

## HIGH SPEED INTERNET

Broadband/Internet services are provided in a phased manner by the Government and Telecom Services Provider (TSPs) in the uncovered villages of the country, including Scheduled caste, Scheduled Tribe dominated remote villages. The Government, with funding from Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF), has schemes namely Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan for North Eastern Region, Left Wing Extremism (LWE) Affected Area schemes, Aspirational Districts Schemes, Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan for Islands, etc. to extend Broadband/Internet services through setting up of towers in the uncovered villages of the country, including Scheduled caste, Scheduled Tribe dominated remote villages. About 4,330 mobile towers have been installed under various USOF schemes.

The Union Cabinet on 27.07.2022 approved a project for saturation of 4G mobile services in uncovered villages across the country at a total cost of Rs. 26,316 Cr. The project will provide 4G mobile services in 24,680 uncovered villages in remote and difficult areas. The project has a provision to include 20% additional villages on account of rehabilitation, new-settlements, withdrawal of services by existing operators etc. In addition, 6,279 villages having only 2G/3G connectivity shall be upgraded to 4G. BharatNet project is implemented in a phased manner to provide broadband connectivity to all Gram Panchayats (GPs) in the country, including Scheduled caste, Scheduled Tribe dominated remote villages, as on 25.07.2022, total 1,78,044 GPs have been made Service Ready. The infrastructure created under BharatNet project can be utilized by Service providers, for provisioning of broadband/internet services. The scope of BharatNet has been recently extended up to all inhabited villages beyond GPs in the country with the timeline as 2025.

## YOUR COLUMN

## Paying tributes to Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati

Dear Editor,

Through the medium of your esteemed daily, I would like to express gratitude towards Prime Minister Narendra Modi, that under his leadership, on the occasion of completion of 75 years of independence of our beloved motherland, hundreds of programs are being successfully organized across the country under the title Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav under which the contribution of numerous freedom fighters due their sacrifices for Mother India independent will be remembered and honored. Heartiest congratulations and best wishes to all the citizens on the pious occasion of 75th year of this proud independence from all Arya Samaj of India and especially Arya Samaj of Jammu and Kashmir. As you must be aware that Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati ji and his disciples participated vigorously and played an active role in the first freedom struggle of 1857 in freeing Maa Bharati from the shackles of slavery.

Taking inspiration and guidance from Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati, even in adverse circumstances of those terrible times, hundreds of his disciples struggled and sacrificed for independence in different roles. It is also worth mentioning here that about 70 years before Mahatma Gandhi's Salt Movement (1930), Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati ji flew the flag of freedom and in the first edition of Satyarth Prakash, strongly opposed the tax on salt and finally said that no matter what, we need to relinquish the grasp of British rule from our country and establish Swarajya. Moreover, at the time when the people of the country used to refrain from uttering the words independence, swarajya etc., even in those perilous times, Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati not only wrote books about independence, swarajya and swadeshi etc, but also kept on roaming around the country, instilling those values in the citizens of the nation through his lectures, which kept awakening and motivating people for independence. Emphasizing how important and necessary independence is for India, Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati ji wrote in his book "Satyarth Prakash's" Jaun Samullas, that whatever one may feel about the foreign rule, but the indigenous state is the best. Without voting rights, without grace, justice and mercy, us Indians should shun away the British rule at the earliest. Inspired by this announcement of Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati ji; Dadabhai Naoroji and Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak made such declarations that Swarajya is my birthright. Apart from this, inspired by the ideology of Arya Samaj founded by Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati ji; Lala Lajpat Rai, Sardar Bhagat Singh and his entire family, Madan Lal Dhingra, Ram Prasad Bismil, Ashfaq Ulla Khan, Sardar Udham Singh etc. sacrificed their lives for the independence struggle. Similarly Veer Savarkar, a disciple of Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati ji was greatly influenced by the ideas of Arya Samaj. He also dedicated his life towards the cause of independence. Arya Samaj scholar Shyamji Krishna Varma, Bhai Parmanand, Bhai Balmukund, Lala Hardayal M.A. etc. hundreds of revolutionaries kept the flame of freedom movement lit even after going abroad and finally dedicated their lives at the feet of Maa Bharti. Along with this, hundreds of educational institutions were established all over the country after the Gurukul education system established by Arya Samaj and Gurukul Kangri established by Swami Dhaddhanand were created to raise public awareness for freedom and attain independence. Hundreds of students of DAV (Dayanand Anglo Vedic) schools established and run by Arya Samaj and Brahmacharis of Gurukulas left their educational institutions and jumped into the freedom movement. Recalling the contribution of Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati towards the freedom movement, Dr Patabhi Sitaramaiah said that Maharishi Dayanand did great work for the nation years before Gandhi. He first told the Indians the path of Swaraj. He was the perfect person to build the era of new age India. Similarly, Bal Gangadhar Tilak had also said that Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati ji awakened India sleeping in deep sleep. He was the first messenger of Swarajya and worshiper of humanity. Referring to these two historical facts, a poet has said the truth. You had shown the way to the country that was bound by chains, you had lit that Shambu, which no time could quench. You used to sow the seeds in the courtyard of the thunderstorm, you used to make a sound when you used to be the whole of India. In this way, Sardar Bhagat Singh had said about Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati ji, that the announcer of independence and the source of inspiration for hundreds of revolutionaries, that all of us brothers got an opportunity to study in Maharishi Dayanand's Vedic DAV School. Arya Samaj has the biggest hand in the creation of our (revolutionary) thoughts and mental progress, we are indebted to Arya Samaj for these. Many such examples and evidences speak of Patabhi Sitaramayya, the history writer of Congress. 100 percent seems to be true, he had said that in the struggle for India's freedom and 80 percent of the heroes who died were inspired by Arya Samaj and Rishi Dayanand. On studying history, this statement it is proven to be hundred percent true. In this way, as much as the soldiers of Arya Samaj fought for freedom, hardly any other organization has done the same. Thus, keeping these facts in mind, Prime Minister is requested to specially mention the unprecedented contribution of Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati in the freedom movement from the ramparts of the Red Fort on 15 August 2022 and the memorial of Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati in the Central Hall of the new Parliament House.

