

AcSIR Gyantarang 2020 Kicks Off at CSIR-NEIST, Jorhat

CSIR-North East Institute of Science and Technology (CSIR-NEIST), Jorhat has for the first time started a scientific event for the research scholars christened as Gyantarang 2020. The event is the brainchild of the Director CSIR-NEIST Dr G. Narahari Sastry to bring together the research scholars of the Academy of Scientific and Innovative Research (AcSIR) functioning under CSIR from all across the country to brainstorm mainly on the 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) identified by United Nations (UN). The three day event had a colourful kick-start on 23 January, 2020 and will culminate on 25 January. The research scholars of AcSIR, CSIR-NEIST under the mentorship of Dr Sastry single-handedly conceptualized and executed this first-of-its-kind gala event which is also packed with vibrant cultural and sporting events among the AcSIR scholars throughout the country. The idea behind this event is to bridge a connect between these young scientific minds from all over the country for achieving scientific excellence through a rapport building which will facilitate exchange of knowledge, information and construction of robust scientific notions, goals and strategies. CSIR-NEIST has set the stage rolling for these young researchers and budding scientists of tomorrow to give a vent to their creative and out of box scientific thoughts in order to address the global challenges identified by the UN through various programmes lined up in the coming two days, apart from a cultural extravaganza. The notable among these activities is a five minutes flash presentation or through video display on 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) of United Nations (UN), where students will endeavour to create awareness on these 17 goals and voice their concerns in urging the research fraternity of India to align their research objectives with the UN sustainable development goals which is very much attuned to UN's objective to address and alleviate some key and critical issues currently plaguing the globe. CSIR-NEIST has designed the programme in such a manner that it acts as a platform for the young scholars to discuss their take in addressing these 17 UN identified global challenges through S & T interventions. To facilitate this objective a YouTube channel has been created for easy dissemination of information and to keep propagating and updating the developments in these areas in the future too. Other programmes include series of competitions viz. Chitra-katha, an instant photography contest on themes like human behaviour, environmental care, waste management and go green; essay writing competition on the 17 UN SDGs, Medhas, the quiz contest and debate are in the agenda for the next two days. The mosaic of cultural and recreational programmes have been vibrantly woven into a pack of activities which includes AcSIR theme song competition,

dance, music, singing, drama, stand-up comedy etc. where participants from all over the country will showcase the fabric of multicultural milieu of the nation. AcSIR scholars of CSIR-NEIST have painstakingly burnt the mid night oil to make this event a quintessential success story so that a niche platform is created to keep the scientific momentum going among the young minds.

The inaugural day on 23 January kicked off with friendly matches played between AcSIR students of CSIR-NEIST and the participants from the other regions of India in various sporting events viz. cricket, volleyball, badminton, table tennis and carom which created an ambience of bonhomie, perfect enough to warm up before the commencement of the main event. The event was formally inaugurated in the afternoon hours with the opening remarks made by the student conveners, Dr Himakshi Sarma and Mr Prachurjya Dutta. They highlighted upon the point that using this platform the research scholars working under AcSIR throughout the country can share and discuss their research ideas and works, for which this event has been conceptualized to make it an ideal forum for building camaraderie among the scholars. Also they mentioned that the main focus in this event will be to brainstorm on seventeen sustainable developmental goals laid down by the UN. The Director CSIR-NEIST, Dr Sastry in his welcome address elaborated on the idea of interdisciplinary research to address the seventeen UN sustainable development goals and the significance of having such an event to facilitate the cause. He said that this kind of brainstorming sessions among the research scholars will lead towards more of applied oriented research which will be holistic in nature and fruitful to address societal problems. He highly commended a group of 13 AcSIR research scholars of CSIR-NEIST who spent three days in local villages of Jorhat and took stock of the health and local societal issues of the rural masses to address them through their PhD research objectives. Finally, Dr Sastry concluded his speech by urging the students to spent at least 10-30% of their time in gathering knowledge about subjects which are not directly connected to their research areas to broaden their horizon and stressed upon participating in such events to infuse more zeal and vigour to pursue their research goals. He was emphatic in his view that students are a major force to reckon with and striving for excellence and passion in work is the fuel for the growth and progress of our nation. This was followed by the comments aired by the Director General (DG) of CSIR and Secretary, DSIR Dr Shekhar C. Mande through video conferencing. He was appreciative of the efforts laid down by the research scholars of AcSIR, CSIR-NEIST and the pivotal role played by Dr Sastry to organize the event. He said that it is indeed of utmost importance to form a connect between the research scholars of AcSIR all over the country in order to

