

India's R&D spending double in one decade, redefining future economy: Dr Jitendra

STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: India's Gross Expenditure on Research and Development (GERD) has more than doubled in the last decade, rising from Rs 60,196 crore in 2013-14 to Rs 1,27,381 crore, Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh announced while addressing the DISHA event at India Habitat Centre.

He emphasized that India's future economy will be defined by home-grown innovations in artificial intelligence, biotechnology, and quantum computing, propelled by government-backed initiatives.

Speaking at the event, Dr. Singh, who holds multiple ministerial portfolios, outlined India's strategy to become a global leader in deep-tech innovation and commercialization. He noted that increased R&D investment is enabling a seamless transition of innovations from laboratories to industries, strengthening



Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh addressing DISHA event organised by IIT Indore at India Habitat Centre, New Delhi on Monday.

the foundation of Atmanirbhar Bharat.

The DISHA Program-Developing Innovations, Successful Harnessing, and Adoption-aims to build a knowledge-driven economy, ensuring research-driven solutions transform industries. It supports faculty members and students working on disruptive technologies, keeping India at the forefront of global innovation.

Dr. Singh highlighted that initiatives like DISHA align with the Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF), which fosters an

integrated research ecosystem across science, humanities, and social sciences. This holistic approach will empower Indian researchers to collaborate across disciplines and drive breakthrough innovations.

A major policy shift allowing private enterprises to enter strategic sectors like space technology and nuclear research has accelerated technological advancements, efficiency, and global competitiveness. The space sector, in particular, has witnessed rapid innovation, with startups contributing to

satellite development, launch services, and space-based applications.

Similarly, the nuclear energy sector has been opened up to private players, a transformative move aimed at leveraging indigenous expertise to enhance energy security and sustainability.

Dr. Singh underscored the transformative role of artificial intelligence (AI) in healthcare, particularly in telemedicine and diagnostics.

AI-powered mobile telemedicine units are expanding healthcare access to remote regions, making high-quality medical services more affordable and accessible. However, he emphasized the need for balance between AI and human expertise, stating, "AI should complement human intelligence, not replace it." A hybrid approach will ensure technology enhances rather than diminishes the role of skilled professionals.

With India set to complete 100 years of inde-

pendence in 2047, Dr. Singh urged young innovators to lead the country's technological transformation. "The investments we make in research and innovation today will determine India's global standing in the decades to come," he stated.

As the government continues to invest in deep-tech research, skill development, and industry-academia collaboration, programs like DISHA will be instrumental in positioning India as an innovation powerhouse, exporting cutting-edge solutions to the world.

NC must Fulfill Expectations of People who Voted for it: PDP



Govt committed to upgrade healthcare infra across J&K: Dy CM

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Asserting his government's commitment towards upgrading the existing healthcare infrastructure across Jammu and Kashmir, Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, on Monday said that quality health services are being provided to the people with special focus on rural and far flung areas.

The Deputy Chief Minister was addressing the officers during a meeting of "Rogi Kalyan Samiti" (RKS) held to review the functioning and patient care facilities available at Sub District Hospital (SDH), Nowshera, here today.

On the occasion, the Deputy Chief Minister, who is also the Chairman "Rogi Kalyan Samiti" was apprised of the progress and performance registered by the SDH under different indicators and



Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary chairing a meeting.

financial allocation under RKS.

A brief discussion was held on various services including Maternity and Child Health Services, referral services, Ayushman Bharat, ABHA card status, services under JSY, ambulance service besides status of Hospital's civil works.

BMO Nowshera gave a detailed presentation regarding the facilities, functioning and activities proposed under RKS 2024-25 for infrastruc-

ture up-gradation and overall advancement of healthcare system in the Hospital

The Deputy Chief Minister directed the concerned authorities to work on various necessities vital for upgrading the basic infrastructure in the hospital. He directed the BMO to submit a detailed list of department wise requirements so that measures are taken with respect to the facility upgradation of the hospital accordingly.

