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Decision on restoration of statehood to J&K soon: Arjun Meghwal

through both legal challenges and public mobilisation. On the political front, both the Congress and the ruling National Conference (NC) have ramped up efforts to frame the return of statehood as a fundamental constitutional right rather than a concession.

The Congress recently launched its 'Har Ghar Dastak' campaign to mobilise public support, with the Jammu and Kashmir Congress Committee president saying the government must honour its parliamentary commitments.

India, France forge 'Special Global Strategic Partnership'

just strategic. In today's turbulent era, it is a partnership of global stability and global progress," he said.

Modi also made a reference to the H-125 helicopter assembly line.

"Today's inauguration of the helicopter assembly line in India is another shining example of this deep trust. We are proud that India and France will jointly manufacture the world's only helicopter capable of flying to the heights of Mount Everest. And we will also export it to the entire world," he said.

"In other words, the India-France partnership knows no boundaries; it can reach from deep oceans to the tallest mountain," Modi noted.

The prime minister, referring to Russia-Ukraine conflict, situation in West Asia and the Indo-Pacific, said both India and France believe in democratic values, the rule of law, and a multipolar world.

"We agree that reform of global institutions will provide solutions to global challenges. Whether in Ukraine, West Asia, or the Indo-Pacific, we will continue to support all efforts for peace in every region," he said.

"It is our shared commitment to eradicate terrorism in all its forms and manifestations," Modi said.

The prime minister also noted that the year 2026 is a "turning point" in India-Europe relations as he cited the India-EU free trade deal.

"Just a few days ago, we signed the largest and most ambitious free trade agreement in India's history with the European Union. This free trade agreement will also bring unprecedented momentum to India-France relations," he said.

"To promote mutual investment, we are signing an agreement today so that our people and companies do not have to pay double taxes. All these initiatives will give new impetus to mutual trade, investment, and mobility. And this is the roadmap to shared prosperity," he said.

The two sides also launched an initiative titled 'India-France Year of Innovation'.

"With the launch of the India-France Year of Innovation, we are now going to transform our strategic partnership into a partnership of the people. Because innovation happens not in isolation, but through collaboration," Modi said.

In his remarks, Macron said India is one of France's most trusted partners.

"From Rafale jets to submarines, we are expanding defence cooperation," he said.

Both our countries firmly believe in rule of law, and it has been demonstrated in past few years, he noted.

Macron said India and France will continue to cooperate to combat terrorism.

32 killed in human-wildlife conflicts between 2023-2025

Sharing district-wise details of the incidents, the minister said that in 2023-24 alone, 9,301 cases were registered, leading to 137 injuries and 18 deaths.

He said that Jammu district reported the highest number of cases at 1,444, followed by Kupwara (1,173), Kishtwar (998), Baramulla (950), Doda (826) and Ramban (756). Kupwara recorded four deaths during the year, while Doda and Anantnag reported three deaths each.

For 2024-25, the government said 6,360 cases have been reported so far, resulting in 213 injuries and 14 deaths, he said.

According to the data, Jammu district again topped the list with 1,341 cases, followed by Ramban (686), Kishtwar (673), Anantnag (637) and Doda (609). Pulwama reported 30 injuries, while Anantnag recorded the highest number of injuries at 34 during the current fiscal.

In terms of fatalities in 2024-25, Doda and Kupwara reported three deaths each, while Anantnag recorded two deaths, the data said.

The minister informed the House that in the Jammu region, the age profile of affected persons ranges between 15 and 60 years, while in the Kashmir region, it ranges from 4 to 70 years.

The government said that Human-Wildlife Conflict (HWC) mitigation measures are being integrated into development planning to ensure long-term coexistence.

Replying to a separate query, the minister said that incidents of human-wildlife conflict have not increased significantly in recent years.

On mitigation measures, Rana said that 42 control rooms have been established across the Union Territory to ensure round-the-clock response to wildlife emergencies. "These control rooms are equipped with tranquillising guns, medicines, capture nets, cages, rescue equipment and vehicles, and are manned by trained personnel".

The minister added that the regular patrolling, surveillance and deployment of quick response teams are also being carried out at identified hotspots, while warning signages and other preventive measures are being installed where required.

