

LG Kavinder Gupta participates in National Science Day 2026 celebrations at CSIR-CSIO, Chandigarh

Says Women-led Science will power Viksit Bharat

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

CHANDIGARH: The Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta, today underscored that science is not merely an academic pursuit but the very cornerstone of a self-reliant, prosperous and developed India. He emphasised that true scientific temper lies in challenging assumptions and translating knowledge into solutions that touch the lives of ordinary citizens.

The Lt. Governor was addressing the National Science Day 2026 celebrations at the prestigious Council of Scientific & Industrial Research - Central Scientific Instruments Organisation (CSIR-CSIO), Chandigarh. Paying rich tribute to Nobel Laureate Sir C.V. Raman on the 98th anniversary of the landmark discovery of the Raman Effect, Kavinder Gupta said that Raman's path-breaking discovery was not made with billion-dollar instruments but with a focused mind, a precise question and an unshakable faith in science - a lesson



LG Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta visiting Science stall.

equally relevant for today's generation of researchers.

Speaking on the occasion themed "Women in Science: Catalyzing Viksit Bharat," the Lt. Governor said that when women lead in science, the nation scales new heights of progress. He invoked the towering contributions of Dr. Asima Chatterjee in medicinal chemistry, Dr. Tessy Thomas in missile technology and the women scientists of ISRO whose collective brilliance scripted history with the successful landing of Chandrayaan-3 at the Moon's South Pole. "This was not

merely a scientific triumph - it was a triumph of women power," he said.

Kavinder Gupta made a firm pledge from the podium that no talented daughter of Ladakh - irrespective of economic hardship, social pressure or lack of opportunity - would ever be denied a career in science. He urged the entire scientific community to mentor generously, create opportunities with an open heart and actively dismantle the invisible barriers that prevent women from realising their full potential. Expressing his deepest aspi-

ration, he said, "I hope and pray that India's next Nobel Prize is won by a woman scientist."

Highlighting Ladakh's extraordinary identity as a natural laboratory of global significance, the Lt. Governor said that with over 300 days of sunshine annually, pristine skies and a unique high-altitude ecosystem, Ladakh holds immense potential for astronomy, solar energy, glacier studies, water conservation and cold desert agriculture. He drew attention to the MACE Telescope at Hanle's Indian Astronomical Observatory - Asia's largest imaging telescope and a proud symbol of indigenous technology - and urged CSIR and all national scientific institutions to make Ladakh a primary hub for frontier research. "Solutions developed in Ladakh will serve not just India but mountain communities across the world," he said.

The Lt. Governor also welcomed the MoU signed between CSIR-CSIO and Sindh Central University as a landmark step towards joint research, skill development and capacity building in Ladakh. He also disclosed that discussions are underway for establishing an IIT Jammu satellite campus in Leh, which would open new doors of innovation and opportunity for local youth.

Commending the scientists and staff of CSIR-CSIO for their invaluable contributions to India's defence, healthcare and agriculture sectors, Kavinder Gupta invoked the legacy of Bharat Ratna Dr.

A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, saying that the dream of a developed, scientifically empowered and self-reliant India that Dr. Kalam cherished will be fulfilled by India's young scientists and women researchers. "Let science illuminate the path and let women lead the way - together we will build the Viksit Bharat that 140 crore Indians deserve," he concluded.

The Lt Governor visited the technology exhibition hall, where a wide range of indigenously developed technologies were showcased. He also toured the Centre for Nano Optics and Fabrication, a state-of-the-art facility dedicated to advanced research in optoelectronics and nanofabrication. He visited the Indo-Swiss Training Centre, where he observed ongoing skill development and diploma programmes designed to provide hands-on technical training to students.

Prof. Shantamu Bhattacharya, Director, CSIR-CSIO, in his welcome address, highlighted the importance of National Science Day, commemorating the discovery of the Raman Effect, and emphasised the invaluable contributions of women scientists in India's scientific and technological progress.

Narinder Singh Jassal, Scientist F and Head, Business Development Group (BDG), delivered the vote of thanks, with special mention about Dr. Prashant Kumar, Scientist E, who played a key role in organising the event.



