

# Northeast to hold first-ever International Science Festival: Dr Jitendra

■ STATE TIMES NEWS  
NEW DELHI: Union Minister, Dr. Jitendra Singh announced here on Friday that Northeast will hold first-ever International Science Festival.

At a press briefing at National Media Centre, Dr Jitendra disclosed that the 10th edition of the India International Science Festival (IISF) will be held at Guwahati, marking a significant milestone in the region's journey towards becoming a hub for scientific and technological innovation. The festival, to be hosted at IIT Guwahati from November 30th to December 3rd, 2024, is a testimony to the Government's commitment to the Northeast and aligns with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's focus on the region as a key player in India's growth story.

Highlighting the unique importance of the venue, Dr. Jitendra Singh said, "IIT Guwahati is not only one of the leading institutes of the country but also a symbol of how the Northeast is emerging as a focal point of India's scientific advancements. Hosting IISF 2024 in the Northeast is not just about celebrating science; it's about placing the region at the heart of India's scientific future."

The decision to host the festival in Guwahati reflects the Government's broader strategy to promote inclusive development, particularly in regions that have been historically underrep-



Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh addressing a press conference at National Media Centre, New Delhi on Friday.

resented. Prime Minister Modi has consistently underscored the importance of bringing the Northeast closer to the rest of India and creating opportunities for it to play a critical role in the country's progress. "The Northeast is rich in natural resources and talent, and this festival is an opportunity for the rest of the nation to recognize and engage with the potential that lies here," Dr. Jitendra Singh added.

The 10th edition of IISF carries the theme "Transforming India into an S&T driven Global Manufacturing Hub" reflecting the government's ambition to merge science and technology with industrial growth, propelling India towards self-reliance and global leadership in manufacturing. The theme aligns closely with national initiatives like 'Make in India' and 'Atmanirbhar Bharat,' and

sions that will shape India's future as a global leader in science and technology."

In addition to its core emphasis on science-led industrial growth, IISF-2024 will serve as a key platform for engaging young minds nationwide. The festival will provide students with the chance to connect with top scientists, take part in science competitions, and experience groundbreaking innovations up close, the Minister stated.

IISF-2024 is being coordinated by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and involves all the major scientific departments and ministries of the Government of India in collaboration with Vijnana Bharati. The event will feature a range of exhibits, panel discussions, and international collaborations aimed at addressing pressing global challenges like climate change, food security, and sustainable development.

Dr. Jitendra concluded by urging more people from across the country to visit the Northeast and experience its vibrant culture, vast resources, and innovative spirit. "It's time we bring the rest of India closer to the Northeast. The region has so much to offer in terms of natural resources, sustainable practices, and progressive culture. This festival will showcase that to the nation."



## Yudhvir Sethi releases devotional music video featuring Sonali Dogra

■ STATE TIMES NEWS  
JAMMU: A spiritually uplifting devotional music video featuring the enchanting voice of renowned singer Sonali Dogra, was officially released on Friday by Yudhvir Sethi, a senior leader and vice president of the BJP in Jammu & Kashmir, on the second day of Navratri.

The video, which radiates devotion and spiritual fervor. This spiritually charged video was launched under the banner of Natya Roots Productions and produced by Neelam Kumari and Varsha Dogra.

The video is directed by Akash Dogra, with lyrics penned by Sukhman and soulful music by Naaz.

The project was further elevated by the beautiful choreography by Divam, and the management of the production by Karan, ensuring a flawless presentation.

A standout feature of the video is that it was shot at the sacred Vaishno Devi Bhawan in Katra, heightening its devotional appeal and creating a profound spiritual atmosphere.

During the release ceremony, Yudhvir Sethi, the chief guest, applauded the efforts behind the video, commenting, "This devotional video, released during Navratri and filmed at such a spiritually significant location, perfectly embodies the essence of devotion to Goddess Durga. It is a perfect combination of music, prayer, and cultural heritage."

While watching this Bhajan, Dr. Ritu Singh praised the devotional song and gave her blessings, offering encouragement and spiritual support to the entire team.

Sonali Dogra shared her thoughts on the project, saying, "Singing this devotional track at the holy Vaishno Devi Bhawan was a deeply spiritual experience



Senior BJP leader, Yudhvir Sethi and others releasing devotional music video.

for me. We hope this video touches the hearts of devotees and enhances their connection to the divine during Navratri."