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## Self Help Groups providing wings to women in 'Naya J&amp;K'

■ SANJAY SAWHNEY

The Self Help Groups (SHGs) are scripting a new chapter in 'Naya Jammu and Kashmir'. The government has provided wings to the aspirations of rural women in the Himalayan region by introducing various schemes under the SHGs. The J&K administration has embarked on a mission to form 11,000 new self help groups in the Union Territory by the end of this year. At present, there are more than 56,000 SHGs in J&K and as many as 5 lakh women are associated with these groups. Last year, J&K Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha had stated that under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home & Cooperation Minister Amit Shah, the country is witnessing renaissance in Cooperative movement to address the developmental needs of underprivileged sections of the society. He had asserted that the J&K Government won't leave any stone unturned to carry forward the mission of PM Modi and Amit Shah. "The new self help groups will be formed to give new impetus to entrepreneurial women organisations," LG Sinha had said.

After August 5, 2019, when the Centre announced its decision to abrogate J&K's special status and bifurcated it into two union territories-the helmsmen in the Himalayan region have been working hard to truly realize the Prime Minister's vision of 'Sahkar se Samiddhi'. They are focusing on agri-marketing, food processing, branding, supply of seeds and other innovative activities in dairy & handicrafts and the women have become an integral part of the mission. According to the official figures, about 55 per cent gram panchayats have been covered under women SHGs in J&K and the efforts are on to expedite the initiative to make women financially independent. The formation of SHGs has helped in bringing transparency in selection of beneficiaries of government schemes. In order to popularise the SHG concept in J&K, the government has involved women from SHGs of Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Bihar as resource persons. They are reaching out to women in the rural areas and explaining to them the benefits of joining the SHGs. The target is to cover the remaining 45 per cent gram panchayats by the end of this year.

In January this year, the Institute of Rural Management undertook a study for the rural development ministry to assess financial progress, quality and sustainability of institutions built and financial services provided to women SHGs. The impact of the initiative, under the DeepDayalAnyodaya Yojana National Rural Livelihoods Mission, was

found positive. The reforms introduced by the government after abrogation of Article 370, a temporary provision in the constitution of India, to identify women's potential in the leadership role and providing them opportunity to scale up their businesses have changed the lives of the fairer sex in J&K. The initiatives like Saath, Hausla, Umeed, Tejaswini have laid a strong foundation for financial independence of rural women.

