



GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

ADDRESS

BY

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GOVERNOR JAMMU & KASHMIR

TO THE

JOINT SESSION OF THE LEGISLATURE

TUESDAY, 2ND JANUARY, 2018

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

I take this opportunity to wish all of you a very happy New Year and hope that 2018 shall be the harbinger of an era of peace which shall enable rapid growth and development of the State and foster harmonious social relations across the length and breadth of Jammu and Kashmir.

2. At the dawn of the New Year, 2018, it would be beneficial to make some resolutions for advancing the growth and development of our people and our State. As we are gathered here today, in this citadel of democracy, let us resolve that from now onwards the problems faced in the recent years will not be allowed to become the baggage for the future and that the anxieties of our people will be replaced by aspirations of a safe and prosperous future.

3. Let us pledge to take the required initiatives to see that the insecurities of our youth soon get overcome and that they get positively engaged in every arena of activity.

4. We should also resolve to join hands to bring about a moral consensus for the revival of a societal environment which is in harmony with our traditional value systems. We must also loudly declare that we are altogether opposed to conflicts and violence.

5. With the hopes engendered in 2017, the Government sees 2018 as a year of opportunities and a period for fully exploiting all possible openings and opportunities.

6. We must learn from the happenings in 2016 and focus on issues relating to the interests of the neglected and marginalized groups. Such sensitivity is already discernible in Government's recent policy initiatives and, hopefully, over time, appropriate policies will put the State on the path of sustained peace and development.

7. We shall need to regain the lost trust and negate the misgivings in certain sections of our society. Hon'ble Prime Minister's Independence Day Address reflects his concern and empathy for the people of Jammu & Kashmir. The subsequent appointment by the Union Government of a Special Representative to hold talks with the people belonging to all shades of opinion is recognition of the concern for widening the

constituency of peace, to include even those who may have contrary ideological convictions.

8. Peace is a great force multiplier. As engagements with all the stakeholders gain ground, there will be a yearning for peace. And when peace comes it will create its own externalities.

9. Government remains committed to taking all possible steps for building on the peace dividend and also remains equally determined to ensure that the arc of violence does not spread from the fringes to the mainstream, to yet again disrupt our lives. This will require tough and targeted actions by our Security Forces.

10. For the past several months our Security Forces have been successfully carrying out targeted counter terrorist operations. While they shall engage in such operations whenever it is necessary to do so, it is hoped that these shall involve the least possible collateral damage to the lives and properties of innocent persons.

11. I take this opportunity to salute the brave hearts of Army, Central Armed Police Forces and the J&K

Police who have been operating in the most difficult circumstances and laying down their lives in the fight against terror and violence. The nation shall remain ever grateful to the brave jawans and officers of our Security Forces.

12. While the valour and sacrifices made by our Police personnel cannot ever be viewed in monetary terms, the Government has, to express its unbounded gratitude, taken several measures for further enhancing the welfare of our policemen and their families. The scales of various reliefs admissible to them have been revised; the ex-gratia for the police personnel has been enhanced from Rs.7 lakhs to Rs.20 lakhs; the special welfare relief payable to NoKs of these personnel, in the event of their death on duty, has been enhanced from Rs.12 lakhs to Rs.15 lakhs. Thus, in all, a sum of Rs.43 lakhs is now payable to the bereaved family of a police personnel killed while on duty.

13. Side by side, recognizing the serious visual disabilities suffered by youth who received pellet injuries, Government has decided to rehabilitate them and mitigate their sufferings to the maximum possible extent.

14. Government is aware of the growing aspirations of our students, some of whom have secured outstanding achievements in academics, sports and many other fields. As regards our youth who have been influenced and misled into deviating from the path, the Government remains committed to weaning them away from the purveyors of violence. Thus the real battle is not on the streets but to combat and counter the deviation of the younger generation from the inherited values of our society. Government is committed to patiently listening to the youth and to do everything to bring them back to the fold.