He directed all the concerned to follow the objectives as envisaged in RKS guidelines. He asked the officials of health department to work with added zeal and dedication to ensure efficient and prompt healthcare facilities to the people.

Among others the meeting was attended by ADC Nowshera, Babu Ram Tandon, BMO, Executive Engineers of Jal Shakti and R&B, EO, representatives from civil society and other members.

LA pays glowing tributes to former PM, legislators

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Legislative Assembly of Jammu and Kashmir, which convened on Monday for Budget Session, paid glowing tributes to former Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, other former parliamentarians and legislators who passed away since the last session.

During the Obituary references, the Speaker remembered the contribution of former Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh in shaping the economy of the country. He remembered him as a



statesman, whose contribution to this Nation will be remembered forever.

The Speaker also paid glowing tributes to former Minister, Syed Ghulam Hussain Geelani; former

MP, Shamsheer Singh Manhas; former MLAs, Ghulam Hassan Parrey and Choudhary Paira Singh. During the obituary reference, MLAs, Mubarak Gul, Sham Lal Sharma, Dr.

Narinder Singh, Dr. Bashir Ahmad Shah Veeri, Ghulam Ahmad Mir, Mohammad Yousuf Tarigami, Abdul Majeed Larmi, Mohd Rafiq Naikoo, Vikram Randhawa, Nizamuddin Bhat, Satish Kumar Sharma and Iftikhar Ahmed also paid tributes to former Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh and other former parliamentarians and legislators who passed since the last session was convened.

The Speaker and members of the house also held two minute silence in their remembrance.

AIIMS Jammu's Pioneering Initiatives on World Hearing Day 2025

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: On the occasion of World Hearing Day, AIIMS Jammu organized a series of impactful programs aimed at raising awareness about the importance of early intervention in hearing loss, ensuring that individuals receive timely diagnosis and treatment.

In a steadfast commitment to promoting ear and hearing care, AIIMS Jammu, under the visionary leadership of Prof (Dr) Shakti Kumar Gupta, Executive Director and CEO, has been at the forefront of innovative initiatives ensuring that "no one is left unheard."

This event was graced by the presence of Prof (Dr) Umesh Kapil (Secretary, National Academy of Medical Sciences); Dr Meeta Gupta, Dean (Academics) and Dr

Saurabh Kumar Gupta, Dean (Examination).

Their presence reinforced AIIMS Jammu's dedication to advancing hearing health care through academic excellence and interdisciplinary collaboration.

"Supported by a dedicated team of ENT, including Dr. Darwin Kaushal (Additional Professor), Dr. Amardeep Singh (Associate Professor), Dr. Pooja, Dr. Youshita (Senior Resident), Dr. Muskan (Junior Resident), Nityansh Sahja, Akshita Gupta, and Reyaz Ahmad (Audiologist and Speech Language Pathologist), and Nursing officers.

AIIMS Jammu has become a beacon of hope for those facing hearing challenges.

On March 1, 2025, AIIMS Jammu organized a hearing



AIIMS Jammu Executive Director and CEO, Prof (Dr) Shakti Kumar Gupta along with children and others during the event.

screening camp at Jawahar Navodaya School, Samba. This proactive initiative aimed to identify hearing impairments among school-aged children, emphasizing the critical role of early detection in preventing communication, learning, and developmental challenges.

Regular hearing screenings are essential tools in identifying children with possible hearing loss who were not identified at birth or who developed hearing loss later in life. In alignment with the World

Health Organization's (WHO) theme for 2025 "Changing mindsets: empower yourself to make ear and hearing care a reality for all"-AIIMS Jammu hosted a comprehensive panel discussion on March 3, 2025.

The event featured a panel discussion that brought

together a multidisciplinary team of medical experts and policymakers. This platform facilitated in-depth discussions on existing barriers in hearing healthcare, policy frameworks, and strategies to enhance accessibility and early intervention.