Technology, market dynamics and financial inclusion are providing an opportunity to transform the women Self Help Groups. These groups are creating a niche for their products in a fiercely competitive global market and are proving to be an inspiration for the other women. The women SHGs in the far-flung rural areas are keeping the wheels of socio-economic progress moving. This has helped the government to reduce disparities, inequalities in the society and create employment. On the occasion of Independence Day (August 15), the government is all set to honor our 75 progressive women entrepreneurs from Rural Livelihood Mission Self Help Groups as an acknowledgment for their contribution towards women empowerment. The SHGs are organising workshops for women in different areas to boost their confidence. The success stories of women are being shared to make the fairer sex in the rural areas believe that they have the potential to become like their counterparts. Many women during the past two years have turned from job seekers to job providers. The SHGs have connected thousands of females and have provided them with an opportunity to interact with other women, to know their thoughts, livelihoods as well as about several government schemes. The SHGs are working hard to inculcate the habit of saving and banking among the rural women, to develop a relationship of trust between the rural women and the bankers, and to develop group activity so that women can become successful entrepreneurs. Women like Kaushalaya Devi of village Bali, Chenani in district Udhampur have become role models. Her story from rags to riches is just one of the examples about how SHGs have changed the lives of women.

While sharing her experience, Kaushalaya Devi while talking to a local newspaper revealed how difficult her life was. "I was a housewife and my husband was unemployed which made our lives very difficult. In 2013, I came to know about the UMEED scheme and joined SHG group Shri Mandir under the aegis of this scheme." She stated that her life changed after the government started to

infuse funds into SHGs. The members started to utilize the funds to start their own small businesses. She started a small business of dairy farming and after taking help of government funds, small loan through bank linkage she started earning around Rs 8,000 per month. Getting inspired by the success of dairy farming, Kaushalaya also started to look for alternate business to earn more money. After that, she started the business of tailoring and bag making which turned her into a successful member of the group. With the assistance under the UMEED scheme she bought a dumper after the government provided Rs 10 lakh loan to their group. Currently, Kaushalaya is handsomely earning more than Rs 50,000 per month making her life and that of her family very happy. Her children are studying in a good school and she is living happily with her family. "Earlier people in my village used to tell women can't do anything but after my success, the same people are giving my examples," she said. Atiqi Wani, of Ramhal, area of Kupwara district in North Kashmir after completing her post-graduation thought to stand on her own and decided to start an educational institute. With the desire to do something big in life, she got associated with the SHG eco-system to augment her otherwise limited financial resources. She received a "Revolving Fund" of Rs 10,000 initially and later on a Community Investment Fund of Rs 20,000 and then three times a total loan of Rs 1.40 lakh. Seeing her performance of repayments etc. and her commitment towards her mission, she was recommended for bank linkage which helped her in running the affairs of the institute successfully. She started the institute with only five students in 2019. As on date, hundreds of students are enrolled in her institute as the financial support from the UMEED scheme has helped her to reach the top. "We are not only earning a decent living but we are proud to become job-givers rather than job-seekers and are able to provide gainful employment to fifteen persons in our institution so far," Russia@3833 [Atiqi told a Srinagar-based daily]. Janna Begum, a SHG member, hailing from Singhpora in North Kashmir's Baramulla district, established various livelihoods for herself and also engaged her entire family in it. "UMEED provided me with a platform to overcome my financial difficulty. I started cosmetics and a fodder shop and both the units were a good success. I now earn more than Rs. 25,000 profit a month," she said. Naseema Bano of Newa area in south Kashmir's Pulwama district wanted to extend a helping hand to her

husband but every time lack of financial resources would stop her. "I not only now created a livelihood opportunity for myself but engaged my entire family with it. UMEED provided us with an appropriate platform for overcoming our financial difficulties we were facing for quite a long time," she asserted. With the financial help and bank linkage, she was able to establish a full-fledged workshop and a retail copper shop in her vicinity. The shop is a successful venture and she is earning more than Rs 30,000 profits a month. Sheetal Kumari, hailing from village Sultampur of Bishnah block was struggling on a daily basis for her livelihood. "It was very hard for us to make both ends meet. I used to make paper bags all night and sell them to the nearby vendor. I joined the UMEED programme and did my best to revive our economic condition," she said. Kumari in a short span of her association with UMEED has generated quite a few assets for her family. She is a role model for the women in her village as well in her own community. She has at present a Kiranya shop, a load carrier, 2 to 3 cows and works as an AMC operator in her village. Anju Bala of Mathwar, Bhalwal area of Jammu region was imparted a number of trainings by the sakhis which opened her horizon. Currently, Anju is running a general store successfully and earning substantial income for her family.