"Long-term interventions such as scientific zoning of conflict hotspots, habitat improvement and protection of wildlife corridors are also being undertaken," he said.

The government further informed that several compensation cases are pending for disbursement, with Kupwara (46), Anantnag (41) and Baramulla (28) among the districts with the highest number of pending cases.

24 PSUs loss-making, 4 non-functional

In a written reply to a question by legislator Javaid Riyaz, Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary said the Union Territory had 10 profit-making PSUs, 24 loss-making PSUs, four non-functional PSUs, two statutory corporations, and one dormant PSU.

He identified the profit-making PSUs as J&K Bank, J&K State Power Development Corporation Limited, J&K Medical Supplies Corporation Limited, J&K Cable Car Corporation Limited, J&K Women's Development Corporation, J&K Bank Financial Services (a subsidiary of J&K Bank), J&K Police Housing Corporation, Chenab Valley Power Projects Limited (a central PSU joint venture with JKSPDC), Ratle Hydroelectric Project Corporation Limited (a central PSU joint venture with JK-SPDC), and J&K Development Finance Corporation Limited (a central PSU with UT government equity).

According to the reply, the loss-making PSUs include J&K Industries Limited; J&K SC, ST and BC Development Corporation; J&K Trade Promotion Organisation;

J&K Horticultural Produce Marketing and Processing Corporation; J&K Power Corporation Limited (Trading); Kashmir Power Distribution Corporation Limited; J&K Handicrafts Sales and Export Corporation; J&K State Power Transmission Company Limited; Srinagar Mass Rapid Transit Corporation, and J&K Agro Industries Development Corporation Limited.

The other loss-makers include J&K Forest Development Corporation Limited; J&K EDI Foundation; J&K State Handloom Development Corporation Limited; Jammu Power Distribution Corporation Limited; J&K SIDCO Limited; Jammu Mass Rapid Transit Corporation; J&K Tourism Development Corporation; J&K Small Scale Industries Development Corporation Limited; J&K Cements Limited; J&K Projects Construction Corporation Limited; J&K Infrastructure Development Finance Corporation Limited; Jammu Smart City Limited; Srinagar Smart City Limited and J&K Minerals Limited.

The two statutory corporations - J&K and Ladakh Finance Corporation and J&K State Road Transport Corporation - are also running in losses.

Among the non-functional PSUs, Choudhary said, are Overseas Employment Corporation; J&K Road Development Corporation, J&K Handloom and Handicrafts RMO Limited, Tawi Scooters Limited, Himalayan Wool Combers Limited, J&K IT Infrastructure Private Limited, and International Trade Centre, J&K.

The dormant PSU is J&K Asset Reconstruction Limited.

"Strengthening and revival of sick or loss-making PSUs, including measures related to infrastructure and manpower, are being examined by the respective administrative departments to improve their operational and financial performance," the deputy chief minister said.

No proposal to waive power bill arrears of farmers

tricity arrears'.

The House was informed that the DISCOMs were already providing electricity supply to the agriculture sector at heavily subsidised tariff rates.

Shantmanu appointed as SEC

(3) of section 36 of the Jammu and Kashmir Panchayat Raj Act, 1989.

The notification says that Shantmanu shall hold the office for a period of five years or till he attains the age of 70 years, whichever is earlier. The appointment will take effect from the date he assumes charge.

The terms and conditions of his appointment shall be notified separately by the government.

Committee to examine issue of daily wagers' regularisation: Govt

to multiple starred questions regarding the regularisation of workers engaged for over two decades.

As per the official data tabled in the House, the registered workers include 69,696 casual labourers, 8,534 seasonal labourers, 8,836 daily rated/work charged employees, 3,092 part-time workers, 156 CIC operators, 5,757 NYC hamals/drivers of FCS&CA department, 1,929 persons engaged under Hospital Development Fund, 2,153 part-time sweepers and 348 settlement assistants of the revenue department.

Region-wise figures reveal that 57,390 workers belong to Kashmir division and 40,077 to Jammu division.

Among departments, the highest number of such engagements are in PHE/I&FC (38,585), Power Development Department (13,616), Education (12,646), Forest (8,317) and Public Works (R&B) (6,801).

The government informed the House that a committee had been constituted to examine the issue of regularisation. It has been mandated to assess various categories of workers, service rules, financial implications and legal ramifications before recommending a comprehensive roadmap.