J&K Branch of NIRC of ICAI announces new office bearers

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Jammu & Kashmir Branch of NIRC of ICAI has announced a change in its office bearers for the term 2026-27. The Branch functions under the Northern India Regional Council of ICAI of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India and plays a pivotal role in promoting professional excellence and academic growth among members and students in the region.

The newly constituted managing committee will lead the Branch with a renewed focus on professional development programmes, high-quality learning initiatives, and stronger engagement with stakeholders. The office bearers for 2026-27 are CA Anit Gupta as Chairman, CA Jatinder Malhotra as Vice Chairman, CA Sanchit Aggarwal as Secretary, CA Ayush Mahajan as Treasurer; CA Ayush



Newly appointed office bearers of NIRC of ICAI J&K Branch.

Sawhney as Executive Member; and CA Sourav Pargal as Immediate Past Chairman.

On assuming office, CA Amit Gupta expressed his commitment to building upon the momentum of previous years and further strengthening the Branch's academic, professional, and institutional initiatives. The Branch also

placed on record its sincere appreciation for the leadership and contributions of CA Sourav Pargal during his tenure as Chairman. Reaffirming its dedication to upholding the highest standards of the profession, the Branch pledged to contribute meaningfully to the financial and economic development of the region.

Dy CM calls for strict monitoring, quality execution of projects in J&K

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Reiterating government's zero-tolerance policy against quality compromise, Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary on Saturday cautioned of strict action against the use of substandard material or poor execution of works under the Public Works Department (PWD) across Jammu and Kashmir.



Dy CM Surinder Choudhary chairing a meeting.

and accountability of the concerned officers responsible for lapses," he warned.

Expressing concern over slow tendering and low expenditure in certain sectors, the Deputy Chief Minister directed the officers to ensure 100 percent utilization of allocated funds by the end of March, cautioning that negligence would be viewed seriously. He strongly discouraged abnormally low bidding and subletting of contracts, with terms such practices detrimental to quality, transparency and timely execution of projects.

He further instructed that fresh tendering should not be undertaken without proper justification and prior approval from the competent authority. "Contractors securing multiple projects through low bids must be closely monitored to ensure adherence to quality standards and progress timelines," he added.

To enhance accountability and transparency, the Deputy Chief Minister directed the field officers to maintain proper movement registers and conduct regular site inspections. The officers posted in far-flung areas were instructed to mark attendance through geo-tag-

ging to strengthen monitoring mechanisms and work culture.

Among key projects, he directed for ensuring expeditious completion of Seerbagh-Chadoora Bridge, Ramban Bridge, Inderpati-Paragwal Bridge, Dak Bungalow-cum-Conference Hall Hyderabad and Dak Bungalow Rajouri.

The Commissioners were also asked to submit detailed proposals for beautification works in Jammu and Srinagar, with specific instructions to ensure completion of works in Srinagar well before the Darbar Move to the summer capital.

The chair was informed that Under PMGSY, 99.7 percent of targeted habitations under Phase-I have been connected, with 18,009 km of road length completed. PMGSY-IV aims to provide connectivity to 2,513 additional eligible habitations, further strengthening rural road infrastructure.

It was further informed that 697 permanent restoration works have recently been approved, reaffirming the government's commitment to build resilient, durable and high-quality public infrastructure across Jammu and Kashmir.

Rs 666 Cr worth claims approved under PMJAY-SEHAT

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo on Saturday chaired the 11th Governing Council Meeting of the State Health Agency (SHA) to review the progress and performance registered under PMJAY-Sehat under the current Policy Stage which commenced on April 17, 2025.

The meeting was attended by Commissioner Secretary, H&ME; Secretary, IT; Secretary, RDD; Secretary, L&E; DG, Codes; CEO, SHA; Principal, GMC Jammu and other concerned officers.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary emphasized the need for putting in place a robust and fool-proof mechanism to weed out fake or fraudulent claims received by the State Health Agency. He stressed that safeguarding the integrity of the scheme is paramount to ensuring that the benefits reach genuine beneficiaries.

The Chief Secretary further underscored the importance of instituting an effective third-party monitoring mechanism to strengthen oversight and accountability. He observed that such independent scrutiny would play a vital role in ensuring that only genuine claims under PMJAY-SEHAT are processed and disbursed by the agency in a timely and transparent manner.

