



**GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR**

# **ADDRESS**

*BY*

**SHRI N. N. VOHRA**

**HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR**

**TO THE**

**JOINT SESSION OF THE LEGISLATURE**

**MONDAY, 22<sup>ND</sup> FEBRUARY, 2010**

**Hon'ble Chairman of the Legislative Council, Hon'ble Speaker of the Legislative Assembly and Hon'ble Members.**

1. It gives me great pleasure to address this Joint Session of the State Legislature at a time when my Government has already completed one year in office. The elections of 2008 were truly a watershed, given the exceptionally large turnout of over 61%, and my Government took office in an atmosphere of hope and expectation. The people of Jammu & Kashmir unequivocally affirmed their faith in the democratic process and clearly demonstrated their desire to put the past behind them. The unambiguous message given by the people of the State to the separatists and to all those who oppose the democratic process is that the problems of the State can be best resolved by political means, within the established democratic and parliamentary system. The rejection of violence, implicit in this message, needs to be taken note of by all those opposed to democracy.

2. My Government made a new beginning, both politically and administratively, with the objective of boosting the socio-economic development of the State, which has been adversely affected by the prolonged period of insurgency. The Government has defined its role in regard to the delivery of basic services to the people and as a facilitator to encourage private and collective enterprise. It has also been decided that the broad policy orientation would be towards the completion and consolidation of all existing and ongoing schemes and programmes, rather than on creating new ones, with exceptions being made for launching schemes which are targeted to secure the development of hitherto under-funded and neglected areas.
3. In the context of restoring normalcy in the State, it is essential that the process of dialogue be resumed. My Government has welcomed the initiative taken by the Government of India to recommence the dialogue process. My Government also welcomes the projected discussions

between the Foreign Secretaries of India and Pakistan.

4. Possibly the highest priority for my Government's policy during its first year in office was the restoration of peace and tranquility in the State. After more than two decades of militancy-related violence and terrorism, there is a palpable yearning for peace across all sections of the society in the different regions of the State. It is clear that people want to put the past behind them and to get on with their lives. Over the years, the disruption of normal life caused by violence, hartals, bandhs, etc. has taken a heavy toll and the delivery of services by the Government has inevitably been adversely affected. The repeated disruption of academic schedules has done irreparable damage to the future of the younger generation. More importantly, the people of the State have not been able to take full benefit of the economic development which took place in various parts of the country after the liberalisation of the 1990's. The State has

to now take rapid steps to make up for lost time.

5. My Government is committed to effectively countering militancy and terrorism in the State. It is clear that socio- economic development cannot be achieved unless an atmosphere of relative peace, tranquility and harmony prevails in the State. There has been a significant reduction in terrorist related incidents in the State in 2009. There were only 499 terrorist incidents last year as compared to 708 in 2008 and 1092 in 2007. This trend clearly shows that the situation is progressively improving, significantly. All the other indices also indicate a return to normalcy in the State. The reduction in terrorism related violence is due in a large part to the concerted action taken by the Security Forces and the Army against militants in the State. The work done in this regard and the sacrifices made by the Army, the Central Paramilitary Forces and the State Police are commendable. The high level of coordination between the Army, the Central Paramilitary Forces and the State

Police has ensured that consistent pressure continues to be mounted against the militants and their over ground supporters. During 2009, a total of 239 militants were killed and 187 were arrested. More importantly, a number of influential terrorist field commanders were also eliminated. However, areas of concern remain. There was a rise in attempts to infiltrate into the State across the LoC and the International Border during 2009 and in the month of January 2010. The Security Forces are taking all necessary action to prevent infiltration.

6. While effective initiatives must necessarily be taken against militants and terrorists, my Government is absolutely clear that all the action taken should be in conformity with the law. The zero tolerance policy of the Government has ensured that there is much greater respect for Human Rights and that prompt action is taken whenever violations occur. In addition, the Empowered Committee system was made fully functional during 2009 which made it possible to consider the recommendations

made by the State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) during the year with a minimum time lag. The Government will try to achieve the difficult balance between empowering the Security Forces and the Police to act decisively and effectively and the firm commitment to ensure that violations of Human Rights do not occur during the course of such action.

