

Dr Jitendra lauds CSIR institutes' pivotal role in drug discovery, genetic diagnostics

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HYDERABAD: Dr. Jitendra Singh, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science & Technology, has lauded Hyderabad based CSIR (Council of Scientific & Industrial Research) institutes' pivotal role in drug discovery, genetic diagnostics and developing cost-effective Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (API).

The meeting was convened by the Minister to review the recent work outcomes of Hyderabad based CSIR labs, particularly after the personal impetus and patronage provided by Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the last one decade.

Directors of three premier CSIR laboratories based in Hyderabad: CSIR-Indian Institute of Chemical Technology (CSIR-IICT), CSIR-National Geophysical Research Institute (CSIR-NGRI), and CSIR-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CSIR-CCMB) attended the meeting. The meeting served as a platform for the Directors to present recent achievements and strategic scientific contributions of their respective institutes.

The Minister was briefed by Dr. D. Srinivasa Reddy (Director, CSIR-IICT), Dr. Prakash Kumar (Director, CSIR-NGRI) and Dr. Vinay Nandicoori (Director, CSIR-CCMB). Dr. D. Srinivasa Reddy, Director of CSIR-IICT, briefed the Minister on the institute's pioneering contributions in advancing India's chemical and pharmaceutical sectors.

The institute has also developed safer and more effective agrochemicals, and its work in catalysis has led to novel catalysts for hydrogenation, oxidation, and polymerization processes used widely in industrial applications.

Dr. Reddy highlighted CSIR-IICT's



Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh holding a meeting of Directors of the CSIR Institutes at Hyderabad.

key achievements including the development of compostable plastics in association with GreenWorksBio. He also highlighted the development of Hydrazine Hydrate in collaboration with Gujarat Alkalies and Chemicals Limited (GACL). In the domain of sustainable technologies, the institute's Anaerobic Gas Lift Reactor (AGR) technology enables efficient conversion of biodegradable waste into biogas and bio-manure. Dr. Vinay Nandicoori, Director of CSIR-CCMB, elaborated on the institute's accomplishments in molecular biology, genetic diagnostics, and biotechnological innovation. He highlighted that CCMB was the first Indian institution to develop DNA fingerprinting technology, which has had a lasting impact on forensic investigations and legal proceedings in the country. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the institute responded swiftly by developing indigenous diagnostic kits, surveillance systems, and even advancing mRNA vaccine technologies. One of CCMB's most impactful initiatives has been its work on sickle cell anemia, under which it developed a highly sensi-

ble, low-cost diagnostic kit as part of the National Sickle Cell Elimination Mission.

The institute is also engaged in research on diseases like tuberculosis and encephalitis and has launched India's first rare disease registry to better understand the genetic basis of uncommon disorders. Through its Atal Incubation Centre (AIC-CCMB), the institute has nurtured more than 160 startups working on biotech innovations in healthcare, agriculture, and environmental sustainability. In the realm of conservation, CCMB continues to lead studies on the genetic diversity of endangered species, such as tigers and olive ridley turtles, and supports wildlife forensics to curb illegal poaching and trade. Dr. Nandicoori emphasized the institute's dual commitment to fundamental research and societal application, bridging deep science with real-world outcomes.

Dr. Prakash Kumar, Director of CSIR-NGRI, presented the institute's significant achievements in earth sciences, particularly in the areas of seismic hazard mapping, resource explo-

ration, and infrastructure support. He noted that NGRI has developed India's first strain map to assess earthquake vulnerability in the Himalayan and Indo-Gangetic regions, a critical step toward national disaster preparedness. The institute is also conducting deep seismic profiling under a national program aimed at decoding the crustal structure of central India, which holds implications for both tectonic studies and mineral exploration. NGRI's work on geothermal energy, particularly in Ladakh and Chhattisgarh, has opened new frontiers for clean and renewable energy.

Dr. Jitendra Singh appreciated the vital role played by the CSIR laboratories in driving scientific innovation, supporting national missions, and contributing to India's goal of becoming a self-reliant knowledge economy. He emphasized the importance of science-based solutions for national development, especially in addressing societal challenges and promoting sustainability.

The Minister said that Hyderabad has emerged as a thriving ecosystem for scientific research, innovation, and entrepreneurship.

In light of the contributions of these three institutes during the meeting it was decided to organize a CSIR Startup Conclave in Hyderabad. The event, scheduled for April 22-23, 2025, aims to facilitate collaboration between research institutions and startups, and promote entrepreneurship in India. The conclave will be organized jointly by CSIR-IICT, CSIR-NGRI, and CSIR-CCMB.

Dr. Jitendra Singh reiterated the Modi government's commitment to fostering a culture of innovation, commercialization, and self-reliance in science and technology.



Advancing Heart Health-Role of Novel Risk Marker, screening tests in predicting cardiovascular diseases: Dr Sushil



HoD Cardiology GMCH Jammu Dr. Sushil Sharma and his team carrying out check of patients.

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JAMMU: In the ever-evolving landscape of cardiovascular medicine, early detection has become the cornerstone of effective prevention.

To address this pressing need, Head Department of cardiology GMCH Jammu Dr. Sushil Sharma in collaboration with Amarujala Newspaper held a day long Cardiac Awareness cum health Check up camp at Datti Devstan Kaka Dabuj Block Vijaypur District Samba aimed at identifying novel risk markers and employing advanced screening tests to predict cardiovascular diseases.

Attendees underwent a series of health assessments, including blood pressure measurement, lipid profile tests, ECG, and blood sugar analysis. However, the highlight of the camp was the integration of novel risk markers-biochemical indicators that provide deeper insights into cardiovascular risk beyond conventional measures. The role of inflammatory markers such as hs-CRP was discussed extensively, emphasizing its ability to predict future cardiac events even in individuals with normal cholesterol levels.

While interacting with the people, Dr Sushil stated that traditional risk factors such as high blood pressure, diabetes, high cholesterol, and smoking have long been associated with heart diseases, but emerging research highlights the importance of novel biomarkers such as high-sensitivity C-reactive protein (hs-CRP), lipoprotein(a), and coronary artery calcium (CAC) scoring in refining risk assessment and prevention strategies.

The significance of lipoprotein(a), a genetic risk factor that remains largely undetected in routine screenings but is increasingly recognized as a key contributor to premature heart disease, he said.

Additionally, Dr. Sushil said, coronary artery calcium scoring was introduced as a cutting-edge imaging tool that helps in visualizing the buildup of plaque in arteries, allowing for a more precise assessment of heart disease risk.

He elaborated that advancements in cardiovascular screening technologies have bolstered the ability to detect disease early and refine risk stratification. Imaging techniques such as coronary artery calcium (CAC) scoring and carotid intima-media thickness (CIMT) assessments provide direct visualization of atherosclerotic burden, often before symptoms arise. Additionally, emerging modalities like advanced cardiac MRI and blood-based biomarkers, including circulating micro RNAs and troponin assays, are expanding the scope of non-invasive diagnostics.

By incorporating these novel tests into clinical practice, healthcare providers can move toward a more predictive and preventive model of care, ultimately reducing the incidence of heart disease and improving long-term outcomes for patients. He emphasized the necessity of lifestyle modifications, dietary interventions, and regular medical check-ups. The importance of stress management, exercise, and smoking cessation was underscored, reinforcing the idea that while genetic pre-

disposition plays a role, lifestyle choices are equally influential in determining cardiovascular health, he said.

As the event concluded, Dr. Sushil delivered a powerful message: "Cardiovascular diseases are silent killers that often go unnoticed until irreversible damage occurs. By integrating novel risk markers and advanced screening techniques, we empower individuals to take control of their heart health before it's too late. Our goal is to shift the focus from treatment to prevention, ensuring a future where heart diseases are detected early and lives are saved."

Through initiatives like this, Dr Sushil and his team continue to pave the way for a healthier tomorrow, where awareness, early diagnosis, and preventive care form the pillars of cardiovascular well-being.

Management Committee of the Devstan Yashpal Sharma, Sat Pal Sharma Subhash Sharma, Mahant Swaran Sanjay Ganpatya, Purshotam Sharma, Chajju Ram Sharma, Tilak Sharma, Rashpal Sharma, Subhash chander and Parvesh kumari appreciated the efforts of Dr Sushil and his team for accepting their request and conducting cardiac awareness cum health Check up camp in their premises and shows their heartfelt gratitude.

Others who were part of this camp includes Dr Venkatesh Yellupu and Dr Aditya Sharma. Paramedics and volunteers includes Raghav Rajput, Rajkumar, Makhan Sharma, Rajender Singh, Mukesh Sharma, Rohit Nayyar, Rahul Vaid and Vikas Kumar.

Shat Chandi Yagya concludes with Divine Blessings at Vaishno Devi Shrine



CEO SMVDSB Anshul Garg and others participating in Yagya.

