New Year satellite XpoSAT exemplifies 'whole of science' joint effort: Dr Jitendra

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

BENGALURU: Union Minister for Science and Technology Dr. Jitendra Singh on Tuesday said that the New Year Satellite XpoSAT exemplifies synergised "whole of science" joint effort of more than one institution.

Addressing the Platinum Jubilee celebrations of "Raman Research Institute" here , the Minister said, the primary science payload was conceived, designed and developed by the Raman Research Institute while the launch was made by the Indian Space Research Organisation(ISRO).

Dr. Jitendra said, the culture of 'Make in India' and being Aatmanirbhar has been the success mantra of the Raman Research Institute (RRI) over the remarkable 75 years.

The Minister expressed satisfaction over the close synergies between the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the Raman Research Institute, a long recognised academic partner in India's space based science programme.

Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh addressing the Platinum Jubilee Year celebrations of "Raman Research Institute" (RRI) Bengaluru on Tuesday.

Dr. Jitendra congratulated the RRI scientists and engineers, who worked on POLIX, the very best for the recent mission. He noted that the RRI is also playing a lead partner role in satellite based quantum communications again in collaboration with ISRO.

The Minister remarked, "I am excitedly looking forward to RRI achieving major milestones in this thrust area of national interest towards securing our country's future".

Outlining the launch of Chandrayan-3 and other events, the Minister noted that the year 2023 was particularly significant for the country in scientific and technological achievements.

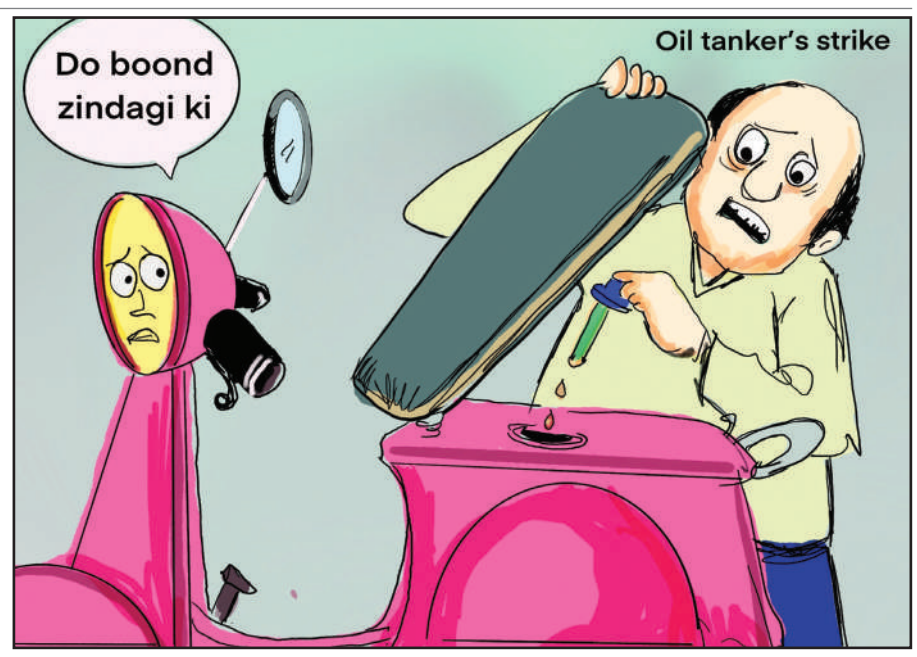
The Minister was addressing at the grand closing ceremony of the platinum jubilee year celebrations of the RRI in Bengaluru today.

Taking note of India swiftly progressing towards the top four economies, the Minister pointed out that humanity will face many challenges for which one has to rely on science and technology to provide solutions. He urged the scientists here to contribute towards India's journey to Amrit Kaal.

Dr. Anil Kakodkar, Chancellor, Homi Bhabha National Institute, A.S. Kiran Kumar, Chairperson, RRI Governing and former Chairman, ISRO and Prof. Tarun Souradeep, Director, RRI were among those present on the occasion.

Earlier on his arrival, the Minister visited the RRI Library complex, interacted with senior scientists and recorded remarks in the Visitor's Book.

Later, the Minister planted the new "Raman Tree" at the Institute premises and released a publication "Lighting the way of Physics" outlining the scientific achievements of RRI.



Yasha Mudgal reviews working of FPOs

Com Secy Cooperative, Yasha Mudgal chairing a review meeting at Jammu on Tuesday.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Commissioner Secretary Cooperative and Mission Director, Holistic Agriculture Development Production (HADP), Yasha Mudgal, on Tuesday had a comprehensive review of working of Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs).

Yasha Mudgal assessed the impact of FPOs in fostering economic empowerment, enhancing market access and promoting sustainable farming practices in the region.

"FPOs, being crucial entities in the agricultural landscape, can play a pivotal role in consolidating small and marginal farmers, providing them with a collective voice and a platform for inclusive growth", she maintained.

Yasha Mudgal said that collectivization of small and marginal farmers to from their organizations as FPOs has been recognized as the most effective institutional mechanism to reduce production cost, increase productivity and facilitate better market. This will not only help in augmenting the income of farmers but shall also considerably improve rural economy and create job opportunities for rural youths in villages itself, she added.

In a forward-looking initiative, the Mission Director underscored the need for a comprehensive study to evaluate the current progress in the region. She stressed the importance of undertaking a comprehensive study to analyze the impact of existing FPOs on the local agricultural landscape and identify future opportunities for Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) The study will encompass aspects such as economic growth, market penetration, and socio-economic uplift of the farming community, she added. Also, the study will culminate in formulation of strategic recommendations to address challenges and capitalize on opportunities. She extolled that these recommendations will guide future initiatives and policies to bolster the growth and sustainability of FPOs.

It was informed in the meeting that 197 FPOs have been registered, so far, under the central sector 'Formation & Promotion of 10,000 FPO' scheme. Besides, apple is the primary product of one-fourth (49) of the total FPOs registered so far followed by vegetables (24).

The meeting was attended by Registrar, Cooperative Societies (RCS) J&K, Director Animal Husbandry Jammu, Director Agriculture/ Horticulture Jammu, Additional RCS Jammu/Kashmir, Regional Director NCDC, DGM NABARD, Regional Head NAFED, all Deputy Registrars and other concerned officers from allied departments while Kashmir based officers participated virtually.

DGP J&K unveils PWWA J&K calendar for 2024

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Highlighting the achievement and activities of Jammu and Kashmir Police, the J&K Police Wives Welfare Association (PWWA), Calendar for the year 2024 was unveiled at a ceremony by the Director General of Police (DGP), J&K, R.R. Swain here at Police Headquarters.

ADGP (Hqrs/Coord.) PHQ, M.K Sinha, IGP Headquarters/CIV PHQ, B.S Tuti, AIG Welfare PHQ, Dr Abhishek Mahajan and DySP Welfare PHQ Shabir Ahmad were present on the occasion.

"The 2024 calendar is showcasing some among the number of major activities organised by the J&K Police in the year 2023. It highlights the recognition it has received in shape of different medals awarded to J&K Police officers and officials which include 01 Kirti Chakra. 02 Shaurya Chakra, 80 Police Medals for Gallantry Services, 03 President Police Medals for Distinguished Services, 31 Police Medals for Meritorious Services," DGP said.

DGP J&K, R.R. Swain and other police officers releasing PWWA Calendar 2024.

He added that the other major highlights of the calendar are the meeting of Union Minister for Home Affairs and Cooperation Amit Shah with the families of martyrs; LG's Manoj Sinha, J&K paying tributes to martyrs, inspecting parade contingents, LG, J&K handing over President's Medal to the recipients during Investiture Ceremony held at Raj Bhawan, Jammu.

"The Calendar also highlights Rashtriya Ekta Diwas Pledge Ceremony, blood donation camp, police commemoration parade held at APC Zewan, inspection of Guard of Honour by the new DGP J&K at PHQ, Srinagar and visuals of 33rd Police Public Mela including painting competition of children, chairperson & members of PWWA alongwith students at Diwali Mela at Jammu," he added.

The Calendar also showcases the initiatives and various youth engagement schemes undertaken by the Police in 2023 under its Civic Action Program that include huge participation of youth in Jammu Marathon, Kashmir Marathon, Cycle Race Pedal for Peace, 19th Martyrs Memorial Football Tournament, Aman Memorial Cricket Tournament, jashan-e-Dal and Rashtra katha Shivir and pictures of retired DGP's & senior police officers with the winners of Kashmir Marathon, he said adding that the display of talent by the Dare Devils team of J&K Police, during Republic Day has also been shown in the Calendar.

The calendar has also on its pages the welfare activities of the department for martyred families, its personnel and SPOs.

Apni Party belongs to people and is dedicated to serving them, asserts Bukhari

Apni Party president, Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari during a meeting at Srinagar.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Emphasizing that the Apni Party belongs to the masses, its president, Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari, said on Tuesday that the party is committed to serving the people in Jammu and Kashmir.

