

AI-Driven Governance can transform public service delivery: LG Kavinder

Says aim of adopting AI is to empower citizens, ensure transparency & efficient services

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

LEH: Artificial Intelligence (AI) holds immense potential to transform governance by automating routine tasks, personalising citizen services, and enabling data-driven decision-making for more effective policy planning and resource allocation. Successful integration of AI, however, requires a balanced synergy between human oversight and technological innovation to ensure a governance system that is transparent, efficient, and citizen-centric.

The Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta, made these remarks while chairing a meeting on "Exploring the Potential Implementation of AI-driven Technologies to Enhance Good Governance in UT Ladakh" at the LG Secretariat on Wednesday.

The meeting was attended by Chief Secretary Dr. Pawan Kotwal, Principal Secretary Sanjeev Khirwar, Administrative Secretaries, and Heads of



Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta chairing a meeting on Wednesday.

Departments. During the meeting, Ankush Sabharwal, Founder of CoRover, a Bengaluru-based company, delivered a detailed presentation on the scope of AI-driven solutions in governance, including the use of conversational platforms and chatbots to improve citizen engagement and streamline government services.

The Lt Governor observed that the integration of AI into governance frameworks, particularly in sectors such as healthcare, education, skilling, and tourism, would not only

ease administrative burdens but also address public grievances more effectively, thereby enhancing the satisfaction levels of citizens.

Reiterating Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's vision of AI as a means to strengthen human values and capabilities while ensuring the use of Responsible AI, the Lt Governor underlined the UT Administration's commitment to delivering effective and efficient services to the people of Ladakh through technological innovations. He stressed that human-technology interac-

tion, especially in healthcare, education, and tourism, would play a pivotal role in providing better medical and educational facilities to Ladakhis, while also ensuring a seamless and enriching experience for tourists.

The Lt Governor directed the Secretaries and Heads of Departments to analyse the potential of AI-driven solutions in easing citizen outreach and service delivery. He asked them to assess how such technologies could help departments connect with people more effectively, respond to their

concerns in real time, and make governance more accessible and responsive.

Concluding his remarks, Shri Kavinder Gupta said that Ladakh, with its unique challenges and opportunities, can emerge as a model UT for AI-driven good governance. He emphasised that the ultimate aim of adopting such technologies should be to empower citizens, strengthen transparency, and make public service delivery more accessible and efficient.



Old JKPCC warning letter resurfaces; Sukhnandan links 2013 negligence to present floods

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Former BJP Minister Choudhary Sukhnandan Kumar on Tuesday referred to a 2013 communication from the Jammu & Kashmir Projects Construction Corporation (JKPCC) to highlight what he described as administrative lapses that have contributed to the present flood situation in Jammu.

At a press conference, Sukhnandan produced a letter dated May 14, 2013, written by the then Managing Director of JKPCC to the Chief Engineer, Irrigation and Flood Control Department. The letter had raised concerns about the placement of the barrage on Nikki Tawi, downstream of the newly constructed 4th Tawi bridge. It had specifically warned that the arrangement of the barrage gates could threaten the safety of the bridge and increase the risk of flooding in residential areas during heavy rains.

Sukhnandan said that the



Former BJP Minister Choudhary Sukhnandan Kumar talking to reporters.

National Conference-led government of the time failed to act on these technical warnings, which, according to him, has contributed to the flood challenges being faced today. "This document is proof that timely corrective measures could have reduced today's risk," he remarked.

He further stated that subsequent construction of embankments along the Tawi river under BJP governments had played a crucial role in safeguarding several

parts of Jammu from further damage this monsoon. "Had those embankments not been built, the scale of destruction could have been far greater," he said.

While calling for greater accountability in responding to expert warnings, Sukhnandan urged the administration to immediately strengthen flood protection measures in Jammu. "The safety of lives and property must always remain above political considera-

tions. Lessons from the past must guide our future," he added.

The resurfacing of the 2013 letter has reignited debate over the adequacy of preventive steps taken in Jammu to address recurring flood threats. Others who attended the press briefing include Ex Sarpanch Ch Bachan Lal from Abdulian, Ex Sarpanch Binny Sharma from Badyal Brahamana and Dr Pardeep Magotra Media Incharge BJP, J&K.

ACB presents charge-sheet against ex-Patwari in trap case

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Anti-Corruption Bureau presented Charge-sheet in case FIR No. 10/2023 registered under Section 7 of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 at Police Station ACB Srinagar Kashmir against accused public servant Abdul Rashid Mir, the then Patwari Halqa Arigam Budgam, in a bribery case before the Additional

Special Judge Anti-Corruption court Srinagar. The FIR was registered on June 13, 2023 on a written complaint alleging therein that aforesaid accused demanded Rs 3,000 as bribe for providing a report concerning a fire incident in which the residential house of complainant was damaged. A trap was laid down and the accused was caught red-handed while accepting Rs

1500 as bribe from the complainant. The bribe money was recovered on the spot, and chemical tests later confirmed the presence of phenolphthalein on the accused's hands.

Based on the facts and circumstances together with cogent evidence brought on record, the investigation established the commission of offence u/s 7 of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988

against the accused public servant namely Abdul Rashid Mir, the then Halqa Patwari Arigam Budgam. After obtaining the requisite sanction for prosecution from the Govt. the charge-sheet was presented before the Court of Additional Special Anti-Corruption Judge Srinagar, today for judicial determination.

The next date of hearing has been fixed on October 20, 2025.

SMVDSB extends relief to landslide affected families

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

KATRA: In a humanitarian gesture, the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB) has undertaken a significant relief initiative as per the directions of Manoj Sinha, Chairman, SMVDSB (Lt. Governor, JK-UT) to support more than 1000 families affected by heavy rainfall and landslides in Katra and other parts of Reasi & Udhampur Districts. Initially, a relief supply for 400 families was handed over to the District Administration, Reasi to ensure timely distribution of relief material to affected families.

The relief material includes dry ration kits, utensils, blankets, medicines, buckets, tarpaulin



SMVDSB officials distributing relief among affected families.

and tents etc. for addressing the immediate needs and helping them cope with the aftermath of the calamity. Furthermore, on the request of the District Administration; families of village Purana Daroor

whose homes have been severely damaged temporarily shifted to Shakti Bhawan, Niharika Complex of Shrine Board, Katra for ensuring their safety and well being during this challenging peri-

od.

Sachin Kumar Vaishya, Chief Executive Officer, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board reaffirms the Board's commitment to supporting the local community, especially during crises and underscored that in coordination with the District Administration, Reasi: The Shrine Board shall provide comprehensive assistance to affected families for ensuring their well-being and safety.

Notably, Shrine Board has undertaken such initiatives during the past to serve the community during times of crisis including COVID-19 pandemic and other calamities as well.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Leader of Opposition in the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly Sunil Sharma, along with MLA Jammu East Yudhvir Sethi, conducted an extensive tour of Jammu City on Wednesday to assess the ground situation and understand the plight of the residents affected by heavy rains and flooding of River Tawi.

The Legislators visited Rajiv Colony, Rajinder Nagar; Vikram Chowk, Goyal Lane, Old University Lane, Fisheries Mohalla, Rajiv Nagar Canal Road, Qasim Nagar, Goswami Mohalla, Jogi Gate, Peerkho and Roop Nagar areas- the hardest hit by the incessant rainfall and subsequent flooding.

They expressed deep anguish over damaged homes, collapsed infrastructure,



MLA Jammu East Yudhvir Sethi informing about damages to LOP Sunil Sharma during visit.

washed-away roads, and families grappling with the tragic aftermath of nature's fury.

"The scenes of devastation are heart-wrenching. The incessant rains have played havoc with the lives of our people. Many families have lost everything overnight," Sunil Sharma remarked.

Sunil Sharma interacted with dozens of affected families and listened to their con-

cerns, needs and fears. He assured the people of immediate and comprehensive relief efforts, promising that no affected citizen would be left out in this hour of crisis. He assured to restore the basic amenities, adding that the efforts are on to resume water supply, electricity etc.

He also lauded the humane approach of the Governments of Haryana and Madhya

Pradesh for donating financial aid for the flood affected people and shared that other states are also being approached for help.

Sunil Sharma said "Your courage in the face of such adversity is commendable and we are with you-not just in words but in action". He assured that every possible measure will be taken to restore normalcy and provide the necessary aid swiftly.

The Legislators called for urgent coordination between disaster management agencies, municipal bodies and local administration to expedite relief distribution and rehabilitation work.

Yudhvir Sethi said that as elected representative of the constituency, he is committed to ensuring that the people affected are heard and provided every kind of help.

Some myths about J&K State related issues cultivated over years had also been dismantled by Constitution Bench Judgement of Dec 11, 2023

Dec 11, 2023 Constitution Bench Judgement in RE: Article 370 of the Constitution: validity of C.O 272 & C.O 273 of Aug 2019: Act 34 of 2019 Grant of Statehood to UT of J&K or UT of Ladakh is for Parliament to decide unless SC holds invalid use of Art-3 for reducing a State to a UT

■ DAYA SAGAR

Part F (Conclusion) of the 5 Judge Constitution bench judgement in the case of Original Writ / Appellate Jurisdiction Writ Petition (Civil) No. 1099 of 2019 in RE: Article 370 of the Constitution the Constitution bench at Para 514 (page348) reads, < In view of the above discussion, the following are the conclusions:

a. The State of Jammu and Kashmir does not retain any element of sovereignty after the execution of the IoA and the issuance of the Proclamation dated 25 November 1949 by which the Constitution of India was adopted. b. The State of Jammu and Kashmir does not have 'internal sovereignty' which is distinguishable from the powers and privileges enjoyed by other States in the country. c. Article 370 was a feature of asymmetric federalism and not sovereignty;

b. The petitioners did not challenge the issuance of the Proclamations under Section 92 of the Jammu and Kashmir Constitution and Article 356 of the Indian Constitution until the special status of Jammu and Kashmir was abrogated. The challenge to the Proclamations does not merit adjudication because the principal challenge is to the actions which were taken after the

