

Dr Jitendra launches 'Kisan Kavach', world's first anti-pesticide bodysuit for farmers

STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Union Minister, Dr. Jitendra Singh on Tuesday launched "Kisan Kavach", Bharat's indigenous and world's first anti-pesticide bodysuit.

Designed to protect farmers from the harmful effects of pesticide exposure, this innovation marks a transformative step in ensuring farmer safety and aligns with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of using science and technology to empower the agricultural community.

Highlighting the significance of the initiative while addressing the media at National Media Centre here today, Dr. Jitendra Singh emphasized that the Kisan Kavach is a groundbreaking solution addressing a critical gap in farmer safety. Developed by BRIC-inStem, Bangalore, in collaboration with Sepio Health Pvt. Ltd., the bodysuit offers protection against pesticide-induced toxicity, which often leads to severe health complications, including breathing disorders, vision loss, and, in extreme cases, death.

"Kisan Kavach is not just a product but a promise to our



Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh addressing media after launching "Kisan Kavach" at National Media Centre, New Delhi on Tuesday.

farmers to safeguard their health as they continue to feed the nation," Dr. Jitendra Singh stated. The washable and reusable suit, priced at Rs 4,000, can last up to a year and employs advanced fabric technology to deactivate harmful pesticides upon contact, ensuring farmer safety like never before.

Dr. Jitendra Singh commended the efforts of the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) and BRIC-inStem for spearheading the project and delivering a society-centric innovation. He highlighted the Modi Government's sustained focus on integrating science, technology, and innovation to empower the agricultural sector, reflecting in initiatives such as Kisan Kavach and

policies like the BioE3 bio-manufacturing initiative.

"Over the last decade, the number of biotech startups in India has surged to over 8,500, putting us on track to achieve a \$300 billion bioeconomy. With initiatives like Kisan Kavach, we are not only safeguarding our farmers but also advancing towards climate-resilient agriculture and sustainable development," he added.

The manufacturing process involves covalent attachment of a nucleophile on cotton fabric, which is stitched as "Kisan Kavach®". This Kisan Kavach fabric can deactivate pesticides upon contact through nucleophilic mediated hydrolysis, thereby preventing

pesticide-induced toxicity and lethality. These findings are reported in the journal Nature Communications, (<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-024-49167-3>)

The event also saw the distribution of the first batch of Kisan Kavach suits to farmers, marking a significant step in protecting the 65% of India's population engaged in agriculture. Dr. Jitendra Singh assured that as production scales up, the suit's affordability will increase, making it accessible to more farmers nationwide.

Dr. Jitendra Singh concluded by reiterating the government's commitment to leveraging science for societal good, calling Kisan Kavach a beacon of hope for

India's agricultural community. "This transformative technology not only addresses an urgent need but also showcases India's capability to innovate for its people," he said.

The event was graced by the presence of Dr. Rajesh S. Gokhale, Secretary, Department of Biotechnology; Dr. Maneesha Inamdar, Director, BRIC-inStem; and Dr. Alka Sharma, Scientist 'H' and Senior Adviser, DBT, who highlighted the collaborative efforts behind this transformative innovation.



Akhil Bharatiya Purv Sainik Seva Parishad felicitates Sham Lal



Akhil Bharatiya Purv Sainik Seva Parishad members with MLA Sham Lal Sharma at felicitation ceremony.

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: In a heartwarming event, Akhil Bharatiya Purv Sainik Seva Parishad (J&K, UT, and Ladakh) honored Sham Lal Sharma, MLA Jammu North, for his resounding success in the recent assembly elections and his steadfast commitment to public welfare. The program witnessed the presence of key association members.

The event was presided over by Brigadier Balbir Singh (Retd.), President of the association. Speaking on the occasion, Brigadier Balbir Singh praised Sham Lal Sharma's dedication and leadership.

