

Be agents of change, President tells Governors

Warm welcome: President Ram Nath Kovind greeting Governors at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi on Monday. PTIPTI

President Ram Nath Kovind said here on Monday that the people of a State look at the offices of the Governor as the “fount of ideals and values”.

Inaugurating a two-day Governors’ conference at the Rashtrapati Bhavan on Monday, he asked these constitutional functionaries to be agents of change.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who spoke at the inaugural session, asked Governors to use their public experience to ensure that people benefited from the flagships schemes of the Central government, and asked them to visit some of the villages that had been electrified for the first time. “The institution of Governor has a pivotal role to play within the federal structure and constitutional framework of our country,” Prime Minister Modi was quoted as saying in an official statement.

In his opening remarks, President Kovind said, “The people of the State view the office of the Governor and the Raj Bhavan as a fount of ideals and values.”

Against the backdrop of the government formation efforts recently in Karnataka, when the Congress and the Janata Dal(S) had accused Governor Vajubhai Bala as partisan, President Kovind’s remarks are significant.

The President said a Governor was not only an important link in the federal structure of the country but also “a mentor and a guide to the State governments” in preparing a road map for development of 100 million tribal people and other marginalised sections.

“As Governors, you can help in the shaping of a road map for the betterment of lives of our fellow citizens who have not benefited as much as expected from our development journey,” he said.

‘Guardians of youth’

The President also urged Governors to serve as “guardians to India’s youth” in their role of Chancellors of universities. He said that nearly 94% of the students enrolled in higher education study in universities under the purview of the State government. “It is for you to inspire State universities to maintain discipline and integrity,” he said.

President Kovind also sought suggestions from Governors on the celebrations for the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. Beginning October 2, this year, the Centre has decided to celebrate it over a 24-month period.

Prime Minister Modi suggested that universities be focal point for such celebrations.

The Prime Minister also urged Governors of States with a substantial tribal population to ensure that they benefited from government programmes on education, sports and financial inclusion.

Mr. Modi also mentioned some key themes of development such as the National Nutrition Mission, rural electrification and development parameters in ‘aspirational districts’ and the move towards Gram Swaraj Abhiyan from April 14, right now being implemented across 16,000 village, focussing on seven key schemes.

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