

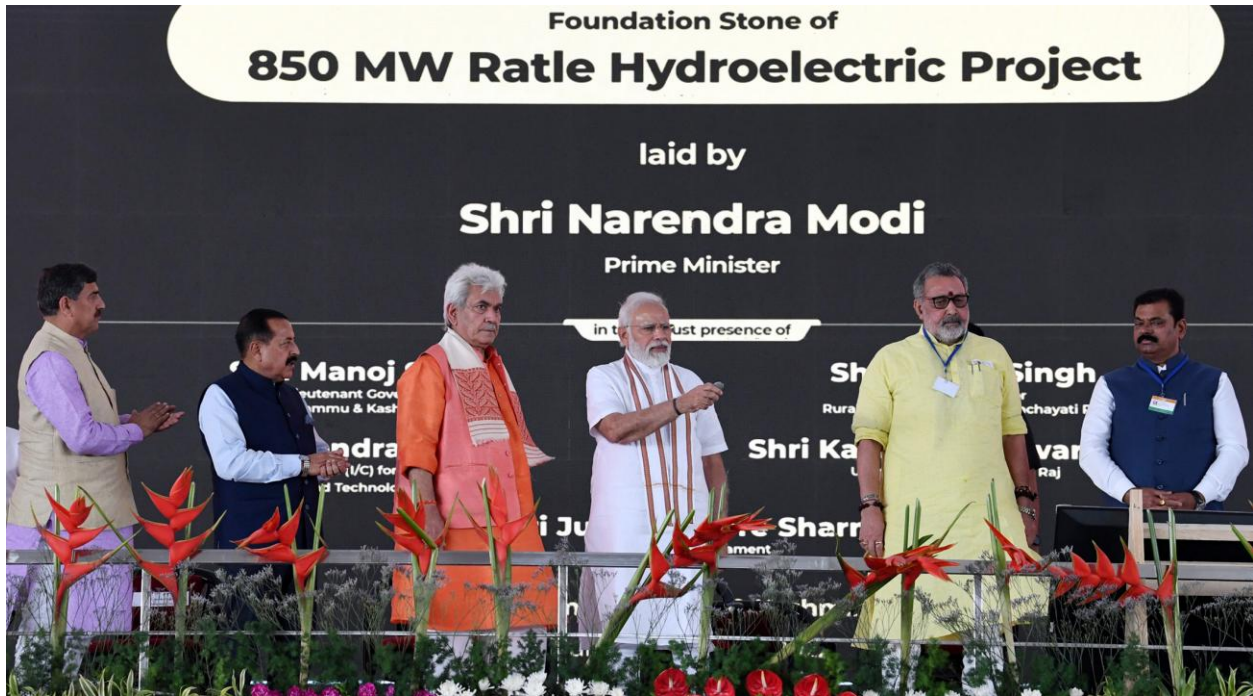
PM visits J&K to participate in celebrations of National Panchayati Raj Day

Addresses all the Gram Sabhas across the country from Palli Panchayat in Samba district



Inaugurates and lays the foundation stone of multiple development initiatives worth over Rs 20,000 crore

Inaugurates Banihal Qazigund Road Tunnel which will help bring the regions of Jammu and Kashmir closer



lays foundation stone of three road packages of Delhi-Amritsar-Katra Expressway and Ratle&Kwar Hydroelectric projects

Launches Amrit Sarovar - an initiative aimed at developing and rejuvenating 75 water bodies in each district of the country

“Celebration of National Panchayati Raj Day in Jammu and Kashmir marks a big change”

“Be it democracy or resolve for development, **today Jammu and Kashmir is presenting a new example. In the last 2-3 years, new dimensions of development have been created in Jammu and Kashmir”**

“Those who did not get the benefit of reservation in Jammu and Kashmir for years, are also getting the benefit of reservation now”

“Distances, whether of hearts, languages, customs or of resources, their elimination is our major priority **today”**

“This ‘Amrit Kaal’ of Independence is going to be the golden period of India”

“Youth of the valley will not face the problems that their parents and

grandparents faced”

“If our villages move towards natural farming that will benefit the entire humanity”

“Gram Panchayats will play a major role in combating malnutrition with the help of ‘SabkaPrayas’”

SAMBA, 24 APRIL 2022: The Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi visited Jammu & Kashmir to participate in the celebration of National Panchayati Raj Day **today** and addressed all the Gram Sabhas across the country. He visited Palli Panchayat in Samba district.