7. Kashmiri Pandits are an essential component of the identity and ethos of Kashmir and their safe return to the Valley with dignity and honour is a major objective of my Government. The State Cabinet has recently approved a package for the return and rehabilitation of Kashmiri migrants with an outlay of Rs. 1618.40 crore. An Apex Advisory Committee has been constituted to oversee the effective implementation of the package, one of the main components of which is the provision of employment to unemployed migrant youth. As many as 3,000 posts have been created for them in various Government departments and the recruitment agencies have already initiated the selection

process. Transit accommodation in Kashmir is being constructed for the returning migrants. Work on the new township at Jagti, where 4218 flats for Kashmiri Migrants are under construction, is at an advanced stage of completion and these flats will be available for allotment during the current year. My Government is also committed to addressing the unresolved problems relating to displaced persons, the refugees and the migrants in Jammu.

8. The only way for the State to progress is for its three regions, Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh, to develop and grow in a spirit of mutual co-operation and co-existence. To achieve this objective, my Government is single mindedly pursuing its agenda to promote the equitable development of all the three regions and sub-regions of the State. The policies and programmes aimed at promoting the welfare of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Gujjars and Bakerwals, Pahari speaking people and other Backward Classes will continue to receive Government's priority attention.



9. A de-centralized development process which involves people's participation at all levels is essential for the overall development of the State. My Government is committed to establishing Panchayati Raj in the State and to devolving powers and responsibilities upon Panchayati Raj Institutions and Urban Local Bodies to enable them to function as self governing institutions. Elections to the Panchayats and the Urban Local Bodies in the State will be held soon.
  
10. My Government is fully alive to the magnitude of the problem of unemployment among the educated youth. The answer to the problem of unemployment does not lie merely in creating more jobs in the already saturated Government sector but in creating employment opportunities in the economy as a whole. Appreciating this need, my Government has for the first time introduced a comprehensive and holistic Employment Policy called the Sher-e-Kashmir Employment and Welfare

Programme for the Youth which seeks to create employment opportunities and enable skill upgradation for about 5 lakh educated youth over the next five years. One of the salient features of the policy is the provision of a Voluntary Service Allowance to educated jobless youth. The erstwhile Employment Exchanges have been revamped and renamed District Employment and Counselling Centres. An Overseas Employment Corporation has been established to act as a Placement Agency for overseas employment. An Employment Facilitating Agency is being established to oversee the functioning of all employment-related organizations. Side by side with the creation of employment opportunities for the youth, my Government has fast tracked the process of selection through the recruiting agencies. During the past one year, over 20,500 Gazetted and Non-gazetted appointments were made and another 20,000 are in the pipeline.

11. My Government remains focused on the provision of Good Governance.

Government institutions and Government functionaries have to become effective and, more importantly, accountable for their work. Immediately after it took office, my Government took various steps to establish a responsive, accountable and people-friendly administration. In order to ensure adequate transparency in the functioning of the Government, a new Jammu & Kashmir Right to Information Act 2009, was enacted on the lines of the Central Act. Another new initiative was the setting up of a Grievance Cell (Awaz-e-Awam) in the Chief Minister's Secretariat for the speedy redressal of public grievances. The new Awami Mulaqat system for taking the Government to the people at district headquarters level has evoked an overwhelming response from the public. The State Information Commission is expected to become fully functional shortly and the State Accountability Commission is being reconstituted. My Government recognizes that urgent steps are required to deal with the

scourge of corruption in public service. Corruption has adversely affected the delivery of governmental services to the public. Therefore, without tackling corruption, the very effectiveness of the Government is compromised. My Government will not compromise on the issue of corruption and ruthless action under law will be taken against wrongdoers.

12. When my Government assumed office about 14 months ago, the biggest challenge before it was to boost economic activities and to find the resources to achieve this. The Government has been successful in increasing the Annual Plan of 2009-10 to Rs. 5500 crore, which is the highest allocation ever. In addition, another Rs. 1,200 crore under the Prime Minister's Reconstruction Plan (PMRP), including Rs. 220 crore as 'counter-part share' to enable the State Government to raise a matching share of loan from the Asian Development Bank, has also been obtained. My Government expresses its gratitude to the Central Government for

extending wholehearted support to the State.

