



UT Govt ensuring world class healthcare facilities for all in Ladakh: LG Kavinder

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KARGIL: The Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta, on Tuesday described the inauguration of a modern 3 Tesla MRI facility at District Hospital Kargil as a proud and historic moment not only for Kargil but for the entire Union Territory of Ladakh. He said the facility would ensure that people living in remote, hilly and border areas are no longer deprived of world-class diagnostic services due to geographical or climatic challenges.

The Lt Governor dedicated the state-of-the-art MRI facility to the people of Kargil in the presence of CEC LAHDC Kargil Dr. Jaffer Akhoun, Member of Parliament Mohd Hanifa Jan, Executive Councillors, and special



LG Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta inaugurating modern 3 Tesla MRI facility at District Hospital Kargil.

guests including Chief Secretary Dr. Pawan Kotwal, Principal Secretary Sanjeev Khirwar, Deputy Commissioner Rakesh Kumar, SSP Nitin Yadav, Director Health Services Dr. Tashi Thimles, senior officers, religious heads, medical staff and students.

Highlighting Ladakh's harsh terrain, long winters and difficult connectivity, Shri Kavinder Gupta said healthcare delivery in the region has historically been challenging. However, he noted that sustained efforts in recent years have ensured that remoteness is no longer a barrier to quality

medical care. He said the installation of advanced diagnostic technology reflects the government's commitment to equitable healthcare and strengthening public health infrastructure.

The Lt Governor emphasized that the 3 Tesla MRI will enable faster and more accurate diagnosis of complex diseases. Earlier, patients from Kargil had to travel to Srinagar, Jammu, Chandigarh or Delhi, causing financial strain and mental stress. With the facility now available locally, patients and their families will receive significant relief.

He informed that nearly 8.76 percent of Ladakh's total budget is allocated to the health sector, higher than the national average. Ongoing

projects include a proposal to increase District Hospital Kargil's capacity from 100 to 200 beds, construction of a new 300-bed hospital block costing Rs 61 crore, staff quarters, an administrative block, a TB hospital, and the Rs 81-crore CHC Zaskar project.

CEC Dr. Jaffer Akhoun termed the facility a major milestone and thanked the administration for prioritizing Kargil. Chief Secretary Dr. Pawan Kotwal said the MRI facility marks a significant step toward timely diagnosis and quality healthcare delivery in the region.



From relying on foreign imports, India today self-reliant exporter: Dr Jitendra

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JAMMU: Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology, Dr Jitendra Singh today said that from relying on foreign imports, India today has, under the Modi regime, moved on to become a self-reliant nation and exporter in major sectors.

In crucial areas like defence and health also, India has now become a major exporter living up to the spirit of 'Swadeshi' and 'Atmanirbhar Bharat', the Minister added. 'The Minister said this while inaugurating an exhibition titled 'Swadeshi Mela' aimed at promoting self reliance (atmanirbhar) and sustainability. Dr Singh, while addressing the audience, said that today 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' has become a festival with various exhibitions displaying the spirit of self sufficiently and Swadeshi by artisans and entrepreneurs. He noted that such festivities were inconceivable a decade ago.

Dr Jitendra recalled that prior to 2014 people were unenthusiastic and wanted to settle abroad for better career and life prospects and India was counted amongst the 'Fragile five' economies of the world. He remarked that there has been a remarkable change in the last 12 years where India has transformed its position on the global stage from 'fragile five' to the first four economies of the



Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh speaking at the "Swadeshi Mela" at Bahu Plaza, Jammu on Wednesday.

world. Today nations look upto India for leadership and collaboration in a range of sectors from medicine and startups to defence and space. The Minister added that this was due to the hardwork, vision and persistent efforts of PM Narendra Modi who initiated schemes like Startup India and Standup India. While referring to Operation Sindoor, Dr Jitendra said that the operation was a testimony to the strength and self sufficiency of India in the defence sector that has been attained in the last decade. He added that the defence exports of India have grown rapidly in the last decade and have reached more than Rs 23000 crore displaying the efficiency and supremacy of Indian weaponry to the world. Similarly, the Minister said that earlier Indians used to go to other countries for medical procedures. However, this scenario has completely altered now with India exporting medical equip-

ment and devices along with medicines and healthcare services to the world. Exports of medical devices today stand at 3.8 billion and India is rapidly becoming the preferred medical tourism destination for patients from abroad due to their comparatively low costs. Dr Jitendra also said that India was increasingly becoming a leader in preventive care and was not limited to curative care with strengthening of the medical and research infrastructure of the country making other nations dependent on us for better health care facilities. While referring to the booming startup ecosystem in the country Dr Jitendra Singh said that presently there are 1.75 lakh startups in the country out of which around 50 percent are in tier II and tier III cities. He said that these startups constitute the soul of Viksit Bharat and will give a fillip to the economy in the years to come. The Minister said that PM Modi's