The video's visual beauty, set against the backdrop of the revered Vaishno Devi Bhawan, combined with Sonali Dogra's powerful voice and the artistic direction, has created a devotional piece that is sure to inspire devotees. The music video will be available on Natya Roots Productions youtube channel and various social media platforms, allowing wide accessibility to viewers throughout the Navratri festivities.

Natya Roots Productions has once again demonstrated its commitment to cultural and spiritual artistry with this devotional release.

## IIM Jammu hosts Mumbai Roundtable Conference

■ STATE TIMES NEWS  
MUMBAI: IIM Jammu hosted a landmark Roundtable Conference on Friday at Trident, BKC, Mumbai, bringing together policymakers, academics, and industry leaders.

The event focused on strengthening collaboration between academia and industry, addressing workforce evolution, and leveraging technology to prepare students for future employment. The conference began with participant registration, a lamp lighting ceremony, and an introductory video of IIM Jammu, setting the stage for insightful discussions.

Dr. Milind P. Kamble, Chairman, Board of Governors, IIM Jammu, emphasized the necessity of collaboration, noting that progress requires unity and cannot occur in silos. He celebrated Marathi's recent recognition as a classical language by the Government of India and touched upon his contributions to the NEP 2020 drafting committee, led by Dr. K. Kasturirangan.

Citing the example of the IPM Programme at IIM Jammu, he praised NEP 2020 for fostering multidisciplinary education with flexible entry and exit options. He reaffirmed IIM Jammu's dedication to developing future-ready leaders, serving local communities, and addressing national priorities. He highlighted the Roundtable Conference as an essential step in bridging academia and industry, promoting entrepreneurship, and achieving impactful societal change. He encouraged all stakeholders to actively contribute to the institute's vision, underlining that collaborative efforts would lead to greater innovation and lasting progress for the nation.

Prof. B.S. Sahay, Director, IIM Jammu, emphasized



Dr. Milind P. Kamble, Chairman, Board of Governors, IIM Jammu, Director BS Sahay and other dignitaries at a Mumbai Roundtable conference.

Jammu's status as India's only Union Territory with all three Institutes of National Importance, advancing the vision of NEP 2020 through unique programs like the MBA in Hospital Administration and Healthcare Management in collaboration with IIM Jammu, IIT Jammu, and AIIMS Jammu, as well as the dual degree program B.Tech + MBA program with IIT Jammu. With a strong representation of female students in all its programs IIM Jammu demonstrates its commitment to diversity, inclusion, and entrepreneurship through initiatives like the Centre for Diversity and Inclusion and the Center for Small Business Development. He highlighted Project YUVA, developed with the J&K Government to empower youth through entrepreneurship, and shared plans for the Centre for Innovation and Transformation in Governance (CITaG) to foster sustainable development and tackle governance challenges in J&K.

He underscored IIM Jammu's rapid growth, industry partnerships, and mission to produce graduates ready for real-world impact. Reflecting on India's vision for 2047, as articulated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, he urged alignment of personal goals with national development.

The Mumbai Roundtable Conference featured three

insightful panel discussions that brought together industry leaders and experts to address critical issues shaping the workforce of tomorrow. The first panel discussion, "Creating a Future-Ready Workforce: Strategies for Adaptation and Resilience," was moderated by Anand Kripalu, MD, Global CEO, EPL Ltd., and Member, BoG, IIM Jammu. He emphasized adaptability and digital transformation as key to preparing a future-ready workforce. The panel included Rahul Pinjarkar, CHRO, Tata Chemicals; Ekta Roy, Senior Manager, HRBP IPD (RD), Cipla; Luckey Kulkarni, Country Group HR Head, Jeena & Company; Nagina Singh, Senior Director People Lead, India, Mondelez International; S.K. Dutt, Senior Executive Advisor Head HR, GI Infotech; Gautam Sinha, CHRO, Birla Opus; and Samir Shah, Executive Vice President, Capgemini; who discussed strategies for agility, digital literacy, and resilience.

