

PALLI IN JAMMU BECOMES INDIA'S FIRST CARBON-NEUTRAL PANCHAYAT

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All cheers: Supporters attending a rally by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Panchayati Raj Day at Palli on Sunday. PTI-

Palli village in Samba district of Jammu and Kashmir has become the first panchayat in the country to become carbon-neutral, fully powered by solar energy. All its records have been digitised and the benefits of all the Central schemes are available in this village around 17 km from Jammu.

Inaugurating a 500-kilowatt solar plant in Palli, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said while it would take three weeks to move a *sarkari* file from Delhi to Jammu and Kashmir, this project, with the help of villagers, was completed in a record time of three weeks.

Referring to the Glasgow Climate Change Conference which he attended last year, Mr. Modi said he was witness to speeches and statements being made during the conference on reducing carbon generation. "It's India that has come up with a living example in the form of Palli village to the Glasgow pledge. Palli village, with its enthusiastic and dedicated elected representatives full of dreams, has shown how to implement the Glasgow pledge," Mr. Modi said.

Palli was a major step towards the Glasgow goal of making India carbon-neutral.

Palli village was also an example of the slogan *Sabka prayas* (everyone's efforts). "Every household in Palli offered *rotis* to workers who completed the solar power plant," he added.

Powerful panchayats

He described Palli as a model panchayat, which is bound to motivate other panchayats in Jammu and Kashmir and the country to become carbon-neutral.

Underlining the role of panchayats and gram panchayats in the country, Mr. Modi said panchayats had to play a central role in decision-making of a village. "Now a villager can check his mobile to know the status of a scheme and the money spent on it."

He said the government was pushing for major technology-related measures, e-swaraj and mode of payments to make panchayats more powerful. "We aim that all basic issues included in citizens' charter are addressed at the village level," Mr. Modi said. Whether it was panchayat or Parliament, no work was small or big. "Panchayats will become mediums for the country to reach new heights," the Prime Minister said.

He asked panchayats to participate in the movement "to segregate waste at the doorstep and reduce the use of chemical fertilizers".

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