The Prime Minister inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of multiple development initiatives worth around Rs 20,000 crore. He also launched the Amrit Sarovar initiative. Lt Governor Jammu and Kashmir Shri Manoj Sinha, Union Ministers Shri Giriraj Singh, Dr Jitendra Singh and Shri Kapil Moreshwar Patil were among those present on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, the Prime Minister said that **today** is a landmark day in the development journey of Jammu and Kashmir. He thanked the people of Jammu and Kashmir for their enthusiasm. The Prime Minister said, due to his long association with the state, he understands the issues involved and expressed happiness about the focus on connectivity in the projects inaugurated and for which foundation stone was laid **today**. “Projects worth 20 thousand crore rupees related to connectivity and electricity have been inaugurated and the foundation stone has been laid here.

To give a new impetus to the development of Jammu and Kashmir, work is going on at a fast pace. These efforts will provide employment to a large number of youths of Jammu and Kashmir”, he said. **Today** many families have also got property cards of their houses in villages. These ownership cards will inspire new possibilities in the villages. 100 Jan Aushadhi Kendras will become a medium to provide affordable medicines and surgical items to the poor and middle-class families of Jammu and Kashmir, he said.

The Prime Minister pointed out that all schemes of the centre government are being implemented in Jammu and Kashmir and people are being benefitted from them. People in the villages are the biggest beneficiaries of schemes for LPG, toilets, electricity, land rights and water connections.

Before arriving at the dais, the Prime Minister met the delegations from UAE. The Prime Minister said that a new story of development is being written

and many private investors are interested in Jammu and Kashmir. For 7 decades of independence, private investment of only Rs 17 thousand crore could be made in Jammu and Kashmir. But now it is reaching around Rs 38,000 crore. Tourism also is thriving once again, the Prime Minister noted.

The Prime Minister underlined the changed system of working in the Jammu and Kashmir, by giving example of the 500 KW solar plant that is being established in three weeks whereas earlier even the movement of file from Delhi used to take 2-3 weeks. He said all houses of Palli Panchayat getting solar power is a perfect example of Gram Urja Swaraj and the changed way of working will take Jammu and Kashmir to new heights. The Prime gave assurance to the youth of Jammu. He said “friends, believe my words, youth of the valley mark my words, the difficulties faced by your parents and grandparents, you will not face those problems. This I will accomplish and I have come to assure you of that.”

Shri Modi referred to India’s leadership on international environmental and climate change platforms and expressed pride in the strides that Palli Panchayat is making towards becoming first carbon-neutral panchayat. “Palli Panchayat is moving towards becoming the first Carbon Neutral Panchayat in the country. [Today](#), I have also got an opportunity to interact with the people's representatives of the villages of the country, in the village of Palli. Many congratulations to Jammu and Kashmir for this big achievement and development works”, he said.

The Prime Minister said that “celebration of National Panchayati Raj Day in Jammu and Kashmir marks a big change.” Shri Modi expressed deep satisfaction and pride that democracy has made way to grass roots in Jammu and Kashmir. “Be it democracy or resolve for development, [today](#) Jammu and Kashmir is presenting a new example. In the last 2-3 years, new dimensions of development have been created in Jammu and Kashmir”, the Prime Minister stressed. For the first time, elections to the three-tier Panchayati Raj system- Gram Panchayat, Panchayat Samiti and DDC have been held in Jammu and Kashmir.

Referring to the process of inclusion of Jammu and Kashmir in the development journey of the nation, the Prime Minister informed that more than 175 central laws have become applicable in Jammu and Kashmir. The biggest beneficiaries of this have been the women, poor and deprived section of the area. He also talked about removal of anomalies in the reservation clauses. “Valmiki Samajhas been freed from the fetters that were put in their feet for decades. [Today](#) sons and daughters of every community are able to fulfil their dreams. Those who did not get the benefit of reservation in Jammu and Kashmir for years, are also getting the benefit of reservation now”, he said.

Referring to his vision of 'Ek Bharat Shresht Bharat', the Prime Minister explained that the vision focuses on connectivity and elimination of distances. "Distances, whether of hearts, languages, customs or of resources, their elimination is our very big priority [today](#)", he added.

