

Dr Jitendra announces Regional Biotech Centres across India to accelerate StartUps, biomanufacturing

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: At a high-level meeting of the Department of Biotechnology, Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh announced the creation of Regional BIRAC (Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council) Centres across India, in collaboration with States, to accelerate StartUps and biomanufacturing, and thus harness the biotech potential in different parts of the country.

Dr. Jitendra emphasized the need for comprehensive mapping of states based on their biotech potential and directed the department to collaborate with them in establishing Bio E3 (Economy, Environment and Employment) Cells highlighting that Assam is the first state to establish a dedicated BIO E3 cell. These specialized cells will provide necessary support for fostering innovation, entrepreneurship, and scaling up biotech ventures.

Recognizing the critical role of StartUps in advancing biomanufacturing, Dr. Jitendra called for enhanced handholding and incubator support to



Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh chairing meeting of the Department of Biotechnology at New Delhi on Friday.

encourage new-age biotech entrepreneurs. He highlighted the importance of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in biomanufacturing and bio foundries, ensuring global investment to drive India's biotech revolution.

Dr. Singh stressed that the Tripartite arrangement-a synergy between Research Infrastructure, Startups, and Industrial R&D-is the way forward for India's biotech sector. He directed the department to prioritize setting up Core R&D Facilities equipped with state-of-the-art biomanufacturing capabilities to facilitate pilot validation, upscaling, and commercial-

ization of promising biotech innovations.

Recalling the Centre-State Partnership Summit held in Delhi, Dr. Jitendra reiterated the Government's commitment to fostering a biotech revolution across states through collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and technical assistance. He noted that several states have expressed interest in setting up Biotechnology Parks, further strengthening India's bio-economy.

Dr. Singh instructed the Department of Biotechnology to establish early industry linkages and work towards a 4P Model

(Public-Private-People Partnership) for accelerating biotech growth. He also welcomed proposals to create BIRAC Centres at a global level to attract cutting-edge biomanufacturing technologies and investments.

Dr. Jitendra expressed pride in India's global standing in biotech research, noting that India ranks 3rd in biotech publications worldwide, with nearly two-thirds of research papers emanating from the Department of Biotechnology. He said "This reflects India's growing influence and leadership in the international biotech arena."

With these strategic direc-

tives, Dr. Jitendra reinforced the Government's vision to position India as a global leader in biotechnology, ensuring that biomanufacturing, research, and innovation drive the country's economic and scientific growth to achieve Prime Minister vision of Viksit Bharat @2047. Dr. Rajesh S. Gokhale, Secretary, DBT, DG-BRIC & Chairman, BIRAC, along with Managing Director, BIRAC, Shri Jitendra Kumar, and other senior officials and scientists of the department, were present at the review meeting.



Dy CM inaugurates 2 day PHDCCI workshop on Intellectual Property Rights, trade, business promotion

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Emphasising government's commitment to catalyse the industrial ecosystem, Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, said that numerous interventions and policies are being implemented towards industrial growth of Jammu and Kashmir as one of the priorities of the present administration.

He was speaking after inaugurating a two day workshop on Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), Trade and Business Promotion in Jammu organised by the PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI), in collaboration with the Office of Development Commissioner MSME, Union Ministry for MSME here on Friday.

The event, moderated by Kanchan Zutshi, Director, PHDCCI, aimed to enhance awareness and foster strategies for IPR, trade, and business promotion in Jammu & Kashmir.

The event was attended by MLA Khansahib, Saifuddin Bhat, Commissioner Secretary, Industries and Commerce, Vikranjit Singh, Director Industries and Commerce, Jammu, Dr Arun Manhas, Prominent Industrialists, office bearers of PHDCCI and senior officers.

While highlighting the global significance of intellectual property rights with examples such as Apple, KFC and McDonald's, the Deputy Chief Minister said that robust IP strategies drive worldwide success. He commended the local entrepreneurs, including lavender farmers and Basmati rice producers, for their efforts in brand registration.

