

Kashmir was, is & will always remain an Integral Part of India: LG Kavinder Gupta Article 370 abrogation opened new era of development and opportunity in J&K & Ladakh: LG Kavinder Gupta Says Unity in Diversity defines Kashmir's identity and India's strength Ladakh emerging as hub of sustainable development and youth aspirations Addresses Rotary International District 3070 Annual Conference on 'Kashmir – Harmony with Mainstream India' From Kashmir to Kanyakumari, vision of 'Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat' is becoming a reality under PM Modi leadership: LG Kavinder Gupta LG Ladakh conferred with 'Rotary World Changemaker Award' for his contributions towards development, good governance and nation-building

Phagwara (Punjab), March 7: The Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Shri Kavinder Gupta addressed the Rotary International District 3070 Annual Conference 2026 in Phagwara on the theme "Kashmir – Harmony with Mainstream India," highlighting the deep cultural, civilisational, and democratic ties linking Kashmir and Ladakh with the rest of India.

Describing Kashmir as the "crown of India," the Lieutenant Governor said the region is not merely a geographical entity but a symbol of India's civilisation, spirituality and resilience. He remarked that Kashmir holds an emotional place in the hearts of all Indians and that its culture, traditions and history are deeply connected with the idea of India.

Referring to the ancient origins of Kashmir associated with Maharishi Kashyap, he highlighted the region's rich heritage reflecting India's ethos of unity in diversity. Sacred sites such as Sharda Peeth and Amarnath, along with revered Sufi shrines and Buddhist monasteries, have long represented spiritual harmony and cultural coexistence in the region.

The Lieutenant Governor also acknowledged the difficult decades experienced by the region due to turmoil and conflict. He said the suffering of people in Kashmir during those years should always be remembered with sensitivity and compassion. The pain of mothers and families who lost their loved ones, he added, remains part of the collective memory and reinforces the need to build a peaceful and prosperous future.

Highlighting the historic decision of August 5, 2019, Shri Kavinder Gupta said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the abrogation of Article 370 marked a transformative moment for Jammu and Kashmir. The decision ensured that the same constitutional rights and legal protections available to citizens across India are fully applicable to the people of the region.

Kavinder Gupta said the change has ushered in a new era of opportunity, empowerment and development. Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, he said, is moving ahead with renewed confidence, with expanding opportunities and growing aspirations among the people. He highlighted major infrastructure projects such as the Zojila Tunnel and Z-Morh Tunnel, which are improving connectivity and transforming seasonal routes into all-weather lifelines, bringing remote areas closer to the national mainstream.

The Lieutenant Governor also pointed to the expansion of educational and healthcare infrastructure, including new medical colleges, IITs, IIMs and AIIMS, enabling youth from the region to access quality opportunities closer to home. He noted that the successful hosting of a G20 meeting in Srinagar symbolised the region's growing confidence and global visibility. Tourism in Jammu and Kashmir has also witnessed record numbers, reflecting renewed faith among visitors.

Sharing his experience as Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh since he assumed the charge on July 2025, Kavinder Gupta said he has travelled extensively across remote and challenging terrains to understand the aspirations of the people. He praised the resilience and courage of Ladakh's residents, who continue to thrive despite harsh climatic conditions.

"Since attaining Union Territory status in 2019, Ladakh has made significant progress in solar energy, sustainable tourism and entrepreneurship, while its youth are excelling in fields such as defence services, administration, sports and business," he added.

He emphasised that development and cultural preservation can progress together. Ladakh, he said, demonstrates that modern growth and ancient traditions complement each other and strengthen the nation. Clarifying the idea of integration, he said harmony with the national mainstream does not mean loss of identity. India's strength lies in its diversity, where languages, traditions and cultures flourish while remaining united.

Invoking the vision of “Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat,” he said that from Kashmir to Kanyakumari and Ladakh to Lakshadweep, India stands united, strong and indivisible. “Kashmir was, is, and will always remain an integral and proud part of India,” he affirmed.

He also commended the humanitarian ideals of Rotary International, particularly its principle of “Service Above Self,” and encouraged the organisation to expand initiatives in vocational training, healthcare and youth entrepreneurship in remote regions.

The Lieutenant Governor expressed confidence that collective efforts by citizens, institutions and organisations like Rotary will continue to strengthen unity, development and harmony across the country.

Later, Rohit Oberoi, District Governor, along with RI Director Gurjeet Singh Sheiko presented the ‘Rotary World Changemaker Award’ to the Lieutenant Governor for his outstanding public service and contributions towards development, good governance and nation-building.

