



North East Witnesses Unprecedented Expansion of Science & Technology Infrastructure under Prime Minister Narendra Modi: Dr. Jitendra Singh

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Dr. Jitendra Singh Reviews Science & Technology Institutions in Shillong, Calls NECTAR a Catalyst for Technology-Led Development

North East Emerging as a Hub of Scientific Innovation and Technology Applications: Dr. Jitendra Singh

Dr. Jitendra Singh Inaugurates Geo-Informatics Laboratory at NECTAR, Reviews S&T Institutions in North East

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Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences and Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office, Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr. Jitendra Singh today said that the North Eastern Region has witnessed an unprecedented expansion of scientific infrastructure during the last decade under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, correcting decades of neglect despite the region's strategic importance and unique geographical challenges.

Referring to the remarkable transformation in scientific capabilities, he said that before 2014 the entire North East had only two weather radars, including just one in Meghalaya, despite Cherrapunji recording the world's highest rainfall. Today, the region has 13 weather radars. Likewise, the number of seismological observatories has increased from 84 before 2014 to 171 at present, while specialised lightning detection stations, which did not exist earlier in the region, have now been established in Meghalaya and Tripura. He said these interventions reflect the Government's sustained commitment to strengthening scientific preparedness, disaster resilience and technology-based development across the North East.

Dr. Jitendra Singh made these remarks while chairing a comprehensive review meeting of Science & Technology institutions under the Department of Science & Technology at the North East Centre for Technology Application and Reach (NECTAR), Shillong. During the meeting, Heads of various DST institutions presented updates on their ongoing programmes, major achievements and future initiatives relating to scientific research, innovation, technology dissemination and capacity building in the North Eastern Region. The Minister also inaugurated NECTAR's state-of-the-art Geo-Informatics Laboratory and visited several flagship technology facilities, interacting with scientists, researchers, students, beneficiary farmers and officials.

Dr. Jitendra Singh said that science and technology must directly improve the lives of ordinary citizens and appreciated NECTAR for successfully translating laboratory innovations into practical technologies benefiting farmers, youth, entrepreneurs and rural communities across the North East. He said institutions such as NECTAR have become important instruments for ensuring that the benefits of scientific research reach the grassroots.

The Minister witnessed the demonstration of the Mobile Food Processing Unit (MPU), jointly developed by NECTAR and CSIR-CFTRI, and described it as an innovative "processing on wheels" model that brings food processing technologies directly to farmers' doorsteps. He said the facility enables value addition at the farm level, particularly for small and marginal farmers, while promoting skill development, food quality assurance and entrepreneurship. The Minister said such interventions strengthen farmers' confidence by creating livelihood opportunities from even small agricultural produce.

Reviewing NECTAR's interventions under the PM-DevINE programme, Dr. Jitendra Singh appreciated the establishment of the Vasundhara Soil Organic Carbon Detection Laboratory-cum-Manufacturing Unit using technology transferred from the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC). He said the facility provides accurate in-situ soil testing and scientific recommendations that will significantly benefit farmers, agricultural universities and research institutions. He was informed that nearly 2,500 farmers have already received soil testing kits and that the initiative will eventually help create a comprehensive soil health database for the region.

The Minister also visited NECTAR's STEM Education Laboratory, which promotes experiential learning through robotics, coding, artificial intelligence, 3D printing and innovation-based activities. He said the laboratory has generated remarkable enthusiasm among school students since becoming operational in January 2025 and appreciated the initiative to establish 50 STEM laboratories across five North Eastern States in collaboration with IIT Kanpur, benefiting nearly 25,000 students, particularly in remote and underserved areas.

Dr. Jitendra Singh inaugurated NECTAR's advanced Geo-Informatics Laboratory and described it as one of the most sophisticated geospatial technology facilities in the North Eastern Region. Equipped with 17 advanced drones, including LiDAR and hyperspectral-enabled VTOL platforms, supported by high-performance computing systems and specialised geospatial software, the laboratory has already executed projects covering more than 2,000 square kilometres in areas such as forest carbon assessment, biodiversity conservation, mining restoration and disaster resilience. Drone-based mapping has also supported over 700 villages under the SVAMITVA Scheme besides scientific organic agriculture projects under PM-DevINE involving nearly 25,000 farmers.

The Minister appreciated NECTAR's emphasis on capacity building, noting that the Centre has trained 569 drone technicians, 247 GIS and Remote Sensing professionals, 107 certified drone pilots through its Remote Pilot Training Organisation and more than 4,500 students in emerging technologies. These initiatives have also generated livelihood opportunities for over 190 youth from the North Eastern Region while contributing to India's Drone Mission and the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat.

Dr. Jitendra Singh said NECTAR has emerged as a key technology implementation agency in the North East through initiatives covering scientific organic agriculture, community seed banks, banana fibre value addition, post-harvest management, food processing, bamboo and natural fibre technologies, technology incubation and entrepreneurship promotion. These interventions, he said, are strengthening farmer collectives, improving market access, promoting rural enterprises and creating sustainable livelihood opportunities throughout the region.

The Minister also expressed satisfaction over the progress of NECTAR's permanent campus at New Shillong, which is expected to provide world-class infrastructure for research, innovation, technology demonstration, incubation, training and capacity building. He said the upcoming campus will further strengthen the institution's role in addressing the unique developmental requirements of the North Eastern Region through science-driven solutions.

Congratulating NECTAR and all partner institutions, Dr. Jitendra Singh expressed confidence that the Centre would continue to emerge as a national hub for geospatial science, drone technology, artificial intelligence and technology-enabled rural development, making a significant contribution towards the vision of Viksit Bharat @2047.







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