

India placed as global leader in 'Space Docking': Dr Jitendra

STATE TIMES NEWS
NEW DELHI: ISRO's Space Docking Experiment (SPADEX) marks a groundbreaking achievement, placing India on par with global leaders in space docking technology. Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh hailed the mission as a milestone while addressing the media today in New Delhi following the successful launch of PSLV-C60 from Sriharikota on December 30.

Dr. Jitendra Singh said, the SPADEX mission is a pivotal project by ISRO aimed at developing and demonstrating technologies for spacecraft rendezvous, docking, and undocking using two small satellites. These capabilities are critical for future missions, including satellite servicing, space station operations, and interplanetary exploration, he said.

The primary objectives of SPADEX, said the Minister, include Demonstrating technology for spacecraft rendezvous and docking, Showcasing controllability in docked conditions to extend the life of target spacecraft and Testing power transfer between docked satellites.

The mission also includes post-docking activities, with spacecraft conducting independent payload



operations. According to Dr. Jitendra Singh the docking is expected to occur on January 7, 2025, at noon.

Dr. Jitendra Singh highlighted a significant collaboration between the Department of Biotechnology and ISRO to explore the application of biology in Space.

"Under PM Narendra Modi's leadership, India will lead in 'Space-Biology' by studying physiological changes in space environments," he stated.

Reflecting on the transformation of India's space journey, Dr. Jitendra Singh credited Prime Minister Modi for liberating the sector from a "veil of secrecy" that limited resources and innovation for decades. He noted the

pivotal role of the 2023 New Space Policy, which for the first time allowed private sector participation in ISRO's activities.

This policy has led to a surge in space startups, growing from a single-digit count in 2021 to nearly 300 in 2023. Notable startups include AgniKul Cosmos, which established a private launchpad on ISRO premises, and Skyroot, which executed India's first private sub-orbital launch. "These startups are reinforcing ISRO's infrastructure and attracting global attention from companies like SpaceX," Dr. Singh remarked.

According to Dr. Singh, the space economy valued at \$8.4 billion in 2023 is projected to grow to \$44 billion by 2033. Investments in the sector reached ₹1000 crore in 2023 alone, placing India as a frontline biology in Space.

Dr. Singh outlined an ambitious timeline: January 2025: NAVIC advancements and the launch of a US satellite for mobile communication in February 2025: Vyommitra, a female robot, will undertake astronaut-like tasks for the Gaganyaan mission. 2026: First crewed Gaganyaan mission. 2035: India's own space station, Bharat Antariksh. 2047:

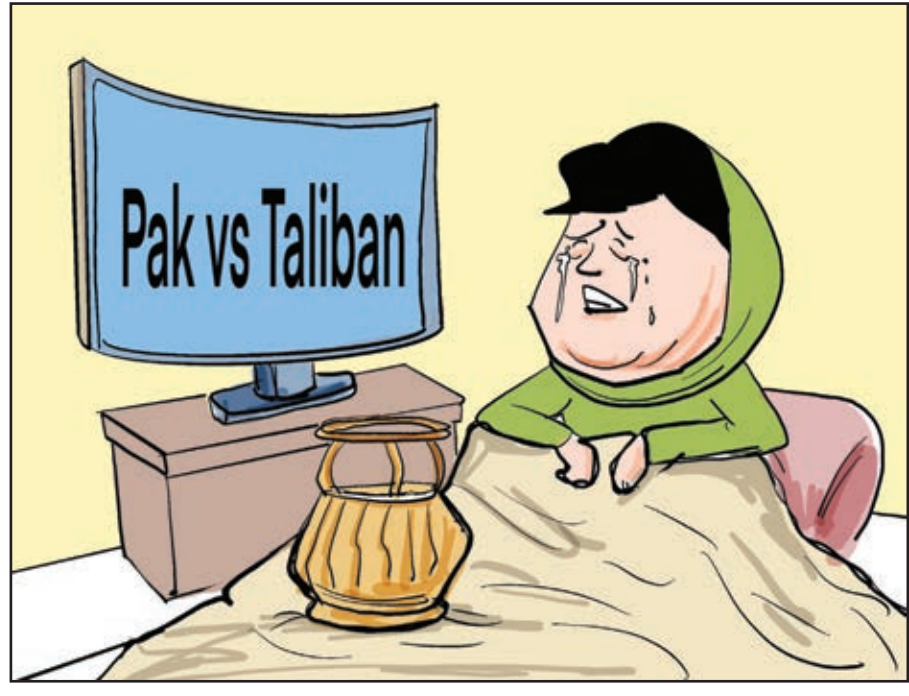
First Indian astronaut to land on the moon.