Proclamation was issued; The exercise of power by the President after the Proclamation under Article 356 is issued is subject to judicial review. The exercise of power by the President must have a reasonable nexus with the object of the Proclamation. The person challenging the exercise of power must prima facie establish that it is a mala fide or extraneous exercise of power. Once a prima facie case is made, the onus shifts to the Union to justify the exercise of such power;

c. in The exercise of power by the President after the Proclamation under Article 356 is issued is subject to judicial review. The exercise of power by the President must have a reasonable nexus with the object of the Proclamation. The person challenging the exercise of power must prima facie establish that it is a mala fide or extraneous exercise of power. Once a prima facie case is made, the onus shifts to the Union to justify the exercise of such power;

d. The power of Parliament under Article 356(1)(b) to exercise the powers of the Legislature of the State cannot be restricted to law-making power thereby excluding non-law making power of the Legislature of the State. Such an interpretation would amount to reading in a limitation into the provision contrary to the text of the Article;

e. It can be garnered from the historical context for the inclusion of Article 370 and the placement of Article 370 in Part XXI of the Constitution that it is a temporary provision;

f. The power under Article 370(3) did not cease to exist upon the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly of Jammu and Kashmir: When the Constituent Assembly was dissolved, only the transitional power recognised in the proviso to Article 370(3) which empowered the Constituent Assembly to make its recommendations ceased to exist. It did not affect the power held by the President under Article 370(3);

g. Article 370 cannot be amended by exercise of power under Article 370(1)(d). Recourse must have been taken to the procedure contemplated by Article 370(3) if Article 370 is to cease to operate or is to be amended or modified in its application to the State of Jammu and Kashmir. Paragraph 2 of CO 272 by which Article 370 was amended through Article 367 is ultra-vires Article 370(1)(d) because it modifies Article 370, in effect, without following the procedure prescribed to modify Article 370. An interpretation clause



A Look through the Mist Part-II

cannot be used to bypass the procedure laid down for amendment;

h. The exercise of power by the President under Article 370(1)(d) to issue CO 272 is not mala fide. The President in exercise of power under Article 370(3) can unilaterally issue a notification that Article 370 ceases to exist. The President did not have to secure the concurrence of the Government of the State or Union Government acting on behalf of the State Government under the second proviso to Article 370(1)(d) while applying all the provisions of the Constitution to Jammu and Kashmir because such an exercise of power has the same effect as an exercise of power under Article 370(3) for which the concurrence or collaboration with the State Government was not required;

i. Paragraph 2 of CO 272 issued by the President in exercise of power under Article 370(1)(d) applying all the provisions of the Constitution of India to the State of Jammu and Kashmir is valid. Such an exercise of power is not mala fide merely because all the provisions were applied together without following a piece-meal approach;

j. The President had the power to issue a notification declaring that Article

370(3) ceases to operate without the recommendation of the Constituent Assembly. The continuous exercise of power under Article 370(1) by the President indicates that the gradual process of constitutional integration was ongoing. The declaration issued by the President under Article 370(3) is a culmination of the process of integration and as such is a valid exercise of power. Thus, CO 273 is valid;

k. The Constitution of India is a complete code for constitutional governance. Following the application of the Constitution of India in its entirety to the State of Jammu and Kashmir by CO 273, the Constitution of the State of Jammu and Kashmir is inoperative and is declared to have become redundant;

l. The views of the Legislature of the State under the first proviso to Article 3 are recommendatory. Thus, Parliament's exercise of power under the first proviso to Article 3 under the Proclamation was valid and not mala fide;

m. The Solicitor General stated that the statehood of Jammu and Kashmir will be restored (except for the carving out of the Union Territory of Ladakh). In view of the statement we do not find it necessary to determine whether the reorganisation of the State of Jammu and Kashmir into two Union Territories

of Ladakh and Jammu and Kashmir is permissible under Article 3.

However, we uphold the validity of the decision to carve out the Union Territory of Ladakh in view of Article 3(a) read with Explanation I which permits forming a Union Territory by separation of a territory from any State; and

n. We direct that steps shall be taken by the Election Commission of India to conduct elections to the Legislative Assembly of Jammu and Kashmir constituted under Section 14 of the Reorganisation Act by 30 September 2024. Restoration of statehood shall take place at the earliest and as soon as possible. >

Para 515says : The writ petition and special leave petitions are disposed of in the above terms and Para 516says : Pending application(s), if any, stand disposed of. So it could be understood that no any subject relating to the petition is left for further attention of the Constitution Bench in terms of Original Writ / Appellate Jurisdiction Writ Petition (Civil) No. 1099 of 2019 in RE: Article 370 of the Constitution

To be continued (The writer is Sr Journalist & analyst of J&K affairs dayasagar45@yahoo.com 09419796096)