

24TH MEETING OF THE WESTERN ZONAL COUNCIL HELD

**Panaji 22, 2019
Sravana 31, 1941**

The 24th meeting of the Western Zonal Council was held at Panaji on August 22, 2019, under the Chairmanship of Union Home Minister Shri Amit Shah in the city today. The meeting was attended by the Chief Minister of Goa Dr. Pramod Sawant, Chief Minister of Maharashtra Shri. Devendra Fadnavis, Chief Minister of Gujarat Shri. V.R. Rupani and Administrator of the Union Territories of Daman & Diu and Dadra & Nagar Haveli Deputy Shri. Prafula Patel along with other Ministers from these States, senior officers from the Central and State Governments including Chief Secretaries and Secretaries to Government of India.

The meeting began with Chief Minister of Maharashtra welcoming the decision taken by the Prime Minister and Union Home Minister regarding the removal of Article 370 and 35A of the Constitution in respect of the State of Jammu & Kashmir. He also emphasized that this decision would pave the way for the development of J&K and Ladakh and integration of this part with the rest of the country. The Chief Ministers of Goa & Gujarat and Administrator of Daman & Diu and Dadra & Nagar Haveli also endorsed and supported the views of CM, Maharashtra.

Welcoming all the members of the Council to the 24th meeting, the Union Home Minister said that the meeting will be fruitful in resolving the issues having Centre-State and inter-State ramifications with consensus. After due deliberations, unequivocal decisions taken by consensus should be resolved to further strengthen the federal structure of the country, he said.

He added that the West Zone has been instrumental in giving impetus to the Indian economy as the States of this Zone contribute around 24% to the GDP and 45% to the total exports of the country. Hence, all the pending issues between the States and the Centre need to be resolved on priority through the medium of Western Zonal Council.

Lauding the States in the Zone for excellent work and for being harbingers in the cooperative sector Shri. Shah pointed out that the States in the Western Zone is a big exporter of sugar, cotton, groundnut, and fish and contribute immensely to the economic development of the country. Now, strengthening law & order and administrative reforms will help in giving further pace to the development of these states and our country.

He expressed his deep concern for the flood victims in the States of Gujarat, Maharashtra and Goa and requested the States to quickly assess the damage caused by the floods and send their requirement to the Government of India. He also mentioned that the Government of India has taken an initiative to assess the damage on its own, for which Central teams have already been constituted to visit the flood-affected areas without waiting for the reports from the States.

The Council also reviewed the progress of implementation of the recommendations made at the last meeting. Action on the Master Plan submitted by Maharashtra Government for utilization of surplus Salt Pan Land for rehabilitation of slum dwellers, a transparent financial model for involvement of slum dwellers (and utilization of land as per high FSI in keeping with provisions of a scheme to be formulated as per Slum Rehabilitation Act) on competitive basis for rehabilitation of slum dwellers & transfer of land/monetization for Government of India were some of the issues taken up.

Coverage of villages without any banking facilities within 5 km radial distance by a Bank/India Post Payments Service was also discussed. “The data derived from the GIS platform of NIC will be further corroborated by the States using road distance on the ground. DBT should also be done through IPPBs also everywhere as these are covered by Core Banking Solution,” Shri. Shah said underlining the need for systemic reforms instead of merely chasing the statistics.

Enhancement of DBT Portal to include scheme/village-wise details by collecting real-time information from respective portals of beneficiary-oriented schemes, Innovative solutions of encrypted QR Code on Aadhaar card for verifying antecedents of marine fishermen were also discussed. State Governments are directed to get the print-outs taken or cards made within a month at Government initiative, so that everyone will have Aadhaar card with latest QR Code and foreign nationals don't enter Indian territory unauthorized through fishing boats.

“Detailed monitoring of mechanism to ensure that investigation and trial of sexual offenses/rape against women below 12 years of age must be completed within 2 months and Chief Secretary must personally monitor periodically adherence to legal provisions of completing investigation & trial, the Minister told. Forest, Roads over bridges, defense services were some of the other topics discussed in the meeting.

“The sole purpose of the meeting is to pace up the developmental works in the Western states. Upgradation and strengthening Law and Order in the states will remain our priority. The Department of Prosecution and Anti Narcotics Bureau will be also reinforced. For better Governance, we all

must work united with a pro-active approach, welcome constructive opinion and use modern technology,” Shri. Shah concluded.

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