Regarding the industrial growth and employment, the Deputy CM said that



Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary speaking during the workshop in Jammu.

the government is well aware of the potential of industrial sector in boosting the local economy industrial creating job avenues for the youth. He assured that his administration would enforce policies to prioritise local hiring and bolster support for indigenous businesses.

MLA Khansahib highlighted the need for promoting local entrepreneurs. He said that the same would go a long way in ensuring the youth get attracted to setting up their own units and ensuring the creation of jobs locally.

Commissioner Secretary, Industries & Commerce, outlined the government policies designed to spur industrial development, describing IPR as a vital tool for economic progress. He encouraged the businesses to invest in innovation and brand protection to unlock sustainable value.

Director, Industries & Commerce, while speaking on the occasion, underscored the need for IPR awareness

among the local enterprises, noting its potential to drive sustainable industrial growth. He urged the entrepreneurs to take advantage of the government schemes for patenting and trademark registration.

Chairman PHDCCI Jammu Chapter, Rakesh Wazir, delivered the opening address, emphasising the pivotal role of branding, innovation and IP protection in enhancing the competitiveness of businesses in the region. He reiterated PHDCCI's commitment towards empowering entrepreneurs and creating a thriving business ecosystem through effective IPR strategies, urging the participants to secure their intellectual property for long-term success.

The National IP Yatra Programme, through this workshop, has laid the groundwork for heightened IPR awareness, policy reforms and proactive measures to strengthen the intellectual property framework in Jammu & Kashmir.

‘Would eliminate 100 terrorists if given chance’, says brother of martyr Constable

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

REASI: A brother of constable Tariq Ahmad -- martyred in an encounter with terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua -- has said that if given a chance, he would avenge the policeman's death by eliminating 100 militants.

According to the grieving family members, Ahmad had promised that he would celebrate Eid with them, but fate had other plans. They also called for a decisive response against Pakistan to dismantle the terror networks plaguing Jammu and Kashmir.

On Friday, hundreds of people from different religious backgrounds gathered at Ahmad's house in his native village of Chamba in Reasi district to support the

family in mourning.

"We are deeply saddened because he is not with us today, but we are proud that he sacrificed his life for the country. He did not keep his promise to celebrate Eid with us... he went to Jannat in the pious days of Ramadan," Ahmad's cousin brother, Nayeem Naiz, said.

With Ramzan in its final week, Eid-ul-Fitr is likely to be celebrated in the country on March 31 or April 1.

Naiz, who is preparing to join the Army, expressed anger over the repeated terrorist attacks in Jammu and Kashmir sponsored by Pakistan, saying, "They (terrorists) have martyred our brother. In return, we will kill 100 of them if given a chance".

Condemning neighbouring

country for "aiding and abetting terrorism that is claiming the lives of hundreds of innocent people", Naiz said, "They are not stopping... A surgical strike was conducted earlier, but now they should be given a befitting response so that such incidents do not happen again."

Ahmad's maternal uncle, Abdullah Gani of Dera Baba Kundara, recalled the slain constable's humble beginnings.

"He was planning to celebrate Eid here. We are saddened that he is not with us today, but he sacrificed his life for the country, and we all take pride in that."

Ahmad comes from a poor background and spent his childhood in a mud house, his uncle said, adding that his joining the police force in

2011 was a proud moment for all of them.

"He lived in a mud house and faced many hardships. He focussed on his studies and with a lot of hard work became a policeman. After joining the force, he built a new house for his family," Gani said.

Ahmad is survived by his wife and a four-year-old daughter, Gani said and sought government support to educate the child.

Ahmad's father, who is still in shock, struggled to speak. "He was a loving son. He cared for us. But we are proud that he achieved martyrdom in the holy days of Ramzan," he said.

"He liked writing poems and would often recite them to me... Now, God will take care of him," he added.

