramulla stations.

The commissioning of the Banihal-Khari-Sumber-Sangaldan section is significant as it features the usage of ballastless tracks (BLT) all along the route, providing a better riding experience to the passengers, according to an official spokesperson.

The country's longest transportation tunnel, T-50 (12.77 km), also lies in this portion between Khari and Sumber.

The rail projects will improve connectivity, ensure environmental sustainability and boost the overall economic development of the region, the spokesperson said.

PDP's Muzaffar Hussain...

The PDP leader further said that electricity has reached distant areas that were in darkness for years and the areas without water supply or roads now have both. Hospitals have been established in remote areas, he added.

"I am from a village and I am witnessing development all around," he said.

Baig credited Prime Minister Modi for bringing peace and normalcy in Jammu and Kashmir due to his bold and compassionate decisions.

"It was not just bold but also compassionate. No one in the past has done as much work as he has done. When he came to power, he started the journey of development, and today, it has reached its zenith," he said.

Baig further said that no one in Jammu and Kashmir is in favour of terrorism now. "Even the dynastic rulers are not in favour of terrorism," he said.

Five rescued from...

heavy overnight rains, the officials said. A joint team of the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) and the police rushed to the scene and successfully rescued the trapped persons after several hours of hectic efforts, they said. In Jammu, SDRF also rescued a man trapped in flash floods in River Tawi.

Delhi-Srinagar IndiGo flight faces turbulence

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Passengers travelling from Delhi to Srinagar on an IndiGo flight had a horrifying experience as the plane faced a severe turbulence due to inclement weather condition, officials said on Tuesday.

The incident took place on Monday. A video, recorded by someone on board the flight 6E 6125, shows anxious faces of the passengers. Several travellers could be heard chanting religious hymns.

A spokesperson of the airline said the flight from Delhi to Srinagar faced severe turbulent due to "inclement weather". "The crew followed all operational protocols and the flight landed safely in Srinagar. We regret the inconvenience caused to passengers due to the inclement weather," the spokesperson added.

Srinagar gets second snowfall of winter

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Srinagar city received second snowfall of the winter on Tuesday as higher reaches of Kashmir have witnessed bountiful snowfall over the past 48 hours, officials said here. Srinagar, which has been lashed by rain since Sunday, witnessed moderate snowfall in the early part of the day, a weather department official said. Heavy snowfall has been reported from Gulmarg, Sonamarg, Shopian, Gurez, Machil and other hilly areas of the valley, the person said.

The wet weather has been accompanied by gusty winds which has resulted in damage to several houses in the valley.

Videos of tin roofs being blown away by strong winds have gone viral on social media. Gulmarg, a skiing resort in Baramulla district, which is scheduled to host 4th Khelo India Winter Games from Wednesday, has received around 2.5 feet of fresh snowfall over the past 48 hours, the official said.

More than four feet of snow has accumulated at Sadhna Top (five feet), Razdan Top (five feet) Tulail-Gurez (four feet) and Sonamarg (4.5 feet).

Srinagar has received 29 mm rainfall over the past 24 hours while Qazigund received 76.8 mm. Pahalgam (40.1 mm), Kupwara (41.9 mm) and Kokernag (26.0 mm) also received substantial rain over the same period. The Jammu region has also been lashed by rain, forcing closure of Srinagar-Jammu national highway due to mudslides at several places in Ramban District.