

~~Media enjoys full freedom of expression in Azad Jammu Kashmir; AJK PM.~~

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MIRPUR (AJK) : February 28: Prime Minister Chudhary Anwar ul Haq has said that the government would take all possible measures to make AJK Press Foundation a dynamic and proactive institution to encourage promotion of healthy journalism in the state.

The AJK premier said this while talking to a delegation led by the newly elected Vice Chairman AJK Press Foundation Sardar Zulfiqar Ali that called on him at the state metropolis on Friday.

Speaking on the occasion, the AJK premier assured the visiting delegation of his government's commitment to help and support stating that all available resources would be utilized for the welfare of journalists.

Highlighting the journalist fraternity's significant role in strengthening the present system, the prime minister Haq said that positive journalism, which puts the common good and the interests of people at its core, could pave the way for real change. He said that the present government had taken landmark initiatives to improve the governance system.

The government, he said, has improved revenue collection by widening the tax net. He said that welfare of the people was given top priority while reforms were introduced in different sectors including education and health to improve overall institutional performance. Similarly, he said that work on mega projects under way in different areas of the State continued at full pace. The PM said that the coalition government adopted a zero tolerance policy against corruption and discouraged the petty politics of regionalism and tribalism. Referring to austerity measures taken by his government, he said that these measures have helped the government to reduce expenditures.

He said that crores of rupees have been saved through e-tendering. He remarked that the provision of subsidized flour and electricity to the state's citizens is a unique concession that individuals residing in other regions of the country cannot even imagine. "All our resources are for the people of the state and I will try to provide maximum relief to the ordinary citizens", he added. He said that the purpose of establishing the base camp government was to take the ongoing freedom movement against India in occupied Kashmir to its logical conclusion.

The current government has made the Kashmir freedom movement a top priority. "I have tried to change the outdated system", he said, adding that there was a dire need to introduce laws that in the long run could help to ensure transparency and make the AJK a corruption-free State. He was of the view that the improvement in the system sans transparency was impossible.

Meanwhile, while charging a high-level meeting of the Works and Communication Department, the PM welcomed the restoration of roads in snowy areas. He directed the authorities concerned to take steps on an emergency basis to repair the road infrastructure damaged due to heavy rains.

During the meeting, Minister for Public Works Chaudhry Azhar Sadiq and Secretary for Public Works Zafar Mahmood Khan drew attention to the need to equip the Public Works Department with modern machinery on an emergency basis to develop it on modern lines. During a separate meeting the PM Haq received a detailed briefing from Minister for Public Health Nisar Ansar Abdali regarding the supply of medicines in hospitals.

The PM said that in view of the severe weather conditions, the stock of medicines should be maintained in hospitals in snowy areas. Another delegation led by Deputy Speaker AJK Legislative Assembly Chaudhry Riaz apprised the PM about the problems being faced by the refugees. Minister for Food Chaudhry Akbar Ibrahim, Minister for Forests Muhammad Akmal Sargala and Minister for Transport Asim Sharif Butt were also present in the meeting.