

Dr Jitendra asks States, UTs to join India's journey of transformation through technology

■ STATE TIMES NEWS
NEW DELHI: In a clarion call for deepening Centre-State collaboration in Science, Technology and Innovation (STI), Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology; Dr. Jitendra Singh on Friday emphasised the need for States and Union Territories to become engines of innovation in India's journey towards a developed nation by 2047.

Speaking at the valedictory session of Annual Review Meeting of State Science & Technology (S&T) Councils here, the Minister defined technology as engine of transformation and asserted that "a developed India cannot exist without developed States and Union Territories," urging them to evolve into strategic, inclusive, and dynamic hubs of innovation.

Addressing over 30 State and UT S&T Councils, Dr. Jitendra underscored the pivotal role of STI in realising the Viksit Bharat vision- a mission that aligns with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call for a self-reliant and globally competitive India by its centenary of independence. "Science, Technology and Innovation is not just a sector-it is the engine powering our transformation," he said.

He pointed out that the Department of Science and Technology (DST) has been instrumental in supporting this transformation through the State Science and Technology Programme (SSTP), which provides both budgetary and technical backing to State S&T Councils.

These councils function as nodal institutions, catalysing regional STI ecosystems that align local needs with national priorities.

The Minister highlighted the network of 23 Patent Information Centres as vital for strengthening



Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh chairing the meeting of Science Secretaries of different States and UTs at Ambedkar International Centre, New Delhi on Friday.

Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) awareness and facilitation across the States.

Dr. Jitendra also emphasised the importance of increasing awareness and effective utilisation of various Science and Technology schemes offered by the Centre.

He urged State S&T Councils to proactively disseminate information about these programmes at the grassroots level, ensuring that stakeholders-particularly in rural and remote areas-are informed and empowered to benefit from them. "Awareness is the first step towards impact," he said, adding that visibility and outreach must become integral to the Councils' strategy for inclusive innovation.

The Minister also encouraged State S&T Councils to actively study and emulate successful models from their counterparts across the country. Highlighting the value of peer learning, he noted that best practices from high-performing states could serve as replicable templates, enabling others to scale up their impact efficiently.

"Cross-learning is key to accelerating progress," he said, stressing the need for regular exchange of ideas and experiences to strengthen the national STI ecosystem collectively.

The two-day meeting, which drew enthusiastic participation from Councils across the country, focused on strengthening the STI

ecosystem through peer learning, strategic planning, and showcasing success stories.

A special session brought together Secretaries and Principal Secretaries from 13 States/UTs to share innovative state-level interventions, propose science-based solutions, and outline future strategies.

The exchange, Dr. Jitendra Singh said, reinforced the importance of collaborative federalism in achieving equitable development.

The meeting also considered proposals from Jammu & Kashmir for further assistance to its S&T Council, alongside plans to establish new Patent Information Centres in Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Meghalaya, and Madhya Pradesh. These initiatives, Dr. Jitendra noted, will help create a more robust and inclusive IPR framework across the country.

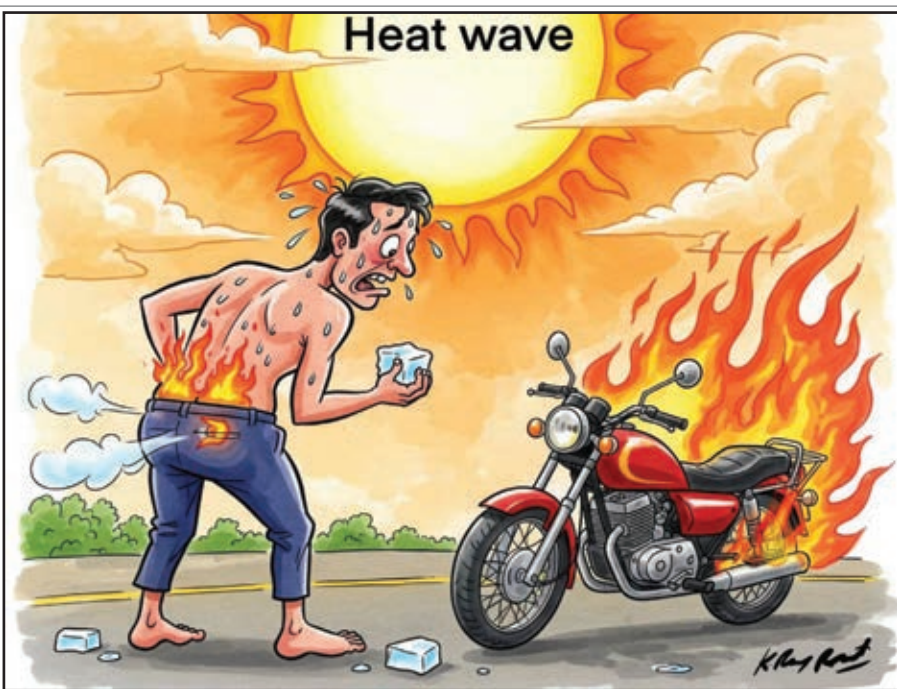
Looking ahead, the Minister called for State S&T Councils to reposition themselves as "visionary enablers of change," not just administrative bodies.

He urged them to actively promote and brand their impactful programmes, replicate successful models across regions, and foster cross-sectoral collaboration with academia, industry, policymakers and civil society. "The Councils must take decisive steps to ensure Science and Technology becomes a cornerstone of governance and development," he said.

cy coherence, India can build an inclusive and innovation-driven future. "The journey towards

Viksit Bharat@2047 is ambitious but achievable-through Centre-State cooperation, we can unlock the full potential of this Amrit Kaal."

The meeting was attended by DST Secretary Prof. Abhay Karandikar, members of the Expert Committee on SSTP, including Prof. Satish B. Agnihotri and Dr. P.K. Agrawal, and key DST officials, marking a united push towards science-led regional development.



AIIMS Jammu conducts trial run of blood donation services

Faculty, Staff participation marks milestone in advancing regional healthcare

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The All-India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Vijaypur, Jammu, announced the completion of a trial run of its newly established Blood Centre services.

The internal blood donation drive witnessed enthusiastic participation from faculty members, medical staff, administrative personnel, and support teams, showcasing the institute's unwavering commitment to healthcare excellence and community welfare.

The blood donation camp, conducted to assess operational preparedness, received an overwhelming response from the AIIMS community. Prof. (Dr.) Shakti Kumar Gupta, Executive Director & CEO, lauded the initiative, stating,

"The spirited involvement of our faculty and staff reflects AIIMS Vijaypur's dedication not only to delivering world-class medical care but also to setting a strong example in public health leadership. This trial run is a significant step toward full-scale operations of our Blood Centre."

The Blood Centre, headed by Dr. Urvashi Kotwal, Associate Professor and



Volunteers donating blood during blood donation camp at AIIMS Jammu.

Head of the Department of Transfusion Medicine, is equipped with modern collection, processing and storage systems. The successful trial affirmed the institute's capability to provide safe, quality-assured blood products while adhering to national and international standards.

This Centre will be instrumental in ensuring timely and safe blood availability-not just at AIIMS, but also for other healthcare institutions across the region, especially during emergencies.

The trial run yielded several positive outcomes, demonstrating the initiative's success and potential for future implementation. Notably, there was high participation,

with a large number of faculty and staff members enthusiastically volunteering to donate blood. Operations were conducted efficiently, ensuring smooth execution of the collection, processing, and storage protocols. Safety and quality were upheld through rigorous donor screening and strict adherence

to regulatory standards. Additionally, the trial run showcased excellent team coordination, with seamless collaboration between medical and technical personnel contributing significantly to the overall success of the event.

Building on the trial's success, AIIMS Vijaypur plans

to roll out regular blood donation drives and awareness campaigns targeting educational institutions, corporate bodies, NGOs, and social groups.

"Our aim is to foster a culture of voluntary blood donation throughout the region," shared Dr. Sushant Kumar Meinia, Assistant Professor and Coordinator of the Voluntary Blood Donation Drive.

The leadership extended sincere appreciation to all participants of AIIMS Jammu who came forward for the noble cause. Among the early donors were Dr. Vijay Kundal, Col. Sanjay Garg, Jitendra Goswami, Dr. Sartaj, Dr. Amit Chaudhary, Monika Rohilla, Anil Bhat, Vikas Yadav, Prashant Kumar, Ritika Garg, Pushpinder, and many others.

BJP delegation visits shelling affected villages near LoC in Uri

Lauds confidence of border population, assures for addressing all concerns

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BARAMULLA: A delegation of Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) including Sat Sharma (State President), Leader of Opposition in J&K Legislative Assembly, Sunil Sharma alongside Dr. Narinder Singh (MLA), Dr. DK Manyal (MLA) and R S Pathania (MLA) visited shelling affected villages of Uri in Baramulla district of Kashmir.

