

India PM Wants More Investments In The Country's R&D
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BHUBANESHWAR (Orissa, India), Jan 3 (Bernama) -- Acknowledging that India has been "overtaken" by countries like China in the world of science, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh Tuesday announced that Research and Development spending in the country would be doubled by the end of 12th plan in 2017, Press Trust of India (PTI) reported.

Outlining an ambitious plan to "change the face" of Indian science, the Prime Minister also voiced concern over a large number of women scientists remaining unemployed due to lack of job opportunities.

"Over the past few decades, India's relative position in the world of science had been declining and we have been overtaken by countries like China," Manmohan Singh said in inaugurating the five-day 99th Indian Science Congress held at the KIIT University campus here.

"Things are changing but we cannot be satisfied with what has been achieved. We need to do much more to change the face of Indian science," he added.

As far as resources are concerned, he said that the share of GDP spent on R&D in India has been too low and stagnant.

"We must aim to increase the total R&D spending as a percentage of GDP to 2.0 per cent by the end of the XII Plan Period (2012-17) from the current level of about 0.9 per cent.

"This can only be achieved if industry, which contributes only 25 per cent of the total (Indian) R&D expenditure today, increases its contribution. I believe public sector undertakings especially in the energy sector should play a major role in this expansion." he said.

Congratulating the Science Congress for highlighting the role of women in science, Manmohan Singh at the same time took note of the results of a study published last year that showed 60 per cent of nearly 2,000 Indian women Ph.Ds in science who were surveyed were unemployed.

"The main reason cited was lack of job opportunities. Only a very small number cited family reasons. This underlines the need for transparency in selection procedures at institutions and also the importance of gender audits," he said.

He also stressed on the need to expand the basic science infrastructure and to achieve greater alignment of the S&T sector with the inclusive development needs of the nation.

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