While highlighting the performance



CS Atal Dulloo chairing 11th Governing Council Meeting of SHA.

of SHA the CEO, Ananth Dwivedi informed that the scheme has registered substantial utilisation across public and private healthcare institutions, reflecting enhanced access to cashless treatment for beneficiaries across Jammu and Kashmir.

As per the details presented during the meeting, it was revealed that from April 17, 2025 to February 25, 2026, a total of 3,52,563 pre-authorizations have been approved under this policy term. Of these, 2,43,967 approvals were accorded to public hospitals and 1,08,596 approvals to private hospitals, demonstrating significant participation from both sectors.

In financial terms, the total amount of pre-authorizations approved during the period stands at Rs 666.34 Cr;

with Rs 444.75 Cr accounted for by public institutions and Rs 221.59 Cr by private hospitals.

The Governing Council was further apprised that 3,23,468 claims have been submitted so far, including 2,21,642 claims from public hospitals and 1,01,826 claims from private hospitals. The total value of claims submitted amounts to Rs 604.46 crore, with public sector claims accounting for Rs 395.36 Cr and private sector claims for Rs 209.10 Cr.

In terms of claim settlement, 1,16,667 claims have been paid to date including 85,570 claims in the public sector and 31,097 claims in the private sector thereby translating into a total disbursement of Rs 183.09 Cr. Of this, Rs 123.86 Cr has been released to public hospitals and Rs

59.23 Cr to private healthcare providers.

The meeting was also informed that 28,631 claims have been rejected after due scrutiny, comprising 27,110 claims from public institutions and 1,521 claims from private hospitals. The total amount associated with rejected claims stands at Rs 55.58 crore, including Rs 52.19 crore in the public sector and Rs 3.39 crore in the private sector.

It was highlighted that the total pre-authorization amount of Rs 666.34 crore has been achieved over a period of 315 days (April 17, 2025 to February 16, 2026). On a pro-rata basis, the projected pre-authorization outgo for the full 365-day policy period is estimated to reach approximately Rs 772 crore, indicating sustained demand and growing trust in the scheme.

The Governing Council underscored the importance of timely claim processing, strengthened monitoring mechanisms, and enhanced coordination between public and private healthcare institutions to ensure seamless delivery of benefits to eligible beneficiaries. The performance under the current policy period reflects the continued commitment of the State Health Agency towards providing financial risk protection and expanding quality healthcare access across Jammu and Kashmir.

Even Constitution of India could be named as the First Victim of 'Article' 35A

Article 370(1-d) was surely not for amending the Constitution of India

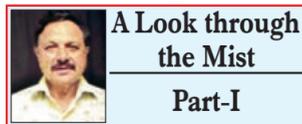
■ DAYA SAGAR

The 'so' called very 'controversial' Art-35A was neither added in Constitution of India by the Constituent Assembly of India (COI) nor was it added by the Parliament of India using the constituent powers available under Art-368. Art 35A was taken to have been added simply by an order of the President of India (C.O 48 of 14 May 1954) by making use of Art-370. This Article was neither part of Art35 nor did this article exit in the main body of the constitution of India before Art-36. This Article was taken as added in COI through the medium of The Constitution (Application to Jammu & Kashmir) Order, 1954 C.O. 48 as made by President of India as a 'New Article' in exercise of the powers conferred on President by Clause (1) of Article 370. Article 35A has not been mentioned in the main text of the Constitution (Application to Jammu and Kashmir) Order of the President of India of date 14 May 1954.

Many questions could be raised on the 'birth' of this order like when this article was added as a new article why was this article not mentioned in main body of the Constitution before Article 36 or after Article 35? Why this article had

been numbered as 35A? Why Art-370 had been used to amend the Constitution since Art- 370 nowhere delegated such power to President for amending the COI since adding a new article in the constitution was amending the constitution and not a simple modification of / with some exceptions of existing provisions? But no such questions were asked and were in public domain atleast till 2011. References of this order were made w.r.t to affairs in the Indian state of J&K and the contents of this article were questioned by some but for some other reasons.