After August 5, 2019, lives of women in J&K have changed. During COVID-19 pandemic, fairer sex played a lead role in sustaining the economy of J&K. Women made lakhs of masks and contributed immensely in the fight against the pandemic. The support offered by the government turned the women into key agents for the development of the society. Self-Help Groups especially for women helped them to start entrepreneurial activities which led to eradication of poverty. These groups have proven to be effective tools for women empowerment in J&K. The women members of the SHGs in J&K have set an example in repayment of loans with less than one per cent NPA. Union Rural Development Minister Narendra Singh Tomar had stated that women self-help groups in rural areas had set an example for the country in repaying loans. J&K women are on a way to change their destinies through the Self Help Groups and they have proven their mettle through the dint of their hard work, sincerity, dedication and honesty. They are contributing immensely towards building 'Naya J&K' and the government is providing them with all possible support.

## Scraping Art 370- step to revive educational &amp; employment opportunities

■ SALMAN MIRZA

Kashmir valley has forever been a place of interest for its unique beauty, the bounty of natural resources and rich culture. With pride in their Kashmiriyat, people here together prospered in the local livelihoods of farming, tourism, handicrafts, etc. But, with political tensions during the British rule and partition, the secular social fabric of the state almost fell apart.

Though, the then separate state happily acceded to India, social tensions across J&K prevailed due to cross border terrorism. Article 370, posing as the savior of the people, was introduced to add a layer of confusion in the functioning of the state.

While the rest of the nation adapted to the on-going global developments, Jammu and Kashmir remained stuck in the past due to conditions imposed by the state laws. This alienated the local people, who found it difficult to come

out and grab multiple education and employment opportunities that have been open for them as for any other citizen. Even though the state possesses a good percentage of literate youth, low connectivity with the educational scenario in the rest of the country has limited their awareness about the latest study trends and opportunities.

This had been creating a vacuum in the right educational guidance, which is restricting most of the students of J&K from competing effectively on a pan-India level. The regressive state laws, along with terrorist activities, curtailed the development dreams of J&K, while other states of India moved forward. Thus, over the years, many have contended over the need to scrap Article 370. Finally, India saw its President passing a resolution of scrapping it on August 5, 2019. With the abrogation of Article 370 (and therefore Article 35A), the limitations on land ownership will be

dissolved, which will enable higher private investment and setting up of industries in the state. This is invariably going to give rise to technical training institutes. Considering the high number of youth in the state, industries are already eyeing the untapped education market. Quality educational offerings by numerous organizations will be accessible to the youth right in the state. This can bridge the wide gap prevailing between curriculum and industry and infuse confidence into the students. With this, J&K's youngsters will come in sync with the contemporary industry trends. Further, it will also break social and psychological barriers across the country and unlock multiple employment and entrepreneurial possibilities. Indeed, the annulment of Article 370 is a promising step in the direction of a new dawn that will see the revival of J&K and its economy as the pride of India.

## Jammu &amp; Kashmir on way to become a Model UT

■ RAJEEV RAJPUT

Kashmir is well on its way to become a model state with investments, infrastructure, tourism, social welfare and agriculture showing unprecedented growth in less than two years after being freed from Article 370. Kashmir is in fact poised on the cusp of a massive economic push with record investment proposals worth Rs 31,000 crore under consideration. The central government has notified a new scheme worth Rs 28,400 crore which is likely to provide employment to over 4.5 lakh people. Six agreements with global investors were signed at EXPO2020 Dubai early January for investments in real estate, infrastructure, tourism, healthcare, manpower employment sectors among others.

There is considerable progress on the infrastructure front. More than 53 projects are at different stages of completion at a cost of Rs 58,477 crore in various sectors such as roads, power, health, education, tourism, agriculture, skill development. Twentyone of these projects have been completed or substantially completed. Projects languishing at various stages numbering over 1,192 projects worth Rs 1,983.77 crore were completed, including five projects which were incomplete for more than 20 years, 15 projects for more than 15 years and 165 projects for more than 10 years. These include roads nearly 11,517 km in total length, 1858 roads and 84 bridges. The quantum jump in the budgetary allocation is evidence how seriously India wants to bring peace through development in otherwise restive J&K because of perpetration of terrorism from Pakistani side. The new government is continuously taking policy initiatives for the development of J&K. The J&K Industrial Policy 2016 is aimed to attract substantial investment in industry for production of goods, services and employment generation through optimal utilization of available resources, including human resources. It aims at addressing the challenges faced by Industry and to create a sustainable, balanced, progressive and competitive ecosystem in the UT. At micro level, students are being offered better endowed scholarship schemes, helping those from the minorities as well as poorer sections of the society. Already famous as a global tourism destination, Kashmir is busy transforming itself into a state of dreams and achievements for its people. A major thrust is on providing educational,

