

Current Northeast budget around Rs 50,000 cr: Dr Jitendra Singh

Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh said here today that the current budget for Northeast for 2017-18 is around Rs. 50,000 crore which is significantly higher than that in earlier years and is also an indication of high priority that the Modi Government accords to the development of that region.

Speech: “We have to take action whenever a weapon of mass destruction is used.”

Let me begin by welcoming you Sacha to the Council for the first time in your role as Chair of the Committee and thank you for your briefing.

I'd also like to thank Council members for their remarks today. Today you have all shown this Council's unity and determination to prevent biological, chemical and nuclear material falling into the hands of terrorists and other non-state actors.

Sadly, on this Council we know only too well that that is no longer a hypothetical threat. The nightmare scenario has been seen in too many places. In Iraq, where we have seen worrying, persistent reports of terrorists using chemical weapons. In Syria, where the UN mandated investigation has proven that chemical weapons have been used both by Daesh and by the Asad regime. And now in Malaysia, where we were all shocked by reports that VX was used to kill Kim Jong Nam.

As these events prove, proliferation threats do not stand still, they are constantly evolving, and we must remain alert to new trends. We will have to be adaptable and nimble to keep our citizens safe.

Ensuring that states have the means and resources at their disposal to deal with these threats is the foundation of Resolution 1540. It sets out how we can make ourselves more secure; by ensuring that our legislation limits the ability to develop such weapons; by having the right controls in place to safeguard potentially hazardous material and by hardening our borders to stop their spread.

This is collective security. One state's resilience can prevent the spread of

a threat to others. But just as one state can help our collective security, so too can one state undermine it.

The current implementation rate of 1540 measures worldwide is 48%. We must continue to work towards full, universal fulfilment of these obligations.

In 2017 we should maintain the momentum and energy from the Comprehensive Review, and ensure that we effectively implement the taskings from Resolution 2325.

We should stay abreast of advances in science and technology that may increase the proliferation risk, but may also present us with opportunities to tackle the threats better. For instance, through advances in cyber, 3D printing and drones.

This Council broke new ground last year by calling on the States to adopt effective national control lists for sensitive materials – a vital step in an effective non-proliferation regime. We should work collaboratively with those who have already developed effective national control lists, and support those who are just starting out.

We should continue to offer assistance and technical support to those who need it to implement 1540 fully. Better matching of requests for assistance to those who require it should follow a more regional approach, as agreed by the Council last year.

But in truth, such preventative measures will count for little if there is continued impunity for those who use biological, chemical or nuclear material as weapons. It isn't enough just to condemn. We have to take action whenever a weapon of mass destruction is used, and we would make sure that there are meaningful consequences for the state actors and non-state actors alike.

Last month, in response to the findings of the Joint Investigative Mechanism, I regret that a minority of Council members blocked a resolution which would have imposed measures responding to atrocities committed in Syria. We must draw on the unity we show on 1540 to find the consensus needed to act against the use of such weapons.

In conclusion, it's clear that the 1540 Committee has a huge task ahead. And Sacha, you have the full support of the United Kingdom in making as much progress as you can.

Thank you.

[Green light for £35m hub to drive](#)

world-leading research in Swansea Bay

EU funding of £17.4m is being invested in IMPACT (Innovative Materials, Processing and Numerical Technologies) to help establish a centre of excellence in Swansea Bay.

The new hub will include laboratory and office space as part of the College of Engineering and will support high-impact collaborative research with industry into ground-breaking science and technology to grow and future-proof business opportunities in the advanced engineering and materials sector.

It will include a metals technology centre, which will undertake research into metallurgy and materials science, supporting partnerships with the metals industry in Wales, the UK and worldwide. The aim is to pioneer new alloys, materials and metal manufacturing processes which can be used in engineering.

Set to open in 2019, the hub will attract 65 new, highly-skilled academic posts and 155 experienced researchers. It will also provide opportunities for local supply chain businesses and jobs during the construction phase.

Professor Drakeford said:

“EU funding is playing a vital role in the establishment of this centre of excellence, which will help drive new, innovative technologies in the engineering sector in Wales.”

IMPACT will focus research into next generation manufacturing processes, including robotics and automation; advanced aerospace and automotive structures.

Research will also involve characterisation and computational-based simulation for understanding and optimisation of manufacturing processes and products, such as wind turbines, aircrafts and engines.

The building will be built to BREEAM Excellent standard and will incorporate a range of measures to promote sustainability and equality, including bird habitats, solar panels, onsite bio-diversity and support for the local supply chain.

Professor Richard B. Davies, vice chancellor of Swansea University, said:

“We welcome the EU funding for this major new resource at the Bay Campus.

“IMPACT will operate as a semi-independent research institute with objectives determined by a scientific board and advised on by external academic, governmental and industrial stakeholders.

“It is set to deliver a transformative, sustainable and laboratory future-proofed engineering research environment, aligning world-class technology development and delivery with collaboration between academia and industry.”

[News story: World War 2 airman finally laid to rest 70 years after he gave his life for his country](#)

He was given a full ceremonial burial on 16 March 2017 at Berlin 1939-1945 War Cemetery, Germany.

The service, led by Reverend Rebekah Cannon, Chaplain of RAF College Cranwell, was attended by representatives of the Royal Air Force, the British Embassy in Berlin and the Royal British Legion. Current members of the Queen's Colour Squadron paid tribute to their former colleague by providing a bearer party for his coffin.