"Sham Lal Sharma has always stood by the people, and today, we honor him

for his vision of a progressive and harmonious Jammu North. The involvement of all sectors of society, including veterans, is critical in shaping a better tomorrow for our youth and ensuring justice and prosperity reach every corner."

In his address, Sham Lal Sharma, MLA Jammu North, expressed his gratitude for the honor and reiterated his unwavering commitment to the development of the region. He said: "I feel deeply humbled by this felicitation and the trust shown by the retired servicemen who have served our nation with bravery and dedication. The development of Jammu North is not just my mission but a collective effort that requires the involvement of every section of society. Together, we can identify the gaps, tack-

le weaknesses, and ensure justice and development reach every individual without delay."

Highlighting his vision further, Sharma added, "Our mission is to lead by example, fostering peace, harmony, and inclusiveness across Jammu North. Combating social evils such as drug abuse and other malpractices is a priority to safeguard the future of our younger generations. For this, the involvement of veterans, youth, women, and community leaders is vital. We will work relentlessly to create opportunities, promote welfare initiatives, and ensure no section of society is left behind."

In a concluding note, Sham Sharma remarked, "The development of Jammu North will only be achieved through unity, collective action, and

accountability. Every sector of society must play a role in addressing challenges, promoting harmony, and contributing towards a shared vision of growth. Together, we will make Jammu North an example of justice, prosperity, and collective progress for the entire region."

The event witnessed an overwhelming presence of senior veterans, including Brigadier Balbir Singh (Retd.), Col VS Mangotra (Retd.), Col Sukhbir Singh (Retd.), Capt Paras Ram Sharma (Retd.), Capt Surjit Singh (Retd.), and other retired servicemen.

The veterans reaffirmed their commitment to supporting Sham Lal Sharma in his mission to bring comprehensive development, peace, and prosperity to the Jammu North Constituency.

Strengthening financial outreach, J&K Bank opens new branch at Rahain in Samba

STATE TIMES NEWS

SAMBA: Reinforcing its commitment to provide modern banking facilities across the Union Territory, J&K Bank on Tuesday inaugurated a new branch at Rahain in Samba district, which falls under its Kathua Zone.

MLA (Ramgarh) Dr. Devinder Kumar Manyal inaugurated the branch in the presence of DGM & Zonal Head (Kathua) Sanjeev Kumar, Cluster Head (Samba) Sanjay Belowo, and DDC Member Asha Rani amid a gathering of valuable customers, prominent citizens, local residents and other officials.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Devinder Kumar Manyal expressed his gratitude to J&K Bank for addressing the



MLA Ramgarh Dr. Devinder Manyal inaugurating J&K Bank branch at Rahain in Samba district.

demand of the people of the border area by opening a branch equipped with all modern facilities. He congratulated the local residents, emphasizing that the branch would cater to their diverse banking needs, significantly benefiting the people living in surrounding areas.

Commending the Bank's

role in the economic development of the region, he remarked, "J&K Bank's efforts in expanding its presence across the region are commendable, as it brings banking services right to the doorsteps of people living in far-flung and border areas also."

Reiterating the Bank's com-

mitment to empowering people, Zonal Head said, "J&K Bank remains steadfast in its resolve to support the people of this region in their financial needs leading to their social upliftment and employment generation. This branch is equipped with state-of-the-art facilities and will provide world-class banking services to the local population and will further boost the economic growth of this area."

After the inauguration, the dignitaries along with Zonal Head interacted with the local residents and customers. The participants expressed their gratitude to the Bank for commissioning the banking touch-point and assured their full support and cooperation in strengthening the Bank's business in the region.

Gaurav calls for designated protest zones to prevent public inconvenience

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Gaurav Gupta, former General Secretary of Chamber of Commerce and Industry Jammu, expressed deep concern over the frequent blocking of roads and bridges in Jammu due to protests and demonstrations.

Highlighting the severe inconvenience caused to the public, he stressed the need for a more structured approach to public demonstrations to ensure minimal disruption to daily life.