The Prime Minister dwelled on the role of Panchayats in the development of the country and said "This 'Amrit Kaal' of Independence is going to be the golden period of India. This resolve is going to be realized by SabkaPrayas. In this, the role of the Gram Panchayat, the most grassroots unit of democracy and all of you colleagues is very important", he said. It is the effort of the government, he stressed, that the role of Panchayat should deepen in planning and implementation of every project related to the development of the village. "With this, Panchayat will emerge as an important link in the achievement of national resolutions", he added.

The Prime Minister said that 75 sarovars will come up in every district by 15 August in 2023. He urged that these sarovars should be lined with trees named after the martyrs and freedom fighters. Shri Modi also elaborated upon the push for transparency and empowerment of Gram Panchayats. Measures like e-Gram Swaraj are linking processes from planning to payment. Panchayats will be audited online and a system of citizen charter for all the Gram Sabha is encouraging the Sabhas for taking up many roles. He also highlighted the role of women in these institutions and village governance especially water governance.

Reiterating his push for natural farming the Prime Minister said that it is critical to free mother earth of chemicals as it is harming the land and groundwater. He said if our villages move towards natural farming that will benefit entire humanity. He asked to explore how natural farming can be promoted at the level of Gram Panchayats, for this collective efforts are needed. Similarly, Gram Panchayats will play a major role in combating malnutrition with the help of 'SabkaPrayas'. "People on the ground have to be made aware about the initiative taken by the central government to save the country from malnutrition and anemia. Now the rice being given under the government schemes is being fortified", he informed.

Since the introduction of constitutional reforms with regards to J&K in [August 2019](#), the government has been focused on bringing about wide-ranging reforms to substantially improve governance and enhance ease of living for the people of the region at an unprecedented pace. The projects inaugurated and whose foundation stone was laid will go a long way in facilitating provision of basic amenities, ensuring ease of mobility and development of infrastructure in the region.

Prime Minister inaugurated the Banihal Qazigund Road Tunnel, built at a cost of over Rs 3100 crore. The 8.45 Km long tunnel would reduce the road distance between Banihal and Qazigund by 16 km, and reduce journey time by around one and a half hour. It is a twin-tube tunnel – one for each direction of travel – with the twin tubes being interconnected by a cross passage every 500m, for maintenance and emergency evacuation. The tunnel would help establish an all-weather connection between Jammu and Kashmir, and bring the two regions closer.

Prime Minister laid the foundation stone of three road packages of Delhi-Amritsar-Katra Expressway, being built at a cost of over Rs. 7500 crore. They are for the construction of 4/6 lane access controlled Delhi-Katra-Amritsar Expressway from: Balsua on NH-44 to GurhaBaildaran, Hiranagar; GurhaBaildaran, Hiranagar to Jakh, Vijaypur; and Jakh, Vijaypur to Kunjwani, Jammu with spur connectivity to Jammu Airport.

The Prime Minister also laid the foundation stone of Ratle and Kwar Hydroelectric projects. The 850 MW Ratle Hydroelectric Project will be constructed on Chenab river in Kishtwar District at a cost of around Rs 5300 crore. The 540 MW Kwar Hydroelectric Project will also be built on Chenab river in Kishtwar District at a cost of over Rs. 4500 crore. Both the projects will help meet the power requirements of the region.

In order to further expand the network of Jan AushadiKendras in J&K and to make good quality generic medicines at affordable prices available, 100 Kendras have been made functional and dedicated to the nation by the Prime Minister. These Kendras are located in the remote corners of the UT. He will also inaugurate a 500 KW solar power plant at Palli, which will make it the country's first panchayat to become carbon neutral.

The Prime Minister handed over SVAMITVA cards to beneficiaries. He also transferred award money to Panchayats which are winners of awards given across different categories on National Panchayati Raj Day for their achievements. The Prime Minister also visited the INTACH photo gallery which depicts the rural heritage of the region, and Nokia Smartpur, a rural entrepreneurship-based model designed to create ideal smart villages in India.

With a view to ensure rejuvenation of water bodies, the Prime Minister also launched a new initiative named Amrit Sarovar. It is aimed at developing and rejuvenating 75 water bodies in each district of the country as a part of celebration of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav.