

# Dr Jitendra announces major reforms for 'Ease of Innovation', 'Ease of Research'

## STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI : In a major policy shift aimed at streamlining the research environment in India, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology, Dr. Jitendra Singh on Sunday announced a set of policy reforms to enhance the "Ease of Innovation" and "Ease of Research", providing long-awaited relief to innovators, researchers scholars, scientists and institutions across the country.

Addressing a press conference at The National Media Centre in the national capital, Dr. Jitendra Singh unveiled decisions that will enable academic and research institutions to bypass some of the most cited hurdles in their day-to-day functioning-particularly around procurement delays and financial ceilings. Such pathbreaking decisions could not have been possible without the personal indulgence and support of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, he added.

The announcement follows extensive consultations led by the Principal Scientific Adviser's office, drawing insights from 13 IITs and multiple research bodies across India.

One of the most consequential decisions announced is the delegation of procurement powers to institutional heads. Directors of scientific organisations and Vice Chancellors of universities will now be empowered to



Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh addressing a press conference at National Media Centre, New Delhi on Sunday.

carry out non-GeM (Government e-Marketplace) purchases for specialized research equipment and materials-a departure from the existing rules which mandated GeM procurement even when suitable items were unavailable.

"We have tried to do away with red tape-ism," said Dr. Jitendra Singh. "This is a move that places trust in the science leaders of this country. The message from the Modi Government is clear-we trust you, we value you and we are committed to you."

The government has also revised key financial thresholds under the General Financial Rules (GFR). The ceiling for direct purchases has been doubled from ₹1 lakh to ₹2 lakh, while the range for purchases through departmental committees has been raised from ₹1-10 lakh to ₹2-25 lakh. Similarly, the limits for limited tender enquiries and advertised tenders have been increased from ₹50 lakh to ₹1 crore. Additionally, heads of institutions can now approve Global Tender Enquiries (GTEs) up to ₹200 crore-

previously a power reserved for central authorities.

The new policies respond directly to longstanding grievances from research scholars and faculty, who often faced delays due to slow exemption processes and cumbersome procurement rules. A recent report by the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister, along with a presentation by the PSA's office, highlighted how rules originally intended to ensure transparency were inadvertently hampering scientific progress.

Dr. Jitendra Singh clarified that while these reforms offer greater flexibility, they are built on a foundation of trust and accountability. "There is an enormous responsibility that comes with this autonomy. We are relying on the integrity of the science community to ensure that this flexibility is used judiciously," he said.

The move is seen as part of the broader national effort to position India as an innovation-driven economy. Dr. Jitendra Singh pointed out that similar liberalisation in

the space and nuclear sectors had yielded strong results. "We opened up the space sector, and today we're looking at an \$8 billion economy poised to grow fivefold. These reforms are meant to replicate that success across the R&D ecosystem."

He also underlined the alignment of these reforms with the National Education Policy 2020, which encourages interdisciplinary flexibility and student-led academic trajectories. "If we are allowing students to choose their learning paths, we must also enable the research ecosystem to support that ambition," he said.

The policy changes are expected to significantly reduce delays in research projects, improve access to high-end equipment, and motivate young scholars, start-ups, and innovators who had often taken to social media to express their frustration with existing bottlenecks. With the Modi government completing 11 years in office, the announcement is being seen as a reaffirmation of its focus on science, innovation,

and youth-led development-core themes that Dr. Jitendra Singh said are "integral to India's future global role." The press conference was addressed in the presence of Dr. Rajesh S. Gokhale, Secretary, Department of Biotechnology; Prof. A. K. Sood, Principal Scientific Advisor to the Government of India; and Sunil Kumar, Additional Secretary, Department of Science & Technology, with participation from scientists and senior officials of the respective departments.



# Cardiac awareness camp brings hope & healing at border village affected by shelling: Dr. Sushil

## STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: A Pathbreaking cardiac awareness cum health check-up camp was organized by Head Department of Cardiology GMCH Jammu Dr. Sushil Sharma in collaboration with SVS Charitable Trust Sunderbani at border village of Krishna Ghati, Mendhar, Poonch District which was recently affected by Cross border shelling.

This camp aimed at addressing the physical and emotional trauma faced by local residents due to conflict. The Camp was inaugurated by Shri Shri 1008 Swami Vishwatamanand Ji Maharaj along with Dr Sushil Sharma, Adv Sunil Sharma (President Bar Association Poonch), Naresh Chander Raj (Ex Councillor MC), Balvinder Singh Baghi (Ex Councillor MC) amidst Vedic invocations for universal peace and health for all.

This pioneering initiative harmoniously blends the healing power of spirituality with cutting-edge medical care, addressing the dual challenges of rising cardiovascular diseases and the psychological toll of border shelling.

Shri 1008 Swami Vishwatamanand Ji Maharaj's presence and blessings at the cardiac awareness camp added a profound dimension to the initiative. His spiritual guidance and motivation inspired participants to adopt a holistic approach to heart health, emphasizing the importance of respecting the human body through healthy lifestyle choices.



Shri 1008 Swami Vishwatamanand Ji Maharaj speaking at cardiac awareness cum health check-up camp being organized by HoD Cardiology GMCH Jammu Dr. Sushil Sharma.

By integrating spiritual practices like meditation and mindfulness, Swami Ji's message complemented the medical advice provided by Dr. Sushil Sharma's team, promoting a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of physical and spiritual well-being. His involvement underscored the transformative power of faith and spirituality in healthcare, providing a beacon of hope and inspiration to the community.

While interacting with the people Dr. Sushil stated that heart health is not just about physical well-being but also about mental and spiritual well-being. By adopting a holistic approach to health, we can reduce the risk of cardiovascular diseases and improve our overall quality of life. He emphasized the importance of managing stress, anxiety, and other emotional factors that can impact heart health. Dr. Sushil also highlighted the benefits of spiritual practices like meditation, yoga, and mindfulness in promoting heart health and overall well-being especially

for people placed in an environment of uncertainty and fear due to their proximity with border.

He further added, 'Our initiative aims to empower individuals with the knowledge and tools to take control of their heart health. By combining medical care with spiritual practices, we can create a comprehensive approach to health that addresses the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of individuals.' Dr. Sushil's message resonated with the audience, inspiring them to prioritize their heart health and adopt a more holistic approach to wellness. The interaction session provided a valuable opportunity for people to ask questions, share their concerns, and receive guidance on maintaining a healthy heart."

Dr. Sushil's approach underscores the profound impact of spiritual practices on cardiovascular well-being, providing a beacon of hope for those affected. By bridging the gap between medicine and spirituality, this outreach has the potential

to revolutionize healthcare delivery in trauma-prone areas. The convergence of faith and medicine in this initiative is a testament to the transformative power of compassion, care, and spiritual healing in healthcare.

Others who were part of this camp include Dr. Parvaz Ahmad Khan (CMO Poonch), Dr. Raghuvir Singh, Dr. Liaqat Hussain, Dr. Poonam Jagias, Dr. Shahbaz Khan, Dr. Kunal Sharma, Dr. Sonali Sharma, Dr. Sourab Gupta, Dr. Komal Bansal, Dr. Kamaljit Singh, Dr. Arneet Sharma, Dr. Zia ul Rehman, Dr. Rahul Khajuria, and Dr. Ruchi. Paramedics and volunteers include Rajkumar, Rajinder Singh, Vikas Kumar, Rohit Nayyar, Rahul Vaid, Gourav Sharma, Nirvair Singh Bali, Dr. Nitan Sharma, Vikrant Sharma, Paramveer Singh, Maninder Singh, Rohit Sharma, Nirjyot Singh, Sukhjyot Singh, Ajeet Pal Singh Joshi, Pankaj Bali, Gourav Sharma, Sumit Sharma and numerous Volunteers of the Trust.

# Khatana slams NC govt for neglecting tribals, seeks white paper on welfare schemes



Rajya Sabha MP Er. Ghulam Ali Khatana speaking at a programme.

## STATE TIMES NEWS

BISHNAH: Senior BJP leader and Rajya Sabha MP Er. Ghulam Ali Khatana on Sunday accused the Omar Abdullah-led government of systematically sidelining Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes in Jammu and Kashmir by failing to implement key welfare legislations introduced after the abrogation of Article 370.

Addressing a well-attended and a huge public gathering at Darbar Ground in Bishnah, Khatana alleged that landmark Central laws including the Forest Rights Act and the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities)

Act-though extended to Jammu and Kashmir post-2019, remain largely unimplemented on the ground.

