

Speech of His Excellency Shri K. Sankaranarayanan , the Governor of Jharkhand for AIR / Doordarshan on the eve of Independence Day 2009

My dear Brothers and Sisters.

My greetings and felicitations to you all on the auspicious occasion of the 63rd Independence day. Today we bow our heads in reverence to the leaders of our freedom struggle like Mahatma Gandhi, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Sarojini Naidu, Sardar Patel, Abdul Kalam Azad and Baba Saheb Ambedkar. We also recall on this occasion the extreme sacrifices made by the brave sons of Jharkhand like Birsa Munda, Sidhu-Kanho, Thakur Vishwanath Shahdeo, Pandey Ganpat Rai, Tikait Umrao Singh for the freedom of our great country from colonial rule.

All these great leaders had dreamt of & worked for an independent, equitable, inclusive, and prosperous India & today we dedicate ourselves to the task of transforming their vision into reality.

After taking over the reins of administration of this State last month, it has been my endeavour to tone up the State administration and provide an effective, sensitive and transparent governance to the people at their doorsteps.

As you all are aware Jharkhand has also been passing through a dry spell during this monsoon due to insufficient rainfall. Being conscious of the hardships of the people, we have declared the entire State as drought affected. Entire administration has been geared up to meet this challenge. My effort is to ensure that no one faces starvation in this State and every person and household has food security & livelihood security in this hour of distress. All BPL and Antyodaya beneficiaries are being given free foodgrains in the entire State from August and Gratuitous relief at the rate of Rs. 20/- per adult and Rs. 15/- per child is being provided to families that are in dire need of means of sustenance. Further, supplementary nutrition is being provided all over the State at the rate of Rs. 2/- per head as per ICDS norms. Payment of old age pension has been made

up to date in the entire State. Crop loans to farmers are being rescheduled to mitigate their hardships and in areas where paddy sowing has been adversely affected, seeds for alternative crops like maize and pulses are being provided. I am regularly monitoring the situation with all the Deputy Commissioners and the concerned departmental heads.

My highest priority is to ensure food security for the people of this State and an efficient Public Distribution System is a major tool to achieve this objective. I have taken steps to ensure that it is made functional, essential commodities reach the target groups in time and there is no pilferage on account of black marketing and bogus ration cards. I am ensuring that distribution of sugar through PDS starts from this month itself. To prevent pilferage and blackmarketing of wheat, rice, salt and kerosene oil, we are ensuring door-step delivery of these commodities and the DCs are making arrangements for transporting these commodities from SFC godowns to the shops. We will also make Village Grain Banks functional by the end of this month.

I am fully conscious of the need to provide means of employment to every able bodied person of this State so that they are not forced to migrate to other places in search of livelihood. Women are being given special focus in this respect. We have decided that all new Fair Price Ration shop licences would now be given only to women Self Help Groups and that at least one-third of labourers employed in the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme are women only. In this moment of drought, each village will have at least one scheme for providing to employment to labourers of that village and we will ensure that by the end of October 2009 all labourers get at least 60 days of employment in the current year. The schemes taken up so far would be speedily completed and I am hopeful that all the schemes that were pending on 1.4.2009 would be complete by October 2009. I would request all of you to participate in the social audit of these schemes being conducted in your villages so that full benefit accrues to the village community and the labourers.

Primitive tribal groups are important constituents of our tribal culture and heritage and their conservation and safety is our priority concern. We are providing free foodgrains & free houses to these groups along with direct employment to all educated boys and girls of these groups by relaxing all norms of reservation and eligibility.

The importance of development of infrastructure cannot be overemphasized for ensuring overall development of this State. Roads and electricity are basic necessities for any developed society. We will ensure that during August 2009, one lakh BPL households are provided with electrical connectivity and 923 villages would be electrified. Similar targets will be set or subsequent months as well. It will also be ensured that there is actual supply of electricity to these electrified households and villages. We will also ensure that all habitations of this state with a population exceeding 500 get road connectivity by 2010-11.

I am aware that a large part of this State is affected by naxalite activities. Peace and development go hand in hand and it is not possible to conceive of one in the absence of the other. While strengthening the security apparatus on one hand we are also committed to providing transparent, responsive and accountable governance where the fruits of development reach those who need it most. DCs and SPs have been directed to move closer to people and be visible. I have made it clear that there will be zero tolerance for corruption and inefficiency. An active and vigilant cooperation from your side will not only help me in achieving my goals but also help me to make mid-time corrections wherever necessary.

I again take this opportunity to greet you all on this proud occasion of our 63rd Independence day and call upon you to join me in the quest to fulfil the dreams of our great freedom fighters.

Jai Hind, Jai Jharkhand