While addressing the issue, Gaurav Gupta stated, "Blocking roads and bridges during protests creates immense hardship for the common people. Many face medical



emergencies, miss important meetings, flights, and trains, or struggle to pick up their children from schools on time. Such situations not only inconvenience the public but also tarnish the purpose of the protests."

Drawing inspiration from the models implemented by various state and union territory governments, Gaurav suggested, "Protests are organized at designated locations like Jantar Mantar, Ram Leela Ground, and Bhurari Ground in Delhi, Azad Maidan and Exhibition Ground in Goregaon, Mumbai, Rally Ground Sec 25 in Chandigarh, Eco Garden in Lucknow (U.P.), and Freedom Park

in Bangalore, allowing people to voice their concerns without causing significant inconvenience to others.

Jammu can also adopt a similar framework to balance democratic rights and public convenience."

Appealing to the Lt Governor of J&K, Manoj Sinha, Gaurav his Administration to allocate a specific area where individuals, organizations, or political parties can hold protests and demonstrations. "A dedicated protest site would allow people to raise their voices effectively while ensuring that essential services and the smooth flow of traffic are not disrupted," he added.

He further called upon citizens to exercise their democratic rights responsibly. "While everyone has the right to protest, blocking roads and

bridges affects thousands of innocent people who are not part of the protest. I appeal to everyone to avoid such practices and consider alternative ways to make their voices heard," he remarked.

Gaurav emphasized that striking a balance between the right to protest and maintaining public convenience is essential for a harmonious society. He assured that his suggestions are not against protests but aimed at ensuring that these important expressions of democracy do not inadvertently harm the very people they are intended to support.

The former General Secretary expressed hope that the administration and the public would work together to implement this vision for a more organized and considerate approach to protests in Jammu.

MVD mulls drive against Number Plate Masking, carriage of goods by passenger vehicles

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Transport Commissioner Vishesh Paul Mahajan on Tuesday reviewed the working of offices of the Motor Vehicle Department at a meeting here today. The ARTOs of Jammu Division attended the meeting in person, while RTO and ARTOs of Kashmir Division participated through virtual mode.

The Transport

Commissioner directed the officers to streamline the functioning of the field offices to provide hassle free services to the general public being offered by the Transport Department. He further directed the officers to launch special drives against Number Plate masking and carrying of goods by the passenger vehicles.

The Transport Commissioner directed

the officers and officials of the Motor Vehicles Department to be polite and at the same time firm in dealing with any kind of violations by the drivers and emphasised to deal strictly against overloading, drunken driving, rash driving, driving without helmet.

He wanted them to go for seizure of vehicles and cancellation of Driving License of habitual offenders.

CGPWA celebrates National Pensioners' Day

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Central Govt Pensioners' Welfare Association, Jammu (CGPWA) on Tuesday celebrated the 42rd National Pensioners' Welfare Association with gaiety and enthusiasm.

Former Chief Secretary B R Kundal was the Chief Guest and President of CGPWA and former CVC & DGP Kuldeep Khoda presided over the function.

Among others present included the Patron S. S. Wazir, Dr. Ashok Bhan, former DGP, Ashok Angurana, former Secretary, Govt of India, and B R Sharma former Chief Secretary.

This day is celebrated all over the country on 17th December as on this day in 1982 the constitution bench of the Supreme Court delivered a landmark judgment guaranteeing dignity and decency to the retired officials by giving them pension as a constitutional right. Considered as a Magna Carta for Indian pensioners, the Supreme Court held that "Pension is neither a bounty, nor a matter of grace depending upon the sweet will of the employer (Govt) nor an ex-gratia payment. It is a payment for the past services rendered..." On this day, the pensioners remember, with grate-

fulness the late D. S. Nakara, retired Financial Advisor in the Indian Defence Services, who fought this case for a decade and won it, extending the benefit of the pension to all employees, overturning the then discriminatory Liberalized Pension Scheme of 1979.