13. The provision of electricity is probably the most important input for the socio-economic development of our State. We are in a paradoxical situation where even though nature has endowed us with an estimated 20,000 mW of hydro-electric potential, only around 12% of this vast potential has been tapped both in the State and the Central sectors. A multi-pronged strategy has been adopted to harness the available hydro-electric potential in the shortest possible time. Follow up action on the decision to execute five hydro electric projects in the State with a total installed capacity of 870.5 mW has already been initiated. The bidding process for the 690 mW Ratle Project, being taken up under the IPP route, is under way. Three other major projects with an aggregate installed capacity of 2100 mW in the Chenab River basin are to be implemented through a Joint Venture Company. Another 6 projects with a total installed capacity of 1799 mW are under execution by NHPC

on a fast track basis. Of these, the 120 mW SEWA-II Project is nearing completion. My Government also intends to encourage micro hydel projects through the Public-Private-Partnership mode.

14. Side by side with the harnessing of hydro-electric power, it makes eminent sense to also utilize non-conventional sources of energy. This is particularly relevant in the high altitude desert environment of Ladakh where solar photo voltaic systems have been found to be very effective. Wind power and geothermal power in Ladakh also need to be exploited optimally. A decentralized, non-grid solution using non conventional sources of energy is required for the provision of power to remote and inaccessible areas of the State. My Government is working in close coordination with the Union Ministry for New and Renewable Energy for setting up power projects below 25 mW and solar energy projects. The possibility of setting up a 5 mW Grid interactive SPV plant along with 6 stand alone SPV Solar Plants in Leh and Kargil Districts in collaboration with

Central Electricity Authority is being examined.

15. As is well known, the problems in the State's power sector are not merely related to the inadequate generation capacity. In the short run, a far more intractable problem relates to the lack of financial or commercial viability in the supply of electricity to consumers. A combination of soaring increases in demand coupled with unacceptably high Transmission and Distribution losses and an inability to generate the envisaged revenue from the supply of electricity to consumers has led to enormous strain on the budget of the State. Thus, the reform of the power sector with a view to making it commercially viable is imperative. A blueprint for reforms in the power sector has been prepared by M/s The Energy and Research Institute (TERI) who were engaged as Consultants for the purpose. The Restructured Accelerated Power Development Reforms Programme (RAPDRP) is presently being implemented in 30 cities and towns of the State. The High Voltage Distribution

System and the Aerial Bunched Cable are to be extended to urban areas in the State in a phased manner so that power thefts can be checked. The High Voltage Transmission Network is being revamped and with the commissioning of 34 new Grid Stations and 29 new Transmission Lines taken up under the PMRP at a cost of Rs. 1351 crore, the reliability of the power system in the State will improve significantly. The implementation of the Rajiv Gandhi Grameen Vidyutikaran Yojana at an approved cost of Rs. 821.62 crore to provide electricity to un-electrified/de-electrified villages will be accelerated. My Government is actively pursuing, with the Government of India, the implementation of the Rangarajan Committee recommendation for transferring the 390 mW Dulhasti Hydro Electric Power Project to the State as part compensation for the losses suffered due to the Indus Water Treaty.

16. My Government accords very high priority to the development of the Agriculture sector which sustains 75% of our rural



population and 50% of our workforce. Emphasis continues to be placed on the adoption of double and multiple cropping patterns so as to increase output and yield and thereby make agriculture more economically viable for the farmer. The Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana, which aims at filling the gaps in agricultural infrastructure and the modernization of agricultural practices in a project mode, has been introduced for the first time in the State. A National Mission on Medicinal Plants has also been approved for implementation in the State. Horticulture and Floriculture will continue to receive priority with special focus being placed on the diversification of fruit cultivation from traditional to exotic varieties. Fruits like walnut and cherry, which face little competition in the national market, are being propagated on a large scale. To ensure remunerative prices to horticulturists, a chain of regulated Fruit Mandis and Terminal Markets is being established and the existing ones are being upgraded. An Advisory Board has been set

up under the Chairmanship of the Chief Minister for the welfare of the Kissans.

17. Livestock rearing is another area which has enormous scope for further development in the State. In spite of the fact that the per capita consumption of livestock products is one of the highest in the country, the State is unable to meet the demand internally. Given the extent of the unmet local demand, my Government's focus is on increasing the crossbred population of livestock so that self-sufficiency in livestock products can be attained. The Government has also reduced the levy on the import of one day old chicks from Rs. 2 to Re. 1 per bird for boosting the local Poultry industry.
18. The development of floriculture in the State has tremendous potential. The commercial production of cut-flowers is receiving special attention and contract farming for the production of flower seeds has been introduced in several districts. Initiatives have been taken for the commercialization of tulips as cut-flowers

and a cold storage facility for tulip bulbs, liliium bulbs and other cut-flowers is being established at the Tulip Garden, Srinagar. In order to boost exports, a cargo facility at Srinagar Airport for perishable items is also being set up in collaboration with the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA).

