

Article 370 misused to isolate Jammu & Ladakh, became tool of discrimination: LG Ladakh Inaugurates Shaheedi Diwas Smaran Samaroh, Kisan Health Mela at Jourian Pays Tributes to Jourian Martyrs; Confers Certificates of Appreciation Says Praja Parishad Martyrs Made 'Ek Vidhan, Ek Nishan' a Reality Ladakh Witnessing Transformative Development Under PM Modi Regime

Journal, Jan 31: Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Shri Kavinder Gupta, emphasised the misuse of Article 370 by the erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir government, stating that the provision, introduced on 17 October 1949 as temporary, was exploited to politically, constitutionally, and emotionally isolate the Jammu and Ladakh regions. He said that instead of serving the people, it became a tool for power, discrimination, and denial of equal rights.

Shri Kavinder Gupta made these remarks while addressing the Shaheedi Diwas Smaran Samaroh and Kisan Health Mela, organised by the Praja Parishad Memorial Trust at Jourian in the Akhnoor sector, paying tributes to martyrs who laid down their lives for India's unity and integrity. The function was presided over by Shri Daljit Singh Chib, President of the Trust.

Recalling the events of 1953, the Lieutenant Governor said that when patriotic citizens of the Jammu region peacefully demanded "One Nation, One Constitution, One Flag," their call was treated as a crime by the then government. He observed that the supreme sacrifice of Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee and the seven young patriots from Jourian, who attained martyrdom while attempting to hoist the National Flag during the Praja Parishad movement, symbolised the struggle for constitutional equality and national unity. He added that Article 370 was deliberately used to suppress democratic voices and prevent the full integration of Jammu and Kashmir with India.

The Lieutenant Governor emphasised that Jourian is not merely a geographical location but a land of sacrifice and patriotism. Drawing a symbolic connection between Jourian and Kargil, he said the soil of both regions reflects the same spirit of courage and supreme sacrifice for the nation. He informed that sacred soil brought from the Tololing heights of Kargil, where Indian soldiers displayed exceptional bravery during the Kargil War, serves as a reminder of the dedication and "nation-first" spirit of the armed forces.

Shri Kavinder Gupta further highlighted that the abrogation of Article 370 on 5 August 2019, under the decisive leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, fulfilled the long-standing aspirations of the martyrs and the people. He said the historic decision restored constitutional uniformity, ensured equal rights for all citizens, and firmly placed Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh on the path of unity and inclusive development.

Highlighting development initiatives in Ladakh, the Lieutenant Governor said the region is reaching new heights under the visionary leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. He noted that the region's budget has increased nearly six fold over the last six years, enabling significant improvements in infrastructure, water supply, education, connectivity, and employment. He cited achievements under the Jal Jeevan Mission, expansion of 4G connectivity, construction of the Zojila Tunnel, and the inauguration of a parallel runway at Leh Air Force Station as key milestones boosting connectivity, tourism, and economic growth.

Shri Kavinder Gupta stated that the nation would remain eternally indebted to the martyrs of Jourian and that their sacrifice would continue to inspire generations to uphold the values of unity, integrity, and the Constitution of India. He also urged the youth to draw inspiration from the martyrs' sacrifices, uphold the values of patriotism, unity, and integrity, and actively contribute to the nation's progress while safeguarding the Constitution and national unity.

Later, the Lieutenant Governor conferred Certificates of Appreciation to government officials and civil society members in recognition of their commendable service, dedication, and valuable contribution towards the welfare of society.

Earlier, an exhibition depicting the Praja Parishad movement was organised, showcasing rare documents, photographs, and historical narratives highlighting the sacrifices made during the struggle for "Ek Vidhan, Ek Nishan, Ek Pradhan." The programme also featured a Health Mela organised by Narayana Hospital and a Kisan Mela organized by the Agriculture Department.

During the programme, it was announced that a memorial statue of the Praja Parishad martyrs will be installed, uniquely crafted using sacred soil collected from the homes of the martyrs who laid down their lives during the agitation. The use of this soil will symbolise the eternal bond between the martyrs, their families, and the motherland, transforming remembrance into a living and enduring national tribute.

Hon'ble MLA and Leader of Opposition Shri Sunil Sharma, in his address, said that the supreme sacrifices of the Praja Parishad martyrs serve as an eternal source of inspiration for future generations.

Earlier, addressing the gathering, Shri Daljit Singh Chib, President of the Praja Parishad Memorial Trust, said that the Praja Parishad movement was not merely a political agitation but a historic mass movement rooted in the demand for equality, dignity, and full constitutional integration. He emphasised that the martyrs of 1953 sacrificed their lives so that future generations could live under one Constitution and one national identity.

Dr. Vikrant Sharma (Seh-Sanghchalak), Former Deputy Chief Minister Dr. Nirmal Singh, and MLA Sham Lal Sharma also spoke on the occasion.

Prominent dignitaries present included MLA Shri Mohan Lal Bhagat, Mahant Rameshwar Dass, Mahant Keshav Dass, Shri Kuldeep Sharma, Shri Ajay Singh, Shri Jugal Dogra, Shri Neeraj Shastri, Neelam Langeh (Ex-MLA), Suraj Singh (DDC), Suresh Sharma (DDC), Bhushan Bral, Rugunada (DDC), Hira Nagar representatives of Brahman Sabha, Rajput Sabha, Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee Akhnoor, Kabir Sabha, and saints from various religious institutions, all of whom paid floral tributes at the Shaheedi Sthal.



