



GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

ADDRESS

BY

SHRI N. N. VOHRA

GOVERNOR JAMMU AND KASHMIR

TO THE

JOINT SESSION OF THE LEGISLATURE

WEDNESDAY, 25TH MAY, 2016

**Hon'ble Speaker of the Legislative
Assembly, Hon'ble Chairman of
the Legislative Council and
distinguished members of the
Legislature.**

1. I am very happy to be associated with this Joint Session in which, for the first time in the history of Jammu and Kashmir, we have a young lady as the Leader of the House. This historical event is a wonderful example of the emancipation and empowerment of women in our State.
2. I would take this opportunity of also recalling, with regard and sentiment, the decades long visionary leadership provided by the late Mufti Mohammad Sayeed Sahib whose entire political

career was marked by unwavering commitment to securing inclusive political stability and advancing the interests of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

3. Perhaps the best collective tribute which this House can pay to Mufti Sahib would be to join hands and work, with single minded devotion, for generating an inclusive political environment and securing rapid and equitable growth and development of the State.

4. The former Chief Minister would often say that this House is the most empowered in the country. It is important to preserve the sanctity and enhance the productivity of this important democratic institution through meaningful discussions and constructive debates. Dissent is an inherent and valued element of the democratic discourse between one and

all, between those in government and those on the other side, and there should be no occasion to feel discouraged or offended by voices of dissent.

5. We need to remember that this House is the custodian and the protector of the rights and privileges of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. It would, therefore, be beneficial if, in the course of discussions and debates, Hon'ble Members, irrespective of ideology and political affiliation, keep in mind that arriving at consensus on contrary issues would enable this House to meaningfully play its crucial role and discharge its high responsibility to the people of the State.

6. The State Government is committed to safeguarding the special status which has been accorded to Jammu and Kashmir in the Constitution of India and

has been also spelt out in the Agenda of the Alliance which forms the basis of the PDP-BJP Coalition Government.

7. It is a happy augury that, at the national level, the Prime Minister of India is personally pursuing the subcontinental agenda of peace which, needless to say, will have a positive outcome for normalizing the situation in the State.

8. The Prime Minister's bold initiative of reaching out to Pakistan in a bid to establish lasting peace in the region has been welcomed in the State and revived the hope for peace, particularly along the borders where the lives of the people have been shattered. The impact of the Prime Minister's visit to Lahore and the subsequent bilateral dialogues at different levels have generated hope for our State, which

has for long borne the brunt of unstable relations between the two countries.

9. The State Government is committed to pursuing and strengthening the path of peace and dialogue for achieving reconciliation and development. The people of the State are hopeful that the revived initiatives for the establishment of friendly relations with our western neighbor will have a positive outcome for the restoration of peace and normalcy, particularly for the people residing in the border areas who live in an environment of insecurity and have, over the years, continued to suffer human and economic losses.

10. As a confidence building measure, in collaboration with the Government of India, my Government has been endeavouring to enlarge and upgrade cross-LoC trade. In this context, the infrastructure of the Trade Facilitation

Centres has been enhanced, the communication systems have been strengthened and, most importantly, steps to set up the framework of the banking facilities have been recently worked out in consultation with the Government of India and the Reserve Bank of India.

11. To enhance the dividends of peace, the State Government is working to develop Border Tourism, particularly in the areas of Suchetgarh and Chamliyal.
12. We are hopeful that with the various ongoing initiatives falling in place we shall soon enter an era of normalcy, peace and prosperity, which the people of the State have been yearning for.
13. The State Police, alongwith other Security Forces, is playing an important role in maintaining law and order and undertaking counter insurgency

operations. Their professionalism, courage and patience merits appreciation. However, incidents like the one which took place the other day in which three of our dedicated Police personnel were killed in a cowardly act, set us back every time we are moving towards normalcy. Besides the need to maintain a constant vigil to prevent the recurrence of such incidents, I urge the civil society to come out strongly, in one voice, against such incidents and send a clear message that we shall act against any move which is against the interest of our society and the security of the country.