19. As a matter of policy, the major thrust in the health and education sectors is towards consolidation so as to optimally utilize the existing infrastructure. To improve the delivery of health care services, steps have already been taken to strengthen the primary and secondary health care institutions. During 2009, the buildings of 32 health care institutions, including 22 PHCs, were completed. It is anticipated that 12 more health care institutions, including staff quarters, will be completed this year. The remuneration of doctors and paramedical staff has been enhanced and special incentives have been sanctioned under NRHM to make the posting of doctors in difficult and remote areas more attractive. The referral transport system

has been improved by procuring 125 new ambulances. Steps are being taken to provide critical-care ambulances at district headquarters. To improve health care delivery at tertiary level, the construction of Super-Speciality Hospitals under Pradhan Mantri's Swasthya Suraksha Yojana is being fast tracked. My Government will also continue to focus on the promotion and mainstreaming of the Indian Systems of Medicine. The Central Government has announced the establishment of a Unani College in Kashmir and an Ayurvedic College in Jammu to promote Indian Systems of Medicine in the State.

20. My Government attaches enormous importance to the spread of education. As a result of the implementation of flagship programmes like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and the Midday Meal Scheme, there has been a significant increase in the enrolment of children and a sharp decline in the dropout rates. The literacy rate has gone up from 55.50% in 2001 to 65.67% in 2008-09. New initiatives like Saakshar

Bharat Mission-2012 and Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan are being launched in the State. Under the Prime Minister's Skill Development Mission, 50 lakh persons are to be skill trained by the year 2022. My Government plans to establish 50 additional ITIs in uncovered Blocks and 142 Skill Development Centres in all the Blocks of the State. Plans have also been made to train 8000 youth outside the State in skills for which the training facilities do not exist in the State. New Government Polytechnics are being set up at 18 locations in the uncovered districts of the State. Eleven new model colleges will be established in the Educationally Backward Districts. The process of establishing two Central Universities has been initiated. My Government is keen that academic activity in these institutions should commence in 2010-11.

21. There is an urgent necessity to augment and improve urban services in the State. The acute sewerage problems in both the capital cities, of Srinagar and Jammu, are being addressed under the Jawahar Lal

Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM), with an outlay of Rs. 132.92 crore and Rs. 129.23 crore, respectively. A comprehensive Urban Infrastructure Development Scheme for Small and Medium Towns (UIDSSMT) is also being executed. Under the Basic Services for Urban Poor (BSUP) scheme, which is meant to provide dwelling units to the BPL population of city slums, a total of 6,677 dwelling units have been sanctioned at a cost of Rs. 162.39 crore.

22. Connectivity is vital for the socio-economic development of a hill state like Jammu & Kashmir. Under the Prime Minister's Grameen Sadak Yojna (PMGSY), 885 road projects with a road length of 4772.44 km and an outlay of Rs. 2239.97 crore have been sanctioned. During the current financial year, 496 projects with a road length of 2239 km and an outlay of Rs. 1463.20 crore have been cleared by the Government of India under Phase-VII of the PMGSY, and 91 road projects connecting 370 habitations with a road length of 464 km were completed. Under

NABARD and the Central Road Fund, 127 road projects costing Rs. 507.84 crore have been sanctioned. As many as 51 bridges were completed during the current financial year while another 61 are likely to be completed by ending March, 2010. A fourth bridge over the Tawi in Jammu is being constructed at an estimated cost of around Rs. 126 crore. New flyovers are being constructed in Srinagar and Jammu in order to reduce the problems of traffic congestion.

23. Inter-regional connectivity in the State is receiving the necessary attention of my Government. Work on the prestigious Mughal Road Project, with an estimated outlay of Rs. 639.85 crore, is in full swing. Construction of the Singhpora tunnel is being taken up in the Public-Private Partnership mode and this will ultimately enable an alternate road from Dunera in Punjab to Kashmir via Basholi-Bhaderwah-Kishtwar. Work on the four-laning of the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway Project has commenced. On completion, this will

significantly reduce the distance and time for travel between Jammu and Kashmir.