On the occasion, four 85 years old members of the Association were honoured including G N Naik IAS (Retd) who will be completing his century in April next year. He was presented with a shawl and a memento.

Other three veterans honoured are Dileep Singh IAS (Retd) Anup Singh IPS (Retd) and H L Sangra from Central Ground Water Commission.

The function was marked by musical event with Bollywood's mesmerizing old hit songs and gazals sung by the noted artist group of Subash Langeh which took the pensioners to their youthful days; health talk Ophthalmology and a presentation on "Retirement Solutions for Health, Wealth, and Longevity" for pensioners. Former Dry Commissioner, Central Custom & Excise, M L Toofan IRS (Retd) presented a Dogri poem on the plight of pensioners.



Central Govt Pensioners' Welfare Association, Jammu members at a programme.

Dr Abhishek Sachdeva of CGHS empaneled Sachdeva Netralaya gave a presentation on Eye diseases, their treatment, and latest advances in technology. He explained that the most common disease of Cataract, mostly related to age, is safely cured by surgery. Glaucoma, he said, is chronic progressive eye disease caused by damage to the optic nerve. Cataract affects the lens but Glaucoma affects optic nerve.

Dr. Sachdeva said that Diabetic Retinopathy is the second commonest cause of vision loss after cataract. It damages Retina permanently if not treated on time.

Quoting data, he said according to the international diabetes federation, India has 72.9 million diabetics and according to an estimate, 8.4% of India's adult population have diabetes and by 2045, it will go up to 134.3 million. So, it is essential for everyone and especially the older persons to be serious about diabetes.

Referring to the latest advances in technology, Dr Sachdeva said that the Optical Coherence Tomography (OCT) is a non-invasive imaging technology that uses light to create 3D images of tissue which works by measuring wavelengths of infrared light. It

reflects off the back of retina and allows eye specialists to examine eye in layers and to measure the depth of important structures. This helps them to diagnose and treat eye conditions.

Tripti Sharma of Bajaj Capital spoke about holistic retirement solutions and explained a wide range of financial products suitable for retired persons. She said that it is essential that senior citizens carefully invest in such financial products which protect them from inflation, falling rate of interest and Taxes. She said that capital should not fall below the principal amount invested.

Kundal said it was a good tradition to celebrate this day and express gratitude to Nakra who fought and got all retired officials a constitutional right of pension. He said such occasions provided an opportunity to meet former colleagues and fondly recalled good old days spent with them. He said that we are fortunate to be in good health as only a small percentage of the population cross 75 years of age and that should be celebrated.

Kuldeep Khoda in his presidential address spoke about strenuous efforts of D S Nakara in establishing the right of retired employees to get pension. He said that the system of pension has widely improved and most of the issues stood resolved due to intervention and support of Dr Jitendra Singh who has been instrumental in addressing these concerns including in matters of CGHS. He talked at length about the improvement in CGHS services and many hospitals in Jammu have been CGHS empaneled and another one of Ujala group is likely to be empaneled next month. The Jammu AIIMS is also being empaneled shortly. Referring to continuous improvement in services, he said

that the CGHS has launched a pilot project to deliver medicines at the residence of beneficiaries who are above 75. He also thanked the Chief Secretary Atul Dulloo for addressing some of the concerns of CGPWA including giving accommodation at Wazarat Road. The Wellness Centre at Exhibition Ground Jammu is also being shifted to better accommodation at Ambphalla.

J K Vaid, former General Secretary CGPWA talked at length about the history of the CGPWA in Jammu and the contributions made by the founding members and many others. He also dwelt with the establishment of CGHS Wellness Centres in Jammu and their growth over the years. He also threw light on various Central Govt schemes which the Pensioners Associations including Jammu are enthusiastically implementing.

The Vice President, CGPWA Dr Sudharshan Kumar presented a formal Vote of Thanks. Earlier, the General Secretary K B Jandial welcomed the guests and members and read out the operating part of the 1982 Supreme Court landmark Judgement.