

Speech of His Excellency Shri K.Sankaranarayanan, the Governor of Jharkhand on the occasion of inauguration of Murma Jatra on 4th October, 2009.

Hon'ble Minister Mr.Subodh Kant Sahaiji, Dr. Rameshwar Oraon, Ex-Minister, Central Government, Mr.Bandhu Tirkey, Ex-Minister, Govt. of Jharkhand, other dignitaries, officials and brothers and sisters.

Johar & greetings to all of you on this historical Murma Jatra held on the 5th day after Dusherra under the auspicious of Raji Parha Jatra Organising Committee.

Jharkhand gets its unique identity throughout the nation from the presence of lush green forests and a vibrant population of scheduled tribes with their extremely rich and varied cultural heritage. Celebration of nature and celebration of life in its purest natural form is seen in the dance and music of tribals of Jharkhand.

The brave tribals of Jharkhand were also in forefront of our freedom struggle. Birsa Munda (1875-1900) and Sidho and Kanho are the legendary heroes of the tribals of this State who fought against the oppressive rule of the British Government. Birsa Munda, now regarded as God, fought for the tribals' natural right over forests and land that was mercilessly being acquired by the British for exploitation. Sidho and Kanho were another set of revolutionaries among the tribals, who led the Santhal rebellion.

For a long time, Jharkhand remained as part of Bihar, but after independence, the demand for a separate State for tribals started gaining momentum and finally Jharkhand became a State under the Republic of India on November 15, 2000. At the time of its creation, it was hoped that

the remote and tribal villages of this State would achieve a faster rate of development and growth. The hopes and aspirations of its people, however, are yet to be realised and a lot needs to be done in all the fields for a balanced development of the State.

My government is totally committed to the service of the tribal population of this state. Within a short time several measures have been initiated for ensuring food security and livelihood security for the people of Jharkhand. Keeping in view the delayed and deficient rainfall in the state, the whole of Jharkhand has been declared drought affected. My government has undertaken several drought mitigation measures including distribution to free ration to BPL and Antyodaya families, free ration to Primitive tribes and supplementary nutrition at ICDS centres. Families in dire need of sustenance who are not getting free ration are being provided Rs.400/- per month under Calamity Relief. Again, for the first time five kg free rice was distributed to 23.94 lakhs BPL and Antyodaya families on the eve of Ed, Desherra & Durga Puja festivals.

We have also strengthened and reoriented the PDS system to ensure that benefits reach every household. Sugar distribution through PDS has started for the first time since creation of Jharkhand. Over 12000 new Public Distribution System shops are being opened through women self-help groups. To keep check on rising prices of essential commodities we have opened over 1000 Suvidha Stores wherein over 4 -lakh persons have already shopped up-till now.

We are also giving special emphasis to NREGA which is the flagship programme for employment generation in rural areas. All backlog of old age pension, widow pension and disabled pension has been cleared.

Payment of stipend to students and distribution of bicycles to boys and girls of class - VIII from deprived sections is also being done. Direct appointments letters have been given to 73 graduates from most primitive tribes to Class III posts in government.

My Government is determined to ensure that the basic needs of all people including our tribal brothers & sisters are met. The focus of all Government Policies and schemes today is the all round development of the people of the State, specially the poor people of the State, the BPL population which comprise 54% of the State Population, the Primitive tribal groups, the old, aged persons, disabled persons, widows, the unemployed and so on. We must ensure that they have sustainable means of livelihood and there is food security, opportunities for quality education, access to Health services and their basic needs. I firmly believe that it is Development and progress alone that can ensure that there is harmony in the society and there is peace.

With these words I declare open the Murma Jatra and give my best wishes for its success.

Jai Jharkhand.