

Dr Jitendra inaugurates new campus of India's first Biomanufacturing Institute at Mohali

■ STATE TIMES NEWS
MOHALI: Dr. Jitendra Singh, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology, Earth Sciences, on Monday inaugurated the new campus of India's first Biomanufacturing Institute, "BRIC-National Agri-Food Bio-Manufacturing Institute" (BRIC-NABI) aimed at enhancing India's agri-food sector through advanced biotechnology.

Addressing the assembly of scientists, industry leaders, and stakeholders, the Minister emphasized the government's dedication to fostering innovation in agriculture, creating job opportunities, and promoting environmental sustainability-essential elements in achieving Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of "Viksit Bharat."

During the inauguration, Dr. Jitendra underscored the Modi government's robust prioritization of science and technology, referencing recent landmark decisions such as the newly launched BioE3 policy. This initiative,



Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh, flanked by senior officers of Govt of India, posing for photograph after inaugurating the new campus of "BRIC-National Agri-Food Biomanufacturing Institute" (BRIC-NABI) at Mohali, on Monday.

which stands for biotechnology in the service of the economy, employment, and the environment, exemplifies the administration's focus on fostering a high-impact science sector. "Biotechnology and synthetic production will not only transform agriculture but redefine India's role in global scientific advancements," stated the Minister.

In his address, Dr. Jitendra noted that India is among the first nations to implement an exclusive biotechnology policy. This shift, he emphasized, will propel a significant transformation from traditional manufacturing to

synthetic production through sustainable, eco-friendly solutions that rely on modern, cost-effective technology. The Minister lauded India's rapid rise from "fragile five" to "first five" in global economic standing, crediting this progress to the government's science-focused strategy.

Dr. Jitendra highlighted that this consolidation would drive efficiency in agricultural R&D, paving the way for high-yield, disease-resistant crops, biofertilizers, and biopesticides. These advancements not only align with the government's ambition to

double farmers' incomes but also promote sustainable, eco-friendly practices, creating new income avenues for farmers and supporting broader environmental objectives.

Through joint efforts with both public and private sectors, the Minister said, BioNEST strives to drive inclusive economic growth, aligning with the "Make in India" vision and advancing India's journey toward self-reliance. Dr. Jitendra Singh emphasized the need for active private sector involvement, noting that investment in such incubators can

unlock market potential and provide sustainable employment for India's young workforce.

Aimed at researchers and industry professionals, this event supports the government's BioE3 policy and reflects India's commitment to eco-friendly, innovation-driven industrial growth, the Minister noted.

Dr. Jitendra also addressed the brain drain of Indian scientists, encouraging young talent to pursue research and entrepreneurship within India, emphasizing the country's competitive resources and a growing scientific ecosystem that rivals global institutions. This national focus on developing indigenous expertise, he believes, will strengthen India's global influence in science and innovation.

The establishment of the BRIC-National Agri-Food Bio-Manufacturing Institute marks a pivotal step in India's journey toward an integrated, science-powered economy, aligned with the Modi government's ambitious development goals.

Adulterated sweets playing havoc with health of people: Sukhnandan

■ STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: Voicing concern over the sale of poor-quality food items, especially adulterated sweets flooding the markets, Choudhary Sukhnandan Kumar, former Minister and senior leader of BJP asked the administration to promptly check the malpractices playing havoc with the people's health and lives.

Sukhnandan, accompanied by former VC Balbir Ram Rattan and Dr Makson Tickoo expressed this concern while addressing the media persons at BJP headquarters, Trikuta Nagar, here on Monday.

Ch Sukhnandan, while greeting people on the pious occasion of Deepawali, voiced his concern over the poor-quality eatables, especially sweets.

He raised his concern saying that the raw materials used in these sweets are way more costly than the finished sweets items and questioned how is it even possible. No manufacturer can afford to purchase the



Former Minister, Ch Sukhnandan Kumar talking to reporters.

costly raw material items and later sell the finished items at lower rates.

He said that this adulteration is playing havoc with the health and lives of people and often forces people to land in costly hospitals due to the damage to the vital organs in the human body over time.

Sukhnandan asked the newly elected government, administration, and the Enforcement Wing to take immediate notice of this malpractice and save the people, stressing that the celebrations of the Deepawali festival have almost begun and the people are making purchases

of different items, including sweets.

The departments concerned should work in unison to take samples of different varieties of sweets to ensure that the people get pure quality sweet items.

Sukhnandan cautioned the administration to take notice of this malpractice by the big players who have established various units in Jammu itself and take samples of the sweets coming from outside as well.

The enforcement wing is harassing small shopkeepers, sparing the actual big players of this game on the ground, which is highly unjustified, he added.

Vigilance Awareness Week kicks off at DIPR Jammu



Jt Dir Info Jammu, Atul Gupta administering integrity pledge to officers and officials.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Directorate of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) in Jammu marked the commencement of Vigilance Awareness Week with a significant pledge-taking ceremony on Monday.

Joint Director Information Jammu, Atul Gupta led the event, administering the integrity pledge to all present officers and officials.

The ceremony saw full attendance of staff, underscoring a collective commitment to ethical practices and transparency in governance.

Joint Director, in his address, highlighted the critical role of integrity in public service. He remarked, "Vigilance Awareness Week serves as a reminder of our responsibility to maintain the highest standards of honesty and transparency. By taking this pledge, we reaffirm our dedication to combating corruption

and fostering trust within our communities."

Atul Gupta also encouraged officials to embody these values in their daily duties, emphasizing that individual actions contribute towards the larger goal of creating a corruption-free environment. The week-long observance aims to promote awareness about the importance of vigilance and integrity, engaging all stakeholders in the fight against corruption.

Deputy Director (PR) Jammu, Ankush Hans; Deputy Director (HQ), Virender Gupta; Field Publicity Officer, Mukesh Kumar; Youth Information Officer, Monika Sambyal; Information Officer, Ashu Kumari, Accounts Officer, Hitesh Choudhary, Administrative Officer, Renu Sharma, besides other officers and officials of the department were present.

IIIM launches Agarbatti Production Unit to support local entrepreneurs

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: CSIR-Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine (IIIM), Jammu, inaugurated its new Agarbatti Production Unit, an initiative established under the Value Addition Vertical of CSIR Aroma Mission at here on Monday.

The facility aims to create high-quality, value-added aromatic products and is dedicated to supporting local farmers, Self Help Groups (SHGs), women, youth, and budding startups in the region.

The Agarbatti Production Unit inaugurated by Dr. Zabeer Ahmed, Director, CSIR-IIIM, Jammu, in the presence of Heads of Departments, Senior Controller of Administration, Controller of Finance & Accounts, and other senior officials of the institute.

Dr. Ahmed spoke on the occasion that CSIR-IIIM is com-



Director, CSIR-IIIM, Jammu, Dr. Zabeer Ahmed and faculty members at a programme.

mitted to advancing economic growth and livelihood opportunities in Jammu and Kashmir through sustainable business models and innovative agro-technological initiatives.

The inauguration of this new facility under the CSIR Aroma Mission highlights the dedication of IIIM to advancing scientific research while also creating meaningful benefits for the local community.

By establishing this production unit, the institute aims to

empower local farmers, youth, and Self Help Groups (SHGs) to engage in and gain from the expanding aromatic industry.

The Value Added Facility under the Aroma Mission aims to utilize the rich natural resources of Jammu and Kashmir, applying advanced research to create commercial products with strong economic potential. The Agarbatti Production Unit will produce high-quality incense sticks from locally sourced aromatic plants,

offering a new source of income and supporting the local workforce.

The unit will provide opportunities and provide training to the local farmers and Self Help Groups (SHGs), encouraging self-reliance and entrepreneurship among women and youth in rural areas. It will also support startup initiatives by offer-

ing resources, and assistance to promote new businesses and enhance employment in the aromatic products sector.

As part of the ongoing efforts under the CSIR Aroma Mission, the Agarbatti Production Unit supports the cultivation of aromatic plants and adds value by producing sustainable products to meet rising market demand. This initiative is expected to strengthen the economy of Jammu and Kashmir by creating a strong, value-focused supply chain in the aromatic sector.

The inauguration of this unit is a major step for CSIR-IIIM Jammu, reaffirming its commitment to advancing India's aromatic and medicinal plant sector through research, innovation, and community support.

