

**CONSULATE GENERAL OF INDIA
VANCOUVER**

PRESS RELEASE

In the wake of abrogation of provisions of Article 370 of the Constitution of India by Parliament of India on 6th August 2019, Prime Minister of India, Hon'ble Mr. Narendra Damodardas Modi, **addressed the nation on 8th August 2019. A copy of the address is attached for wide dissemination among public.**

Vancouver
9th August 2019

Preliminary English rendering of PM's address to the Nation

Posted On: 08 AUG 2019 9:20PM by PIB Delhi

My fellow countrymen,

As a country and as a family, you and us, together we took a historic decision. A system which denied due rights to our brothers and sisters of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh; a system which was huge hurdle in their development has now been eradicated.

A dream which Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel had, a dream which Babasaheb Ambedkar had, the dream shared by Syama Prasad Mukherjee, Atalji and crores of citizens, has now been fulfilled. A new age has begun in Jammu-Kashmir and Ladakh.

Now the rights and accountabilities of all the citizens of the country are similar. I congratulate the people Jammu-Kashmir, Ladakh and each and every citizen of the country.

Friends,

Sometimes some things of the social life get so entangled with time that they are considered to be permanent. A sentiment of complacency develops and it is thought that nothing is ever going to change. A similar sentiment prevailed for Article 370.

Because of this there was no debate or talk about the damage done to our brothers and sisters, our children in Jammu-Kashmir and Ladakh. Astonishingly, nobody was able to list the benefits that Article 370 delivered to the people of Jammu-Kashmir.

Brothers and sisters,

Article 370 and 35A has given nothing but secessionism, terrorism, nepotism and widespread corruption on a large scale to Jammu-Kashmir. Both these articles were used as a weapon by

Pakistan to flare up the emotions of some people. Due to this more than 42,000 people lost their lives in the last three decades. The development in Jammu-Kashmir and Ladakh could not be done on levels which the region deserved. After the removal of this flaw in the system, the people of Jammu-Kashmir will not only have a better present but a bright future ahead.

Friends,

Whichever government is in power, it works for the betterment of the country by enacting laws in the Parliament. No matter which party or coalition is in power, this work never stops.

There is a lot of debate both inside and outside the Parliament when laws are enacted and made, a lot of debate and brainstorming occurs and serious arguments are put up over its importance and effect. The laws that are enacted after undergoing this process are beneficial for people of the nation. However, it's unfathomable that so many laws are enacted in the Parliament and not enacted in a particular region of the country. Even previous governments who were hailed after enacting just one law couldn't claim that the same law will be implemented in the Jammu & Kashmir region. More than 1.5 crore people of Jammu & Kashmir were deprived of the benefits of laws that were enacted for the benefit of the people of India. Imagine children in rest of the country have a right to education while children in Jammu & Kashmir were deprived of this right. The daughters of Jammu & Kashmir were deprived of the right that our daughters had in rest of the states. In all the other states, Safai Karamchari Act was enacted for hygiene workers but the workers of Jammu & Kashmir were deprived of this. In other states, strict laws were enacted to stop atrocities on Dalits but no such laws could be implemented in Jammu & Kashmir. To protect the rights of blue-collar workforce, Minimum Wages Act was enacted and implemented in all the other states while such a law is only found on papers in the state of Jammu & Kashmir. In all other states, (our) brothers and sisters from Scheduled Tribes got reservation while contesting elections while such thing is unheard of in the state of Jammu & Kashmir.

Friends, I am fully confident that, following abrogation of Article 370 and 35-A, Jammu and Kashmir would soon come out of its negative effects.

Friends and sisters,

In the new system, the priority of the central government would be to keep state government employees and Jammu and Kashmir police personnel at par with the state government employees and police personnel of other states in terms of facilities.

In Union Territories, the government provides many such financial facilities like LTC, House Rent Allowance, Education Allowance for children, Health Schemes etc., most of which are not provided to the employees of Jammu and Kashmir government. Such facilities would soon be provided to the employees of Jammu and Kashmir government and state police personnel following a review.

Friends, very soon the process to fill in the vacancies of central and state government will be initiated in Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. This would provide adequate employment opportunities to the local youth. Besides, public sector units of the central government and big private sector companies would also be encouraged to provide new employment opportunities. Apart from the above, Army and para military forces would organize rallies to recruit

local youths. The government would also expand Prime Ministers Scholarship Scheme so that more and more students can get its benefit. Jammu and Kashmir also has huge revenue loss. The central government will ensure to minimize its impact.