The government stated that the matter involves legal, administrative and financial considerations, including compliance with constitutional provisions and judicial pronouncements governing public employment. It added that appropriate action will be taken after the Committee submits its recommendations within the established legal and fiscal framework.

J&K records Rs 24,080.79 cr GST collection in 3 yrs: Omar

"The GST regime, implemented in 2017, replaced a multi-layered indirect tax system with a unified structure, reduced cascading of taxes and improved compliance through technology-driven processes such as online registration, return filing, refunds and e-way bill generation".

The Chief Minister said that the single-tax system has eased compliance for taxpayers, strengthened tax administration and expanded the tax base, leading to a significant rise in monthly GST revenues in the Union Territory.

The steady growth in GST collections and IGST receipts indicates improved revenue mobilisation and more efficient tax administration in Jammu and Kashmir, he added.

He said that the implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) in the Union Territory since July 2017 has simplified the indirect tax regime, improved compliance and widened the tax base.

He said that GST replaced the earlier multi-layered tax structure with a unified system, reduced cascading taxes and leveraged technology for registration, return filing, refunds and e-way bill generation. "The reforms have eased compliance for taxpayers and strengthened tax administration, leading to a significant rise in average monthly GST revenue".

While the shift to an online compliance system initially posed challenges for small and rural businesses, these were largely addressed through measures such as the Composition Scheme, quarterly return options and the QRMP scheme, along with the establishment of GST Suvidha Kendras in every district, he said.

Abdullah said that GST reforms have particularly benefited the handicrafts sector through rate rationalisation, placing most handicraft items in the 5 per cent tax slab and easing interstate trade.

"In horticulture, farm income remains outside GST, with only value-added activities attracting tax, while concessional rates apply to key inputs. In the tourism sector, subsuming of entry tax and lower GST rates for hotels have made travel to J&K more affordable", he said.

However, the chief minister acknowledged challenges for small, unorganised and home-based producers, including compliance burdens, delayed payments and IGST refunds, and said these issues are being addressed through continued simplification and support measures.

AI Impact Expo powerful convergence of ideas: PM

shaping the future of Artificial Intelligence for global good," PM Modi wrote on X.

The prime minister also said that above all, the Expo reaffirmed India's commitment to harnessing AI responsibly, inclusively and at scale for human progress.

The Expo brings together global technology firms, start-

tups, academia and research institutions, central and state governments and international partners.

Spread across 10 arenas covering more than 70,000 square metres at Bharat Mandapam, the Expo brings together global technology firms, startups, academia and research institutions, Union ministries, state governments and international partners.

The Expo also features 13 country pavilions, showcasing international collaboration in the Artificial Intelligence (AI) ecosystem. These include pavilions from Australia, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Serbia, Estonia, Tajikistan and Africa.

The Expo is hosting more than 300 curated exhibition pavilions and live demonstrations, structured across three thematic chakras - people, planet and progress.

In addition, the Expo is featuring more than 600 high-potential startups, many of them building globally relevant and population-scale solutions.

These startups are demonstrating working solutions that are already deployed in real-world settings.

Tarique Rahman sworn in as new PM of Bangladesh

Earlier in the day, Rahman was elected as leader of the parliamentary party by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party lawmakers.

Rahman's Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) bagged 209 out of 297 seats, while right-wing Jamaat-e-Islami secured 68 seats in the 13th Parliamentary elections. Deposed premier Sheikh Hasina's Awami League was barred from contesting polls.

Rahman appointed 10 advisers, granting them the ranks of minister and state minister.

Five individuals have been given the status of minister. They are: Mirza Abbas Uddin Ahmed, Nazrul Islam Khan, Ruhul Kabir Rizvi Ahmed, Md Ismail Zabihullah, and Rashed Al Mahmud Titumir.

In addition, five more advisers have been appointed with the rank of state minister. They included Humayun Kabir, Shamsul Islam, Zahed Ur Rahman, Mahadi Amin, and Rehan Asif Asad.

The appointments formalise the new prime minister's advisory team, with the selected individuals set to assist in governmental functions while holding ranks equivalent to ministers and state ministers.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has congratulated Tarique Rahman on the victory of BNP in Bangladesh's parliamentary elections and on his appointment as Prime Minister. In his message, he said the electoral mandate reflects the people's trust in Rahman's leadership and vision for peace, stability and prosperity.