He urged the party leaders and workers to remain closely connected with the people in order to serve them better.

He made these remarks during a meeting attended by party leaders and functionaries from Baramulla.

The meeting, held at the party headquarters in Srinagar, aimed to assess the performance of leaders and senior workers from Baramulla.

Leaders and senior workers from Baramulla briefed the party president on their ongoing political activities and public outreach efforts.

They also brought certain party affairs and issues to the attention of the president and shared their views and ideas to strengthen the party further in the Baramulla.

Additionally, the attendees held discussions over the present political scenario and the party's preparedness for the upcoming parliamentary polls.

Bukhari advised the leaders and workers to remain in touch with the people.

He said, "Apni Party belongs to the masses; therefore, we must stay in touch with them to better serve their needs. With upcoming elections in mind, we must be active at the grassroots level to raise awareness about our clear agenda and pro-people policies. People need to understand that our primary goal is to serve them and elevate Jammu and Kashmir to new heights of peace, prosperity, and development."

USBRL-- national dream project for Kashmir nearing completion: officials

CRS inspection on Banihal-Khari section likely today

■ MASROOR AHMAD

BUDGAM: Banihal-Khari Section of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) project is likely to be thrown open after the scheduled inspection of Commissioner of Railway Safety (CRS) on January 3.

In this connection, the people were asked to stay away from the Banihal-Khari track by the Ferozpur Division of the Northern Railway.

"The second round of statutory inspection by the Commissioner of Railway Safety (CRS) Dinesh Chand Deshwal for the opening of 14.869 km Banihal-Khari section of Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla new BG rail line project of Northern Railway will take place on Wednesday," officials said.

Khari railway station falls between Banihal and Katra on the remaining 111 km, stretch of the USBRL project. During the inspection, the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) USBRL, construction officers and other concerned officers will accompany the Commissioner.

Official sources said that CRS would inspect the newly constructed lines in terms of safety regulations. "The electric engine train-run in the Banihal-Khari Section of the Ferozpur Division of Northern Railway will begin, following electric train operation, shortly," they said.

"A high-speed trial of the section by special train will be conducted by the Commissioner of Railways Safety on Wednesday after the trolley inspection. Thereafter, new line train work will start running between the Banihal-Khari stations of the USBRL project," official sources informed. "The general public has been asked to stay away from the railway lines of the Banihal-Khari section. Crossing the track at any location is trespassing and is a punishable offence and liable prosecution under the Railway Act," Railway authorities cautioned. It will be the first major step after years of work between the Udhampur-Banihalsection of the USBRL - a dream national project.

"Banihal-Khari Railway Station is expected to be thrown open any time after January 3 whereas the entire Katra-Banihal stretch is scheduled to be commissioned by March, 2024," senior Northern Railway officers have said.

"Once the track is opened for operations, the Kashmir Valley will be connected with the rest of the country through all-weather rail connectivity," they said.

Taking inspiration from PM's commitment towards Jan Aushadhi write prescriptions by Generic name

PM is 'single handedly' taking stresses on all economic & social fronts like Jan Aushadhi Pariyojna. Even after 14 Yrs of launch Jan Aushadi Medicines have not taken even 0.5% of Pharma Market?

Why so when Jan Aushadhi Medicines bear very Genuine Price tags as compared to Branded Generic Medicines?

■ DAYA SAGAR

Branded generic medicines were being sold and are still being sold in India at highly / unreasonably inflated prices , as high as even 4 to7 or 8 times more than a possible fair price for a patent free drug (at a particular time Amlodipine - 5mg Tab Jan Auashadi Rs.5/ 10 Tab, Amodep-5 Rs.15.55/14 Tab, Amlokind-5 Rs. 22.15/ 10 tab, Amanat- 5 Rs.22.37/10 tab , Amlip-5 Rs.24.97/10 tab, *Amtas 5 Rs. 74.93/30 tab, Amlovas 5 Rs.37.46/15 Tab, Mold 5mg Rs.39/10 Tab,Samloday 5 mg Rs.53.56/10 Tab ,*Espin-5 Rs.66.50/10 Tab) which could be well seen from the price labels of drugs be sold by chemical/ generic name through JAN AUSHADI Stores (initiated in 2008 .under Jan Aushadhi Compaign Scheme and now being handled under Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana(PMBJP after 2016 or so . But even after over 15 years of the Government of India having conceived the programme if one goes to the financial report 2022-23 of the handling Fanchise, Pharmaceuticals & Medical Devices Bureau of India -PMBI (upto it was being handled upto 2019-20 by Bureau of Pharma PSUs of India BPPI), in terms of Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP), one would find that in a country of 650000 villages total value of drugs/ appliances supplied to distributors/ Jan Aushadhi Stores / shops (revenue from operations) has been only Rs.790.1 Crore in 2022-23 in a country where may be as per rough estimates out of INR 400000 Cr worth MRP label market around INR 320000 cr to 360000 Cr drugs are free from any patent rights / as generic branded or generic medicines are being sold in domestic market. Imagine how much undue burden was still being put on an average Indian. No doubt after Prime Minister Narendra Modi took intimate interest in promoting the programme after 2014 there has been some marked improvement looking the financial data of the 2014-2015 report of BPPI which mentioned revenue from operations as only Rs.5.62 Cr and for 2017 -18 as just Rs.102.1 Cr.