He also highlighted achievements in 2024, such as the Aditya L1 solar mission and the launch of satellites for international clients.

India's space sector has emerged as a significant foreign exchange earner. Of the ₹220 million earned through launching foreign satellites, ₹187 million-85% of the total was generated in the last eight years. Countries benefiting from ISRO's services include the USA, France, Japan, and more.

Dr. Jitendra Singh emphasized the diverse applications of space technologies in agriculture, defense, water resource management, smart cities, and infrastructure development. Initiatives like Mission Mausam for weather forecasting demonstrate the impact of India's growing space capabilities.

Concluding the briefing, Dr. Jitendra Singh expressed optimism for India's space sector. "Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, India's space and science capabilities are at their peak. The upcoming years will witness unparalleled achievements and contributions to global space exploration," he stated.



Katra shut for week against ropeway project

STATE TIMES NEWS
REASI/JAMMU: The health department officials conducted a full medical check-up of the youths continuing their hunger strike to press for the release of several persons detained during protests in Katra, the base camp of Mata Vaishno Devi, with the holy town observing a shutdown for the seventh day on Tuesday against the proposed ropeway project in Trikuta hills of Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district.



The Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Sangharsh Samiti called for the shutdown on Wednesday, announcing that all activities in Katra would remain suspended.

All shops, restaurants and business establishments remained closed for the seventh day on Tuesday and traffic stayed off the roads in the holy town following the Samiti's call for protest.

The shutdown has disrupted normal life in one of the busiest towns in the country, as thousands of pilgrims arrive daily to pay obeisance at the cave shrine.

Eight youths are on a hunger strike, demanding the release of 18 members of the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Sangharsh Samiti who were detained during a protest march against

the ropeway project in Katra. Several protesters, including Samiti leaders Bhupinder Singh and Sobhan Chand, were detained and taken away in a police vehicle from the protest site during Wednesday's march.

One youth on hunger strike has been hospitalised.

As the year comes to an end, the number of pilgrims visiting the cave shrine to pay obeisance has increased drastically in the Katra base camp.

Heavy rush of pilgrims is being seen at counters and checkpoints in the town. Despite facing difficulties, the pilgrims are enthusiastic about paying obeisance at the abode of Mata on New Year's day.

"We have come here as a group of 23 persons to pay obeisance at the shrine on New Year's day. We seek blessings for our families and the country," said Devi Sharan, a resident of Rajasthan's Jaipur.

Asserting that faith is a bigger driving force than facilities, he said, "We knew there is a continuous shutdown in Jammu resulting in fewer boarding and lodging facilities. Even then, we have come to pay our obeisance to seek blessings for ourselves and our families." However, the other pilgrims on their way to the abode of Mata said that many people have cancelled their tickets due to the shutdown.

Last month, the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board announced plans to install a ropeway to facilitate access to the temple for senior citizens, children and others, who find it challenging to climb the 13-km-long track to the cave shrine. The proposed Rs 250-crore ropeway project will connect Tarakote Marg to Sanji Chhat, leading to the cave shrine in Reasi district.

Bahu Fort Aquarium cum Oceanarium to become prime tourist attraction in Jammu: Javed Dar

STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Javed Ahmad Dar on Tuesday remarked that Bahu Fort Aquarium Cum Oceanarium will become prime tourist attraction in Jammu region in coming days.



Agriculture Minister, Javed Ahmad Dar visiting Bahu Fort Aquarium Cum Oceanarium on Tuesday.

These remarks were made by the Minister during his visit to Aquarium Cum Awareness Centre, Bahu Fort to take stock of ongoing works on Phase-II of the project.

During his inspection, the Minister was informed that the establishment of Aquarium Cum Awareness Centre was proposed to be completed in two phases.

Execution of Phase-II works was started by the department through PWD (R&B) Department under

Smart City Limited at an estimated cost of Rs. 18.57 Crores.