Prof Serge Mignani delivers lecture at IIIM Jammu



Prof. Serge Mignani, renowned Scientist delivering lecture at IIIM Jammu on Friday.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Prof. Serge Mignani, renowned Scientist, former Head of Medicinal Chemistry and Scientific Director at Sanofi, France and the Advisor, Centre Franco-Indien pour la Promotion de la Recherche Avancée (CEFIPRA) i.e. Indo-French Centre for the Promotion of Advanced Research (IFCPAR) delivered

a Lecture entitled, "A Critical Evaluation of the Approaches to Targeted Protein Degradation: PROTACs vs. Molecular Glues." at the CSIR-Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine (IIIM), Jammu. A spokesperson while giving the detail of the lecture which was on emerging area in medicinal chemistry research, mentioned that the session drew keen participation from

IIIM scientists and researchers who eager to explore the latest advancements in the field of drug discovery.

Dr. Serge Mignani, a distinguished expert in medicinal chemistry, has made significant contributions to drug discovery and pharmaceutical sciences. With a career spanning several decades, he has played a pivotal role in devel-

oping innovative therapeutic agents and putting more than ten molecules in clinical trials and published numerous high-impact research papers and collaborating on pioneering global healthcare projects. His expertise in organic synthesis, drug design, and translational research has greatly advanced treatments for a wide range of diseases.

Prof. Mignani in his scientific lecture explained how the PROTACs harness the ubiquitin-proteasome system for selective protein degradation, offering high specificity but

facing challenges with cellular permeability but in contrast, molecular glues enhance protein-protein interactions to induce degradation, providing superior bioavailability but often discovered serendipitously. The session highlighted the complementary roles of these strategies in modern medicinal chemistry. Following the lecture, an engaging question-and-answer session was held, where participants had the opportunity to interact with Prof. Mignani, gaining deeper insights into his research and expertise.

Earlier, Dr. Zabeer Ahmed, Director, CSIR-IIIM, Jammu, while welcoming Prof. Dr. Serge Mignani, reaffirmed IIIM Jammu's commitment to promoting scientific excellence and international collaboration in the research areas like Cancer, Metabolic disorder, Rheumatoid Arthritis and neurodegenerative disorders. Dr. Parvinder Pal Singh, Senior Principal Scientist, NPMC Division, conducted the proceeding and introduced the speaker to the audiences.

Aarti Chowdhary appointed as Chairperson of FICCI FLO Jammu, Kashmir & Ladakh for 2025-26



Aarti Chowdhary taking over as Chairperson of FICCI FLO Jammu, Kashmir & Ladakh.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Aarti Chowdhary has taken over as the Chairperson of FICCI FLO Jammu, Kashmir & Ladakh (JKL) for the term 2025-26, marking an important milestone as the chapter enters its 5th year of impactful work in the region.

The Change of Guard Ceremony at FICCI Federation House, New Delhi, is a prestigious event that embodies the essence of "Power to Empower." This annual tradition marks the seamless transition of leadership, ensuring a continuous cycle of innovation and impact. By passing the mantle to a new line of leaders each year, FLO reinforces its commitment to nurturing women's leadership, fostering entrepreneurship, and driving meaningful change across India's business and social landscape.

Since its inception, FLO JKL has established itself as a key player in fostering women's economic empowerment through entrepreneurship, skill development, and leadership initiatives. Under

Aarti Chowdhary's leadership, the chapter will continue its legacy of marquee events that have shaped the business and social landscape of the region, while also introducing initiatives to bolster cooperative networks that support women-led enterprises. Emphasizing on She Learns, She Builds & She Leads.

Expressing her vision for the year ahead, Aarti Chowdhary stated, "It is an honor to lead FLO JKL into its 5th year. I am committed to carrying forward the remarkable work done by my predecessors and further strengthening the cooperative framework to create lasting economic opportunities for women in the region."

As part of the national network of FICCI FLO, which has over 12,000 members across India, FLO JKL remains dedicated to driving impactful change. With Aarti Chowdhary at the helm, the chapter looks forward to another year of growth, collaboration, and empowerment.

India can't change fanatic mindset of Pakistan: EAM

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, speaking in Lok Sabha on Friday, highlighted incidents involving attack on minorities in Pakistan and Bangladesh.

The minister said New Delhi is tracking "very closely" the treatment of minorities in Pakistan and making its position "well known", but the country cannot change the "fanatical and bigoted mindset" of a neighbour.

