

**HON'BLE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR OF J&K's SPEECH DURING THE
EVENT OF RELEASE OF COMMEMORATIVE POSTAGE STAMP ON
LATE WAZIR MOHD HAKLA POONCHI OF DISTRICT POONCH, J&K
ON 24TH OF JULY 2024 AT RAJ BHAWAN, SRINAGAR, J&K.**

For me personally this is an extremely emotional moment, and I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the Prime Minister of India, Honorable Shri Narendra Modi ji, and to the Indian Postal Department, who have revived Chaudhary Wazir Mohammad Hakla Sahib not only in the memory of the nation but in the memory of the world by issuing a postage stamp in his name.

I also welcome and congratulate the family members of Chaudhary Sahib and all of you here at the Raj Bhavan. I also extend my congratulations to all of you on today's ceremony.

The older generation associated with public life, social service, and literature in almost every part of the country is familiar with the personality of Chaudhary Wazir Mohammad Sahib. Politics, social service, literature, language, cultural upliftment, empowerment of deprived sections—meaning all aspects of the life of a nation and society—on all of these Chaudhary Sahib left his indelible mark.

Listening to Pradeep Khanna Sahib, I was reminded of the great Urdu poetry master Mirza Ghalib. Once, while acknowledging the greatness of Taqi Mir Sahib, he wrote:

“reḳhte ke tumhīñ ustād nahīñ ho 'ḡhālib'

kahte haiñ aḡle zamāne meñ koī 'mīr' bhī thā”

And later even the great Urdu poet Zauq had to say:

***“Na hua par na hua Mir ka andaaz naseeb,
Zauq yaaron ne bahut zor mazameen baandhe”***

Therefore, I believe that Chaudhary Wazir Mohammad Sahib, along with being a true son of Mother India, was the Mir Taqi Mir of public life and social service.

For a long time before his demise in August 1977, for many decades, it was Chaudhary Sahib's era. His social and political thoughts worked like guiding principles for people connected with public life. Even those who could not meet him personally during that period were aware of his struggle for the upliftment of tribes, the upliftment of weaker sections, and especially for the unity of the Gujjar community of the country.

There are numerous achievements of his hardworking and sacrificial public life, but I believe Chaudhary Sahib's greatest contribution was to unite the Gujjar community across the country beyond religion and modes of worship—whether Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, or Jain. And this unity was not merely for an ethnic group, but for the honor of the nation.

His leadership and guidance were not limited only to Poonch, and to say “the son of Poonch” would, in my understanding, be reducing his stature. He was a son of Mother India.

Discussions of his foresight take place everywhere—whether in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, or Delhi. The respect he commanded not only among the Gujjar Bakarwal community of Jammu and Kashmir but also in the hearts and minds of other sections of society here makes his personality completely distinct.

For the upliftment of Hindu, Sikh, Gujjar, and deprived sections living in other parts of the country as well, he carried out lifelong movements. He made tireless efforts for their dignified and respectful lives.

People have told me earlier as well that in the meetings of the All India Gujjar Mahasabha held in 1965, 1968, and 1973, he placed demands and resolutions centered on tribal and deprived-class-oriented policies and their implementation. During that period, through his thoughts and writings, he continuously worked for the preservation and propagation of the Gojri language.

The firmness in his mind towards altruism and social moral values further strengthened the feeling of nationalism. I had read an article by Ibtisam Chaudhary Sahiba, in which she wrote that in 1958, when the Gujjar community was granted tribal status in Himachal Pradesh, Chaudhary Sahib himself went to participate in a conference.

And at the national level, he raised the demand for tribal status for the Gujjar Bakarwal community in Jammu and Kashmir and provided outstanding leadership for their upliftment.

I believe it was the result of Chaudhary Sahib's efforts that in 1965, Gujjars across the country—Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh—supported the demand for tribal status for the Gujjar Bakarwal community of Jammu and Kashmir. It was the result of Chaudhary Sahib's struggle that, 14 years after his demise, finally in 1991, the Gujjar Bakarwal people were granted tribal status.

It is true that even after receiving tribal status, the benefits and strength that the community should have received under the Constitution were, somewhere, not fully reaching them. I will not blame anyone, but I feel that someday time will surely reflect on this. And I can say that why and how this happened is a subject of research.

Deprived people of deprived society—regardless of which religion they belong to or which caste—they fall into, I believe it is the responsibility of governance to make efforts to bring such people into the mainstream. This is not my personal or political opinion, but a bitter truth of history.

The elders of the Gujjar Bakarwal community are aware of the laws passed by the Parliament of the country, under what circumstances they could not be implemented here, and why the community was kept deprived of them.

I would definitely like to say one thing: in 2019, the decision taken by the Honorable Prime Minister on 5th August broke a chain. Because of that, I believe many facilities and benefits that the community should have received constitutionally and legally have now started reaching them.