24. The commissioning of the Qazigund-Anantnag section of the Qazigund-Srinagar-Baramulla railway line during 2009 has facilitated convenient, speedy and affordable rail transport from Qazigund to Baramulla. My Government has urged the Government of India for speeding up the construction of Udhampur-Qazigund section of Udhampur-Qazigund-Srinagar-Baramulla rail project to connect Kashmir with the rest of the country by rail. My Government will also urge the Government of India to take up new rail projects for harnessing the full economic potential of the State. Srinagar Airport has been upgraded as an international airport and the airports at Jammu and Leh are being upgraded. The runway of the Kargil Airport is also being extended to facilitate operation of commercial flights.
25. The revival and promotion of the Tourism sector, which has a huge potential for the generation of direct and indirect



employment and to act as a catalyst for the economic transformation of the State, is another high priority area of my Government. The different regions of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh have the potential to attract tourists throughout the year. However, the industry continues to suffer on account of the disturbed conditions in some parts of the State. My Government has initiated a series of proactive measures to promote the State as a safe tourist destination and put it back on the World Tourist Map. The number of tourist arrivals in the State during 2009, including pilgrims, was 92.89 lakh, which represents a marked increase of about 15.95 lakh over the previous year. The number of pilgrims visiting the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine during 2009 reached an all-time high of 82.35 lakh. My Government will continue to take steps to enable the much needed diversification of tourism activities in the State and to bring new areas on the Tourist Map. The State is planning to host the Commonwealth Golf Championship next summer and this will put Jammu & Kashmir on the international

golfing map. My Government has initiated a number of steps for establishing quality tourism infrastructure. Till January 2010 projects for the development of Tourism infrastructure worth Rs. 162.58 crore were sanctioned with the assistance of Government of India. My Government has initiated a serious dialogue with Tour and Travel Operators within the country and abroad for the promotion of tourism in Jammu and Kashmir. My Government is also vigorously pursuing, through the Government of India, the withdrawal of advisories issued by various countries about travel to J&K. We are expecting an increase in tourist inflow during 2010-11. I urge the people of Jammu and Kashmir to create a congenial environment for the effective promotion of tourism in the State.

26. My Government attaches great importance to the conservation of the environment and important issues relating to the protection of water bodies and forests are receiving high attention. The Government of India has agreed to sanction Rs. 356 crore as additional assistance to fund the cleaning

of the Dal and the rehabilitation of the lake dwellers for whom a colony at Rakh-i-Arth is being set up. Work has started on two Sewerage Treatment Plants at Brari Nambal and Nalla Amir Khan to treat raw sewage in the densely populated areas adjacent to the Dal Lake. The conservation programmes for other important water bodies will also be implemented in a time bound manner.

27. The Government is determined to act responsibly to conserve the rich biodiversity and the abundant natural resources of the State. My Government is striving hard to extend green cover by launching a massive afforestation drive and is also attempting eco-restoration of degraded catchments in the State. A project has been formulated under the Integrated Forest Resource Management with an outlay of Rs. 600 crore which will focus on eco-system conservation and also provide employment opportunities for the socio-economic uplift of the stakeholders. Under the J&K State Compensatory Afforestation Fund

Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA) set up in 2009, an amount of Rs.100 crore will be spent on afforestation and regeneration activities in the State during the next five years. To meet the genuine demand for timber and in order to discourage smuggling, the supply of timber has been increased from 8 lakh cft in 2008-09 to about 12 lakh cft during 2009-10 and a corresponding increase in the number of sale depots. The import of timber is also being encouraged to reduce pressure on our forests. It is a matter of pride that our State bagged the prestigious Indira Priya Darshini Vriksha Mitra Award for outstanding achievement in the fields of afforestation and wasteland development.

28. One of the Government's primary responsibilities is the provision of safe drinking water for the people. The focus of my Government is on ensuring drinking water security on a sustainable basis by the optimal use of surface and ground waters, supplemented by rainwater harvesting along with proper ground water recharge. The Sitlee-III Intake/Filtration

Plant of 54 lakh gallons per day capacity in Jammu has been completed and commissioned. In Kashmir, an additional capacity of 1 crore gallons per day was added through the Rangil Phase-II scheme. Another 30 lakh gallons of capacity was added in Jammu with the commissioning of 25 new tube wells. The water supply schemes in Lar Watlar and Manigam, with a combined capacity of 5 lakh gallons per day, have also been completed and commissioned. Two new projects of 1 crore gallons per day, each at Tangnar and Sukhnag in Kashmir, have been approved under JNNURM at an estimated cost of Rs. 148 crore and Rs. 120 crore, respectively. About 400 ongoing water supply schemes are being completed on a war footing during the current financial year under the Centrally Sponsored National Rural Drinking Water Supply Programme and other State and District sector schemes and 93 new schemes have been submitted to the LIC for loan assistance during the next financial year.