It was part of ongoing visits of BJP delegation in border and shelling affected areas across Jammu and Kashmir.

During this visit, delegation visited Laghama, Salamabad, Bandi and other shelling affected villages in Uri sub division.

The BJP leaders met with shelling affected families of the area listening to their issues and accessing losses suffered by people due to shelling by Pakistan that targeted civilian areas.

The leaders also visited the family where a woman attained martyrdom in Pak



J&K BJP delegation meeting with shelling affected border residents at Baramulla.

shelling.

Interacting with locals, LoP Sunil Sharma lauded their confidence and patriotism saying that people living along borders of country are not less than a soldier in themselves as they face various hardships of cross border shelling but still stand like rock against enemy threats.

Sat Sharma assured that families that all their issues and grievances have been enlisted and the party delegation

will prepare a detailed report for further submission before higher authorities including Government of India so that all required steps are taken to address these issues.

Later, LoP Sunil Sharma also convened a meeting with district administration Baramulla wherein discussion on prevailing situation was held and efforts for mitigating their problems of civil population were reviewed.

Nationalism only understands national interest: Arun Gupta

‘NC demands in resolution are ill timed’

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JAMMU: India is passing through a very critical phase and every citizen of the country is only concerned about the dignity and respect for India at international level. Indo-Pak conflict has given a new definition to Nationalism and redefined it, said Arun Kumar Gupta, spokesperson, J&K BJP, in a press release, on Friday.

The armed forces of our country have done exceedingly well in teaching the hard lesson to the backers and supporters of terrorism in Pakistan. We are continuing the process of conveying the countries across the globe the menace of terrorism and how this affects the countries and their citizens.



The delegations comprising members of Parliament of India have started visiting various countries for an opinion on how this menace of terrorism is affecting countries globally and is spreading very aggressively and the role of Pakistan which is involved deeply in backing and supporting the terror camps across their country,

said Arun Gupta.

During this critical juncture as India is passing through, internal politics always takes back seat as the interest of nation is always on top and; that is precisely the reason all major political parties are the part of these delegations which India has planned for building up much needed narrative against terrorism and how India has been able to dismantle the network of terror camps in Pakistan, explains Gupta.

NC demand for statehood and special status is highly ill timed and gives ammunition to our enemy countries, which is not desired, looking into the critical juncture India is passing through. India is a democratic country and every citizen

has the right to express their desires and wishes whether an individual or a political party, but internal issues cannot take over pressing national interest and the ill-timed resolution by NC is highly condemnable, said Gupta.

NC on one hand gives the reference of assurances given for the grant of concerned issues at appropriate time, and on the other hand their statements go against the very interest of the country and its citizens. There is and will be ample time to discuss and raise internal issues as things start looking good. We as citizens of the country have first and foremost duty not to do any action which certainly goes against the country; NC

must look into these types of ill-timed statements and avoid for some time till the situation is normal again, said Arun.

Redefining nationalism is the new mantra of India and one aspect is very clear that it is written loud and clear in every Indian's heart that nothing should come in the way of national interest, as 'Country Exists, We Exist' and all other issues become irrelevant for some time. India has shown its military and political strong will to the world that we are a strong nation and growing economy. If any obstacle comes in the way, it will be dealt with very sternly and effectively come what may, concluded Arun Gupta.

Including caste enumeration in forthcoming population census may help in making some indirect evaluation analysis in spirits of Art-341 of COI

NDA-IV Modi Govt deciding to include caste enumeration in Census raises hopes for real good to many SC/ST/OBC

■ DAYA SAGAR

Before the subject is taken further there is must need for referring to the categories of Indian citizens which are referred as SC, ST, OBC whenever references are made to subjects like special provisions in the name of reservations for some of Indian citizens in the Legislature / Services /Educational institutions made. The constitution of India talks of socially & educationally backward classes(SC see Art 341 of COI) / Schedule Tribes (ST see Art 342 of COI)/backward classes [OBC inserted by Art 342A by the Constitution (One Hundred and Second Amendment) Act, 2018, s. 4 (w.e.f. 15-8-2018) but does not make mention of any pointed elements / scale for identification or classification. Article 366 of the Constitution of India defines the Scheduled Castes as: Such castes, races or tribes or part of or groups within such castes, races or tribes as are deemed under Article 341 to be Scheduled Castes for the purpose of 'this' constitution and Article 366 of the Constitution of India defines the Scheduled Tribes as: such tribes or tribal communities or part of or groups within such tribes or tribal communi-

