Curtain Raiser of CSIR-Summer Research Training Programme (CSIR-SRTP) 2020 inaugurated online by DG, CSIR

Dr Shekhar C. Mande, Director General (DG) of Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR) and Secretary, Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR), Government of India inaugurated online the curtain raiser of CSIR-Summer Research Training Programme (CSIR-SRTP) 2020 hosted by CSIR-North East Institute of Science & Technology (CSIR-NEIST), Jorhat. CSIR-NEIST, the coordinating institute has painstakingly worked for a cause of national importance which has fructified in this red letter day as it scripted history with the kick-starting of this ambitious programme. The director of CSIR-NEIST, Dr G. Narahari Sastry said that the concept of this online summer research training programme started budding with the lockdown triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic that sent the academic scenario throughout the country into doldrums. To dissolve the lull created by the pandemic in the academics of the nation and to uplift the sagging constructive spirit among the students fraternity of the country, Dr Shekhar C. Mande has given the mandate to CSIR-NEIST to conceptualize this programme which is happening for the first time in the academic history of India. Dr Sastry in his opening remarks mentioned that the advertisement was floated on 01 June, 2020 and an overwhelming response of more than 16,000 applications were received from all across the country. The last date of receiving the applications was extended from 05 June to 08 June, 2020. Dr Sastry lauding the dedicated team of CSIR-NEIST staff for accomplishing the Herculeans task of processing the plethora of applications at war footing in a span of two days and then having the list of shortlisted candidates declared by 10 June, 2020, as a feat achieved. Dr Sastry concluded by saying that the best of the innovation in science and technology have come about during the times of war, pandemic and natural disasters. Therefore, this pandemic has posed a challenge and given an opportunity to science and technology to give its best.

The curtain raiser was attended by hordes of people online through MS Team and Facebook online which crossed 3,100 mark. The programme was also attended by galaxy of dignitaries including directors of various CSIR laboratories, including the director of CSIR’s Academy of Scientific and Innovative Research (AcSIR), Prof. Rajender Singh Sangwan and host of higher officials from CSIR Headquarter’s, New Delhi. Prof. Alok Dhawan, Director, CSIR-Indian Institute of Toxicology Research (CSIR-IITR), Lucknow introduced Dr Shekhar C. Mande, before commencement of his presentation. Prior to his presentation, Dr Mande, narrated the motto of the programme which is quoted as “When the world is in lockdown and universities and educational institutes are closed, we need to proactively create opportunities
to engage and connect students and teachers to bring forth innovativeness, and creativity to combat COVID pandemic, through science and technology research projects”. Thus, he further went on to say that the objective of this programme is to provide a scientifically stimulating platform to the students stuck at home due to lockdown and expose them to scientific research and inculcating scientific temperament. He mentioned that the salient features of the programme are popular lectures by highly eminent personalities, each student is mentored individually and engaged in a research project (2 months full time), specialized lectures, live demonstration of high-end equipments, instruments and experimental procedures, lectures on fundamental, applied and translational research topics. He categorically stated that this is not an online lecture series, but a full fledged research training programme. Dr Mande gave a presentation on “Role of CSIR in Shaping New India”. He elaborated upon the multitude of CSIR technologies like the indelible ink used in India and many countries abroad during elections is a CSIR product. He mentioned about CSIR’s role in green revolution of the country by producing the first tractor with its own indigenous technology that contributed in a great way in mechanization of farming practices and also by producing agri-pesticides. He underscored the pivotal role played by CSIR in the pharmaceutical sector of our country, especially the generic drugs by carrying out high quality R&D to producing cheap, highly effective and affordable drugs which even facilitated the health care facilities in Africa too. He highly commended the scientists working throughout the country in various CSIR labs in their endeavour to combat COVID-19 pandemic by researching on new medicines, vaccines, PPE kit, ventilators, better diagnostic techniques, oxygen enrichment unit, setting up testing facilities etc. and expressed his hope that CSIR products would give a new dimension and fortify the health care system in the country’s fight against the pandemic. He further said there is multitude of such examples which vindicates the fact that CSIR has always rose to the occasion in the face of any challenge and “Atmanirbharta” is in the genes of CSIR. Dr Mande concluded his presentation by urging that never to practice science without humanity. This was followed by question forum programme wherein the young aspirants had put forward a volley of questions pertaining to future research areas and challenges posed by COVID-19 pandemic. The programme culminated with the concluding remarks and vote thanks proposed by Dr Vidyadhar Y Mudkavi, Director, CSIR-4PI.

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Concluded.