The second panel discussion, "Shattering the Glass Ceiling: Strategies for Inclusive Leadership," was moderated by Lalit Kumar Naik, Director, Noveltech Feeds Pvt. Ltd. & Member, BoG, IIM Jammu. He highlighted the importance of inclusive leadership for innovation and long-term success. The panel featured Pawan Gangwani, AVP, Life and Annuities, JP Morgan; Sonal Jain, Global CHRO, EPL Ltd.; Rajesh Balakrishnan, CEO, Advanced Materials-Aditya Birla Chemicals; Ajay Brahmabhatt, India Lead HR, Siemens Ltd.; Manoj Sharma, President & CHRO; Aarti Industries; Saksharam Garale, Founder & CEO, Renovare Healthcare Solutions; Swati Mishra, Director HR, Omya Group; and Surya Saraf, Global Alliance Manager, Tech Mahindra; who discussed strategies for fostering diversity, breaking barriers, and promoting inclusive growth. The third panel discussion, & Leadership in Digital Transformation, was moderated by Shrikant Badve, MD, Belrise Industries Ltd. Member, BoG, IIM Jammu. He stressed that breaking leadership barriers and fostering inclusivity are key to unlocking organizational potential. The panel included Kaustubh Dhavse, OSD to the Deputy Chief Minister, Govt. of Maharashtra; Pranay Gaharwar, Vice President, State Street Services India; Dr. Sangeeta Srivastava, CEO, Godavari Biorefineries; Natasha Chander, AVP Lead Talent Engagement, IIFL; Kshitij Bhatnagar, Grant Thornton Bharat; Mallika Vyas, Head of HR, Tata Capital Housing Finance Ltd.; Ramakrishna Vyamajala,

CHRO, Home First Finance Company; Sandeep K Singh, Head of Commercial - Maharashtra & Goa, Business Processing Cell, Godrej & Boyce, and Harini Sreenivasan, Partner, SemcoStyle Institute India LLP. They emphasized visionary leadership, adaptability, and fostering innovation to navigate digital transformation effectively.

Prof. Jabir Ali, Dean Academics, IIM Jammu, gave an overview into Roundtable Conference by outlining its objectives and setting the stage for the engaging panel discussions.

Dr. Baljeet Singh, Co-Chairperson, IIM Jammu, proposed the vote of thanks.

## AIIMS Jammu conducts first Clinical Grand Round

■ STATE TIMES NEWS  
JAMMU: AIIMS Vijaypur, Jammu, successfully conducted its first Clinical Grand Round (CGR) as part of an interdepartmental academic activity, under the guidance of Prof. Shakti Kumar Gupta, ED & CEO of AIIMS Jammu, in the pursuit of clinical excellence. The Department of Ophthalmology, led by Dr. Bhavani Raina, Additional Professor, facilitated the CGR, during which two interesting cases were presented.

Dr. Asma Jabeen, Senior Resident, presented a case of Neuro-ophthalmology under the mentorship of Dr. Nitin Kumar, Associate Professor. The patient was diagnosed with non-arteritic anterior ischemic optic neuropathy and proliferative diabetic retinopathy. Dr. Nitin Kumar elaborated on the diagnostic clues for identifying and appropriately managing such cases. He also explained the investigative modalities available, such as visual fields and fundus



Prof. Shakti Kumar Gupta, ED & CEO of AIIMS Jammu and other doctors at a CGR.

angiography. The possible differential diagnoses were discussed with an expert panel of neurologists.

The second case, presented by Dr. Gavesha Garg, Junior Resident, was of Ocular Tuberculosis, under the mentorship of Dr. Ridham Nanda, Assistant Professor. The patient exhibited unique features of tubercular retinal vasculitis, which posed various diagnostic dilemmas. The management options were thoroughly discussed, and Dr. Nanda provided key insights into distinguishing ocular tuberculosis from other similar conditions.

The expert panel included Dr. Nazia Anjum, Assistant Professor from the Department of Ophthalmology; Dr. Padma and Dr. Ajay Kotwal, Assistant Professors from the Department of Neurology; Dr. Taranpreet, Assistant Professor from the Department of Internal Medicine; and Dr. Priya, Assistant Professor from the Department of Microbiology.