And whatever has happened—I do not have the time to go into great detail about it. Just yesterday, the national budget was presented, and among the nine priorities placed before the country by the Government of India, the Prime Minister's Tribal Advanced Village Campaign is included among the top nine priorities, which will work in a dedicated manner in the future for the socio-economic upliftment of tribal families in tribal-dominated villages and aspirational districts.

I have found very few examples. I myself have been broadly associated with social life for a long time. A Prime Minister of the country, with penance and dedication, engaged in mobilizing resources to elevate the self-respect, pride, and dignity of a community—such examples are rare in history.

I am reminded of an incident. Some of you may have heard it as well. Earlier, when people used to go to the mountains, it took a lot of time. A decision was taken that whether it was your livestock or people, the administration would provide vehicles.

So when a State Transport Corporation bus was going, people of this very community were on it. Someone said, "Sir, the word 'State' has been removed; now only 'Transport Corporation' is written." There was a young man there. The reply the young man gave was later conveyed to me. He said, "Yes sir, the State may have been removed, but for the first time we have got the opportunity to sit."

What used to take one and a half to two months is now getting done in three to four hours.

I feel that during summer, going towards the mountains on foot was certainly difficult. Many arrangements have been made—mobile vans, mobile veterinary hospitals, mini seed farms, mini dairies, opportunities for employment and education. Many such works have been carried out.

And this is among the highest priorities of the Prime Minister. Therefore, our administration carries out this work with intensity. I see this as the greatest tribute to a great personality like Chaudhary Sahib.

And I would like to say that where we have reached, there is still a long path to be covered. And I would certainly urge the enlightened members of society that some

people continuously try to keep society in confusion, and society also falls into confusion very quickly.

People walk wearing many masks, and political bread is also baked behind those masks.

But there was another aspect of Chaudhary Sahib's personality, which I find necessary to mention. Chaudhary Sahib made the greatest contribution in making the Gujjar Bakarwal community a major component of India's security system.

These brave tribal families, raised in the lap of difficult mountains, became the eyes and ears of the Indian Army. History is witness that this community, a symbol of strength, valor, and dedication, always placed the defense of Mother India above everything else.

This mention will always remain in the history of India. In the 1960s, to give a befitting reply to the nefarious actions of the neighboring country, Chaudhary Sahib had requested the central government to create a separate Gujjar Regiment in the Indian Army.

At the social level as well, he continuously motivated the youth of the community to serve as an integral part of the Indian Army. And the entire country is witness that in the 1965 and 1971 wars, under the leadership of Chaudhary Sahib, the Gujjar Bakarwal community of Jammu and Kashmir displayed extraordinary bravery and made an important contribution to the nation's victory campaign.

Today, once again, the terrorist country Pakistan is making a malicious attempt to disturb peace in the Jammu region. It wants to halt the pace of development. From Poonch and Rajouri to Kathua, Reasi, and Doda, families of those who wish to build a bright future are being targeted.

I will definitely request all of you—if we truly want to pay a real tribute to Chaudhary Sahib at this program, then standing united with clenched fists against terrorism is the need of the hour.

The Gujjar Bakarwal community has been regarded as the first line of defense on the border. Therefore, I would request that security agencies receive correct

information. Your help is also needed in how the drug network can be completely eliminated.

Those who support networks of terror and drug smuggling belong to no community and no caste. If action is taken against such people, I believe it should be welcomed.

When the thought arises—“he belongs to our community, our caste, our religion”—then difficulties are bound to arise. Always remember that every drop of blood shed by Pakistani terrorists will be accounted for—and it will definitely be accounted for, and properly.

Once again, on the occasion of the release of the commemorative postage stamp issued in memory of Chaudhary Wazir Mohammad Sahib Hakla ji, I express my heartfelt thanks to the Department of Posts and my heartfelt thanks to the Honorable Prime Minister.

And I especially congratulate every citizen of Jammu and Kashmir, along with the Gujjar Bakarwal community of the entire country and Jammu and Kashmir. I complete the formality of congratulating his family members as well, because such people do not belong to a family—they belong to the nation.

May the Gujjar Bakarwal community grow stronger day by day. May the valor of the youth of the community increase, and may their maximum contribution be towards the security and development of the nation. If we can achieve this, I believe this will be the true tribute to Chaudhary Sahib’s memory.

I will conclude my words by saying two lines—

“hamāre baad añdherā rahegā mahfil meñ

hamāre baad añdherā rahegā mahfil meñ.

bahut chirāgh jalāo.ge raushnī ke liye

bahut chirāgh jalāo.ge raushnī ke liye”

Thank you very much.

Jai Hind.

Jai Bharat.