Emphasising the deep-rooted ties between India and Bangladesh, he highlighted cooperation in connectivity, trade, technology, energy and cultural exchanges. He also invited Rahman, Dr Zubaida Rahman and their daughter Zaima to visit India.

Sovereign AI models available at summit, huge response to event: Vaishnaw

crore, which will materialise over the next 1-2 years.

On people complaining about long queues and other logistics issue, the minister said there has been a huge response to the summit and registrations crossed 3 lakh already.

"There is a very strong response. More than 3 lakh people have registered. All sessions are overflowing. There is a response about AI Summit among all the people. There is a lot of excitement," Vaishnaw added.

17.27 lakh kanals of state land encroached: Govt tells LA

croached, of which 2,16,912.98 kanals had been retrieved.

It stated that in the Jammu division, 14,00,049.66 kanals of land was encroached, while 12,12,287.44 kanals had been retrieved.

In total, 17,27,248.16 kanals of state land was found encroached across J&K, of which 14,29,200.42 kanals had been retrieved.

Committed to address problems of general public: Kavinder

Bogdang and Turtuk led by former Executive Councillor Ghulam Mehdi and Councillor Tsering Sandup also raised development issues in the areas.

The LG gave a patient hearing to all the delegations and assured them timely intervention to address their issues.

He highlighted Ladakh's vast tourism potential, especially in Nubra and Changthang, particularly in border and rural tourism, stating that all efforts were being made by the administration to explore new destinations for the benefit of the rural economy and livelihood of people.

No land of KP migrants acquired without due process: Govt

question in the House raised by M Y Tarigami, he said, "As per the report submitted by the Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir, no land is acquired without adhering to the prescribed land acquisition procedures, including prior notification and verification, and all such acquisitions are assessed in accordance with the applicable land acquisition laws." Choudhary said this on behalf of the Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, who is in-charge of the Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation & Reconstruction (DMRRR) department.

On notifying a separate order in June 2022 for nearly 6,000 employees under the Prime Minister's (PM) Special Package for the Pandit community who are serving in the valley, the deputy chief minister said the order does not vitiate their service interests; rather, it strengthens and protects them.

"Recruitment and initial appointment of Kashmiri Migrants under the Prime Minister's Package are governed by the J&K Migrants (Special Drive) Recruitment Rules, 2009 and creation of 6000 supernumerary posts sanctioned in 2009 and 2017. These orders primarily address entry into service and availability of posts," he said.

However, he said with large-scale appointments made under the package, a need was felt to put in place a clear service- management framework.

Accordingly, the government issued an order in June 2022 to regulate seniority, cadre management, postings and career progression of PM package employees in a structured manner.

"These provisions are protective and enabling in nature and ensure that PM Package employees are not disadvantaged vis-à-vis regular employees," he said, adding that there was no inconsistency between previous orders and the 2022 directive.

Proposals for further service improvements and possible absorption into the regular cadre were under examination by the General Administration and Finance Departments, he informed the House.

Regarding delays in provisional registrations of Kashmiri migrants, the deputy chief minister said on July 12, 2023, the administration decided that, given the improvement in the law and order situation in the valley, fresh registrations on security grounds are not justified, and that no further extensions to provisional registration cases shall be al-

lowed.

However, a screening committee, reconstituted in May 2024 to screen and approve registration of those families, has held a series of meetings and has given its recommendations in all the cases.

"Out of 1,263 cases, CID/DM reports are awaited in only 75 cases and these cases shall be also decided immediately after receiving the CID/DM reports," the deputy CM said, ruling out any inordinate delay in the matter.

He said that as the process involves security and threat-perception assessment, each case requires detailed verification by the CID and district administration. The time taken is procedural.

In his supplementary, Tarigami said the 2022 order was "highly discriminatory," though he welcomed government initiative for its revision.

He urged the government to review relief for pensioners, noting that the structure fixed in 2018 had not kept pace with inflation.

Raising the issue of political migrants, he said migration was forced by circumstances and is not voluntary, hence the government should review all cases on humanitarian grounds.