29. In the Irrigation and Flood Control sector, emphasis is being laid on creating additional irrigation potential by taking up new irrigation schemes and, simultaneously, modernizing the existing ones. The Rajpura Lift Irrigation Scheme was commissioned at a cost of Rs. 63 crore. The Lar Canal Budgam, Zaingeer Canal and Grimtoo Canal, which are major and medium projects costing Rs. 220.70 crore, have been submitted to the Government of India for approval and release of funds under the Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme (AIBP). Another 124 new minor irrigation projects costing Rs. 409.57 crore have also been submitted to the Government of India for approval and funding. Other important projects submitted for Central assistance include the construction of a Rs. 25 crore Weir on the River Tawi for augmenting water in the Ranbir Canal, downstream of Tawi Bridge at Belicharana, and the comprehensive Rs. 2200 crore Flood Management Project for the River Jhelum.

30. The Mahatama Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme is under implementation in all districts of the State. Under the scheme, 14,184 works were taken up during 2009, out of which 5016 have been completed and, in the process, have generated 69.76 lakh man-days of employment. Under this scheme a total of 5,97,415 households were provided job cards during 2009. Under the Indira Awas Yojana, 9,683 houses were completed during 2009, out of which 7,174 have been newly constructed and 2,509 upgraded. Under the PMRP, 119 villages are being developed as Model Villages at a cost of Rs. 142.80 crore. During 2009, 8 Model Villages were completed, raising the number of completed Model Villages in the State to 84. By March 2010, 35 more Model Villages are likely to be completed.
31. My Government has taken several initiatives to facilitate the growth and development of Information Technology (IT) in the State. With a view to providing various services to the people nearer their homes, in collaboration with the Jammu

and Kashmir Bank the State Government is in the process of establishing Common Service Centres (Khidmat Centres) in 1109 villages, of which more than 300 Centres have been set up and about 100 Centres have been made functional. Each Centre will cover 6 villages in the first instance. The services which are proposed to be offered through these Centres include disbursement of Social Welfare Pension, Pension to retired employees, voluntary service allowance to unemployed youth, receipt of electricity and telephone bills, application forms for recruitment/ admit cards, birth and death certificates, air and railway tickets, NREGA payments, etc. Under the National e-Governance Programme (NeGP), the Government has initiated the State Wide Area Network (SWAN) project which envisages connectivity of all Government offices upto Block level within the State on a common high speed data network controlled by the State Data Centre (SDC). My Government will also focus on selected Mission Mode Projects in key sectors to improve operational efficiency and transparency.



32. My Government attaches great importance to the welfare of the disadvantaged and vulnerable sections of the society particularly women, children, widows, orphans, persons with disabilities, the aged and the infirm. Under the Integrated Child Development Services Scheme, as many as 7,01,426 beneficiaries, including children in the age group of 0-6, adolescent girls, pregnant women and lactating mothers, have been covered through 25,483 Anganwari Centres. The Government is opening 3,094 new Anganwari Centres under Phase III of the Expansion Programme which will, among other things, generate employment opportunities for 6,188 women. The Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) is being launched to improve the wellbeing of children living in difficult circumstances and also to reduce their vulnerability to abuse, neglect and exploitation. Various pre- and post-Matriculation scholarship schemes for OBCs, SCs, STs, Gujjars, Bakerwals and Pahari speaking students are also under implementation. During the current

financial year, monthly pension has been paid to 3,43,180 old age persons/ widows/ physically handicapped, involving an expenditure of Rs. 37.12 crore. Similarly, monthly pension has been paid to 1.29 lakh old age persons belonging to the BPL category involving an expenditure of Rs. 17.67 crore.

