



Himachal Pradesh CM Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu Calls on Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh; Discussions Focus on Weather Early-Warning, Lavender Cultivation and Astro-Tourism

**CM Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu appreciates support of Modi
Government for five Doppler Weather Radars and further
strengthening weather early-warning system in Himachal
Pradesh**

**In Himachal, Aroma Mission has extended lavender
cultivation to Upper Bhamla, Tehsil Baldwara, district Mandi;
Dr Jitendra Singh Discusses its further Expansion**

**Possibility of High-Altitude Sky Observatory in Spiti Explored
for Science, Students and Astro-Tourism discussed**

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Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Shri Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu called on Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science & Technology and Earth Sciences, and MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr. Jitendra Singh, in New Delhi today and discussed a range of issues concerning the State, including strengthening weather observation and early-warning systems, expansion of lavender cultivation under the CSIR Aroma Mission, grassroots-level weather forecasting, the possibility of a high-altitude sky observatory in Spiti, and issues related to the Himachal Pradesh State cadre.

During the meeting, the Chief Minister appreciated and thanked the Government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi for five Doppler Weather Radars support for Himachal Pradesh, while discussing the need to further strengthen the State's weather observation and early-warning capabilities. Dr. Jitendra Singh stressed that necessary steps should be taken to ensure that Himachal Pradesh has an adequate early-warning system, particularly keeping in view its difficult mountainous terrain and vulnerability to extreme weather events. The meeting also covered the proposed expansion of the weather observation network in the State.

Chief Secretary of Himachal Pradesh Shri Kamlesh Kumar Pant and senior officials were also present during the meeting.

Himachal Pradesh currently has three Doppler Weather Radars, at Kufri, Jot and Murari Devi, while two more are in the pipeline, making the total five. The proposed expansion includes two additional Doppler Weather Radars, one in Lahaul-Spiti and another in Kinnaur.

The existing IMD observational network in the State also includes 28 Automatic Weather Stations, 64 Automatic Rain Gauges and 84 Daily Rainfall Monitoring Stations.

The proposed expansion also includes 20 Automatic Weather Stations, 24 Automatic Rain Gauges, 21 Automatic Snow Gauges and one Radio Sonde/Radio Wind system. Suitable sites for the proposed radars in Lahaul-Spiti and Kinnaur are currently being examined, with site selection facing technical issues related to beam blockage.

The discussions also covered the Gram Panchayat-level weather forecast being provided by the India Meteorological Department, aimed at taking location-specific weather information closer to people at the grassroots. The service, known as Mausamgram, provides weather forecasts at Gram Panchayat level and is designed to make localised weather information available for everyday decision-making, including for farmers.

Dr. Jitendra Singh also discussed the expansion of the successful lavender cultivation model under the CSIR Aroma Mission in Himachal Pradesh. Under Phase III of the CSIR Aroma Mission, CSIR-IIIM Jammu has extended lavender cultivation to Upper Bhamla, Tehsil Baldwara, District Mandi, where 20,000 lavender cuttings have been planted and around 150 farmers have been associated with the initiative. The initial trials have been successful, and more area is proposed to be brought under lavender cultivation this season. Distillation units are also proposed to be provided to farmers under Phase IV of the Aroma Mission.

The Minister also referred to the expansion of the lavender initiative beyond Jammu & Kashmir, including Nagaland, Uttarakhand and Arunachal Pradesh, with the model seeking to connect cultivation with industry and value addition so that farmers can derive greater livelihood benefits from the crop.

Another key issue discussed was the possibility of establishing a high-altitude sky observatory in Spiti. The proposal is being explored in consultation with the Indian Institute of Astrophysics, taking advantage of the region's high-altitude location and favourable conditions for astronomical observations. The proposed concept envisages a scientific facility that can also support students and educational activities, while opening up opportunities for astro-tourism and stargazing.

The discussions included the possibility of combining a telescope facility for scientific studies and use by college students with smaller telescope-based facilities that could enable tourists to experience stargazing. A detailed proposal from the Indian Institute of Astrophysics is expected to take the initiative forward.

The meeting also covered issues related to the Himachal Pradesh State cadre, including matters arising from the cadre review process. The discussions were confined to the issues concerning the State and the appropriate procedural course of action, without indicating any final decision on cadre strength or restructuring.

The discussions reflected the potential of science and technology interventions to address some of Himachal Pradesh's distinctive challenges—from timely weather warnings in its vulnerable mountain regions and technology-led livelihood opportunities for farmers, to scientific exploration and new tourism opportunities in high-altitude areas.





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