Atmanirbhar Bharat has given us the confidence, strength and the aspiration that we lacked over the last many years. He added that out of these startups around 60000 are women led startups depicting the rise in confidence of the nari shakti in big and small cities. Dr Jitendra said that despite having potential, India could not compete with other countries earlier 'due to lack of leadership. With strong and visionary leadership this is changing fast as India is becoming a global leader in various fields. Concluding, Dr Jitendra said that the golden era for India has now started and it is upto the current generation to make India future-ready and build ecosystems that help future generations realise their potential and live the dream of Viksit Bharat. MP Rajya Sabha, Sat Sharma and MP Lok Sabha Jugal Kishore were also present on the occasion. Numerous stalls were set up by entrepreneurs displaying their products that included handicrafts, handlooms, herbal cosmetics, bamboo and other sustainable products, handmade items, local cuisines etc. majority of the products were created by women at their homes or with help of small units. Some cooperatives working closely with Handloom and handicrafts departments had also participated.

Dy CM calls for pro-public decisions on Gair Mumkin Khads issues

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JAMMU: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, on Wednesday chaired a meeting of the Sub-Committee constituted to examine the issues related to Gair Mumkin Khads in Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting, held at the Civil Secretariat, Jammu, was attended by Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs Departments, Javed Ahmad Rana and Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, Cooperative and Election Departments, Javid Ahmad Dar, as members of the Sub-Committee.

Additional Chief Secretary, Jal Shakti Department, Shaleen Kabra, briefed the Sub-Committee on the current status of Gair Mumkin Khads and the challenges associated with their identification, protec-

tion and management.

Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Chief Minister emphasized the need for taking pro-public and pragmatic decisions to ensure amicable redress of genuine issues faced by the people. He stressed that the policy interventions must strike a balance between the environmental protection and safeguarding the livelihoods and property rights of citizens.

The Sub-Committee discussed in detail the existing status of Gair Mumkin Khads, Daryas and Nallahs, along with related concerns with the objective of providing relief to the general public wherever required.

The Deputy Chief Minister called for sensitization of all stakeholders and directed for proper scientific mapping of Gair Mumkin Khads, Nallahs and adjacent non-cultivable waste lands.

The meeting also discussed climatic challenges and measures being taken to mitigate climatic impact on the environment, human life and properties.

The Deputy Chief Minister asked for comprehensive mapping of flood-prone areas to strengthen the disaster preparedness and mitigate risks. He further instructed the concerned departments to take stringent action against the illegal encroachments and ensure retrieval of encroached land across Jammu and Kashmir in a time-bound manner.

The members of the Sub-Committee put forth their valuable suggestions and highlighted various public concerns requiring urgent attention.

Among others, the meeting was attended by Special Secretary, Jal Shakti and other concerned officers.



Principal Secretary Finance, Santosh D Vaidya chairing a meeting.

representatives of various Transporters' Associations of the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir.

During the meeting, the representatives of the transporters submitted a proposal seeking a hike of 40% in passenger fares, citing a substantial increase in operational costs.

The Committee held a detailed and threadbare discussion on the matter, taking into account multiple factors such as the sharp rise in the cost of spare parts, fuel-related expenses, taxes, maintenance costs, and other operational inputs. A comprehensive cost analysis exercise was also examined during the deliberations.

While acknowledging the genuine concerns raised by the transporters, the Committee

also carefully considered the socio-economic impact of fare revision on the general public, with particular emphasis on ensuring that the common man is not subjected to an undue financial burden.

After extensive deliberations and consensus among all stakeholders, it was unanimously decided that an 18% increase in passenger fares would be implemented across all categories of passenger vehicles operating in the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir and the revised fares shall come into effect from 01.01.2026.

The decision reflects a balanced approach aimed at safeguarding the sustainability of the transport sector while simultaneously protecting the interests of commuters.

Principal Secretary Finance chairs FRC meet

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JAMMU: Principal Secretary Finance, Santosh D Vaidya on Wednesday chaired a high-level meeting of the Fare Revision Committee (FRC) at Civil Secretariat here to deliberate upon the issue of revision of passenger transport fares across the Union Territory.

The meeting was attended by Secretary Transport, Avny Lavasa; Acting Transport Commissioner, J&K, Anju Gupta; Managing Director JKRTC Abdul Rashid War; Representative of Headquarters Northern Command (C/o 56 APO); Regional Transport Officer, Kashmir; Regional Transport Officer, Jammu, Additional Secretary GAD; members of the Committee, including rep-

President confers 'Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar 2025' on eminent Scientists

CSIR-Aroma Mission Team receives 'Rashtriya Vigyan Team Puraskar' 2025

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JAMMU: President Droupadi Murmu presented the awards to 24 scientists and innovators across disciplines, in the presence of Union Minister of Science and Technology Dr. Jitendra Singh.

The Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskars were instituted by the Modi government.

Taking to 'X', Dr Jitendra Singh wrote, "Congratulations 'Team Aroma' for the coveted #RashtriyaVigyanPuraskar 2025, in recognition of your contribution in gifting the world the concept of 'Purple Revolution' and presenting 'Lavender' as a new avenue of Agri-Entrepreneurship.... kindling prospects of attractive livelihood even in remote hilly terrains of the Himalayas".