STATE TIMES NEWS

KATRA: The sacred 9-day-long Shat Chandi Maha Yagya, organized by the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB), concluded with immense reverence and devotion on Mahanavami. Over 3.5 lakh devotees from across India and abroad visited the shrine during the Chaitra Navratra to seek the blessings of the revered Mata Vaishno Devi Ji.

Anshul Garg, Chief Executive Officer, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board; Vikas Anand, SDM Bhawan; other officers and staff of the Shrine Board, besides pilgrims participated in Purnahuti and other religious ceremonies performed amidst Vedic mantras on the occasion. This spiritual occasion was further sanctified by a group of Pandits led by Padma Shri Prof Vishwanurti Shastrri, who conducted the Maha Yagya.

The Shrine Board, under the

directions and guidance of Chairman, SMVDSB (Lt. Governor, JK-UT), introduced several initiatives to make the Navratra more memorable. Key additions included smart lockers, free public call booths and complimentary slots for divyang devotees to participate in Garbjoon and Atka Arti at Adhkuwari and Bhawan. Dedicated quotas for helicopter bookings and complimentary battery car services were also provided for divyang pilgrims. Additionally, resting and holding areas were set up at Banganga and Adhkuwari and the dining area at Indraprastha Bhojanalaya was expanded. The Langar facility was extended to Shubhra Bhawan at Banganga, with all Shrine Langars offering fast-related food options for visiting devotees observing fasts during the Navratra.

The Shrine Board made elaborate arrangements to

enhance the pilgrimage experience including decorative flowers at Bhawan, Atka and surrounding areas. Round-the-clock water and power supply, sanitation, and sanitization measures were ensured along the tracks and in the Bhawan area. The Bhawan area and other sectors along the track were illuminated with attractive facade lighting and facilities like accommodation, battery-operated vehicles, passenger ropeway and helicopter services operated smoothly. Additionally, pilgrims benefited from free food at various locations, including Tarakote Marg, Prasad Kendra at Sanjichhat, Langar Sewa at Bhairon, Adhkuwari, Banganga and Railway Station, Katra, ensuring a seamless and spiritual experience for devotees.

Other highlights during these Navratra were captivating performances by renowned artists including Maithili Thakur, Raj Pareek, Shelly Taluja, Sachet/Parampara, Hansraj Raghuvanshi, Tripti Shaky, Jeet Ganguli, Brijesh Shandilya, Hargun Kaur, Bhoomi Trivedi, Suraj Singh/Juhi Singh, Pratibha Singh Baghel and Neetu Chanchal. The students of SMVD Gurukul also showcased their musical talents, blending tradition with youthful energy and enriching the spiritual experience.

Dr Darakhshan met Union Minister for Minority Affairs Kiren Rijju

Discussed Waqf Development Programmes & benefits of Waqf Amendments passed by Govt



Chairperson Waqf Board, Dr Darakhshan Andrabi calling on Union Minister of Minority Affairs, Kiren Rijju.

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SRINAGAR: Chairperson of Jammu & Kashmir Waqf Board, Dr Darakhshan Andrabi on Sunday held a meeting with the Union Minister of Minority Affairs, Kiren Rijju and thanked the minister for praising her work as the head of the J&K Waqf Board.

She informed the Minister that the entire team of the Board had put in a lot of hard work to transform the Waqf management system in J&K which was ailing to the core.

Dr Andrabi discussed futuristic Waqf development and management possibilities and plans with the Union Minister. She

hailed the central government for initiating the era of change in the Waqf Act by passing the Amendments Bill 2025.

Dr Andrabi said a false propaganda against the amendments has been spread while the these changes into the Act were long due and recommended by many who have studied or worked with the system.

She said that soon the Muslim community throughout India will come to know about the benefits of these amendments. Kiren Rijju hailed the views of Dr Andrabi and her clear stand based on facts. He also praised Andrabi for her direct samvad with the people on Waqf Bill benefits.

Dy CM UP meets LG

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JAMMU: Brajesh Pathak, Deputy Chief Minister, Uttar Pradesh called on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, on Sunday.

Meanwhile, Chandar Parkash Ganga, Member of Legislative Assembly from Vijaypur also called on the Lieutenant Governor and discussed various issues related to public welfare.

