

*Governor: Peace imperative for development/Jehlum Post News/Jammu/Jan 26, 2015/Mr. N. N. Vohra, Governor*



*Jammu and Kashmir, Monday observed that maintenance of peace and public order are imperative for securing sustained growth and development. In his address, after hoisting the tricolour at the State level function on the occasion of the 66th Republic Day, at Maulana Azad Stadium here this morning, the Governor said that because of the consistently negative*

*trans-border factors and recurring challenges to the maintenance of peace and normalcy, Jammu and Kashmir has continued to face varied hurdles in maintaining the required pace for securing its growth and developmental goals. The Governor saluted the State and Central Armed Police Forces and the Army for their uncompromising commitment and devotion to duty and paid homage to all the brave officers and men who have sacrificed their lives to safeguard national security. The Governor said that while celebrating the birth of the Republic of India we must also remember and pay tribute to the great national leaders who carried out a prolonged struggle to liberate our country from the foreign yoke. He said that it is the duty of all the citizens of India to protect and preserve our hard won freedom and to commit themselves afresh to safeguarding the unity and integrity of the Nation.*

*Referring to the imposition of the Governor's Rule in the State earlier this month, the Governor said that the recent elections to the State Assembly did not yield a clear cut verdict. And while talks between the leading political parties were underway, the caretaker Chief Minister decided to step down. This unforeseen development led to the imposition of the Governor's Rule. He said, "I am hopeful that the present spell of governance under my charge will soon come to an end, when the elected representatives form government and take over the responsibility of running the affairs of Jammu and Kashmir".*

*The Governor observed that the past year has been marked both by important events and tumultuous developments in Jammu and Kashmir. Elections to the Lok Sabha were held in early 2014. These polls witnessed a marked increase in the voter turnout, as compared to the Parliament elections held in 2009. Referring to the State Assembly elections held in the State recently, the Governor said that the people of the State were still engaged in dealing with the many problems created by the floods when the schedule of the elections to the State Assembly was announced. Notwithstanding their sufferings and varied threats this election witnessed a voter turnout of an unprecedented high level which confirmed, yet again, the people's deeply*

rooted trust in the democratic process.

The Governor observed that after the successful conduct of elections to the State Assembly, which were visibly free and fair, I believe that the people's mandate shall very soon lead to the installation of the next government. The Governor said that it is a matter for serious concern that the past year witnessed repeated violations of the Ceasefire Agreement and continuing attempts at infiltration across the International Border (IB) and the Line of Control (LoC). In the Jammu region, there were two terrorist attacks across the IB last year. The repeated instances of unprovoked heavy firing from across the border caused loss of innocent lives and damage to the properties of those who are living in the villages along the border.

The Governor observed, "over the years, repeated attempts have been made to persuade our western neighbour to respond positively to India's recurring initiatives for securing peaceful bilateral relations. Needless to stress, till peace dawns on our frontiers our Security Forces shall continue their unceasing vigil to safeguard the territorial integrity of our country." The Governor said, "in September last year, consequent to incessant rains in several parts of the State, we faced floods of an unprecedented scale which caused large scale loss of life and colossal devastation of private property and public infrastructure. As per governmental assessments about 15 lakh families were adversely affected by the floods, which caused enormous damage to roads and bridges, and water, power and health systems. In Kashmir Valley, about one and a half lakh marooned persons were rescued while in the Jammu region thousands had to be evacuated to safer places. All essential services, particularly power, water, transport and health, were severely disrupted". The Governor observed that the rescue operations launched by the Administration were very strongly supported by the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and the Army. The Air Force evacuated over 15,000 flood affected persons and carried out hundreds of sorties for air dropping packets of water, food, medical and other essential supplies. The Governor said "it is heartening to note that in the rescue operations invaluable help was provided by the local youth, representatives of the civil society organisations and Non-Governmental Organisations from within the State and elsewhere in the country. I take this opportunity to thank all of them, particularly the local youth who played a truly commendable role and took untold risks in providing valuable assistance to the flood victims".

The Governor observed that rehabilitation and reconstruction work began as soon as the flood receded and, thanks to the timely efforts put in by the concerned authorities, there was no occurrence of any kind of epidemic. The Governor said that on the very day the floods engulfed the whole of Srinagar city, the Prime Minister had visited Jammu and Srinagar and announced a Special Plan Assistance of Rs. 1,000 crore for the reconstruction of public infrastructure. After the floods had receded, the State government had assessed the total loss on all fronts and forwarded a comprehensive report to the Government of India, which is being pursued for a very early decision. Meanwhile, close attention is being paid to ensure that the corpus of Rs. 1,191 crore, available under the State Disaster Response Fund, is fully utilised and the relief distribution work is completed very early.

The Governor observed, "in the past decades, since the attainment of Independence, our country has faced serious challenges on varied fronts. It is a matter for pride that India, the largest democracy in the world, has been able, despite numerous constraints, to achieve outstanding successes in several arenas and is steadily emerging as one of the largest economies in the world". On the joyous occasion of the 66th Republic Day, the Governor conveyed his greetings and good wishes to the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