Dr. Padma discussed the distinguishing clinical features of arteritic and non-arteritic types of anterior ischemic optic neuropathy. Dr. Priya highlighted the various diagnostic tech-

niques available for identifying ocular tuberculosis, while Dr. Taranpreet reviewed the treatment regimens available for the continuation phase in anti-tubercular therapy.

The CGR was an engaging session, offering valuable lessons for clinicians. Prof. Shakti Kumar Gupta emphasized the importance of such multidisciplinary engagements, stating that they foster efficient patient management and encourage interdepartmental research collaborations.

He announced that AIIMS Jammu will hold these sessions regularly.

## Bus carrying Vaishno Devi pilgrims catches fire, passengers escape safely

■ STATE TIMES NEWS  
JAMMU: A bus carrying 38 pilgrims returning from the holy shrine of Vaishno Devi caught fire under mysterious circumstances while traveling on the Katra-Jammu road near Bayin Nala.

The incident occurred when flames suddenly erupted from the bus.

The driver immediately stopped the vehicle and ensured that all passengers were able to evacuate before the fire spread further.

Eyewitnesses described the terrifying moment when the flames were first noticed.

"We suddenly saw smoke and flames coming from the bus. Everyone was panicking, but the driver acted quickly and got us all out safely," said one of the passengers. "We were scared, but



thankfully, everyone got out in time."

The emergency services were quickly alerted, and firefighters arrived at the scene to extinguish the flames.

Authorities have launched an investigation to determine the cause of the fire, with initial reports suggesting that a mechanical failure might

have been the trigger. However, no official conclusions have been reached yet. Another passenger, speaking about the incident, shared their relief. "It was a frightening experience, but we are so grateful to God that no one was hurt." Despite the fire, no injuries were reported, and the pilgrims were later provided with an alternate bus to continue their journey. Local authorities have assured the public that steps will be taken to improve safety checks on buses, especially those operating on the heavily traveled Katra-Jammu route. "We will be looking into the safety protocols and ensuring that buses are regularly inspected to prevent such incidents from happening again," said a local official.

## SOS Int'l calls for non-political nominee for reserved assembly seat for PoJK refugees Political appointment will further alienate 'neglected, overlooked' PoJK displaced persons: Chuni

■ STATE TIMES NEWS  
JAMMU: S.O.S. International, a registered organization dedicated to advocating for the rights of displaced persons from Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (PoJK), has urged Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha not to nominate a candidate from a political party for the single reserved seat in the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly.

The chairman of S.O.S. International, Rajiv Chuni, emphasized that appointing a political figure would jeopardize the rights that the PoJK displaced persons have fought to secure over nearly three decades.

In a memorandum submit-

ted to the Lieutenant Governor, Chuni highlighted that the reserved seat should genuinely represent the interests of the PoJK displaced community, which comprises over 12 lakh refugees. He argued that treating this seat as a political sanctuary undermines its purpose. Instead, he proposed that a non-political nominee should be considered to better address the community's needs. Past political representatives, he noted, have failed to deliver meaningful results for the displaced community.

Chuni pointed out that S.O.S. International has worked tirelessly to unite PoJK refugees both within and outside Jammu and



Kashmir. The organization has raised their issues before various government panels, including the Wadhawa Committee and the Delimitation Commission, which had recommended eight assembly seats for PoJK refugees. Unfortunately, these recommendations were ignored, resulting in the allocation of

only one seat for a significantly larger population.

S.O.S. International has been at the forefront of advocating for the political empowerment of PoJK refugees since the early 1990s, pushing for their representation in the Legislative Assembly.

Chuni stressed that the plight of PoJK refugees should be viewed as a humanitarian issue, deserving of a compassionate approach that transcends party politics.

Chuni expressed concern over reports suggesting that a political figure might be nominated for the assembly seat, warning that such a move would further alienate PoJK refugees,

who have been neglected by successive governments. He reiterated that the purpose of reserving this seat is to empower PoJK displaced persons and provide them with a platform to advocate for their rights. To achieve this, he asserted that the nomination should reflect justice and empowerment, ideally through a non-political candidate.

In conclusion, Chuni urged the Lieutenant Governor to consider the genuine concerns of the PoJK refugee community while making this critical nomination, emphasizing the importance of ensuring that the seat serves its intended purpose of representation and advocacy.