

**Press Information Bureau
Government of India
Ministry of Science & Technology**

08 NOV 2019 8:16PM by PIB Delhi

Science Festivals help generate scientific temper in the country, says West Bengal Governor

The Governor of West Bengal, Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar has said mega fairs like the India International Science Festival (IISF) help generate scientific temper in the country. Addressing the Closing Ceremony of the 5th IISS in Kolkata today, he said this momentum must take an “incremental trajectory” rather than rest on a plateau. Shri Dhankhar said India’s history has peaked since 2014. “Basic issues concerning the people have undergone a transformation”, he added.

Shri Dhankhar said the popularity and influence of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi is among the top world leaders at par with the US President. Mentioning that among the delegates to the Science Festival he met was a woman farmer entrepreneur from Sikar, Rajasthan, he asked the media to promote science by carrying such success stories to the people and motivate them.

In his address, the Union Minister for Science and Technology, Earth Sciences and Health and Family Welfare, Dr Harsh Vardhan said India has jumped to the 4th place in computing capacity for weather forecasting. “More than 4 crore farmers are getting precise weather forecast on SMS. This has resulted in a gain of Rupees 50,000 crore in India’s GDP by helping avert losses,” he said. “Indian scientists are in no way less competent than the advanced countries. If we have an idea to adapt from them, we have a couple more to share with them,” he added.

The Minister said India is among top five scientific countries. He said sensors have been installed deep inside earth in Maharashtra to study and analyse earthquakes. “Inspired by the Prime Minister’s ecofriendly initiative ‘Swachh Bharat Abhiyan’, India has demonstrated process to convert biomass waste to ethanol”, he added.

“Our CSIR labs have invented Green Crackers to tackle environmental pollution and the technology transfer to industry for mass production is underway,” he said. “More than 5,000 Startups have been supported by the Department of S&T,” he added.

Dr Harsh Vardhan said three Guinness World Records were created during the course of the four days of this 5th edition of the Science Festival. “All districts of the country, more than 700, were represented in this mega science fest. No section of the society has been left unrepresented during this science fair,” he said. Besides, six countries were represented by high-level delegations including Afghanistan, Bhutan, Myanmar, Maldives, Britain and South Korea, he added.

Dr Harsh Vardhan said, for the first time the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi addressed the Science Festival. “The Prime Minister even offered to fly directly to Kolkata for the festival from his visit to Thailand, but keeping in view his hectic schedule, a video conference was arranged for the inaugural ceremony of the IISF,” said Dr Harsh Vardhan.

Earlier addressing the Valedictory Session of the National Science Teachers’ Conclave, he encouraged the teachers to inculcate a scientific temper among the children. He also felicitated the delegates and presented awards during the Women Scientists’ & Entrepreneurs’ Conclave.

The four-day annual science festival was organized in Kolkata from November 5 to November 8, 2019. It aimed to build a strategy for inclusive advancement of Science and Technology. The theme for this year's festival is RISEN India – Research, Innovation, and Science Empowering the Nation.

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