

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC RELATIONS
CHANDIGARH ADMINISTRATION**

Press Release

28th Northern Zonal Council Meet held at Chandigarh

Chandigarh, 12th May, 2017: The Hon'ble Union Home Minister, Sh. Rajnath Singh chaired the 28th Meeting of the Northern Zonal Council comprising of the States of Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, J&K, Punjab, Rajasthan, NCT of Delhi and UT of Chandigarh today in Chandigarh at Hotel Taj. The meeting was held in the presence of Sh. VP Singh Badnore, Hon'ble Governor Punjab and Administrator U.T Chandigarh, Hon'ble Chief Ministers and Ministers of Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi and Lt. Governor Delhi and dignitaries and officers from the Northern Zonal Council Secretariat, Central Ministries and State Governments.

The Northern Zonal Council meet is held every year to discuss, and make recommendations with regard to any matter of common interest in the field of economic and social planning; any matter concerning border disputes to the member States, linguistic minorities or inter-State transport; and any matter connected with, or arising out of, the State Re-organisation Act, 1956. The Council today reviewed the progress of the implementation of the recommendations made at the last meeting of the Council and also took up for discussion several social, economic and development issues which have currently assumed importance in the context of inter-state and centre-state relations.

Concluding the meeting, the Union Home Minister thanked all the participants and assured the member States of the Northern Zonal Council of all possible cooperation from the Council Secretariat. 18 items (including sub-items) were taken up for discussion and decisions in the 28th meeting of Northern Zonal Council.

Addressing the august gathering, Sh. VP Singh Badnore, Governor Punjab and Administrator U.T Chandigarh delivered the following speech:

“A city planned by the world renowned French architect Le Corbusier who's ‘Capitol Complex’ in Chandigarh has been recognized by the UNESCO as a

‘World Heritage Site’. The City beautiful is a unique example of a green modern City which came up in the post Independence era of India.

The success story of the City beautiful, which offers an un-paralleled quality of life owes its all round development to the united efforts of its citizens, the Union Territory Administration, the Governments of Punjab and Haryana and the Central Government. It has become a haven for the retired people but also offers ample opportunities for one and all who reside here.

I feel overwhelmed to share with you that Chandigarh became the 1st Union Territory/State to implement DBT Scheme for food grains. It has also been ranked 1st amongst UT's and 5th within all States and UTs in India with regard to Aadhaar Enrollment. Today there are 51 Direct Benefit Transfer schemes running in Chandigarh, 100% Aadhaar seeded and all the payment successfully rendered through Public Financial Management System (PFMS) with absolute transparency in all transactions. In a move towards realizing the broader objective of making itself a Solar City, Chandigarh has also taken a lead among various solar cities of the country.

The Union Territory of Chandigarh has laid keen emphasis on women empowerment by transferring the Food subsidy amount in the account of ‘Grehini’ of the house. The city has also gained popularity on the national front under “Swachh Bharat Mission” on being declared as ODF (Open Defecation free) city and is considered one of the cleanest Cities of India.

To make the City pollution free and encourage cycling, separate cycle tracks have been constructed along all the main roads.

Our meeting today offers an ideal platform for exchange of views, problems and consultation between Centre and the states of Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and also the National Capital Territory of Delhi and UT Chandigarh. It will truly be a learning experience for all.

By virtue of its location and development over the years leading to creation of world class infrastructure, in every possible field, Chandigarh can rightly be called the hub of Northern Zonal States. But this has also thrown up some challenges for

Chandigarh. It is a land-locked oasis of sorts and hence, I would like to mention a few important areas of concern.

1. **EDUCATION**: Chandigarh can boast of near 100% literacy and robust school and technical education systems. Top class institutes like Punjab Engineering College (PEC), Catering and Hotel Management Institute, Design Institute, College of Art & Architecture, other Technical Institutes, IT hubs and last but not the least the Panjab University. PU has a glorious past, a world class infrastructure and learned faculty but today it is facing numerous issues primarily of status and financial resources, which needs to be resolved.
2. **PGIMER CHANDIGARH** is an institute known world over for excellence in health services and medical care which is something to be proud of, cherished and preserved. Conceived in 1960, as a Centre of Excellence, the Institute is since then involved in research for the rural and community related environment and health issues. It has developed new methods and strategies for the benefit of patients. The tremendous pressure on OPDs and other services in the P.G.I is however a matter of concern.
3. **SUKHNA LAKE**: The Sukhna Lake in Chandigarh is ethereal and evokes in us a primeval connection, which transcends all manmade political and social boundaries. It is truly the heart and soul of Chandigarh. But preserving it has become difficult for which we need the assistance and support from our neighboring States. The lake has been running short of water at frequent intervals. We all need to focus ourselves to resolve this so that this important landmark continues to survive and flourish.

Chandigarh being the seat of 3 governments has made rapid strides towards entering into a new era of e-governance and responsive administration. Due to the upsurge of population, the city is under increasing pressure of developmental requirements. To meet the same, preparation of a functional plan having integrated proposal of transport network, physical and social infrastructure is desirable.

To prevent surplus traffic within the city, there is a compelling need to create a ring road/by-pass around Chandigarh. In view of non availability of land within the city and to make provision of the above, the matter needs to be addressed at the interstate level. This will also provide a better connectivity to the International Airport.

The Chandigarh Master Plan 2031 along with Smart City proposals are being implemented expeditiously. The CMP 2031 expects symbiotic relations with the regional urban areas. It expects that the three partners in development, Punjab, Haryana and Chandigarh U.T should have an understanding and coordination between themselves for sharing key responsibilities for locating some of the spillover infrastructure components of Chandigarh in their territory and to reduce the pressure on our limited land bank.

Chandigarh is protected and safeguarded by a strong and powerful 24 X 7 police force to make UT a better and a safer place to live in. With the best efforts put in place by the police, like specialized investigation units and intelligence branch, the crime in Chandigarh has witnessed a declining trend but we need not be complacent. There is still a lot to do for which an active support of the neighbouring states in maintaining the law and order is necessary. The existing mechanism of inter-state police cooperation needs to be bolstered. A State of the Art command and control Centre for managing the law and order, fire, disaster, health hazards, etc. is already planned under Smart City Project for Chandigarh which require active coordination by all the stakeholders.

Albeit water remains a contentious issue, I would like to express my gratitude to the Governments of Punjab and Haryana for giving consent to release additional 40 MGD of raw water for Chandigarh from Bhakra main line at Kajauli.

In the end, I would like to thank the Hon'ble Union Home Minister for holding this important meeting at Chandigarh. I am confident that under his valuable guidance & leadership, various inter-state issues shall be resolved and it will further strengthen the cooperation among these states.”