



“RDI fund to catalyse private sector participation in India’s innovation ecosystem: Dr Jitendra Singh”

RDI fund to back near-market technologies, focus on AI, biotech and clean energy

Centre opens innovation financing to industry through layered RDI fund structure

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Panchkula, December 6: At a round table held on the sidelines of the India International Science Festival (IISF) 2025 in Panchkula, Union Minister for Science and Technology Dr Jitendra Singh on Saturday called on industry, investors and researchers to play a more active role in shaping India’s research and innovation landscape, as the government moves to roll out the ₹1 lakh crore Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) Fund .

Addressing stakeholders from academia, startups and industry, the Minister said the success of science policy should be measured not by publications alone but by its ability to translate research into real-world outcomes, jobs and technological capability for the country. He emphasized that public institutions cannot shoulder the innovation load by themselves and that private sector participation was now critical to India’s ambitions in frontier technologies.

The outreach programme focused on familiarising stakeholders with the contours of the RDI Fund, which was approved by the Union Cabinet earlier this year and formally launched by the Prime Minister in November. Designed to catalyse private sector-led research, the fund will support high-impact and near-commercial projects in areas such as clean energy, artificial intelligence, biotechnology, deep-tech manufacturing, semiconductors and the digital economy .

Officials explained that the fund will operate through a professional, layered structure rather than making direct grants to companies. The Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF) will act as the first-level custodian, while deployment will happen through selected second-level fund managers such as alternate investment funds, development finance institutions and specialised agencies like the Technology Development Board (TDB) and BIRAC . Financing will largely be in the form of long-term, low-interest loans or equity support, with an emphasis on projects that are closer to market readiness.

Citing recent progress, the Minister noted that India has emerged as one of the world's leading contributors to scientific research and patents, while its startup ecosystem has expanded rapidly over the past decade. He linked these gains to a larger national effort to build technological self-reliance and stressed that the RDI Fund is intended to bridge the long-standing gap between laboratory research and commercial deployment.

Participants were also briefed on how the RDI Fund will complement the work of ANRF, which is supporting basic and frontier research, nurturing young scientists, and promoting academia–industry collaboration through dedicated grant programmes and convergence research centres.

The Minister invited feedback from stakeholders on the design and implementation of the scheme, signalling openness to course correction as the fund is operationalised. “This is a shared national project,” he said, urging industry and investors to step forward with what he described as ambition and risk appetite for long-term research investments.

As India works towards its Viksit Bharat@2047 goals, officials said the RDI Fund is expected to play a key role in moving Indian companies from simply manufacturing technologies developed elsewhere to inventing and exporting them globally, marking a shift in how the country finances and governs innovation.









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