33. The Government has a special responsibility for tackling the problems faced by the victims of militancy. A total of 6467 militancy affected persons, including children and the disabled, have been covered under the enhanced pension schemes with an expenditure of Rs. 2.52 crore. Scholarships, amounting to Rs. 1.55 crore, have been disbursed to 1590 orphans. During the last year, nearly 3000 pending militancy related cases have been settled by way of providing compassionate appointment or payment of cash in lieu of appointment, involving an expenditure of Rs. 62 crore.
34. My Government attaches the highest importance to the empowerment of

women. As part of the initiative to empower women, due priority has been given to them in the new employment policy. Under this policy, the 2200 women entrepreneurs to be selected in the first phase will be granted soft loans up to Rs. 3 lakh through the State Women's Development Corporation. A corpus of Rs. 10 crore has been created for the implementation of the scheme. My Government intends to introduce legislation for the protection of women from domestic violence. Gender budgeting is being given due attention so as to ensure that funds are allocated for activities which promote the development of women in an integrated manner.

35. It has been the endeavour of my Government to attract private investment in the State in those sectors where local talent is available and where local resources can be utilized. A serious dialogue has been initiated with Corporate India at the highest level for this purpose and the initial response has been encouraging. However, for these efforts to

succeed, we need to create a conducive environment for the investors. Since such investment is crucial for creating productive employment opportunities for our youth, I urge everyone to play a role for the promotion of an investment conducive environment. While continuing with efforts to attract private investment in the State, the promotion of local industry will remain an area of priority for the Government. The development and revival of the Traditional Arts and Crafts will continue to receive focused attention. The Government is encouraging youth to take up handicrafts for earning a livelihood by providing training in 553 Handicrafts and 100 Handloom Training Centres and by giving soft loans under the Micro Credit Scheme. The National Institute of Fashion Technology, J&K Centre, is being established at Srinagar at a cost of about Rs. 70 crore. The prestigious Export Development Centre for Handicrafts, completed at a cost of Rs. 7.28 crore, has been made functional.

36. The welfare of Government employees is a major concern of my Government. It is because of its commitment to their welfare that, despite serious financial constraints, the Government has implemented the recommendations of the Sixth Central Pay Commission w.e.f. 1.7.2009, benefiting around 3.50 lakh Government employees and 1.20 lakh pensioners. The additional financial burden involved in extending the recommendations of the Sixth Central Pay Commission is estimated to be more than Rs. 1600 crore. It must be kept in mind that J&K took the lead in this matter and became one of the few States to implement the Sixth Central Pay Commission recommendations. The Government has also allowed House Rent Allowance (HRA) in the revised pay scales, entailing an additional financial burden of Rs. 184 crore annually. All pending DA instalments released by the Central Government have also been sanctioned by the State Government to its employees. Government is committed to the agreement reached with the employees' unions to pay arrears of Pay revision

w.e.f. 1.1.2006 as soon as funding for the same becomes available. Efforts are continuing to seek Central assistance for this. The Government has also raised the wages of Daily Rated Workers from Rs. 70 per day to Rs. 110 per day. To meet a long pending demand the Government has notified 43 instalments of COLA in favour of the State PSU employees. My Government has also taken a decision to regularize employees working on Ad hoc, Contractual and Consolidated basis against clear vacancies after completion of seven years of continuous service.

37. The pay revision and the implementation of the various welfare measures for Government employees and employees of the Corporations have resulted in a substantial increase in the salaries of Government employees across the board. Now that various welfare measures have been implemented, it is necessary for Government and PSU employees to assiduously discharge their responsibilities and to avoid taking confrontational or agitational postures in regard to some of

their residual demands which the Government is already committed to addressing. Agitations and strikes by Government employees will not only thwart the pace of the developmental process in the State but also inevitably cause distress and inconvenience to the public at large. My Government will take all necessary steps to encourage hard working, honest and efficient officials and deal ruthlessly with slack, indisciplined, corrupt and dishonest functionaries.

38. The people of Jammu & Kashmir have high expectations of the Government. We must live up to their expectations. The people of the State are its greatest strength and with their support and cooperation, we should be able to ensure the optimal socio-economic development of the State. My Government has been in office only for the first of its six year tenure. While this is not a long period, any objective assessment of the work done by my Government during the last year would show that the pace has been set and various activities are moving in the right direction. On the basis of the

firm foundation laid in its first year in office, the Government now confidently looks forward to meeting the hopes and aspirations of the people of the State. With the active cooperation of all concerned, my Government, under the leadership of our young Chief Minister, Shri Omar Abdullah, is committed to taking the State rapidly and assuredly forward on the path of peace, prosperity and development.

JAI HIND