15. Sadly, the two enduring images of the happenings in 2016 have related to stone pelting mobs on the streets and pictures of those who had received pellet injuries. Thankfully, our children have since gone back to where they belong, to schools and colleges, and are now doing their best to do well in their studies and in other activities.

16. A number of students were charged for stone pelting in recent years. As a good will gesture, to encourage the youth to return to their normal lives, Government has announced an amnesty scheme for the first-time offenders. As a part of this scheme, the process of withdrawal of cases, with the permission of the concerned Courts, has already been initiated.

17. Women and children are among those who have suffered the most from the recurring disturbances in the Valley. Recognising its responsibility to rehabilitate the trauma affected children, Government has decided to promote their all round development and, as a part of this effort, the Juvenile Homes in Harwan and R.S. Pura are being upgraded to provide rehabilitative facilities for the affected children. Government has also established 22 Juvenile Police Units across all districts of the State. 8 Juvenile Justice Boards and 8 Observation Homes in eight districts are also being established, during the current fiscal. The facilities at the existing Orphanages are also being upgraded.

18. Long years of unrest have adversely affected our democratic institutions, particularly those at the grass roots level. The absence of elected local bodies has not only deprived the people of the power to take their own decisions regarding development and other issues impacting their day to day lives, but also adversely impacted the flow of resources from the Central and the State Governments to the rural and urban local self-governing institutions. Government has decided to commence elections to Panchayati Raj Institutions during February 2018 and, thereafter, to the Urban Local Bodies.

19. With the third tier of governance in place, the Government's administrative and developmental initiatives will gather renewed steam. Meanwhile, in the last three years, major developmental works have been initiated under the Prime Minister's Development Package.

20. The major part of the Prime Minister's Development Package (PMDP) is dedicated to enhancing physical connectivity. The projects under the PMDP, upon implementation, are going to transform the infrastructural landscape of the State. A massive investment of Rs.42,668 crore is being made by the Government of India through the Ministry of Road Transport & High Ways and the Ministry of Defence and 19 projects have been sanctioned, which include major National High Way projects. The Chenani-Nashri Tunnel was inaugurated by the Hon'ble Prime Minister last year. The Jammu-Udhampur Highway has been completed. Under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) programme; 1400 Schemes were completed upto March 2017, covering 1873 habitations, with a cumulative length of 7038 kms. During the current financial year, 75 Schemes have been completed so far, covering 118 more habitations, with an aggregate length of 848 kms.

21. A total of 6434 kms of road length has been macadamized, which includes approximately 3209 kms during the current fiscal, under the Cities & Town Plan Macadamization Programme.

22. The traffic problems of the capital cities of Srinagar and Jammu continue to be under the Government's sharp focus. Unless the twin capital cities are decongested through appropriate detours, underpasses and flyovers, the commuters would continue to face severe traffic jams, which would be unacceptable.

23. Government is seized of the severe traffic problems and has initiated steps to make appropriate structural changes to the landscapes of the two cities. Construction of Ring Roads around the cities of Srinagar and Jammu has been sanctioned under PMDP, for an aggregate length of 118 kms, at an estimated cost of Rs.3,260 crore.

24. For the Semi Ring road in Jammu city, out of total land of 6,455 kanals involved in acquisition, final award has been issued for 5,946 kanals. Land measuring 1,220 kanals has been handed over to NHAI for starting the work. Similarly, for Ring Road

Srinagar, the process of acquisition of 8,104 kanals of land is at different stages of implementation.

25. Despite all the advances made in road connectivity, a large number of areas in the state continue to be inaccessible, particularly during the winter months. To alleviate the difficulties of people residing in such areas, Government has started a subsidized helicopter service covering ten sectors to connect some of the remotest and most inaccessible areas of the State which include Gurez, Keran, Poonch, Kishtwar, Doda and Marwah. Government is committed to extend this service to other remote areas also.

26. Government is making efforts to provide 24x7 electricity to all the registered consumers and to cover all the un-electrified areas by 2019 through proper implementation of various centrally sponsored/flagship schemes.