Reverend Rebekah Cannon, who led the service said:

It's been incredibly moving to lay this brave young man to rest today and to be part of his military family here to pay him our final respects.

Wilfred Lawson was born on 24 April 1918 at Penrith in Cumberland, youngest child of John and Elizabeth Lawson. He was 25 years old when he died. He had two older siblings, William and Elizabeth.

Wilfred joined the Royal Air Force in July 1936, before which he had worked for an ironmonger in King's Street, Penrith. He started his RAF career as an Aircraftman Grade 2, progressing through the ranks to Sergeant by the time of his death. In September 1940 he married Margaret Grace Flood and they lived on Sefton Terrace, Leeds.

Sgt Lawson's remains were discovered in September 2014 by the Vermisstenforschung Deutschland, a German group interested in researching those missing in war. Although there were no identifying items found with the remains, the site was known to be where his Lancaster bomber LL721 had crashed in January 1944.

Investigation work led by the MOD's Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC), part of Defence Business Services, showed that of the 7 crew members,

3 were captured and held as prisoners of war, 2 were killed and buried at the time in the Berlin 1939-1945 War Cemetery and 2 remained listed as missing and were commemorated on the Royal Air Force memorial at Runnymede, Surrey.

It was possible to identify the remains through DNA analysis of samples from both Sgt Lawson's distant surviving family and relatives of the other missing airman.

Enid Townson, first cousin once removed of Sgt Lawson said:

It's amazing news that Wilfred's remains have been found and laid to rest in Berlin. I just wish that his parents and siblings had known during their lifetime what had happened to him.

They never quite gave up hope that there could have been a mistake and that he might one day come home.

Peter Nelson, first cousin once removed said:

We give Wilfred our thanks for his bravery in defending the free world. Although he's been lost for so many years he's now been found and will be in our thoughts forever.

Louise Dorr, who has led the organisation of today's service in the JCCC said:

It's the MOD Casualty Centre's mission to care for the fallen whether they're from current conflicts or historic campaigns. It's been an absolute privilege to arrange this ceremony for Sgt Wilfred Lawson. Although his blood family aren't able to be here today, his military family is honoured to be able to pay him this final tribute.

A new headstone bearing Sgt Lawson's name has been provided by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC), who will now care for his final resting place in perpetuity.

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16 Mar 2017



Below is a statement by Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson on Nicola Sturgeon's plan for a repeat independence referendum.

"Thank-you.

On Monday this week, the First Minister chose the wrong course for Scotland.

I profoundly regret the course of action she took.

And on behalf of the many, many Scots who do not want to go back to a second referendum – people who voted both No and Yes to independence – I tell her, it is not too late to change course.

The fact is that there are so many other urgent issues that require our attention

...from managing the Scottish Parliament's important new powers over tax and welfare, to the future of our NHS.

The First Minister herself has said that that improving the quality of Scottish schooling would be her number one priority.

In our view, an all-consuming referendum campaign over the next 18 months would show this promise to be worthless.

So I ask the First Minister to act – and act now – to show she is prepared to deliver on those pledges she made.

Unfortunately, all the signs are that the Scottish Government will not take that step.

In addition to Monday's statement, a website for its referendum campaign was set up at the start of this month, and fundraising has already commenced.

That is why the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State and myself have decided today to make clear to the Scottish people what response we will adopt.

As David has already said, we reject conclusively the timetable for a referendum set out by the Scottish Government.

For a key reason – because it is unfair to Scottish voters.

We have just come through a referendum campaign when a key complaint among many people was that they did not have the necessary information to help them make an informed decision.

If we were to keep to the First Minister's timetable, this is exactly what would happen in Scotland, too.

On the most important political decision a country can make, we would be voting blind.

I believe that it is only right that people have the opportunity to examine the UK's new relationship with the European Union once it is up and running.

People should only be asked to make a judgement about whether to leave or remain within a 300-year old Union of nations when they have seen for themselves how that Union is functioning, following Brexit.

They should also know what the alternative entails, and we have seen no clarity from the SNP on even the basic questions of their proposition.

But I believe there is another fundamental reason why now is not the right time to take Scotland back to the precipice.

And that is because there is no clear political or public consent for this to take place.

The country – and our Parliament – is divided not over just the question of independence, but over whether we should even hold a referendum or not.

Prior to 2014, this was not the case.

We all accepted – Unionist, Nationalist and those who sat on the fence – that it was right and proper for the question to be asked.

Today, however, that consent is simply not there.

In Scotland, we know to our cost that referenda are divisive.

At an absolute minimum, therefore, I believe there should be agreement across political parties and from the public at large, that it is right and fair for such a referendum to proceed.

And I say:

just three years after the last one

when the SNP promised to respect the previous vote

and when the Scottish public are weary and divided over the prospect of an immediate second vote

that the SNP must earn the right to ask the question again.

They cannot simply claim it. And through that claim, pretend it is true.

In short, I oppose a referendum on independence.

But if the SNP insists on pressing ahead, we will argue that a referendum cannot happen when the Scottish people have not been given the opportunity to see how our new relationship with the European Union is working.

And until there is clarity over the alternative.

And we will maintain that it should not take place when there is no clear public or political consent for it to happen.

Our country does not want to go back to the divisions and uncertainty of the last few years.

Another referendum campaign will not solve the challenges this country will face.

It is my deep regret that the SNP has chosen the path of trying to divide Scotland yet further. It would be irresponsible not to do all I can, to ensure that does not happen.”