achieve excellence in research, and such endeavours should be given more importance in the future too because scientific excellence can only address the common societal problems. The Director of AcSIR, Dr R.S. Sangwan in his opening remarks narrated the very basic idea of instituting AcSIR in the country. He elucidated on the importance of having large number of PhDs in the country and said that the fundamental difference of obtaining a PhD under AcSIR from rest of the institutes is the social relevance of the thesis which is one of the mandatory criteria. This was followed by a Satriya dance performance by the research scholars of CSIR-NEIST. The Director, CSIR-NEIST, Dr Sastry felicitated a host of dignitaries present in the function. There were two keynote lectures delivered by Dr B. Gopalan, CEO and Executive Director, IICT, Hyderabad and Dr Sanjay Kumar, Director, IHBT, Palampur, Himachal Pradesh. Dr Gopalan spoke about invention, innovation and creativity in the Pharma industry. He said passion and research ethics are vital to pursue ones goals than a mere interest because the former will lead to excellence and provide promising opportunities. He is also underscored the importance of emerging branch of chemistry called medicinal chemistry and highlighted the significance of Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning in drug modeling and discovery. Dr Sanjay Kumar spoke on Young researchers: Champions of innovation for national growth and development. He stressed upon the youth energy and power to carry forward with sustainable development goals by building a team around for finding practical solutions to problems plaguing our society rather than only concentrating on research publications. His message to the young researchers was to understand and identify with ones surrounding and find the actual gap areas or opportunities which demands a thorough research and solutions. This was followed by a vote of thanks and the national anthem. The evening culminated with a vibrant and vivacious cultural programme performed by the research scholars of AcSIR of CSIR-NEIST.

A galaxy of eminent and stalwart personalities from the scientific fraternity of the country like Prof. Rajender Singh Sangwan, Director, AcSIR, Prof. Sanjay Kumar, Director, CSIR-Institute of Himalayan Bioresource Technology (CSIR-IHBT), Palampur, Himachal Pradesh, Dr Alok Dhawan, Director, CSIR-Indian Institute of Toxicology Research (CSIR-IITR), Lucknow, Dr Amitabha Chattopadhyay, CSIR-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CSIR-CCMB), Hyderabad., Dr A. Chakraborty, Head, HRDG, CSIR Dr. K. Ravikumar Assoc. Director AcSIR, Dr Ajay Dhar Assoc. Director AcSIR, Dr I. Suryanarayana, Former Scientist, CSIR-NEIST, Jorhat, Dr V. Subramaniam Chief Scientist CSIR-Central Leather Research Institute (CSIR-CLRI) Chennai, Dr B. Gopalan, Chief Scientific Officer and Exec. Director Drug Discovery Research Orchid Chemicals and

Pharmaceutical Ltd. Chennai, Dr S. Venkata Mohan, Dr Ramanuj Narayan and Dr K. Rajender Reddy, all Senior Principal Scientists from CSIR-Indian Institute of Chemical Technology (CSIR-IICT), Hyderabad, have descended in CSIR-NEIST to witness event.

The Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR) boast of 37 laboratories spread all across the length and breadth of the country. This event has proved to be big draw for AcSIR research scholars functioning under the CSIR laboratories throughout the country and has created an ambience, congenial enough for a brainstorm on collaborative research and technological development in the emerging frontiers of interdisciplinary sciences.

The email ID for the event is gyantarang2020@gmail.com, and the Facebook and Twitter handles are <https://www.facebook.com/AcSIR-GyanTarang-2020-100383164779221/> and <https://twitter.com/AcSIR2?s=09>

Prepared by Bijit Kumar Choudhury (PhD)
Scientist, CSIR-NEIST, Jorhat

Concluded.



Photo 1: Dr G Narahari Sastry, Director CSIR-NEIST, Jorhat addressing the audience in the inaugural function of Gyantarang 2020.

P.T.O



Photo 2: A group photo of the dignitaries and the AcSIR (CSIR-NEIST) student performers in the inaugural function of Gyantarang 2020 at CSIR-NEIST