Brothers and sisters, after abrogation of Article 370, the central government has decided to keep the state of Jammu and Kashmir under its administration after putting in a lot of thought process in it. It is essential for you to understand the reasons behind the decision. Ever since the state has been under governor's rule, the administration of Jammu and Kashmir is directly under the central government. As a result the good effect of Good Governance and Development have been observed on the ground. The schemes which earlier remained only in files, have been implemented on ground. Projects pending from decades have been speeded up.

We have tried to bring transparency and a new work culture in the Jammu and Kashmir administration. As a result, be it IIT, IIM, AIIMS, various irrigation projects or power projects or the Anti-Corruption Bureau, we have been able to fasten up the work on these projects. Besides, be it the projects of connectivity, roads or new rail lines, modernization of the airport, everything is being accelerated.

Friends,

The democracy in our country is so secure, but you will be surprised to know that there have been thousands of brother and sisters living for decades in Jammu and Kashmir who had the right to cast their vote in Lok Sabha polls but they were not allowed to cast vote in assembly and local body elections.

They are the ones who had come to India following partition in 1947. Should we have allowed the injustice to continue in the same way?

Friends,

I would also like to clarify another important point to my brothers and sisters of Jammu and Kashmir. Your representative (electoral) would be elected by you, he would be one amongst you. The MLAs would be elected just as they were elected earlier. The forthcoming cabinet would just be as it was used to be earlier. The chief ministers would just be as they were before.

Friends, I am fully confident that, under the new system, we would collectively be able to keep the state of Jammu and Kashmir free from terrorism and secessionism. When our Jammu and Kashmir- the paradise on earth, after achieving new heights of development, attract the whole world, and when there will be greater Ease of Living in the lives of citizens, when they would ceaselessly get their rights, when all the tools of governance would speed up the work in favor of the masses, then I don't think there would be any need to continue with the system under the union government. Yes, it would continue in Ladakh though.

Brothers and sisters, we all want assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir, that a new government is formed, that a new chief minister is elected. I assure the people of Jammu and Kashmir that you would get the opportunity to select your representative in a fully honest and transparent atmosphere. Just as Panchayat polls were held transparently last days, assembly polls would also be held in Jammu and Kashmir.

I would urge the Governor of the state that the setting up of Block Development Council, which has been pending for past two-three decades, be constituted as early as possible.

Friends,

I have personally experienced that those who got elected in Panchayat polls in Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh four-five months back, have been working nicely. Few months back when I visited Srinagar, I had a long meeting with them. When they came to Delhi I interacted with them for long at my home. It is because of these friends in Panchayats that the work has been done promptly on village level in Jammu and Kashmir. Be it the task of electrification in every home or making the state Open Defecation Free, the representatives in Panchayats have played a crucial role.

I am fully confident that following abrogation of Article 370, once these Panchayat members get a chance to work in the new system, they would do wonders. I firmly believe that the people of Jammu and Kashmir would conquer secessionism and move forward with new hope. I firmly believe that the people of Jammu and Kashmir would achieve their objectives with renewed fervor in an ecosystem of Good Governance and Transparency.

Friends, Family rule has not given any opportunity of leadership to any young citizen of Jammu and Kashmir in the State. Now, my these young people will take leadership of the development of Jammu and Kashmir and take it to a new height.

I appeal to the youth, sisters and daughters of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh to take over command of development of their area on their own hands.

Friends,

There is every possibility of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh becoming one of the greatest tourist destinations. The environment required for this, the need of change in administration, all is being taken care, but for this I need the support of all countrymen. There was a time when Kashmir was the favorite place for shooting bollywood films. During that time perhaps there was no film produced, had it not been shot in Kashmir. Now, situations in Jammu and Kashmir will normalize; not only from India, but people from all over the world will come for shooting there. Every Film will bring with it new opportunity of employment for the people of the Kashmir. I appeal to the Film Industry of Telugu and Tamil Film Industry and people associated with it to definitely think over for investment, shooting of film, theatre and setting up of other facilities in Jammu and Kashmir.

I appeal to those who are associated with technology, administration or private sector to give priority in their policies and their decisions as to how to disseminate technology in Jammu and Kashmir. When digital communication will be strengthened there and BPO Centre, Common Service Centre will increase in numbers there, there will be enhanced opportunity of earning livelihood, and the life of our brothers and sisters of Jammu and Kashmir will become easier.

Friends,

The decision taken by the Govt. will benefit those youth of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh who aspire to progress in the field of sports. New sport academies, new sports stadium, training in scientific environment will help them to show their talent in the world.