Underlining that the need for expediting work on Oceanarium under Phase-II, the Minister maintained that it (Oceanarium) will become a prime tourist attraction as first of its kind in North India and third such project in India.

He said the Oceanarium shall be harbouring various varieties of Marine Fishes in a Glass Tunnel with a holding capacity of about 4,00,000 Litres of water. He added that the Oceanarium at Bahu Fort will be developed as prime tourist spot.

He instructed for undertaking up gradation/face-lifting of some already existing structures so that the works on the same are completed by or before the opening of Oceanarium.

The Minister also directed

the Officers of the department to carry out the implementation of schemes in private sector strictly in accordance to the guidelines of the schemes and achieve the targets in a stipulated timeframe.

He directed officers to work with zeal and zest to cover maximum number of beneficiaries under various Fish culture schemes allotted to them.

Stating that the Fisheries sector has vast potential for employment generation, the minister urged youth to avail benefits under the department's schemes.

During the inspection, the Minister was informed that works on the Oceanarium involving certain technicalities are going on in full swing and shall be completed within

two months.

While as phase-I of the project was thrown open in the year 2007, attracting good number of tourists, visitors on daily basis.

Among the visiting points, the project also comprises of Multimedia Hall where lectures regarding fish culture are delivered to the students and 24 number of Aqua-caves with different water holding capacities wherein more than 120 species of Fishes are being reared and put to display.

The Minister was accompanied by the Director Fisheries Abdul Majeed Tak; Joint Director Fisheries (Central) Jammu Masood Hussain Sheikh; Joint Director Fisheries (Chenab Valley) Jammu Gopal Krishan and other senior officers of the Department.

DC Jammu calls for extensive promotion of PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana



DC Jammu, Sachin Kumar Vaishya chairing a meeting on Tuesday.

STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: Deputy Commissioner Sachin Kumar Vaishya on Tuesday chaired a meeting to work out an action plan for promotion of Pradhan Mantri Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana. Deputy Commissioner instructed Sub-Divisional Magistrates and Executive Engineers of the Power Development Department to coordinate and organise awareness activities. He emphasised motivating individuals constructing new houses to understand the benefits and cost savings of installing solar

power systems. Additionally, he stressed the importance of addressing public queries to enhance awareness.

To ensure the scheme's success, the Deputy Commissioner called for regular progress reviews and the achievement of set targets.

The meeting was attended by Additional District Development Commissioner Sher Singh, Assistant Commissioner General Vikas Dhar Bagati, Chief Planning Officer Uttam Singh, along with SDMs besides senior PDD officers.

Speaker reviews arrangements for training programme for newly elected MLAs

STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: Speaker, Jammu and Kashmir, Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly (JKLA), Abdul Rahim Rather on Tuesday convened a meeting with senior officers of Information, floriculture and State Motor Garage Departments to review and finalize the necessary arrangements for smooth conducting of three days training programme for newly elected MLAs of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

The orientation program will be held from 9th to 11th January, 2025 at Central Hall of J&K Legislative Assembly Jammu in collaboration with the Parliamentary Research and Training Institute for Democracies (PRIDE), Lok Sabha Secretariat, New Delhi.



Speaker JKLA, Abdul Rahim Rather chairing a meeting on Tuesday.

Addressing the officers during the meeting, the Speaker underlined that imparting of training to the newly elected legislators is the dire necessity in order to enable them to place matters of the public interest before the House.

During the meeting, the Speaker directed the concerned stakeholders to make necessary arrangements of their respective departments well in

advance for smooth conduct of the training programme. He directed the floriculture department for proper decoration of entry gate of J&K Legislative Assembly and dice of Central Hall.

The Speaker also directed the officers of Information department to make necessary

arrangements for proper coverage of the event besides other required arrangements.

He also directed the officers of State Motor Garage to arrange adequate vehicles for smooth movements of VIPs and other senior officers during the program. He directed the SSP Security

Civil Secretariat for making fool proof security arrangements in and around the Civil Secretariat Jammu during the program.

Responding to the instructions given by the Speaker, the concerned officers present in meeting assured the Speaker of successful conduct of training programme with timely arrangements well in advance.