But, the said order C.O 48 of 14 May 1954 as far as elements like Art 35A were concerned could be even contested as constitutionally invalid since Art 370(1) did not empower the President of India for amending COI so as to add a new Article like 35A since adding a new article is an act of amending of constitution and the action cannot be defended by taking refuge under even sub clause (d) of clause (1) of Article-370 of Constitution of India since the scope of this sub-clause (370-1d) was limited to only such of the other existing provisions of the Constitution of India that already existed in the Constitution { Art370 (1) (d) ...such of the other provisions of the Constitution shall apply in relation to J&K State subject to such exceptions and modifications as the



A Look through the Mist Part-I

President may by order specify} where as vide constitution application order of 1954 C.O. 48 [4(j)] said: After Article-35, the following new article shall be added, namely: - "35A. Saving of laws with respect to permanent residents and their rights.- ... } a new article namely Article 35A was taken to have been Art-35A had remained in discussions for quite some time after 1954 but it was more since this article did not allow protection of all fundamental rights of some citizens of India in the State of J&K who did not fall in the category of the Permanent Resident of J&K State in case the state government or state legislature made some laws to benefit only those Indian citizens who were included in the category of permanent residents of J&K like laws / rules as made regarding right to join state government service, right to own land in J&K, right of admission in government professional colleges in J&K, only permanent residents of J&K could vote for J&K Assembly elections. The questions were mostly raised by people who did not belong to J&K initially for about 4

decades of issue C.O.48 more on the shelter provided by Art-35A to unfair laws / rules made by the J&K State.

Although such bads / short coming as were pleaded by some even before the Courts were in a way indirectly acknowledged as irregularities / discriminatory but simultaneously inability for granting any relief was expressed even by court taking that provisions made in J&K as constitutionally protected under Art35A as had also been said in the judgement in the case Bachan Lal Kalgotra vs State Of Jammu & Kashmir And Others { 20 February, 1987- Equivalent citations: 1987 AIR 1169, 1987 SCR (2) 369}.... (<"It is to be noticed here that these provisions are not open to challenge as inconsistent with the rights guaranteed by Part III of the Constitution of India because of "the Constitution (Application to Jammu & Kashmir) Order, 1954" issued by the President of India under Art. 370(1)(d) of the Constitution by which Art. 35(A) was added to the Constitution in relation to the State of Jammu & Kashmir: "... " In the circumstances, in view of the peculiar Constitutional position obtaining in the State of Jammu & Kashmir: We do not see what possible relief we can give to the petitioner and those situate like him. All that we can say is that the position of the petitioner and those like him is anomalous and it is up

to the Legislature of the State of Jammu Kashmir to take action to amend legislature, such as, the Jammu & Kashmir Representation of the People Act, the Land Alienation Act, the Village Panchayat Act, etc. so as to make persons like the petitioner who have migrated from West Pakistan in 1947 and who have settled down in the State of Jammu & Kashmir since then, eligible to be included in the electoral roll, to acquire land, to be elected to the Panchayat, etc. etc" ... "In regard to providing employment opportunities under the State Government, it can be done by the Government by amending the Jammu & Kashmir Civil Services, Classification of Control and Appeal Rules. In regard to admission to higher technical educational institutions also, the Government may make these persons eligible by issuing appropriate executive directions without even having to introduce any legislation. The petitioners have a justifiable grievance..." }

After that even some considering permanent residents of J&K / social activists / analysts too seriously took notice of some of the laws / rules that were even violating the fundamental rights of some of the Indian citizens who were also permanent residents of J&K like the PR woman of J&K who were indirectly denied to chose her life partner with independent choice (in case

she married a non permanent resident Indian citizen her husband & children will not become eligible for category of permanent residents of J&K), there was no political reservation for the ST permanent residents of J&K in the Legislative Assembly. Some suggestions were made to the local governments / legislators for atleast removing the disadvantages in the local laws that were affecting even some permanent residents of J&K for which there were existing provisions in J&K Constitution / with the government for applying corrections but unfortunately no attention was paid for that since some politicians 'appeared' using such negative laws more to project that J&K had some special position in comparison to other states which in reality was not. So after 2010 many permanent residents of J&K too started suggesting for removing / amending Art-35A. It was after that that serious notice of the possible constitutional inadequacies regarding Art-35A was taken like adding a new article in the constitution could not be any more taken as simply nominating some exceptions and modifications w.r.t some provisions of the Constitution in relation to the Indian state of Jammu & Kashmir and the manner it was added. Continued

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