Rakesh Jewellers unveils festive offers for Dhanteras

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: In line with its commitment to providing exceptional value to customers, Rakesh Jewellers has announced a range of festive offers to celebrate Dhanteras. As the auspicious occasion approaches, the team at Rakesh Jewellers extends heartfelt wishes for a Shubh Dhanteras and a joyful Divali, hoping that this festival brings peace and prosperity to everyone in the form of gold and silver. Rakesh Jewellers is proud to offer a selection of products including 100% Hallmark Gold, verified through a Karatmeter gold test machine, IGI Certified Diamonds, Swiss watches, and exquisite silver idols, as well as gold and silver coins-all available under one roof. The showrooms are designed to create a warm and personalized shopping experience, complemented by a professional and friendly attitude from the staff. Customers can browse through a clearly displayed collection, making it easy to pick and choose their favorite pieces. Furthermore, Rakesh Jewellers emphasizes customer satisfaction by providing international certifications and guarantees of quality and craftsmanship for every item purchased. To enhance the festive spirit, they are also offering a special gift with every purchase, ensuring that each customer's experience is memorable.



Slathia reviews health sector, lays foundation of school building

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SAMBA: Pradesh BJP Vice President and MLA Surjeet Singh Slathia on Monday reviewed the status of health care sector in the Samba district with an avowed objective of driving improvements in the services with focus on ensuring adequate availability of medicines and seamless diagnostic examinations.

The meeting was attended by senior functionaries of the Health Department and various strategies were discussed for strengthening infrastructure, improving healthcare accessibility and ensuring standard medical services across the district.

Slathia stressed the need for further improving public health outcomes and outlined initiatives focused on enhancing primary healthcare, upgrading hospitals, and increasing medi-



MLA Surjeet Singh Slathia laying foundation stone of a 10-room double storey building at GHSS Goran Block Sumb.

cal supplies and staff in underserved areas. He sought optimal coverage under Aayushman Bharat and exuded confidence that the medicos and paramedics will serve the ailing people with a sense of commitment and dedication.

"Ensuring quality healthcare for all citizens must be a top priority and every effort is needed to be made to improve the well being of our people",

ness and hygiene of the health institutions.

Later, Slathia also laid the foundation stone of a 10-room double storey building at Higher Secondary School Goran Block Sumb, being constructed at an estimated cost of Rs 1.85 crore under Capex budget. He stressed the need for maintaining quality standards of the building and ensuring its completion in stipulated time frame. He said congenial atmosphere and infrastructural facilities are imperative for imparting education. Prominent among those who accompanied Surjit Singh Slathia on the occasion are Chairman DDC Keshav Sharma DDC Balvan Singh BDC Ramesh Singh Mandal President Balwinder Singh Vice President BJP Samba Mohan Lal Sharma Vijay Singh.

Slathia assured his full support to the health officials and hoped that they too will work for the larger interest of the people and maintain the services in a missionary spirit. He also called for taking all possible steps to maintain cleanli-

ness and hygiene of the health institutions.

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Excise Deptt observes Vigilance Awareness Week with Integrity Pledge Ceremony



Excise Commissioner, J&K UT Subash Chhibber with officers taking Integrity Pledge.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: In observance of Vigilance Awareness Week, the Excise Department conducted an Integrity Pledge Ceremony on Monday, reaffirming its commitment to ethical values and transparent governance. The ceremony was led by the Excise Commissioner, J&K UT Subash C Chhibber who, along with officers and officials from the Department, took the Integrity Pledge to uphold integrity and actively combat corruption in public service. Addressing the gathering, the Excise Commissioner underscored the importance of accountability and ethical conduct in fostering public trust. He emphasized that every official's commitment to these principles strengthens governance integrity and advances the goal of a transparent, accountable public service environment. This Integrity Pledge Ceremony serves as a significant step in the Excise Department's continued efforts to promote a culture of honesty and responsibility, setting a meaningful example for public service ethics during Vigilance Awareness Week.