27. To provide the last-mile connectivity to all the un-electrified households and to achieve the goal of universal household electrification by December 31, 2018, 'Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana' (SAUBHAGYA) scheme has been launched. The process of formulation of DPRs for the remaining un-

electrified households has already been initiated and efforts are being made to complete the targets before the timeline of December, 2018.

28. To expedite the process of registration of electricity connections for the un-electrified households, the Power Development Department has developed an online mobile application: "Gram Jyoti Doot". This application provides for online submission of the requisite documents to apply for new electricity connections in remote locations.

29. Under PMDP, fifteen Micro Hydel projects, with an installed capacity of 306.50 MW, have been taken up for implementation. Besides, implementation of hydro electric projects like Pakaldul, Keeru, Kawar etc., is also being taken up under the PMDP. Further, Rehabilitation & Resettlement Plan for 330 MW Kishanganga HEP has been finalized for the implementation of the Project and to address the concerns of more than 400 project affected families. JAKEDA is also executing 13 SHP projects up to 10MW capacity, under PMDP. Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) for five sites have already been prepared and tenders (RFP) have been floated to finalize the EPC contractors. The DPRs in respect of the remaining eight projects are in final stages of preparation.

30. Emphasis is being laid on significantly harnessing new and renewable sources of energy in the State. Government is planning to establish the J&K Renewable Energy Corporation (RENCO) to exploit the solar and other renewable forms of energy in the State by raising debt/loan investments. Apart from enhancing administrative and financial credibility, the proposed Corporation would enable easy access to capital.

31. Access to clean water is a fundamental human need and, therefore, one of the top most priorities of the Government. Substantial steps are being taken towards improving and enhancing the coverage of drinking and irrigation water supplies.

32. Dhansar Nallah Water Supply Scheme, in the pilgrim town of Katra, has been commissioned, adding 8 lakh gallons of water per day to the existing supply system. This supply will be increased to 16 lakh gallons per day by strengthening the infrastructure. Water Supply Scheme Tangnar, Srinagar, costing Rs.148.37 crore, is almost complete under the Jawahar Lal Nehru Urban Renewal Mission (JnNURM). This scheme will add 10 million gallons of potable water per day to the Srinagar city and the surrounding sub-urban areas.

33. A number of water supply schemes, covering 260 habitations and 1.48 lakh souls, have been

implemented. In addition, twenty four new projects, costing approximately Rs.1,547 crore, have been framed for providing water supply to the growing urban population of the State. These projects are envisaged to be funded through J&K Economic Reconstruction Agency (ERA).

34. The enormous damage done by the September 2014 floods cannot be forgotten. It reminds us of our systemic failure to appreciate the imperatives of flood management in the Valley and in the whole State. Government is committed to finding a permanent solution to the problem of floods. In this context, a comprehensive flood management plan of river Jhelum has been devised and is under implementation. Phase-I of Comprehensive Flood Management Plan of river Jhelum has been approved at the cost of Rs.399 crore. Appreciable progress has been made in land acquisition. The dredging of river Jhelum is going apace and against a target of 16.36 lakh cum, 10.11 lakh cum of material has been dredged so far.

35. A detailed project report valuing Rs.195.71 crore for the construction of protection works on vulnerable spots downstream the Steel Bridge Akhnoor, on the left and right banks of River Chenab, has been prepared and, after technical appraisal by the Central

Water Commission (CWC), submitted to the Government of India.

36. To transform the State into a business hub, Government has successfully implemented 270 business reforms advised by the Government of India. This has enormously improved our inter-state rankings. In a major paradigm shift, any new Industrial Unit in the State is presently being registered online.

37. Rs.3119 crore investment proposals for setting up of 21 medium and large scale units have been cleared during the last two years.

38. Our crafts are a rarity: they are both functional and aesthetic. However, they have not so far found their due place in the competitive business environment. There is need to develop their brand equity through appropriate market interventions. Government will take all the steps necessary to develop a suitable supply chain for promoting our products through price, market and technological interventions.

39. Government will soon introduce an e-Commerce platform to link 20,000 artisans and weavers of the State. The target is to increase the exports of handicrafts and handloom products by Rs.1000 crore annually. The up-gradation and revival of Rajbagh Silk Factory and Woollen Mills Bemina has also been undertaken.

