

MODI, THE RULER!

Prime Minister Narendra Modi completed 25 years in office, marking an unbroken stint – first as Chief Minister of Gujarat followed by Prime Minister of India. This is a record in numbers and more importantly in emotional terms as well. He remains the most popular ruler elected leader in the world. His career was not an accident but he rose from the ranks staring his regimented life as RSS Pracharak, travelling across the country, familiarising himself with the vast land and its cultural milieu. In the process, he understood the inherent problems and figured out possible solutions. He was grooming himself to become a problem solver and work for the people. Modi’s tenure as Chief Minister of Gujarat was marked by reforms and development and it became his byword for good governance when he was elected as leader of world’s largest democracy. Modi delivered on promises that once looked impossible. Removal of Article 370 from the Constitution and addressing black money issues and foiling Pakistan’s massive plot to flood Indian markers with fake currency by sudden demonetization are a few on top of the list. Closer home, his government managed to bring control terrorism and an ecosystem associated with it and restore peace in J&K to a large extent. His government another major achievement was lifting millions from acute poverty through targeted schemes and also alleviating the status of women through its various schemes. PM Modi’s appeal goes beyond the Indian shores. The world leaders admire him for his leadership qualities and vision for humanity. His government’s first major global mark was during the COVID pandemic when India offered vaccines to the whole world. It was at a time when the richer nations were hoarding the vaccines and the poor countries did not know where to go. Above all, PM Modi’s rise has proven that becoming ruler does not come from bloodline but with a sense of service towards the people.

ATAL DULLOO

On 9 and 10 October 2026, something quite interesting is going to happen at IIM Jammu. The J&K GCC Summit 2026, being organised by IIM Jammu in collaboration with the Government of Jammu and Kashmir and in knowledge partnership with NASSCOM, will bring together some of the country's leading Global Capability Centre (GCC) companies, policymakers, academics and industry leaders. But I believe the significance of these two days goes well beyond a summit. For perhaps the first time, some of the senior-most administrative leaders of Jammu and Kashmir will sit across the table with leaders of India's GCC industry in a series of candid, no-holds-barred conversations about a question that matters deeply to us: What will it take for Jammu and Kashmir to enter India's growing GCC ecosystem, and to do so as a credible Tier-2 and Tier-3 destination?

That may sound like a familiar proposition at a business summit. It is not. Economic growth is ultimately driven by two sets of stakeholders- the government that creates the enabling environment and the businesses that take the risk of investing in it. Genuine growth begins when these two sides are willing to listen to each other, ask difficult questions and speak honestly about what works and what does not. That is precisely the spirit in which we are approaching the J&K GCC Summit.

Let me explain why

In June 2025, a train crossed the Chenab on the world's highest railway arch bridge, connecting the Kashmir Valley to the national rail network. The bridge was decades in the making. Its deeper value, however, can be expressed in one word that matters as much to an investor as it does to a traveller: predictability. A journey that once depended heavily on weather and a single highway can now be planned with greater certainty.

That is the journey we want to begin for J&K's GCC ecosystem. Building a significant GCC destination will not happen overnight. It may take years. Perhaps decades. But the journey can be made predictable if we learn from those who have already travelled it. Be they leading GCC companies or States that have successfully attracted such investments.

That is why the Summit is bringing industry leaders together with representatives of States such as Gujarat, Bihar and Tamil Nadu, which have valuable lessons to share. We do not intend to reinvent the wheel. We want to understand what has worked elsewhere, what has not, and what can be adapted to J&K's own circumstances.

The opportunity before us

India already hosts more than 2,200 capability centres employing around 1.9 million professionals and generating close to USD 65 billion in annual exports. Importantly, more than 220 of these centres have already chosen

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You may already know about it. The Department of Labour and Employment, Government of J&K is working closely with IIM Jammu to organise a benchmark event, the J&K GCC Summit 2026, where 55 panelists interact with leading government officials and other stakeholders over two days to find out the optimal path to make J&K an emerging destination for GCCs.

But what are GCCs? The earlier BPOs were outsourced, but Global Capability Centres are fully owned in-house centres that companies build to centralise many core business operations, including technology, R&D, corporate processes (HR, payroll, you name it) and so on... And no, they are not data centres. While data centres are physical infrastructure based, GCCs are intrinsically human capital based – and that's where the phenomenal story builds. GCCs hold the key to build employment in a way to current industry can. So should J&K promote GCCs? But before you ask that no-brainer question, perhaps you should ask, does J&K have the talent to support GCCs?

Well, ask what Jammu and Kashmir exports and most people will name apples, saffron, walnuts and handicrafts. The list leaves out the export that costs the Union Territory most: its graduates. Every year engineers, accountants, analysts and designers trained here take their first jobs in other States. They do well there. Their salaries are spent there too.