"The tribal population continues to live without even the most basic amenities. Their hamlets lack roads, electricity, clean water and healthcare. Funds are being allocated, but there is no accountability. One has to ask-where is the money going?" Khatana questioned.

Khatana further claimed that while the Modi government ensured constitutional rights were extended to all communities after the special status of J&K was revoked, the Omar-led National Conference govern-

ment failed to follow through. "Is it because these communities supported the abrogation of Article 370? Are they now being punished for their loyalty to the nation?" he asked, calling the situation "deeply discriminatory and politically motivated."

The BJP MP pointed out that several state and centrally sponsored development schemes have seen progress under the present Lieutenant Governor-led administration, but these initiatives are now allegedly being obstructed or diluted. "Development cannot be selective. Welfare must reach the last person in the line," he said. Moreover, Khatana demanded that the J&K government release a White Paper detailing the disbursement and on-ground status of all state and central welfare schemes. "People deserve to know how public money is being spent. Communities that are constitutionally entitled to development cannot be left in the lurch," he added.

He also used the platform to urge tribal elders and local leaders to act against the growing menace of drug addiction and social decay among youth in marginalized areas. "Social neglect is driving our youth toward dangerous paths. We need collective responsibility to protect the next generation," he said. Concluding his address, Khatana appealed to the Lieutenant Governor to intervene if the state administration continues to fail in delivering basic rights and infrastructure to the tribal and backward populations.

## STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Additional Chief Secretary (ACS), Higher Education Department, Shantmanu, on Sunday unveiled significant new ICT based initiatives aimed at bolstering academic excellence and fostering stronger connections between the department and colleges as well as students. The launch, attended by the college principals and faculty, marks a pivotal step towards enhancing the transparency and streamlining data flow within the Higher Education system.

A cornerstone of these advancements is the launch of website of the Directorate of Colleges J&K, www.direc-

# HED unveils 'SIGMA'; other ICT based initiatives

torcollegesjk.in, developed entirely in-house, which introduces innovative features like The Policy Planning and Development Portal, Staff Services Portal and SIGMA- Student Integrated Grievance and Messaging Application. The ACS had desired for redressal of student grievances in a timely manner and the launch of SIGMA will work in that direction, said Director Colleges, Dr. Sheikh Ajaz Bashir. The Policy, Planning and Development Portal provides dashboard access to the Principals of Degree Colleges as a one-stop place for submitting the data, getting actionable insights, facilitating informed decision-making and promoting "Ease

of Doing". The Staff Services Portal will enable the staff members to submit and track applications digitally for a range of essential services. The staff can apply for services like Passport NOC, Foreign Visit NOC and PhD permission from anywhere, at any time, eliminating the need for physical visits and paperwork. These streamlined digital workflows will reduce the processing time and administrative burden, allowing the staff to focus more on their core responsibilities.

SIGMA is a student-centric user-friendly web portal accessible at <https://directorcollegesjk.in/signalogin.aspx>.

# JU AC approves one seat for transgender candidates in each on-campus programmes

Adopts NCrf along with SoPs for effective implementation

Endorses MA History programme, various certificate courses

## STATE TIMES NEWS

BHADERWAH: The Academic Council (AC) of the University of Jammu on Sunday approved the creation of one supernumerary seat for transgender candidates in each on-campus programme of the University, as a step towards fulfilling its social responsibility.

The Council, which met under the Chairmanship of Vice Chancellor Prof Umesh Rai, at the Bhabarwah Campus, for the first time as part of its outreach programme, also endorsed the adoption of the National Credit Framework (NCrf) along with its Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs) for effective implementation at the University of Jammu.

During the exhaustive deliberations, the Council covered a wide range of academic and research matters, inter alia, approving existing guidelines and statutes related to several academic programmes in accordance with the latest applicable UGC Guidelines.

The M.A. History programme, along with certificate courses in Basic

Accounting, Goods and Services Tax (GST), and Filing of Income Tax Returns through Open and Distance Learning (ODL) mode, were also endorsed under the Centre for Distance and Online Education (CDOE).

Revised statutes governing the Four-Year Undergraduate Programme - Design Your Degree, aligned with NEP 2020, were also approved.

The introduction of a Postgraduate (M.A./M.Sc.) Degree Programme in Disaster Management under the Department of Geology was also endorsed by the Academic Council.