ties as are deemed under Article 342 to be the Scheduled Tribes for the purposes of 'this' Constitution. And said Art 341 says < Scheduled Castes.-(1) The President State or Union territory], and where it is a State may with respect to any ***, after consultation with the Governor by public notification , specify the castes, races or tribes or parts of or groups within castes, races or tribes which shall for the purposes of this Constitution be deemed to be Scheduled Castes in relation to that State or Union territory, as the case may be. (2) Parliament may by law include in or exclude from the list of Scheduled Castes specified in a notification issued under clause (1) any caste, race or tribe or part of or group within any caste, race or tribe, but save as aforesaid a notification issued under the said clause shall not be varied by any subsequent notification. And referred Art-342 says < Scheduled Tribes.-(1) The President , and where it is a State the Governor thereof, by public notification may with respect to any ***, after consultation with , specify the tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within tribes or tribal communities which shall for the purposes of this Constitution be deemed to

be Scheduled Tribes in relation to that State or Union territory, as the case may be. And Art 342A says for Socially and educationally backward classes.-<(1) The President may with respect to any State or Union territory, and where it is a State, after consultation with the Governor thereof, by public notification, specify the socially and educationally backward classes in the Central List which shall for the purposes of the Central Government] be deemed to be socially and educationally backward classes in relation to that State or Union territory, as the case may be.

There may be nearly 1200 castes in SC list and nearly 800 tribes in the ST list . For reservation purposes all listed castes and tribes are on date taken as a homogenous mass where as on ground the case may not be so .The position regarding the OBC list may also not be different. So maybe it was due to such like reasons that Art-340 was also included in the COI to also review the effectiveness of the provisions of SC & ST special sports for the socially & educationally marginalised classes as well as tribes taken as a whole mass or indi-



A Look through the Mist

vidual classes / tribes within. Art-340 of Constitution lays down that the President may by order appoint a

Commission consisting of such persons as he thinks fit to investigate the conditions of socially and educationally backward classes within the territory of India and the difficulties under which they labour and to make recommendations as to the steps that should be taken by the Union or any State to remove such difficulties and to improve their condition. Although the said article does not specifically say that the commission would be required to review whether the reservations / supports to educationally & backward subjects of India (particularly SC &ST) need be carried further or ceased but surely the object at back of the article must have been to assess how far the reservations / special supports/ props / system of identification of castes / classes have been delivering the targets and was there any need to relook into the procedures/ systems adopted for delivery of benefits. (Art-340. Appointment of a Commission to investigate the conditions of backward classes.-(1) The President may by

order appoint a Commission consisting of such persons as he thinks fit to investigate the conditions of socially and educationally backward classes within the territory of India and the difficulties under which they labour and to make recommendations as to the steps that should be taken by the Union or any State to remove such difficulties and to improve their condition and as to the grants that should be made for the purpose by the Union or any State and the conditions subject to which such grants should be made, and the order appointing such Commission shall define the procedure to be followed by the Commission. (2) A Commission so appointed shall investigate the matters referred to them and present to the President a report setting out the facts as found by them and making such recommendations as they think proper. (3) The President shall cause a copy of the report so presented together with a memorandum explaining the action taken thereon to be laid before each House of Parliament).

As per records available at no time after 1950 any exercise has been got done by the governments to pin the reasons for having not achieved the uplift-

ment goal in set 10 years & thereafter amending Art-334 for many extension beyond 1960 done without applying corrections. May be now with including caste in population census some analysis for betterment would be possible for making the benefits to some individual castes / tribes otherwise left behind due to internal caste/ tribe dominations within the SC/ ST so far taken as a homogenous mass as regards 'backwardness' / social discrimination.

So now including caste as one of the elements in the population census going to be conducted has gained some relevance for studying how far the reservation benefits have reached the reserved classes/ groups and how far the benefits have been equally/ proportionately / disproportionately obtained by different groups / castes among the ones included in the list of SC / ST/ or even OBC where reservations to some percentage are provided in the Legislature / Services/ Educational institutions as a whole. As regards the economically weaker sections (EWS) the study may not be that seriously relevant.

To be continued
(The writer is is Sr Journalist & analyst of J&K affairs)