One would ask even when the Jan Aushadhi drugs are available at so low prices in comparison to the drugs sold under brand names in trade then why the sales have been so low even after PM has adopted the programme as his intimate flag ship programme ? Why the ventors are not rushing to open Janaushadhi outlets even when the BPPI /PMBI offers incentives to outlet seekers ? The answer well lies in facts that the agencies/ departments that have been given the task for implementing the venture have not so far worked sincerely to carry ahead the mission of the Prime Minister by even atleast ensuring that the doctors in Government hospitals write prescription by chemical name. The H&ME Departments have not been religiously working for enforcing writing prescriptions by chemical name even when in 'states' like J&K somewhere in 2017 orders were issued for establishment of prescription audit units in Government institutions to work on regular day basis but that have remained only a formality. Hardly one may find 'doctors' in J&K government hospitals writing prescriptions by chemical name even in emergency/OPD GMC Jammu , GNR Hospital , not even those government govt doctors who are allowed private practice while in their clinics and like barring a very few doctors in routine, what to talk of motivating/ forcing private clinics / doctors for writing prescription by chemical name atleast for patent free drugs.. Yes there may be a few cases where doctors in routine prefer writing prescription by chemical name as far as possible like the other day when the writer was so much impressed (rather even surprised) while laying hands last 21st December on a prescription very neatly written by chemical names by Dr. Nishu Gupta (skin specialist) in Sub District Hospital Sarwal Jammu. Such doctors must be recognised.

A Look through the Mist

Part-I

It is not out of place to mention here that medicines if prescribed under generic/ technical name/ chemical name would make even the manufacturers of a medicine using same technical grade material to mark their drug with a competitive MRP which most of them generally do not do when they market with a brand name for selling with the assistance of the 'Prescription Writer'..

No doubt with coming up of Jan Aushadhi primitive indications are there where some manufacturers have either brought down their branded product MRP or atleast they have not increased further but that is too less an achievement for a 15 yr old Pariyojna.

Unfairly marked MRP fleeces all of the society, whether rich or poor, ofcourse the rich may be able to bear the brunt and the economically weaker / poor may be further crushed or may even 'skip' taking timely treatment

No doubt there has been some noticeable increase in the sale of 'generic' medicines labeled with chemical names as supplied though Jan Aushadhi Shops by BPPI/ Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Bureau of India (PMBI) after 2018 but credit for that goes only to Prime Minister of India and not to the agencies/ officers who have been retained to do the work on ground since 2008 which could be seen from the Rs.790.1 Cr turnover of PMBI in 2022/2023 in proportion to total market available (INR 320000 cr to Rs 360000 Cr). But looking at the facts like (i) that the JA generic drugs are genuinely priced much lower than those sold under brand names by private companies (ii) the Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Bureau of India (PMBI) provides financial cost & infrastructure support to those who take to starting such shops/ Kendras the sales have been very much frustrating.

Had the Member Pharma PSEs of BPPI/PMBI, the Administration in Health & Medical Education Departments and political masters worked even with 'a quarter' of as commitment with what as Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been working on day basis for promoting Jan Aushadhi drugs a couple of lakhs of INR would have been saves from draining out into the 'pockets' of those in unfair trade of marketing drugs with inflated MRPs with the assistance of prescription writers (prescription writing has to be promoted and enforced by Health administration and PM is not supposed to come to enforce it).Ofcourse civil society is also supposed to assist the programmes of PM by proving feedback from ground and the status shows social groups too have failed in promoting the programme. Writer has been closely following the JA since 2010 and is of the opinion that more work for promotion of JA has been done by consumers who have been messaging their friends/ relations than those in medical profession.

To be continued

(The author is Sr Journalist, social activist and analyst J&K affairs).