14. Initiatives for enhancing growth and socio-economic development will bear fruit, and pave the way for our youth to lead peaceful and productive lives, when the various moves have been institutionalized by political and legislative processes.

15. My Government is deeply committed to realizing the full potential of our talented youth. This objective is at the top of the priority list and a multi-pronged strategy is envisaged to unleash the unlimited zeal and energy of the younger generation.

16. The Government is engaged in reorienting and upgrading the education system to make it an "enabler" and not merely a "certification department" which compels educated youth to seek jobs which do not match their potentials or their qualifications. Needless to say, the establishment of institutions of excellence like the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) and Indian Institute of Management (IIM) will soon engender a definitive improvement in the quality of professional education in our State.

17. The State Government is committed to reviving the creativity and sense of

purpose among the youth. Already, encouraging reports are coming in about groups of self-assured entrepreneurs succeeding in establishing their own enterprises, particularly in Horticulture, Handicraft, Information Technology and other sectors. The State Government has come out with schemes to match and enhance the endeavours of the young entrepreneurs whose initiatives are already bearing fruit.

18. Skill development is a thrust area for the Government and significant initiatives have already been taken in this regard. Apart from implementing the National Vocational Educational Qualification Framework, heritage craft courses have been introduced in 13 Polytechnics and ITIs in the State.
19. The establishment of two Cluster Universities and two Engineering Colleges is expected to provide a

significant boost to the enlargement of academic and research activities in the State. For devoting focused attention towards the upgradation of school education, the State Government has launched the Chief Minister's Model School Scheme, which also provides for schools being adopted by Institutions and Legislators.

20. As a former civil servant I note, with enormous satisfaction, that a growing number of our talented boys and girls are getting into the All India Civil Services every year. A few years ago one of our boys secured the first position in the country and a few days ago a young lad from Anantnag has secured the 2nd position in the list of those selected for the Indian Administrative Service this year and hope that these outstanding achievements shall inspire many of our youth to strive for similar successes. I take this opportunity of congratulating all

those who joined the All India and various Central Services in the recent years and have every reason to expect that the services rendered by them will be recognized and lauded at the national level in the coming years.

21. We live in a world of ever increasing competitiveness. If our State has to do well our talented youth must learn to become competitive. To enable the upcoming generation to attain their aspirations the Government is committed to taking all required steps to upgrading and securing excellence in the academic standards of the institutions of higher learning. Side by side, the Government will also take the required administrative and other initiatives to enable our educational institutions to achieve global standards.

22. We live in an age of instant and real time communications and the youth cannot be

immunized from varied global influences. Being aware and sensitive to the phenomenon of radicalization, the State Government believes that the revival of our own culture, traditions and practices and enabling our youth to become proud of their heritage would contribute in thwarting unwholesome influences. The Government is actively working in this area to soon bring about a cultural revival in the State.

23. While the various initiatives being taken by the Government are envisaged to address the challenges facing the youth in the State, there must not be any doubt that no other course except the provision of efficient, honest and sensitive governance can lead to stopping the alienation of the younger generation.

24. In our democratic framework the effectiveness of governmental

functioning depends upon the efficiency, reliability and credibility of the administrative apparatus. Though burdened with a host of accumulated problems, many of which require basic reforms and not merely quick fix solutions, the PDP-BJP alliance is vigorously engaged in dealing with and restoring the credibility of systems.

25. A definitive component of the Government's policy is to move away from adhocism in policy making and, instead, establishing and reinvigorating systems for delivering good governance and efficient delivery of public services.
26. In this context, the establishment of the Public Service Commission, with full membership, and the strengthening of the Service Selection Board have already enhanced the speed and brought in the much needed transparency in the recruitment system. Today, all

recruitments are being made only through the established procedures and institutions, and none through the back door.

27. The fast track recruitment policy is being followed for reaching out to the remote and far flung areas where vacancies have remained unfilled for long periods, particularly in the health and education sectors. The written test has been made mandatory for all recruitments and enlistment to Police has been streamlined to ensure that the fittest and the best are admitted to the Force. To eliminate subjectivity, favoritism, nepotism, and patronage in the award of contracts the departments are required to implement e-tendering in letter and spirit.