A heartwarming highlight of the event was a cultural program showcasing a mesmerizing dance performance by specially-abled children of Muskan Foundation under leadership of Parveen Sangral and Rajesh Bhardwaj. This performance not only highlighted their immense talent and resilience but also reinforced the message of inclusivity and the limitless potential of individuals with hearing impairments.

AIIMS Jammu has emerged as a leader in advancing hearing healthcare. Executive Director and CEO, (AIIMS Jammu), Prof (Dr) Shakti Kumar Gupta's dedication to accessible medical services has led to the integration of cutting-edge technologies, such as telemedicine and comprehensive digital transformation.

ensuring that quality hearing care reaches even the most remote communities.

Supported by a team of experts, AIIMS Jammu continues to set new benchmarks in early detection, intervention, and management of hearing impairments, embodying its mission to leave no one unheard.

These initiatives by AIIMS Jammu serve as a clarion call to the community to prioritize hearing health. Early detection and intervention are paramount in mitigating the long-term impacts of hearing loss. By empowering individuals with knowledge and resources, we can collectively make ear and hearing care a reality for all.

Together, let's change mindsets and ensure a world where everyone is heard.

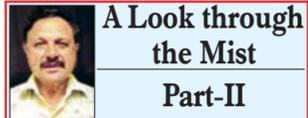
'We have promised people about meeting their expectations, & we stand by our promise': Omar Abdullah

With J&K Budget Session starting 3rd March, people wishfully hope Omar to deliver Manifesto Promises

DAYA SAGAR

It is not out of place to mention here that in the NC Election Manifesto placed before the voter citizen during the 1st Elections to the Legislative Assembly of UT of J&K Omar Abdullah as vice President of NC had said < "This manifesto is not just a list of promises; it is a pledge with the people. It reflects the blood, sweat, and tears of those who came before us, who dreamed of a prosperous and peaceful Jammu and Kashmir. It is your voice, your aspirations, your resilience, and your resolve. I stand before you as your son, your brother, your friend committed to seeing every promise in this manifesto fulfilled">. Pledge has a sanctity and which the voter citizen should/ takes in that sense only. The NC 'manifesto' promises that the common man/ voter citizen would have expected word delivery without any delay after installation of government could be briefed (i) filling all vacancies in government departments within 180 days (ii) making job application forms free for all the examinations (iii) provide 200 units of electricity free (iv) will implement a one-time settlement for pending electricity bill arrears in both rural and urban areas (v) providing Rs. 5000 per month to female heads of households to EWS (vi) providing 12 cylinders free of cost per year to EWS (vii) enhancing the old age and widow pension to Rs 3000/pm

(viii) entitling woman to travel free in all public Transport (ix) Increasing FREE rice allocation to 10 kg per person per month (x) entitlement for 10 kg rice/Atta per person per month. (xi) free education for all upto University level (which was also part directive principles in J&K Conastitution), (xii) formulate a policy to provide land to the landless and those who have been in uninterrupted possession of state lands for an extended period, granting ownership rights under a considered policy (xiii) dignified return and rehabilitation of Kashmiri Pandits (xiv) ensure simplification of passport verification procedures are simplified (xv) shall make all efforts for all engineering and medical examinations to be conducted locally including NEET and other exams.(xvi) formulation a policy for regularisation in a time bound manner for Paramedical staff in Associated Hospitals, GMC Casual labours. Daily wagers, CIC operators, Contractual Employees, Home Guard, Rehbar-e-Khel and other category of temporary employees(xvii) finding ways to reinstate the old pension scheme (xviii) resolving land lease policy and ensure all genuine leases are renewed. (xviii) working towards the establishing of Minority Commission (xix) exploring new tourist destination in J&K, including regions in Pir Panjal, Chenab, and other areas.(XX). People are still hopefully expecting



A Look through the Mist Part-II

that the Omar Abdullah Government will come with orders and proposals which immediately concern the common man for day to day requirements and living with possible ease. No doubt programmes/ issues that involve finances would require matching inputs but people expect that any such limitations must have been assessed by the vote seekers before making electoral promises.