Friends, whether is it colour of kesar or flavour of kahwa or sweetness of apple or juiciness of apricot or Kashmiri shawl or the art work or be it organic products of Ladakh or herbal medicines of Jammu and Kashmir, all these need to be publicised in the entire world. I give you one example, there is a plant in Ladakh, named solo. Experts say that this plant is like a sanjivini for people living in high altitude and for security forces deployed in heavy icy mountains.

These plants have great role in maintaining the immune system of body in places with low levels of oxygen. Just think over, should not these extraordinary items be sold in the whole world? Which Indian do not want this. And friends, I named only one plant. There are ample plants, herbal products spread over Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. Those will be identified. If they are sold, it will benefit people and the farmers of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. Therefore, I appeal to the people associated in Industry, Export, Food Processing Sector to come forward to ensure that local products of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh reach whole of the world.

Friends, After becoming a Union territory, development of the people of Ladakh becomes natural responsibility of the Govt. of India. Central Government with the cooperation of local representatives, Development Council of Ladakh and Kargil, will ensure benefits of all development schemes reaches to people at a faster pace. Ladakh has the potential to become the biggest center of spiritual tourism, adventure tourism and eco-tourism. Ladakh also has the potential to become a big centre of Solar Power generation. Now, the capability of people of Ladakh will be utilized appropriately and new opportunities of development will come up. Now the innovative spirit of youth of Ladakh will get a boost, they will get good institutes for good education, people will get good hospitals, and infrastructure will be modernized with priority.

Friends,

It is possible, in a democracy that some people will agree to this decision and some will oppose it. I respect their disagreement and their objections. Whatever is being argued in this connection, Central Govt. is responding to that and it is trying to resolve the same. It is our democratic responsibility. But I urge them to keep the national interest as paramount and help the government in giving a new direction to Jammu - Kashmir-Ladakh, and help the country. Moving ahead from, who voted in Parliament, who didn't, who supported the bill, who didn't, now we all to have come together to work unitedly in the interest of Jammu - Kashmir-Ladakh. I also want to convey to our countrymen that the concerns of Jammu - Kashmir and Ladakh are our collective concerns. These are the concerns of 130 crore citizens. We are not indifferent to their happiness or sorrows and sufferings.

The riddance from Article 370 is a reality. But it is also true that whatever odds are being caused now because of these historic steps are being fought by them only. Our brothers and sisters of that region are patiently replying to those handful of people, who want to vitiate the atmosphere there. We should not forget that it is the patriots of Jammu - Kashmir who are strongly opposing the nefarious designs of Pakistan in perpetuating terrorism and separatism. Our brothers and sisters, who believe in Indian Constitution, deserve a better life. We all are proud of them. Today I assure these friends of Jammu - Kashmir that the situation will gradually return to normal and all their troubles too will reduce.

Friends, the festival of Eid is around the corner.I extend my greetings to all on Eid. The government is taking care that people of Jammu – Kashmir don't face any problem while celebrating Eid.The government is extending all possible help to those friends who live outside Jammu – Kashmir and want to return back to their homes on Eid.

Friends, today on this occasion,I also express my gratitude to our friends in security forces, who are posted for the security of the people of Jammu – Kashmir.The way all administrative officials, state employees and Jammu – Kashmir police personnel are handling the situation there is really commendable. Your diligence has boosted my confidence that change can happen.

Brothers and sisters, Jammu – Kashmir is the crown of our country. We are proud that many brave sons and daughters of Jammu – Kashmir have sacrificed and risked their lives for its security.Maulvi Ghulam Din of Punch district, who had informed Indian Army about Pakistani intruders during 1965 war. He was conferred Ashok Chakra.Col. Sonam Wangchug of Laddakh district, who forced enemies to bite dust during Kargil war, was honoured with Mahavir Chakra. Kirti Chakra was conferred to Rukshana Kausar of Rajauri, who had killed a big terrorist.Martyr Aurangjeb of Punch, who was assassinated by terrorists last year and his two brothers are now serving the country after joining the Army.The list of such brave sons and daughters is very long. Several jawans and officials of Jammu – Kashmir Police have also laid their lives while fighting with terrorists. We have lost thousands of people from other parts of the country as well.They all dreamt of a peaceful, safe and prosperous Jammu – Kashmir. We, together, have to realize their dream.

Friends! this decision will help in economic development of Jammu - Kashmir and Laddakh along with the entire country. When peace and prosperity prevails in this important part of the globe, the efforts for peace in entire world will be naturally strengthened.

I call upon my brothers and sisters of Jammu – Kashmir and Ladakh to come together to show the world how much strength, courage and passion we have.

Let us come together to build a new India, as well as a new Jammu - Kashmir and Laddakh.

Thank you very much!

Jai Hind!!!