Additionally, the Council approved the provision allowing candidates to pursue an academic programme under the Centre for Distance and Online Education (ODL/Online mode) simultaneously with another academic programme in physical mode at a UGC-recognized University, in line with the revised UGC Guidelines.

Further, the modalities for signing Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) for



Vice Chancellor Prof Umesh Rai speaking at Academic Council meeting at the Bhabarwah Campus.

various academic activities were chalked out during a focused interaction with officers of the Indian Army.

At the outset, the Vice Chancellor welcomed all members of the Council and expressed appreciation for their presence-both in person and in virtual mode.

Calling the event a significant step in institutional outreach, Prof. Umesh Rai emphasized the need to empower off-site campuses and bring core academic discussions closer to students, faculty, and civil society in remote regions. He acknowledged the collective efforts of faculty, staff, and leadership that made it possible to host the meeting in such a vibrant academic setting.

The Vice Chancellor

extended his heartfelt appreciation to several faculty members for their contributions, including Prof. Meena Sharma for leading key infrastructure developments, Prof. J.P. Singh Joorel and Prof. Rahul Gupta for their committed work at Bhabarwah Campus. He acknowledged transitions across academic leadership and welcomed newly appointed deans and faculty heads.

Referring to the University's progress since the last Academic Council meeting, the Vice Chancellor spoke about the University's advancements in academics, research, infrastructure, student engagement, digital transformation, and national-level recognition. He

appreciated the seamless teamwork that contributed to impressive accreditation, timely admissions, new academic collaborations, and enhanced student opportunities.

Prof. Rai said that multiple infrastructure and academic initiatives have been rolled out in recent months, significantly enhancing the University's physical and digital ecosystem. He also highlighted the University's growing presence in national rankings and its expanding footprint through MoUs and research partnerships.

The Vice Chancellor also took a moment to acknowledge the efforts of stakeholders who have made significant contributions to the University's growth. He laud-

ed the Director DIQA Dr. Ginny Dogra for her instrumental role in securing the prestigious A++ NAAC accreditation, and appreciated the Director of IT Dr. Guneet Singh Sudan for spearheading key digital initiatives that have enhanced administrative efficiency and digital infrastructure.

Earlier, Dr. Neeraj Sharma, Registrar, placed before the Council several key agenda and reporting items. The Council confirmed the minutes of its previous meeting held on November 20, 2025, and ratified the academic decisions taken by the Vice Chancellor in the interim.

Held against the serene backdrop of the Chenab Valley, this landmark meet-

ing reaffirmed the University's resolve to integrate its off-site campuses into the heart of its academic and governance frameworks.

On the sidelines of the Academic Council meeting, a soulful song titled "Wah Bhabarwah", sung and produced by Col. Kuldeep Manhas, was released.

While the academic deliberations were underway at the Bhabarwah Campus, Prof. Sadaf Shah, Assistant Director, SIIDEC, delivered a presentation on the University's flagship Design Your Degree (DYD) programme. Around 150 students from various local schools of Bhabarwah and nearby areas participated with excitement and expressed keen interest in pursuing the DYD programme.

Later in the evening, a series of sports and cultural activities were organized, with a Mushaira as the central attraction. Faculty members, officers, students, and stakeholders participated with immense enthusiasm and high spirits.

Prof. Anju Bhasin, Dean Academic Affairs, Prof

Neelu Rohmetra, Dean Research Studies and Prof Sangeta Gupta were also present on the dias for making thoughtful deliberations viz a viz various academic items. Dr. Sumita Sharma, JR Academic conducted the proceedings.

Among those who attended the meeting included Deans, Directors, Rectors, Heads, officers from the University, Prof. Manzoor A. Malik, Dean School of Physical and Material Science, University of Kashmir, Prof. B. A. Ganai, Dean School of Unani Medicine, University of Kashmir, Dr. Sanjay K. Verma, Principal GDC Udhampur, Dr. Naveen Anand, Principal, GDC Women Bhagwati Nagar, Dr. Kulvinder Kour, Principal, GDC Paloura, Dr. Vandana Verma, Principal GDC Sunderbani, Dr. Rakesh Kalotra, Head, Department of Music GDC R.S. Pura, Dr. Mushtaq Ahmed, Convener Board of Studies in Persian, Dr. Ahsan Ul Rehman Rizvi Convener Board of Studies in Arabia, Suresh Kumar Convener Board of Studies in Indian Music.