Secretary, JKLA, Manoj Kumar Pandita; Director, Floriculture, Jatinder Singh; Director, State Motor Garage, Malik Tahir Gani; Joint Director, Information Jammu, Atul Gupta; SSP Security, Civil Secretariat, Sajjad Khaliq Bhat and other concerned officers attended the meeting.

Court awards five years RI to Pak ISI Agent

STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: Principal Sessions Judge Rajouri Rajeev Gupta today awarded five years rigorous imprisonment and fine Rs 50000 Abdul Qayoom, son of Sher Mohd, resident of Village Lehran, Tehsil Nowshera, District Rajouri an agent of Pakistan Intelligence Agency ISI.

According to the police case that that on November 28, 2014, Major Adjutant for Commanding Officer, Jhangar Rashtriya Rifles Battalion C/O 56 APO, lodged a written report with the SHO, Police Station, Nowshera, alleging therein that on November 27, 2014 at 0615 hours, an unidentified terrorist, who had crossed over the Line of Control, was apprehended near the fence at Lehran COB of Jhangar Rashtriya Rifles Battalion. On seeing the

suspicious movement, the area was cordoned and the individual was apprehended before he could react.

The said individual disclosed his name as Abdul Quoom alias Punjabi, son of Sher Mohd, resident of Village Lehran and he had crossed over to Pakistan in the year 2004. 01 AK-47 19750E7744, 01 Pakistan made pistol 145543BB, 01 AK-47 Mag, 02 Mag pistol, 30 AK047 Rds, 01 pistol belt, Rs.8100/- Pakistani currency, 01 key, 01 lighter, medicines made in Islamabad, Pakistani, food items and telephone diary were recovered from the apprehended terrorist and the same were seized. The said individual alongwith seized items was handed over to the Police Post, Lam.

On this written report, a case FIR No.183/2014 for offences under Sections 7/25 Arms Act, 2/3 E&IMCO and 121/122

Sanitation workers to get accidental insurance coverage: JMC Commissioner

STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: Municipal Corporation (JMC), Dr. Devansh Yadav on Tuesday extended warm New Year greetings to the people of Jammu and Kashmir in general and to the employees of the Jammu Municipal Corporation and their families in particular.

Dr. Yadav encouraged everyone, "Let us work together to make Jammu and Kashmir a better place to live and work".

The Commissioner announced that Jammu Municipal Corporation is taking a pathbreaking initiative to benefit sanitary workers contracted through NGOs in the

Corporation. "In collaboration with J&K Bank and Bajaj Allianz, JMC will provide accidental insurance cover of Rs. 5 lakh to these workers from the new year" the Commissioner announced.

The premium will be paid through the NGOs, he said and added that this initiative aims to enhance the sense of safety and security among the workers and their families, thereby boosting their confidence.

Dr. Yadav further emphasized that these workers would also reap the benefits from government welfare schemes aimed at improving the lives of the working class.

KPs integral part of our culture: Dy CM



Dy CM, Surinder Choudhary addressing a function at Jagti Township, Nagrota.

STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary on Tuesday reaffirmed that Kashmiri Pandits (KPs) are an integral part of the cultural and social fabric of Jammu and Kashmir and government is committed towards their dignified rehabilitation.

The Deputy CM made these remarks while addressing a function on the side lines of his visit to Jagti Township, Nagrota here today.

The Deputy CM was accompanied by Relief Commissioner (Migrants), Director Health Services Jammu, Director General Floriculture, Director Food supplies Jammu, and other senior officers.

On the occasion, Surinder Choudhary reiterated the government's dedication to addressing the concerns of Kashmiri Pandits and ensuring their well-being through targeted initiatives, robust support system and various welfare schemes.

"Efforts are being intensified to provide a better quality of life for the residents of Jagti township and Kashmiri Migrants as a whole and our commitment to their rehabilitation is unwavering," he stated.

The Deputy Chief Minister directed the officers to redress the grievances of the residents within the shortest possible time.

During his visit, the Deputy CM conducted a comprehensive review of the facilities available for the township residents. He assessed the status of health and education infrastructure, availability of drinking water and other essential services. In a detailed inspection of healthcare services at the Sub-District Hospital (SDH) in Jagti, the Deputy CM directed Director Health Services to ensure uninterrupted and high-quality medical care services. He also stressed on adequate supply of medicines to meet the needs of the patients besides upgrading the existing infrastructure at the hospital.