28. Besides youth, the Government is focusing on the problems faced by the marginalized and vulnerable segments of

the society. In the past one year the State Government has taken significant steps to promote welfare measures which are inherent to any caring administrative apparatus. All in all, the various measures which have been taken by the Government are intended to create a safety net for the poorer sections of our society.

29. The Ladli Beti and Aasra schemes are among the examples of this safety net. The State Government is reaching out to provide direct financial support for securing the future of the girl child and of the sole bread winners for providing security to their families in unforeseen eventualities.
30. Needless to say, with a woman as the chief executive of the State there should be no doubt that policy making is on the way to becoming visibly gender sensitive. Already, a range of women

centric measures have been enforced, among which there are women Police Stations and women only buses. Surely, more is on the way!

31. The State Government is planning to set up women entrepreneurship centres to particularly empower women and facilitate their livelihoods.
32. To promote the health standards of women and provide basic and critical gynecological care to women every district will have a model Maternity Hospital.
33. It is a matter for great satisfaction that the Government of India has approved the establishment of two AIIMS in our State. Needless to say, the functioning of these two institutions of excellence will visibly upgrade the delivery of health care services in the State.

34. The Government has taken the laudable initiative of implementing the National Food Security Act (NFSA) in the State. This step, an improvement over the earlier system, will promote food security in the State, particularly of the less advantaged segments of the society. After the enforcement of NFSA the number of beneficiaries has increased by 20 lakh, from 99 lakh under the erstwhile Public Distribution System to 1.19 crore, thus providing food security to 95% of the total population. Furthermore, the number of souls to be provided rice and wheat at Rs 3 and Rs 2 per kg, respectively, has increased five fold, from 13.77 lakh to 74.13 lakh souls. The implementation of NFSA shall provide food security to almost the entire population of the State and particularly benefit those who need it most, and at the lowest price.

35. Till the new food distribution system stabilizes and responds sensitively to the needs of the people, the State Government has taken an important step of introducing a "Food Entitlement Scheme", as distinct from "Food Safety Scheme", under which additional ration of 5 kg per soul shall be provided to families with 6 or less members. The cost of this welfare measure will be borne by the State Government from within its own resources.
36. The State Government is committed to taking various steps for securing efficient use of the available resources.
37. By changing the Budget classification and accounting, which is now being adopted nationally, the State has saved considerable expenditure and, besides, paved the way for physical monitoring of public expenditure in terms of asset creation.

38. The Government has, as a policy intervention, adopted the convergence of resources approach. Even though this is a recent step, the impact so far has been impressive. For instance, as many as 500 bridges have been constructed in just one year while the remaining bridges under the project will be completed during the current year to provide connectivity to residents, schools, anganwadies, hospitals and other community institutions.

39. The convergence mode has also provided a viable approach to revive many institutions like schools and hospitals which have been lying in a derelict condition for want of upkeep and resources. Other sectors like flood control, local connectivity and horticulture, are also getting benefitted by this new strategy which has the

potential of transforming the rural landscape in the near future.

40. Another example of building systems is the manner in which the Government is dealing with the issue of 61,000 casual, adhoc and daily workers. A comprehensive skill development programme is envisaged to be implemented to secure gainful utilization by deploying this large work force in different departments after the process of verification, biometrics and skill profiling of these persons has been completed.

41. The Government considers Aadhar as a crucial lever in building systems. Following the NPR for the unique identification of citizens the Government have been able to enroll 1.09 crore persons out of the total population of 1.25 crore and 82 lakh have already been issued Aadhar cards. This forward

step will ensure that, in the coming years, all benefits from the State and the Central Governments to the people shall be directly transferred to the beneficiaries. This will be a very important forward step in the upgradation of the Government's institutional capacity to efficiently deliver goods, services, utilities and other benefits to its people.

