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Article 370 Anniversary Draws Mixed Reactions in Jammu & Kashmir

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The sixth anniversary of the revocation of Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, which in August 2019 removed Jammu and Kashmir’s special status, was marked by sharply divided responses across the political spectrum.

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha described August 5 as the birth of a new Jammu and Kashmir, emphasizing what he called the transformative impact of the

constitutional change. Speaking at an official event, Sinha said that the abrogation had opened new avenues for development, investment, and improved governance in the region. He pointed to infrastructure upgrades, tourism growth, and social welfare initiatives as evidence of progress made over the past six years.

The abrogation has brought an era of peace, progress, and prosperity, Sinha stated, highlighting government projects aimed at improving road connectivity, expanding healthcare access, and strengthening education. He also credited the decision with boosting security and fostering a stable environment for business operations in the union territory.

However, opposition parties, except the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), marked the day as a Black Day, underscoring continuing political divisions over the constitutional move. Leaders from the National Conference, Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), and other regional and national parties reiterated their criticism of the decision, which they say was implemented without the consent of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Former Chief Minister and PDP leader Mehbooba Mufti said the abrogation stripped the region of its constitutional safeguards and undermined democratic principles. She claimed that the changes had not addressed unemployment, economic challenges, or political alienation in the region. National Conference leaders echoed similar concerns, urging the restoration of statehood and special constitutional provisions.

Several civil society groups and activists also held events to express their opposition to the move, citing concerns over land rights, employment protections, and political representation. Some participants alleged that the years following the abrogation have seen increased restrictions on political activity and a reduction in local autonomy.

The anniversary comes amid continuing debates over the long-term effects of the constitutional change. While government representatives highlight tourism records, infrastructure investments, and improved law and order, critics argue that social and political reconciliation remains elusive.

Since the removal of Article 370, Jammu and Kashmir has been reorganized as a union territory, with Ladakh carved out as a separate union territory. The central government has maintained that the change was necessary to fully integrate the region into India's

constitutional framework and promote economic development without what it described as barriers created by the earlier provisions.

Public sentiment remains divided, with sections of the population welcoming the increased central investment and others calling for the restoration of pre–2019 constitutional arrangements. The political discourse surrounding the anniversary underscores the continuing complexity of governance and identity in the region, six years after the landmark decision.