Although as CM of UT Omar has some Legislative & Executive limitations but still he can freely do some good & undo some bads

With Elected popular Government in place distantly placed J&K Subjects once again hope for Administrative & Legislative Rationalization

■ DAYA SAGAR

Omar has been sworn in as the 1st Chief Minister of UT of J&K. National Conference (NC) in its manifesto has made many other promises, some are long term & some are short term, some subject in particular to the jurisdictional authority of the LG in terms of public order, police, and land hence legitimate limitations would be there but surely the promises which will not restrict the Omar cabinet in action and which do not require more time to get cover of a declared government policy must be put to action before the voter citizen raises questions on the promises made in NC election manifesto and election rallies. Elections for Legislative Assembly of UT of J&K concluded peacefully on 1st Oct 2024, results were declared on 8th Oct. People in large numbers participated in the elections. National Conference headed by Dr Farooq Abdullah although won as part of India alliance only 42 seats out of 90 that were put to direct elections

but as part of INDIA alliance with Congress also as part did secure easy majority worth forming government .Omar Abdullah took the oath as the t Chief Minister of the UT of J&K with added support from CPI(M),AAP and 5 independent MLAs.

National Conference election manifesto has made some segments of the society very particularly hopeful for getting some redressal of their demands/grievances, more particularly since in the election manifesto Farooq Abdullah the NC President in his letter had said "This manifesto is not just a collection of promises; it is a solemn pledge to you my sons and daughters, sisters and brothers. It is a promise that I and my Party will continue to serve you tirelessly. In this manifesto, we have addressed the major issues you face daily. Through these commitments, the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference aims to fulfill the promises we make to you today" and Omar Abdullah in letter from Vice President had said< "This

manifesto is not just a list of promises; it is a pledge with the people. It reflects the blood, sweat, and tears of those who came before us, who dreamed of a prosperous and peaceful Jammu and Kashmir. It is your voice, your aspirations, your resilience, and your resolve. I stand before you as your son, your brother, your friend committed to seeing every promise in this manifesto fulfilled."

Those aspiring for justice could be from common masses like the 1947 POJK DPs (displaced 'families' from the areas of the then princely state of J&K as were unduly 'occupied' by Pakistan through open aggression after 22nd Oct 1947 since the then princely state of J&K had not acceded to India dominion before 15th August 1947) who have not been treated as refugees by Government of India since they had come to safer areas in their own country



A Look through the Mist Part-III

and so were not given any claims for the properties / assets left behind in addition to having lost thousands of their dears enroute to safer areas. Even so far not even a regular registration of their numbers and assets left behind has neither been done by GOI nor by J&K Government (no doubt a domicile related notice was issued in 2020 asking those having registration in government records to get registered through the Relief Commissioner Migrants (1990) but even against that process no any numbers have been made public as their final count. It was in 2014 ((D.O. letter No. Rev/Rehaly/08/2011 dated 20-10-2014 for Rehabilitation @Rs.25 Lakh / family one time full and final settlement of the claims of the POJK Displaced Persons of 1947 and Chammb Displaced Persons 1965/71) that the then NC- Congress Government had some proposals to GOI which among

other assistance /socio-economic support for 1947 POJK DPs as well as 1965/1971 DPs had recommended a onetime settlement at a uniform rate of Rs.25 Lakh per 1947 times family irrespective of the worth of the assets left behind (although that was not fair since some assets may be worth a few thousand in 1947 and others may be even worth a few lakhs).Before a Parliamentary sub-committee had visited J&K somewhere in September 2013 or so and in its report (One Hundred Eighty Third Report on problems being faced by refugees and displaced persons in J&K was presented to Rajya Sabha on 22nd December, 2014(that was also laid on the table of Lok Sabha on 22nd December 2014)presented in Parliament among other support it was recommended to pay the one time settlement as Rs.30 Lakh / family of 1947 times (though against that also some representations were made). But in 2016 Government of India ordered to pay only Rs 5.5

Lakh as one time settlement and that has been disbursed.

During election campaign Raman Bhalla Congress working President J&K Unit had said that in case alliance / congress comes to power one time settlement would be increased to Rs.30 Lakh as proposed by NC- Congress Government in 2014(it was not Rs.30 Lakh but was Rs.25 Lakh but the Parliamentary report recommended for rs.30 Lakh per family). Any one may ask why Congress-NC was silent all these years and did not agitate when out of power? Anyhow now it is the duty of Omar Government to atleast get the balance payment made to the POJK DP families . Some families have claimed that even a hundred rupees that were to be paid by state government as part of Rs.5.5 Lakh have not been paid to them yet by state government.

To be continued
(The writer is a Sr Journalist & a known analyst of J&K affairs).