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ಇಲಾಖೆ / ವಿಷಯ: DEPARTMENT / SUBJECT: President  
ಪತ್ರಿಕೆಯ ಹೆಸರು : NAME OF THE NEWS PAPER: Times of India ದಿನಾಂಕ : DATE: 15/05/2019

# Revocation of special status good for people of J&K: Prez

## Kovind: Ladakh Too Will Benefit From Changes

New Delhi: President Ram Nath Kovind on Wednesday expressed confidence that the people of Jammu & Kashmir will immensely benefit from the revocation of provisions of Article 370 that gave special status to the state and its bifurcation into two Union Territories.

"I am confident that the recent changes made in Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh would be of immense benefit to those regions. They will enable the people to access and enjoy the same rights, same privileges and same facilities as their fellow citizens in the rest of the country," Kovind said in his address to the nation on the eve of the 73rd Independence Day.

The Modi government announced on August 5 the removal of some provisions of Article 370 to take away Jammu & Kashmir's special status and proposed bifurcation



President Ram Nath Kovind addresses the nation on the eve of the 73rd Independence Day from Rashtrapati Bhavan on Wednesday

of the state into two Union territories — Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh — a far-reaching decision that seeks to redraw the map and future of a region at the centre of protracted militancy.

Kovind made a reference to the changes in Jammu & Kashmir while recalling that the illustrious generation that led us to freedom did not perceive Independence only in terms of transfer of political power.

"They considered it a steppingstone in a longer and larger process of nation building and national weld-

ing. Their objective was to improve the life of each individual, each family and society as a whole," he said.

The President added that said the recent enactment of new laws and amendments to existing ones will also be beneficial to people of Jammu & Kashmir. "These include progressive, egalitarian laws and provisions related to the Right to Education; accessing public information through the Right to Information; reservations in education and employment and other facilities for tradition-

ally deprived communities; and justice for our daughters by abolishing unequal practices such as instant triple talaq," President Kovind said.

The President observed that India has rarely been a judgemental society and rather it has had an "easy-going, live-and-let-live organising principle". "India's history and destiny, India's legacy and future, are a function of co-existence and conciliation, of reform and reconciliation — of expanding our hearts and embracing the idea of others."

Kovind said he was confident India will never lose its capacity to listen to the "feeblest voice" and it will never lose sight of its ancient ideals and will forget neither its sense of fairness nor its sense of adventure. Referring to the recently concluded session of Parliament which recorded lengthy and productive sittings, the President said many important Bills were passed, in a spirit of cross-party cooperation and constructive debate.

"I am confident this is only an indicator of what the coming five years have in store," he added.