The figures explain the pattern. The Mission YUVA Baseline Survey 2024-25,

J&K GCC Summit 2026
Building J&K's Place in India's GCC Future

Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities. The next phase of the GCC story is increasingly moving beyond the established metropolitan centres, with locations outside the metros expected to account for a substantial share of the sector's future workforce.

This is where J&K must position itself. The question is not whether Jammu and Kashmir can replicate Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Chennai or Pune. We should not try to become another metro. Our opportunity lies in becoming a different kind of GCC destination.

Over the last decade, the case for J&K has changed significantly. Rail and road connectivity has been transformed and air connectivity has expanded. The Union Territory today has an institutional ecosystem that includes an IIM, an IIT and an AIIMS, alongside CSIR-IIIM, NIT Srinagar, the Islamic University of Science and Technology, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University and the prestigious Universities of Jammu /Kashmir, among several other institutions offering new-age and specialised programmes.

In addition to that we also have something that every GCC ultimately needs-human resource. Jammu and Kashmir has a young, educated and increasingly aspirational population. Its universities and technical institutions are producing talent across disciplines. Office, talent and utility costs remain competitive compared to established metropolitan locations. And the security environment today provides a foundation for businesses to plan for the long term.

Yet a good proposition is not enough. An investor looking at a new location will ask some very practical questions. Who will take my decision? How long will my approvals take? Where will my people sit on the first day? And who will do the work? The answers to these questions can determine where a GCC chooses to locate, often more decisively than the headline value of an incentive.

We have to answer each of them

The first is facilitation. The hardest part of entering a new region for an established business is often not the investment itself, but understanding whom to approach and how to navigate the system. In J&K, an investor should not have to make multiple rounds of enquiries across Departments. The investor should have one phone call or one email to make.

We therefore need a named facilitation officer, with the authority to convene Departments, resolve issues and remain accountable as a single point of contact for the prospective investor. If banks can provide relationship managers to their customers, there is no reason why government cannot provide the same degree of institutional ownership to an investor.

The second question is time

Approvals relating to registration, premises, power, fire safety and labour com-

pliance should carry clear and published timelines. These should be tracked through the single-window system and, importantly, measured against actual performance. An investor can plan around a known timeline. It is uncertainty that stalls a project. Strict adherence to prescribed timelines translates to confidence which is quintessential for attracting investments.

The third question is space and infrastructure

J&K needs to identify and earmark ready-to-occupy office spaces in both Jammu and Srinagar, with floor plates, tenure and tariffs clearly stated in advance. A GCC that decides to come here should be able to occupy its premises within months, not years. The space has to exist before the decision is made.

There is also a unique advantage here that few locations can offer. Jammu and Srinagar are two major cities within one Union Territory, under one administration, one policy framework and one institutional point of contact. They draw upon different talent pools and can potentially serve as primary and continuity locations for the same GCC. A company should be able to scale across both cities without having to navigate two different administrations.

The fourth question is people

Our commitment has to be simple: skilling must respond to actual employer demand. Here comes the role of Mission YUVA and our technical institutions. Mission YUVA, the Skill Development institutions, our universities and the ITI network being upgraded under PM-SETU must increasingly train people for specific roles, in specific numbers and within specific timelines. The Department of Labour and Employment, which is spearheading the organisation of the Summit, will have an important role in translating industry conversations into an actionable talent strategy. This is also where the GCC opportunity becomes much more than an investment proposition.

A GCC does not merely bring an office. It brings new skills, new career paths, new technologies and new aspirations. For a young person in Jammu or Srinagar, the arrival of a global company should mean that a world-class career no longer necessarily requires leaving home for Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Mumbai or Delhi. That is the human dividend we must keep at the centre of this conversation.

And then comes the most important question of all: Who will be the first?

The first GCC centre matters disproportionately. Every subsequent investor will ask: Who else is already here? The answer today has to change from zero.

An anchor GCC can do more than create direct employment. A centre employing 500 professionals can support a comparable ecosystem of opportunities in facilities,

transport, hospitality, food services, professional services and other allied sectors.

Securing that first anchor tenant is therefore not just another investment target. It is the decisive step in establishing confidence. The administration will concentrate its efforts accordingly. This is why the J&K GCC Summit matters.

Every panel, every panellist, every question and every answer over these two days will be an opportunity for us to learn and, equally important, to allow industry to tell us what it needs from us.

We are not approaching the Summit merely to showcase J&K. We are approaching it to listen. If we want global capability centres to look beyond the metros, then we must demonstrate that a Tier-2 or Tier-3 location can offer something equally compelling: access to talent, competitive costs, quality institutions, reliable infrastructure, responsive governance and, above all, confidence that commitments made today will hold tomorrow.

Jammu and Kashmir has many of these ingredients. The task before us is to bring them together into an ecosystem that works.