40. GST was implemented in the State from 7th July, 2017. The issues faced by various segments of the economy, post GST roll out, have been raised very effectively in the GST Council meetings and most of them have been addressed. As GST is only 6 months old, the difficulties faced in the future by our trade and business sectors would be duly taken up before the Council for their redressal on priority basis.

41. Industrial units in our State used to receive exemptions on VAT, CST and Central Excise, besides waiver of Entry Tax etc., to make them viable. Government has decided to reimburse 42% of CGST from its own budgetary resources as the Central Government has agreed to reimburse only 58% of CGST to our Industry. Similarly, Government has already announced 100% SGST reimbursement to all the eligible Industrial units.

42. Due to the Government's intervention, the threshold of annual handicraft turnover for the entrepreneurs of J&K has been kept at Rs.20 lakhs in the GST regime, compared to Rs.10 lakhs for entrepreneurs of other states. This decision will benefit small handicraft traders, who deal in papier mache items, carpets, shawls etc. The GST Council has also, at the request of the State Government, brought down the rate of tax on walnuts, papier mache and willow wicker from 12 percent to 5 percent.

43. Government has been able to convince the Union Government to allow both Jammu and Srinagar cities to be developed as Smart Cities. Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs) for the implementation of the Smart City Missions for both the cities have already been set up. The State Government has requested Union Government to extend the funding pattern of 90:10 to the State on the analogy of other Himalayan states under the said Mission. Government will vigorously pursue this matter with the Central Government.

44. Consistent with the national goals, Government is working towards declaring all urban areas as Open Defecation Free (ODF) by 31st March, 2018. 25 towns/cities would shortly be declared defecation free.

45. Jammu and Kashmir is endowed with diverse forest resources which have been instrumental in preserving the fragile ecosystem and also serving the catchments of important Himalayan rivers. To raise and maintain the plantation assets on forest and non-forest lands, Government has decided to engage more than 500 un-employed forest graduates, post graduates and DDR trained youth as Rehbar-e-Janglat.

46. Government is aware of the fragile ecology of the State and is consequently committed to taking all required steps for rejuvenation of the environment. As a part of this ecology enrichment effort, more than 8 million plants have been planted during the last year. The sewerage network in Srinagar and Jammu cities is presently laid in only 1/3rd area of the cities. The left out areas of the cities will also be covered shortly for which assistance of Rs.1,497 crore and Rs.1,298 crore for the cities of Srinagar and Jammu, respectively, will be secured through Japanese Capital Investment route.

47. Under the rural chapter of "Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana" (PMAY), the first installment of financial assistance of Rs.50,000 against the total financial

assistance of Rs.1.3 lakh per unit has been transferred directly into the accounts of more than 8,000 beneficiaries through the Public Financial Management Scheme (PFMS). To ensure that only the identified beneficiaries receive the benefits under the scheme, geo-tagging of the assets has also been started by the Government.

48. More than 66,000 beneficiaries have been identified in 25 towns and cities for construction of beneficiary led houses under the urban chapter of PMAY. In the first phase, the scheme is being implemented in 25 identified towns including Jammu and Srinagar cities. Also, survey is going on in other 55 towns for kick-starting the implementation of the scheme during the current financial year.

49. Government is committed to providing access to quality affordable health care in the State. The overall health indicators in Jammu and Kashmir are better than the national averages. We have the distinction of having the highest life expectancy at birth in the country. The Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) of the State has improved and decreased by 10 points in just two years. The State has been ranked number one in the country for the reduction of IMR by 8 points in a single year. We need to sustain and further build upon the achievements made so far.

50. Five Medical Colleges have been sanctioned in the State at Kathua, Doda and Rajouri in Jammu Division and Baramulla and Anantnag in Kashmir Division. Even as work on three new Medical Colleges is going on apace, steps have also been initiated to set up other two Medical Colleges in the State. The staff for all the five Medical Colleges has been sanctioned and these Medical Colleges are expected to start delivery of health and medical services by the end of 2019. This will increase the intake capacity of MBBS seats from the existing 500 to 1000 seats.