42. The Government is committed to effectively implementing the Public Services Guarantee Act which was passed by the previous government. This will empower the people and also make the governmental machinery accountable in every manner.
43. The Prime Minister's Development Plan for J&K is an initiative and an opportunity to bring about socio-economic development of the State. Underlying the Prime Minister's Plan is an intermediate

strategy of institutional reform, of reconstruction and of sustainable development. A crucial objective of the Plan and its strategy is to systematically build up and enhance the self-help capability of the entire population.

44. The Government's top priority in the next two years is to ensure the speedy implementation of the Prime Minister's Development Plan which will enable the Government to not only respond to any arising natural calamities but also catalyze all round economic growth which will reduce the socio-political vulnerability of the State.

45. This fully funded Plan of Rs. 80,000 crore, an aggregate of sectoral initiatives, is to be executed over the next five years. The annual phasing of the Plan will be based on the absorptive capability and the spending capacity of

the Government and its implementing agencies.

46. A large part of the relief component has already been distributed to those whose houses had been partially or fully damaged.
47. To accelerate trade and business activity in the State the Government will shortly provide interest subvention, which will generate substantial liquidity support for the revival of the business and trade fraternity. The Government has already received the resources for implementing this important initiative.
48. Assistance has been received from the Government of India for providing humanitarian relief to PoK refugees, which has been hanging fire for the past six decades. The modalities for the distribution of this relief are being finalized in consultation with the

Government of India. In the case of West Pakistan refugees, which is another serious humanitarian issue, a Committee is presently deliberating on the possible measures which can be provided to the refugees for their sustenance and livelihood support.

49. The Government is committed to the return and settlement of displaced persons, including the Kashmiri Pandits who are a part of the ethnic diversity and must be rehabilitated in a manner which fully addresses their sense of insecurity.

50. The Government is anxious to diversify the sources for financing economic development. Apart from the assistance received from Government of India in the form of the Prime Minister's Development Plan, which is in the nature of an autonomous injection of Rs 80,000 crore of investment into the system, the Government is working to mobilize

private investment to supplement this public expenditure by seeking assistance from multilateral agencies like the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and Japan International Cooperation Agency. The Government is also seeking to tap domestic private investments.

51. Private investments are needed not only for promoting industry and its allied sectors. A very disconcerting factor, which has severe implications for the economic growth of the State, relates to the declining public investment in the agriculture sector. There is urgent need to reverse this trend and provide incentives for attracting private investments in the agriculture and allied sectors, particularly for the development of horticulture and animal and sheep husbandry.

52. The High Density Mission in Horticulture is potentially a game changer and can be a sweet spot for private investors.

53. My Government is very keen to access clean energy and secure funding which various environmental agencies are providing. This appears the most advantageous route for promoting sustainable development without impairing the ecology and environmental eco-system of our State which is known for its natural beauty and resources.

54. To preserve our environmental heritage the Government is committed to containing the adverse impact of climate change by implementing the Green India Mission. We will also seek to create, with the help of the Government of India, three Eco Battalions to help in protecting the ecology and environment of our State.

55. The Government will encourage Public Private Partnership (PPP) to seek private investment. This should encourage all those who want to invest with the Government or local entrepreneurs in J&K. To begin with, 34 ITIs have been covered under PPP. The Government will explore PPP for the delivery of social services, particularly in the health sector.

56. While the Government will go all out to attract investments by providing an enabling environment and incentives it will ensure that these are in compliance of our existing administrative practices, regulatory norms and constitutional provisions.

57. For strengthening the decentralized system of governance, the Government is committed to soon hold the Municipal elections. This House is fully aware of the reasons why the earlier envisaged election schedule could not be followed.

The Government is fully conscious of the need to hold Panchayat elections at the earliest, which are due to be held this year.

58. I would conclude this Address by wishing all the Hon'ble Legislators to have fruitful deliberations, particularly when they discuss important issues which face our State and society, and evolve harmonious approaches to dealing with all our problems. I fervently hope that the discussions in this Session of the Legislature will also result in evolving convergence regarding the initiatives which will restore peace and normalcy and bring prosperity for the people of our State.

JAI HIND