The Union Minister of State for Fisheries and

Animal Husbandry praised the dedication and resilience of the BJP workers in Kashmir and reminded them of the party's unwavering commitment to national integration, development and inclusive growth, particularly in Jammu and Kashmir. "The Bharatiya Janata Party has always worked for

Final version of 'Surya Tilak' mechanism installed at Ram temple: CBRI scientist

STATE TIMES NEWS

AYODHYA (UP): The 'Surya Tilak' ceremony of Lord Ram held at the Ram Mandir here on Sunday was performed using the final version of the tilak mechanism installed on the third floor of the temple complex, a senior scientist from the Central Building Research Institute (CBRI), Roorkee said.

Chief Scientist at CSIR-CBRI Dr S K Panigrahi told PTI that unlike last year's temporary arrangement from the second floor, this year's Surya Tilak was

conducted from the completed third floor using an upgraded optical design.

Last year, the demonstration was successful, but it was a temporary setup, Panigrahi said, adding that this year, it was performed from the third floor of a completely new optical design, including the addition of two more lenses in the optical path.

The objective of the Surya Tilak Project is to focus a beam of sunlight precisely on the forehead of the Ram Lalla idol every year at 12 noon on Ram

Navami, which falls in the Chaitra month of the Hindu calendar.

Panigrahi explained that the solar position varies each year as per the lunar calendar, and the English calendar date for Ram Navami repeats every 19 years.

The design for the Surya Tilak mechanism has been

developed to account for this cycle, he added.

CBRI, in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA), Bengaluru, developed the system to channel sunlight from the third floor of the temple to the sanctum sanctorum (Garbha Griha).

The optical validation,

fabrication, and installation were carried out by Bengaluru-based Optics & Allied Engineering Pvt. Ltd. (Optica).

The CSIR-CBRI team includes Director Dr R Pradeep Kumar, Dr R S Bisht, Dr Debduutta Ghosh, Dr S K Panigrahi, Kanti Solanki, V Chakradhar, Dinesh, and Sameer. From

IIA, Director Dr Anna Purni, Engineer Sriram, and Professor Tushar Prabhu served as consultants.

Optica Managing Director Rajinder Kotaria, along with Nagraj, Vivek and Thava Kumar, was involved in design validation and fabrication, Panigrahi added.

Kurian presides over function in Srinagar to mark BJP's foundation day

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SRINAGAR: The BJP celebrated its 45th foundation day here on Sunday.

Union minister George Kurian presided over a function held here to mark the party's raising day at Jawahar Nagar.

The Union Minister of State for Fisheries and

Animal Husbandry praised the dedication and resilience of the BJP workers in Kashmir and reminded them of the party's unwavering commitment to national integration, development and inclusive growth, particularly in Jammu and Kashmir. "The Bharatiya Janata Party has always worked for

'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas aur Sabka Prayas'. Our foundation is rooted in the spirit of nationalism and service. Kashmir holds a special place in our hearts and we will continue to work for its peace and prosperity," he said.

Senior BJP leaders from Kashmir, including Waqf

Board chairperson Darakhshan Andrabi, district office-bearers and prominent workers, participated in the event.

The programme included the hoisting of the party flag, singing patriotic songs and the reading of the party's foundation day message from BJP president J P Nadda.

Upscaling conservation efforts need of hour: Javed Rana

STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Minister for Forest, Ecology & Environment, Javed Ahmed Rana on Sunday called for a unified approach for upscaling conservation and management of forest resources, with special focus on wildlife conservation and eco-tourism development.

He made these observations while chairing a review meeting of the forest department here.

Considering the need to upscale the conservation efforts, the Minister called for a coordinated strategy from all stakeholders involved in forest

management, ensuring a holistic and effective approach to conservation.

"We have to work collectively for the efficient management and conservation of our forest resources. The conservation efforts have assumed huge significance owing to the changing climate pattern," Rana emphasised.

"Local communities have an essential role to play in forest conservation as community forestry has been shown to have numerous benefits, like reducing deforestation and promoting sustainable land use

pattern", he added. He also highlighted the potential of eco-tourism as a sustainable means of generating revenue and supporting local communities.

"We have to focus our efforts toward responsible eco-tourism as it has proven to be beneficial in reducing negative impacts on local ecosystems," he said.

During the meeting, Rana also emphasized on community engagement, sustainable livelihoods and forest protection measures to curb encroachment, poaching and habitat degradation.

The Minister also reviewed current measures to improve forest fire preparedness and response, aiming to mitigate damage and protect biodiversity.

"There is a need to enhance the monitoring and management of forest fires, particularly in vulnerable areas. We should enhance our efforts towards prediction, prevention and control," he said.

He also directed the concerned officers for timely timber marking, extraction and supply to cater the needs of population.