"How can it take two years to determine genuine cases?" he asked, asserting that migrants were not "beggars" but people compelled to leave their homes.

Responding to this, the deputy chief minister rejected allegations of discrimination and said the government remained committed to justice for all migrants.

He described migration as "unfortunate" and said that while many cases are genuine, there are some cases which have proved otherwise during verification.

Nations mastering AI will write rules for coming century: LG

ing at the valedictory function of a 48-hour national-level Hackathon under "Innovathon 1.0".

The Hackathon organised by Skill, Incubation, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development Centre (SI-IEDC), University of Jammu, was aimed at promoting innovation, encouraging development of technology-driven solutions and strengthening entrepreneurial mindset.

The LG called for transforming the educational campuses to realise the vision of Developed India@2047.

He highlighted the need for creating technological ecosystems that continuously reinvent themselves, that refuse to become static or complacent and embrace change as opportunity.

"The youth of India today are not watching the future unfold from the sidelines but they are the architects, the builders, the designers of what comes next. The path-breaking innovation, fresh ideas and cutting-edge research possess the power to alter our nation's destiny," he said.

"Young generation must pursue transformative innovations because Developed India@2047 is not merely a slogan but represents a commitment, a promise made to ourselves and to future generations," he added.

"Campuses have evolved beyond mere degree-granting institutions and they have transformed into factories of ideas, workshops of innovation where possibility takes tangible form," Sinha said.

He lauded the University of Jammu for its unique endeavour to bridge the gap between classroom theory and authentic learning, between abstract concepts and practical application through Innovathon 1.0. He said five thematic pillars of Innovathon 1.0-AI, Cyber-Physical Systems, Sustainability, Health-Tech, and Responsible Tourism represent the actual challenges and opportunities for India on its journey toward becoming a developed nation.

The LG entrusted upon the educational institutions to cultivate an entrepreneurial spirit, fortify startup ecosystems, and close the chasm between prototypes and products, concepts and companies.

He stated that the skills that guaranteed employability just five years ago now fade into obsolescence.

"Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Blockchain, Quantum Computing, and Synthetic Biology are no longer distant horizons-they define our present and evolving at fast speed.

Classrooms must pivot from passive learning to active creation. Forget asking students, "What do you know?"-the new imperative is, "What can you build?" Spotlights should shift from individual gold-medal brilliance to interdisciplinary teamwork," the Lieutenant Governor said.

He emphasised that the AI tools should not aim to replace human intelligence. He said that their purpose should be to augment it and amplify human capability.

"As cyber-physical systems and emerging technologies blur the boundaries between digital and physical worlds, we must build robust and secure solutions that genuinely improve ordinary people's lives rather than merely dazzling technical audiences," he said.

The LG urged youth and entrepreneurs to focus on priorities for tech-powered answers and zero in on pertinent concepts and transmute them into viable commercial tools that uplift society, key sectors, and national progress.

"Transform knowledge into creation, silos into synergy, and aspirations into achievements. Don't just participate in the future but be ready to define it," the Lieutenant Governor told the Youth.

Prof. Umesh Rai, Vice-Chancellor, University of Jammu; Prof. Alka Sharma, Director SIIEDC; Prof Anil Gupta, Dr Jatinder Manhas, faculty members, and innovators, startup entrepreneurs in large number attended the valedictory ceremony.

6 cops suspended after Pak duo, gangster flee juvenile home

Ludhiana.

The local gangster, however, remained at large and raids were being conducted at different places to arrest him too, officials said.

Police have registered an FIR under sections 109 (attempt to murder), 132 (assault or criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of duty), 262 (resisting, obstructing, or escaping from lawful custody), 307 (theft with preparation to cause death, hurt or restrain), 111 (organised crime) of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and sections 3 and 25 of Arms Act (unauthorised possession, carriage, use of firearms).

A departmental inquiry was underway to probe various angles, including conspiracy and procurement of a country-made pistol by the inmates, officials said.

A purported video of the gangster, said to be associated with the 'Khauff' gang, resorting to few rounds of firing inside the juvenile home went viral on social media, drawing public concern.

Gugga was arrested along with nearly a dozen other accused in connection with the murder of rival gangster Sumit Jandiyl alias 'Gataru' in Jewel chowk area in January last year and was subsequently lodged in the juvenile home.