health and employment opportunities for the people of the Union Territory as well as neighbouring regions. A multi-pronged plan has been put in place to transform Kashmir into a premier educational hub in north India. Besides improving existing schools and colleges, new educational institutions are rising across the territory. Premier educational institutes like IITs and IIMs are already functional. Over 22 colleges and two new cultural universities are on the anvil. At micro level, students are being offered better endowed scholarship schemes, helping those from the minorities as well as poorer sections of the society. Improvement in health services has been dramatic with national health schemes and projects establishing itself in far nook and cranny of the valley. National medical insurance schemes are now reaching even the most remote, and poorest, sections. Kashmir is the only Union Territory with universal health insurance coverage for up to Rs 5 lakh per family. Besides premier medical institutes like All India Institute of Medical Sciences and Cancer Institute along with two new medical colleges in Udhampur are changing the health scene in Kashmir. Mega private hospitals are already planning to enter the state. The first one would be Apollo Hospitals which plans to set up a 250-bed hospital, an initiative which the hospital administration hopes would sow the seeds of Kashmir being known as a global health tourism destination. Kashmir is known for its handicrafts throughout the world. Its carpets, silks, shawls, basketry, pottery, copper and silverware, papier-mache, and walnut wood are most sought after. The cottage handicrafts industry provides direct and gainful employment to around 340,000 artisans. A new plan for global cooperation has been launched with Germany, one of the biggest patrons of Kashmiri handicraft, as the focus. These global initiatives are likely to be expanded to other countries in Europe. Perhaps the most visible change has been sports infrastructure livening up the horizon across the state and a galaxy of sportspersons becoming household names. From gymnastics to cricket, sports academies, tournaments and prizes have made remarkable progress, attracting thousands of young women and men towards sports. A violence-marred state is fast becoming a great sporting destination to look out for in the days to come.

## PROGRESSING J&amp;K

## ABDM-revolutionary step for upgrading healthcare system across country

## ABDM aims to develop, support integrated digital health infrastructure for effective medical care

With the rollout of the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM), citizens of J&K will be able to get digital health identification card for effective and timely medical care. The ABDM was launched by Prime Minister, Narendra Modi in September 2021 aiming to usher a revolutionary change in India's healthcare system. ABDM aims to develop and support the integrated digital health infrastructure across the country. It will bridge the existing gap amongst different stakeholders of Healthcare ecosystem through digital highways in J&K. Recently after the rollout of ABDM in J&K, separate directorate under the Directorate National Health Mission for smooth implementation of the mission was established.

"Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM) will empower individuals with accurate information to enable informed decision making and increase accountability of healthcare providers," said Additional Mission Director ABDM, Dr Shafkat Hussain who has expertise and experience of managing important programmes and institutions in J&K Govt besides being certified Chief Information and Security Officer by Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology GOI to make ABDM successful in J&K.

The ABDM envisages to establish state-of-the-art digital health systems, to manage the core digital health data, and the infrastructure required for its seamless exchange. An official said that it will create a system of personal health records, based on international standards, easily accessible to individuals and healthcare professionals and service providers, based on individual's informed consent besides promotion of development of enterprise-class health application systems with a special focus on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals for health.

The official added that it is for the first time that the healthcare institutions and professionals in the private sector will actively participate with public health authorities in the building of ABDM through combination of prescription and promotion.

The implementation of ABDM is expected to significantly improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and transparency of health service delivery.

Patients will be able to securely store and access their medical records (such as prescriptions, diagnostic reports and discharge summaries), and share them with health care providers to ensure appropriate treatment and follow-up. They will also have access to more accurate information on health facilities and service providers.

Further, they will have the option to access health services remotely through tele-consultation and e-pharmacy. ABDM will also provide choice to individuals to access both public and private health services, facilitate compliance with laid down guidelines and protocols, and ensure transparency in pricing of services and accountability for the health services being rendered. Similarly, health care professionals across disciplines will have better access to patient's medical history (with the necessary informed consent) for prescribing more appropriate and effective health interventions.

The integrated ecosystem will also enable better continuum of care.