51. Two State Cancer Institutes have been approved at a cost of Rs.120 crore, one each at SKIMS Soura, Srinagar, and GMC, Jammu. The State Cancer Institute for Kashmir has been sanctioned and a sum of Rs.47.25 crore has also been released as the first installment for the purpose for setting up of the Institute at SKIMS Soura, Srinagar. To further strengthen the cancer care facilities at District level, the Union Government has approved three Tertiary Cancer Care Centres (TCCC) at District hospitals Udhampur, Kishtwar and Kupwara.

52. The Drug Food Control Organization has been strengthened and state of the art Laboratories have

been set up, one each at Jammu and Srinagar, for ensuring the quality of drugs and food safety standards. Two Food Safety Appellate Tribunals, one each in Kashmir and Jammu, have also been established to enforce the provisions of Food Safety and Standard Act and to fast track the process of litigation.

53. In the Education Sector, GIS mapping of 28,680 schools has been completed, which will enable the Government to do the gap analysis in terms of infrastructure facilities, upgradation of schools etc. The School Education Department has rolled out Mid-Day-Meal Automated Reporting and Management System (MDM-ARMS) for real time monitoring / management of the Mid Day Meal Scheme and the data under the system will be collected digitally and uploaded on the national portal on daily basis.

54. The School Education Department has broadened the scope of the Chief Minister's Super 50 winter coaching from this year by formulating a plan of training/coaching around 1000 aspiring students. 383 schools are being covered under the Information Communication Technology Scheme (ICT @school) for the establishment of computer labs.

55. 68 Girls Hostels are under construction under RMSA in the educationally backward blocks of the State. An amount of Rs.6.55 crore is being spent

during the current financial year for the development of 146 Model Schools in the State. Further, during the current financial year, construction of 47 Primary school buildings, 05 Middle School buildings, 458 additional Class Rooms and 28 Head Master Rooms will be completed under SSA.

56. To improve the quality of teaching, in-service untrained graduate teachers shall be trained through IGNOU for B.Ed courses in the Open Distance Learning (ODL) Mode. Similarly, undergraduate service teachers shall be trained through National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) for Diploma in Elementary Education (D.E.Ed) courses.

57. In order to provide access to education for youth, especially girls, the School Education Department is planning to upgrade 200 Middle Schools (100 in each Division) to the level of High Schools and 200 High Schools (100 in each Division) to the level of Higher Secondary Schools, as per the existing norms. The department has referred 2154 posts of Teachers to Services Selection Board (SSB) for time bound recruitment.

58. The sight of small children carrying large and heavy bags on their backs to school is cause for concern. The School Education Department will soon notify guidelines for reducing the weight of school bags. The fee structure of nearly 7000 private educational institutions, across the State, is proposed

to be regulated by making an appropriate legislative intervention.

59. To encourage female students to pursue higher studies, Government will construct Girl's Hostels in all the far flung colleges. In the first phase, the construction of Girl's Hostels in seven Government Degree Colleges at Bemina, Paloura, Kargil, Thathri, Kupwara, Pulwama and Rajouri has been approved under PMDP. Under Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA), the establishment of two Cluster Universities has been approved. Construction of the campuses of both the universities is nearing completion.

60. To expand the access of Higher Education in rural areas, 17 new Degree Colleges have been sanctioned. Two Schools of Architecture have been established: one each at Maulana Azad Memorial College, Jammu, and Degree College Bemina, Srinagar. In addition, two B.Sc. Nursing Colleges have been established in the State.

61. 159 hectares of forest land has been acquired for the construction of additional blocks at Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Jammu. The provision of basic facilities like water and power supply at the campus has been completed.

62. Similarly, for IIM Jammu, 80 hectares of Forest land has been allotted for construction of additional infrastructure at the campus. The academic session for the second batch of 113 students has started from the Old University Campus.