Replying to a supplementary query during the Question Hour, Jaishankar pointed to 10 incidents involving attacks on Hindus in Pakistan in February.

Seven of these incidents related to abduction and forced conversion, two other cases related to abduction, and one in which there was "police action" against students celebrating Holi, the external affairs minister said.

He informed the House that there were also three cases related to atrocities against members of the Sikh community. In one case, a Sikh family was attacked; in another case, a Sikh family was threatened for reopening an old Gurdwara, and yet another case involved the abduction and conversion of a girl from the Sikh community,



the minister said.

He added that two other cases involved members of the Ahmediya community, and another case in which a Christian person of unstable mind was charged with blasphemy.

Jaishankar said India takes up such cases at the international level also.

"Like in Pakistan, we track the welfare and well-being of minorities in Bangladesh as well ... In 2024, we had 2,400 incidents relating to attacks on minorities and in 2025, 72 incidents ... I have taken it up with my counterpart there. The foreign secretary also took it up when he visited Bangladesh. This continues to be a matter of concern for our government," Jaishankar said, responding to another supplementary question.

Responding to a query on whether India plans "tough action" on the lines of earlier prime minister Indira Gandhi's stance against Pakistan, Jaishankar said New Delhi is making its position "well known" but "we as a government and a country cannot change the fanatical and bigoted mindset of a neighbour."

"Even Indira Gandhi could not do it," he observed.

Constable Balwinder Singh's sacrifice upholds three-generation legacy of valour

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

KANNA CHAK (KATHUA): As three brave police personnel lost their lives battling infiltrating Pakistani terrorists in Kathua district, Balwinder Singh Chib's sacrifice carries forward a legacy of courage that has endured for three generations.

With his death, the Chib family has lost four members across three generations in the line of duty. According to the local residents of Chib's native village -- Kanna Chak -- the family is venerated for its history of sacrifices and patriotism.

Former Sarpanch of Chak Hariya village, Deewan Singh, said, "The Chib fam-

ily is known for its sacrifices and patriotism. The village of Chak Hariya takes immense pride in its sons who have given their lives for the country". Kanna Chak is a part of Chak Hariya.

Recalling the Chib family's long history of sacrifice, he said, "During World War I, Balwinder's great grandfather, Prakash Singh Chib, was awarded the Victoria Cross for his bravery before attaining martyrdom. Prakash Singh Chib's brother, Shankar Singh Chib, also laid down his life, earning honourable recognition."

Balwinder's uncle, Pritam Singh Chib, who served in the Border Security Force,

was martyred in the line of duty.

"Now, Balwinder has lost his life becoming the fourth martyr from the family. It is an unparalleled legacy of courage and sacrifice," he said.

Balwinder bravely fought against the terrorists before making the ultimate sacrifice, Deewan Singh said.

Villagers remembered Balwinder as a kind-hearted, disciplined, and selfless man. "He was a very good person who always helped others. He never had a conflict or dispute with anyone," Sumit, his neighbour, said. "Balwinder Singh Chib's name will be etched in history as a true patriot... his

sacrifice will remain a guiding light for generations to come," Sumit added.

Balwinder is survived by his wife, a daughter and a son.

Balwinder's mother, who fainted upon hearing the news of his death, said, "This pain is unbearable... I wish I had died instead of him."

According to his relatives, Balwinder joined the police force in 2000 during a special border recruitment drive launched by then SSP R R Swain, who later became Director General of Police (DGP).

One of his uncles, an ex-serviceman, said, "He sacrificed his life for the nation. Today, our family stands tall

with pride. Bharat Mata Ki Jai! His sacrifice has made the country proud."

Balwinder's friends said he was passionate about cricket since childhood and recalled that he led a disciplined life and respected everyone.

"His commitment to duty remained unwavering until his last breath. His sacrifice has helped save many lives from terrorists," one of his friends said.

Meanwhile, the local residents of Kanna Chak have urged the government to recognise Balwinder's sacrifice and extend support to his bereaved family. They said honouring his bravery will serve as an inspiration for future generations.