The Aroma Mission team, working under the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, has been widely credited with translating laboratory research into field-level outcomes by promoting cultivation and processing of aromatic crops, particularly lavender, in the Himalayan region. Its work helped open new livelihood avenues for farmers in Jammu and Kashmir, reduced dependence on imports of essential oils, and demonstrated how coordinated scientific



President, Droupadi Murmu with scientists at the Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar-2025 award ceremony held at Gantantra Mandap.

intervention can lead to measurable socio-economic impact.

The recognition places collaborative, application-oriented science at the centre of the national awards framework. The Lavender cultivation and entrepreneurship, beginning from Bhaderwah and Gulmarg townships of J&K has now spread in other parts of the UT also and is being adopted by other States like Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh as well.

The Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar, instituted last year as part of a new national science awards architecture, is designed to acknowledge scientific work across the full spectrum - from lifetime achievement to early-career excellence and team-based innova-

tion. This year's ceremony marked the second edition of the awards, underscoring the government's intent to present science and technology honours in a structured, contemporary format aligned with global best practices.

Among the honours announced, the Vigyan Ratna for lifetime achievement was awarded posthumously to eminent astrophysicist Prof. Jayant Vishnu Narlikar, while several Vigyan Shri and Vigyan Yuva awards recognised individual contributions across physics, agriculture, biological sciences, chemistry, engineering, medicine, space science, mathematics, and technology. The full list of awardees spans senior scientists as well as researchers below

the age of 45, reflecting the award's emphasis on both experience and emerging talent.

Under the Vigyan Shri category, which recognises distinguished contributions in specific fields, awards were conferred on Dr. Gyanendra Pratap Singh (Agricultural Science), Dr. Yusuf Mohammad Sheikh (Atomic Energy), Dr. K. Thangaraj (Biological Sciences), Prof. Pradeep Thalappil (Chemistry), Prof. Aniruddha Bhalechandra Pandit (Engineering Sciences), Dr. S. Venkata Mohan (Environmental Science), Prof. Mahan Mj (Mathematics and Computer Science), and Jayan N (Space Science and Technology), highlighting sustained and field-defining

work across disciplines.

The Vigyan Yuva-Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Award, aimed at scientists below the age of 45, recognised emerging researchers for innovative contributions. Awardees included Prof. Amit Kumar Agarwal and Prof. Surlind Shrikant More in Physics; Dr. Jagdis Gupta Kapuganti and Dr. Satendra Kumar Mangrauthia in Agricultural Science; Dr. Deepa Agashe and Shri Debarka Sengupta in Biological Sciences; Dr. Dibyendu Das in Chemistry; Dr. Waliur Rahman in Earth Science; Prof. Arkaprava Basu in Engineering Sciences; Prof. Sabyasachi Mukherjee and Prof. Shweta Prem Agrawal in Mathematics and Computer

Science; Dr. Suresh Kumar in Medicine; Ankur Garg in Space Science and Technology; and Prof. Mohanasankar Sivaprakasam in Technology and Innovation.

Women scientists featured prominently among this year's awardees, with recognition across multiple categories and disciplines. Researchers such as Dr. Deepa Agashe and Prof. Shweta Prem Agrawal were honoured for their work, reflecting the growing participation and leadership of women in India's scientific ecosystem. Dr. Jitendra Singh congratulated all the award recipients, stating that their work reflected the depth and diversity of India's scientific talent and underscored the role of science and technology in addressing national priorities and improving the quality of life of citizens.

The presence of the President and the Science and Technology Minister was seen as reinforcing the national priority accorded to scientific research, innovation, and its translation into public value. The awards framework also seeks to bring clarity to categories, particularly the young scientist segment, by clearly defining age and achievement criteria.

With the Aroma Mission's recog-

nition, the ceremony highlighted how government-backed scientific programmes, when anchored in local needs and implemented through teamwork, can deliver outcomes that go beyond laboratories and journals. As India looks to strengthen its science-led development model, the Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar is increasingly positioned as a platform that connects research excellence with national priorities and grassroots impact.

The Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR) Aroma Mission Team, which heralded the 'Lavender Mission' in Jammu and Kashmir, won the Vigyan Team award. The team include Dr. Prabodh K. Trivedi, Dr. Anil Kumar Tripathi, Dr. Alok Kalra, Dr. Ram Vishwakarma, Dr. D.S. Reddy, Dr. Sudesh Yadav, Dr. Zabeer Ahmed, Dr. Ajit Kumar Shasany, Dr. Saudan Singh, Dr. Sanjay Kumar, Dr. Manoj Semwal, Dr. Suphla Gupta, Dr. Mohan Lal, Dr. Sanat Sujat, Dr. SK Tewari, Dr. Ramesh Srivasatava, Dr. Rajesh K. Verma, Dr. Sudeep Tandon, Dr. V. Sundereshan, Dr. Ram Suresh, Dr. AK Gupta, Dr. Qazi Parvaiz Hassan, Dr. Rajender Bhanwaria, Dr. Rakesh Kumar, and Er. Mohit Sharma.