63. The State Government is focussing on the creation of durable economic assets and improvement of rural infrastructure along with wage employment to the rural households under MGNREGA. Special emphasis is being laid on rural connectivity to provide relief to the thousands of souls living in far off areas of the State. Apart from generating 1.60 crore mandays, more than 33276 durable assets have been created under the programme during the current financial year. Further, around 2 lakh works have been geo-tagged under the scheme during the past one year.

64. The State has been assessed as the best performing State under Geo-MGNREGA by the Union Ministry of Rural Development. In addition to the seeding of Aadhar Cards of 11.86 lakh workers, Electronic Fund Management System (e-FMS) has been started for making transfers of benefits directly to the accounts of the beneficiaries. Efforts will continue to be made to leverage MGNREGA to

generate more employment as well as substantive assets in the rural areas.

65. It is a matter of serious concern that the contribution of Agriculture and allied sectors to the Gross State Domestic Production has been steadily declining over the past decades. More recently, it has declined from 28.16 % in 2004-05 to 15.89% in 2015-16. Government has decided to take steps to revive the Agriculture sector. As a part of this renewed focus, steps are being taken to double the farmers' income by 2022, in line with the national targets. Besides, farmers are being given remunerative prices for their produce. Also, steps are afoot to arrange for an appropriate insurance coverage for their crops.

66. While efforts continue to increase crop production and productivity, endeavour will be also made to introduce new Schemes like "Farmers Value Enhancement Programme and Infrastructure Development" in the farms with a sharp focus on farm mechanization and achieving 100% seed replacement targets. Further, specific initiatives such as Trikuta Intensive Mushroom Development Corridor, Chenab Intensive Vegetable Development and Intensive Spice Development Programme will be implemented for delivering better outputs. Work on the development of

Saffron Park at Dusso Pulwama is nearing completion. The development of Model Saffron Village at Samboora Pulwama is going on well in convergence with the National Saffron Mission.

67. Recognizing that the famed apple of Kashmir is currently faced with severe competition in the international market, Government is intent on improving both the quality and production of the apple crop. The high density plantation programme, currently underway, would be a key driver of this improvement; it is expected to enhance the volumes in the sector and, in turn, improve the incomes of the apple growers on a sustained basis.

68. For securing the future of horticulture on a sustainable basis, the High Density Plantation Programme has been rolled out, which is being financed on 50:50 basis (private sector: public sector). Against a target of 50 hectares (40 hectares under private sector and 10 hectares under public sector), an area of 36 hectares (31 hectares covered in private sector and 05 hectares in public sector) was covered under the Scheme during 2016-17 and 1.21 lakh fruit plants, imported from Italy, were distributed

to the orchardists. In addition, an area of 37.25 hectares was covered under high density plantations through private enterprises during 2016-17. Also, 2.22 lakh clonal root stocks were imported from Netherlands and planted at ACHD, Zainapora, for multiplication under the High Density Plantation Scheme, for further distribution to the orchardists.

69. The Department of Horticulture has conducted a Fruit Tree Census after a gap of 36 years. The Census data will be a valuable input for improved planning of this sector.

70. Tourism is the mainstay of our economy. Around 1.2 million tourists, including over 26,000 foreigners, visited the State during 2017, despite unrest in the Valley and less than fair reporting by certain sections of the media. Further, more than 8 million pilgrims paid obeisance at Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine while about 2.60 lakh yatris visited Shri Amarnathji Shrine last year.

71. Government will take all required steps to ensure that tourists from far and wide find their way back to the State. Towards this end, all infrastructural

bottlenecks will be removed and the State's strengths in this sector will be positively leveraged to not only build the required capacities but to also address the perception issues.

72. During the past two decades, the overriding attention which was required to be given to law and order maintenance has adversely affected a meaningful focus on economic activities in J&K. Consequently, the State has lagged behind the rest of the country in almost all fields. However, as the situation continues to improve, there is need to restore the balance and also attend to building a knowledge economy in the State. Government will lead the effort in this direction and also aid and assist in creating a facilitative environment for the establishment of such an economy in the State.