J&K Chief Minister had started pre-budget consultations with his colleagues, the legislators, the senior officers in the administration and key stake holders since 5th Feb in relation to preparations of the UT budget that is to be presented for the year 2025-26 in the session starting 3 March. Of course the Chief Minister must also be / is very particularly concerned for the issues and priorities which may be very much in hand with him in relation to the promises made by him/ his party in the election manifesto related to the basic day to day requirement of the common masses of the UT which the people have been very hopefully waiting for over last about four months. Ofcourse the common man of J&K in

the "unorganised civic sector" too is the key stake holder. The common man of J&K wants Omar Abdullah to take on the promises made by his party / his alliance related to immediate local needs and the delays in any form in executing processes / proposals worth delivering commitments made in manifesto cannot be disposed off under the excuse that as Chief Minister of UT he has limited powers/ delegations since it is expected that before contesting elections he was well aware of the fact that he was going to be the member of a legislature of a UT where LG too has some direct / even exclusive jurisdiction on some important matters even for which there should not be any problem for him to initiate notes/ proposals for the consideration of LG. Simply initiating any new process of examining the implications or appointing new committees for the purpose after forming government is surely no any delivery of promises.

The issues that common people expect Omar Abdullah to particularly address in the Budget 2025-26 for 'delivery' could be pinned as (I) To-fill up all vacancies in government departments within 180 days of taking over (II) Making Job Application free for all the tests/examinations (III) Provide 200 units of electricity free to all (IV) Provide Rs. 5000 per month to female heads of households to EWS (V)

Provide 12 cylinders free of cost per year to EWS (VI) enhancing the old age and widow pension to 3000 (VII) entitle woman to travel free in all public transport (VIII) increasing FREE rice allocation to 10 kg per person per month (IX) entitle the general public also to 10 kg rice/Atta per head/month.(X) Free education for all upto University level (XI) regularization of daily wagers and Contractual Employee (XII) one-time settlement for pending electricity bill arrears in both rural and urban areas (XIII) providing Free, Clean and Safe Drinking Water to All. No doubt programmes that involve finances would require matching inputs but people expect that any such limitations must have been assessed by the vote seekers before making electoral promises.

Though not part of election manifesto but still people expect Omar Abdullah Sahib to also address the wages / honorarium issues related to the Special police Officer (SPOs) and Anaganwadi Workers who are paid disproportionately very low to their job requirements and also minimum surviving needs of their family.

It is not out of place to mention here that Union Finance Minister has in the Union Budget 2025-26 presented on 01-02-2026 included a total allocation of around Rs 41,000 crore to Jammu and Kashmir (almost same like Rs

42,277 crore allocated in the previous fiscal) . For the J&K Police, which is under the administrative control of the Union Home Ministry, Rs 9,325.73 crore have been allocated including Rs 8,897.72 cr for revenue expenditure and Rs 428.01 crore for capital expenditure. Lt Governor Manoj Sinha has hailed the Union Budget as a "pragmatic Budget for Viksit Bharat".

One of the most encouraging aspects of the 2024 elections has been the high voter turnout, reflecting the enduring faith of the people in democratic processes and people now look up to the Government with many hopes and expectations.

LG Manoj Sinha in his address to Legislative Assembly on 04-11-2024 did say " Our people now look up to the Government with many hopes and expectations. My Government is fully geared up to realize these hopes and fulfil these expectations." Hon'ble LG Manoj Sinha will surely go an extra mile to endorse the welfare decisions of the elected government, even where the State cabinet does not have direct jurisdiction, to surely endorse every fair action/ proposal. Similarly those who profess that J&K Legislative Assembly and Cabinet have to get ultimate approval of LG for every subject are not fair in their thinking.

(The writer is a Sr Journalist & a known analyst of J&K affairs)