Our entrepreneurial spirit is gathering momentum. Our young people are increasingly looking towards new-age sectors and new forms of enterprise. The GCC ecosystem can benefit from this talent and ambition, even as its presence here can accelerate the development of that very ecosystem.

The Path Forward

I do not believe J&K needs to become the biggest GCC destination in India. I believe it can become one of the most differentiated.

We have learnt something from building the Chenab Rail Bridge. Great journeys begin with an audacious idea, but they are completed through engineering, patience, persistence and thousands of smaller decisions made correctly along the way.

The GCC journey will be no different. We have the ambition. We have the foundations. We have a growing pool of talent. What we now need is execution, industry partnership and the patience to build for the long term.

The first J&K GCC Summit is therefore not the culmination of a journey. It is the beginning of one. And if we get the beginning right, I believe the destination is within reach. A GCC ecosystem that proves that the next generation of India's growth need not come only from its largest cities, but can also emerge from its most promising Tier-2 and Tier-3 centres.

Jammu and Kashmir is ready to make that journey. The promise is not that it will happen overnight. The promise is that we are ready to make it happen.

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The Arithmetic of a Capability Centre
Why should GCCs even consider J&K?

drawing on the Periodic Labour Force Survey 2023-24, places youth unemployment in Jammu and Kashmir at 17.4 per cent against a national rate of 10.2 per cent. More than 3.6 lakh educated young people were registered with the Union Territory's employment exchanges in September 2025. Talent is in surplus. Private employers of scale are in short supply.

The Global Capability Centre sector addresses that shortage directly. India's GCC workforce is projected to grow by 84 per cent to about 3.46 million professionals by 2030. A growing share of it will be based outside the metropolitan clusters. The Mission YUVA baseline itself identified high-skilled, knowledge-sector enterprises as the route to better-paying jobs. Capability centres are among the largest employers of that kind in India.

The roles are more varied than is commonly assumed. Capability centres hire for finance and accounting operations, data analytics, software engineering, cybersecurity, human resources services, customer experience, legal process work and healthcare data management. Many of these roles are open to commerce, science and humanities graduates after focused training. The sector can therefore absorb a far wider section of our graduates than engineering alone would suggest.

Mission YUVA, the Yuva Udyami Vikas Abhiyan, is the J&K Government's principal instrument for this work. It was conceived by the Government of Jammu and Kashmir in collaboration with IIM Jammu, NABARD, J&K Bank and other financial institutions. It aims to create 1.37 lakh enterprises and 4.25 lakh jobs over

five years. By May 2026 it had received more than 1.07 lakh applications, sanctioned 25,000 cases and disbursed over ?1,100 crore. The target for 2026-27 alone is 50,000 enterprises.

The Mission was built for entrepreneurship. Its machinery serves employment at scale equally well. Twenty district-level Small Business Development Units and 80 Business Help Desks give it a presence in every district. Its app and portal track outcomes enterprise by enterprise. The same infrastructure can match a capability centre's hiring requirement to candidates, track their training and verify their placement.

There is a second link that is easy to miss. A centre of 500 people needs caterers, transport operators, facility managers, security services and IT support vendors. Each is an opening for a Mission YUVA enterprise. Every capability centre that comes to Jammu and Kashmir therefore creates two streams of opportunity: salaried jobs inside the building and local businesses around it.

But to make it happen, the Department of Labour and Employment, J&K Government is working on four lines of work with the sector.

First, training will start from a stated requirement. When an employer specifies the skills and numbers it needs, the Department will convene the universities, the Skill Development Department and the ITI network to deliver them against a fixed cohort size and date. The upgrade of ITIs under PM-SETU allows part of that network to prepare technicians for the IT infrastructure, network operations and facilities roles that surround every centre.

The Department's district employment and counselling centres will add guidance on capability centre careers, so that students choose courses with these roles in view.

Second, internships will be designed as recruitment, with a defined project, an assigned supervisor, a formal assessment and a stated expectation of conversion to employment.

Third, the Department will build a register of professionals from Jammu and Kashmir who now work in capability centres elsewhere in India and overseas. Many would consider returning if the work were here. They are the fastest route to the experienced managers a new location needs most.

Fourth, the sector offers the clearest route to formal employment for educated women who cannot relocate for work. Mission YUVA was built to address unemployment that weighs most heavily on young people and on women. Placement in capability centres will carry the same priority.

As the Administrative Secretary of the Department of Labour and Employment in J&K, I am presenting the Summit Report at the Valedictory Session of the J&K GCC Summit 2026 on 10 October. My request to every GCC investor and employer present is specific: tell us the roles, the numbers and the dates. The Department will build the pipeline to match. Success will look like a graduate in Anantnag or Rajouri who chooses a global career and stays home to pursue it.

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