73. Government recognizes that the institutional framework of public service delivery in the State has to be simple, measurable, accountable, responsive and transparent (SMART). Also, citizens need to be sensitized about their rights and obligations. A fully functional Information Commission is presently in place to address the issues of transparency in the Administration. Side by side, the scope of the J&K Public Services Guarantee Act has been further enhanced with the inclusion of 15 new services.

Government is committed to propagating greater use of technology, e-governance and adoption of best practices which are used in other parts of the country.

74. The use of ICT has become essential for securing real time responsiveness from the Administration and delivering good governance. Government has been successful in issuing Aadhaar Cards to more than 9.5 million people in the State. Further, the use of Budget Estimation, Allocation & Monitoring System (BEAMS) and Public Financial Management System (PFMS) has considerably improved the system of financial management and accountability in the State.

75. Government is taking steps to support able and willing entrepreneurs in setting up their start ups. Due to the intervention of the Government, many entrepreneurs have established their own enterprises, particularly in Horticulture, Handicraft and Information Technology sectors. Further for improving the skills of our youth, for making them employable, the State Skill Development Mission has been set up to align the State Government's Skill Development programmes with those of the Central Government, in collaboration with the stakeholder departments.

76. The initiatives of “Udaan” and “Himayat” have also contributed significantly in enhancing the employability of our youth.

77. The “Himayat” programme aims to train 1.24 lakh un-employed youth over a period of three years (2016-19). As on date, the State Government has approved 9 Project Implementing Agencies (PIA) for implementation of the Programme. Jammu and Kashmir State Rural Livelihood Mission (JKSRLM) has initiated the mobilisation of youth across the State to be trained by the three Champion Employers in different trades. 716 candidates have been sent to undergo skill training in different trades (Dialysis Technician Course, Emergency Medical Technician Course, Retails, Banking Associate, Hospitality and BPO) at Bengaluru, Jammu and Raipur.

78. Women in J&K are being increasingly seen as stakeholders in furthering peace and development. Their contribution to GSDP is steadily increasing, which is a positive and encouraging development. Women’s partnership will, overtime, create self sustaining vested interest in peace. “UMEED”, a livelihood initiative for the rural women, has been successful in enhancement of livelihoods to 1.8 lakh households. Over 20,000 Self Help Groups have been set up with a credit base/seed capital of Rs.220 crore.

With a multipronged approach, “UMEED” has met with substantial success in not only enhancing the skills of the rural women, but also fostering their meaningful empowerment.

79. Young girls in the Valley are leading initiatives to review traditional art forms of Kashmir with the help of modern technological tools. Government is committed to providing them the necessary hand holding to enable them to reach both national and international markets to market our treasured arts. In this context, exclusive EDI led Centres for Women Entrepreneurs have been set up in Jammu and Srinagar cities. Further, consistent with the national goals, Government is committed to increasing the coverage of women beneficiaries in various schemes from the existing 15% to 30% within the current financial year, to be progressively increased to 40% over the next few years.

80. Safety and security of our women is amongst the top priorities of the Government. As part of the continuing drive to smoothen the police-women interface, six All Women Police Stations were set up during 2016. Four more All Women Police Stations were set up at Pulwama, Kupwara, Kathua and Doda in 2017.

81. Government strongly believes that the involvement of youth in sports will further bolster the ongoing initiatives to restore normalcy. Besides, sports instill confidence, promote camaraderie and team spirit and improve physical stamina of the youth. To address the serious infrastructural gaps in this sector the construction of multipurpose sports halls in all the 22 districts and renovation and upgradation of Bakshi Stadium, Srinagar, and MA Stadium, Jammu, has been approved under PMDP. Government is presently focussing on in-school sports activities for which additional 3000 positions of Rehbar-e-Khel have been created.

82. Empowerment of the weaker sections of society is in line with the Government's avowed commitment to trigger multipronged actions for the upliftment of SCs and Gujjars and Bakerwals. Towards this end substantial allocations have been earmarked to strengthen institutions devoted to their welfare. Government will continue to work for their inclusion in the developmental framework of the State.

83. Government is concerned about the problems facing the differently abled persons. To broaden the nature and the scope of disabilities and to safeguard the interests of differently abled persons in the State,

Government is bringing the J&K Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1998 at par with the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 of the Government of India.

84. To enable the differently abled persons to access the public services: 151 public buildings in the State have been identified for retrofitting under the Accessible India Campaign. The retrofitting work on the seven public buildings is nearing completion.

85. Government recognizes that Scheduled Tribes have distinct traits, culture, language and nomadic characteristics. Tribal Research Institute at Srinagar and Tribal Bhawan at Jammu will come up to realise these objectives. Besides, significant steps are being taken to achieve overall economic development of tribals. The development of seventeen cluster villages in thirteen districts is one such step.

86. Under the rehabilitation programme, a number of steps have been taken under PMDP, including implementation of a rehabilitation package for the one time settlement of 36,384 refugee families from PoK and displaced persons from Chamb, involving an amount of Rs.2000 crore. Further, under the PMDP, transit accommodation for migrant and other employees posted in various districts of Kashmir

valley, particularly the migrant employees, is proposed to be constructed in a phased manner.

87. Prime Minister's Package for the return and rehabilitation of Kashmiri Migrants has been a key initiative aimed at ensuring the dignified return of Kashmiri Pandit families to the Valley. In 2017-18, 3000 additional supernumerary posts have been created under the Programme, in various departments. Out of 3000 posts, 2575 posts have been referred to the concerned recruiting agencies and will be filled up shortly.

88. Government is also committed to look after the Kashmiri Pandits who chose to stay back when their brethren left the Valley during the period of peak militancy. Recognising the sacrifices made by the Kashmir based Pandits, Government has authorised their special recruitment under the Prime Minister's Package, at par with their migrant brethren.

89. Ladakh has a special place in our hearts and shall always remain at the top of our developmental priorities. Grant of enhanced plan allocations and progressive fiscal autonomy to the region, over the years, are testimony to the importance of Ladakh's

development in the growth plan of the state. Apart from the ongoing developmental effort in the region under PMDP and other developmental schemes, Government is committed to effectively leveraging the unique traditional strengths of the people of Leh and Kargil districts in the tourism, culture and crafts sectors.

90. Government understands the daily miseries of those who have been engaged for long periods on temporary/casual basis in various departments. Often, they have to go without wages for months. These employees have been surviving in the hope of being regularised some time or the other, in the unknown future. Government deserves to be complimented for deciding to regularise the services of these employees, even in the absence of commensurate fiscal resources. As a part of the regularisation plan notified by Government, all eligible Casual/Seasonal Labourers/ land donors/NYC/ITI trained workers, HDF workers etc., working in various departments of the State Government, will be regularised after proper verification, in a time bound manner. This will ensure sustainable livelihoods for thousands of employees in the State.

91. The welfare of the labour class is fundamental for the inclusive growth of our society. To ensure a

fair wage to every worker, Government has hiked the minimum rates of wages by more than 55%, highest ever in the history of J&K. The wages of un-skilled, skilled and highly skilled workers have been raised to Rs.225, Rs.350 and Rs.400, respectively.

92. Government is sanguine that the reform and development initiatives embarked upon by it, in the larger public interest, will lead to sustained inclusive growth and development in the State. As exemplified by the Chief Minister's ongoing outreach programme visits to various districts, Government is taking varied steps to extend the reach of governance. It is hoped that the civil society at large will support and supplement Government's efforts towards building an enduring narrative of peace and development in the State.

93. Government firmly believes that the elected and the electorate have equal stakes in the peace process and, together, they will have to rise against those who choose violence to disrupt the established order. Such challenges will be met through dialogue, which is the best means of resolving all disagreements. To all those who had earlier refused to be part of the peace process, Government appeals to them to come forward and accept the Special Representative for Kashmir's offer for engaging in dialogue. Government

is hopeful that, soon enough, all segments shall come forward for a dialogue and all issues would find resolution.

94. Before concluding, I wish all of you a very productive Budget Session.

JAI HIND.