Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh dedicates to the nation first-of-its-kind 'Eco-Educational Hub' developed by CSIR-NBRI at Lucknow

Dr Jitendra Singh calls for taking science closer to society through greater outreach of technologies and success stories

Science and technology institutions must connect research with livelihoods and societal needs: Dr Jitendra Singh

Dr Jitendra Singh calls for integrated scientific efforts across Departments and Ministries to maximise societal impact

CSIR-NBRI showcases science-to-society connect through technology transfers, biodiversity conservation and experiential learning

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Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science & Technology and Earth Sciences, and Minister of State in the Prime Minister’s Office, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, and Vice-President, CSIR, Dr Jitendra Singh today called for taking the work of scientific institutions closer to society by systematically showcasing their technologies, success stories and societal applications, while dedicating to the nation, the first-of-its-kind CSIR-National Botanical Research Institute (CSIR-NBRI) 'Eco-Educational Hub' ‘Prakriti Gyan Dham’ at the Maharishi Parashar Bioresource Centre (MPBC), Banthra, Lucknow.

Dr Jitendra Singh said the outreach of scientific institutions should go beyond laboratories and institutional campuses, with greater use of digital and social media platforms to showcase successful technologies and initiatives so that farmers, entrepreneurs, students, industry and other stakeholders are able to access scientific solutions and opportunities for livelihood generation. He also called for greater integration of similar and complementary projects across Departments and Ministries, enabling institutions to work together and maximise the societal impact of scientific research and innovation.

The programme was attended by Dr G.N. Singh, Advisor (Health) to the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh; Dr Ajit Kumar Shasany, Vice-Chancellor, Central University of Odisha; Dr Zabeer Ahmed, Director, CSIR-NBRI and CSIR-IIIM Jammu; senior scientists, researchers, farmer beneficiaries of the CSIR Floriculture Mission and other invited guests.

The Eco-Educational Hub represents a convergence of scientific research, environmental education, biodiversity conservation, botanical heritage and cultural interpretation. Developed as a first-of-its-kind eco-educational facility, it has been conceived as a living repository of India's rich botanical and cultural legacy, offering an immersive environment for students, researchers, educators, nature enthusiasts and the general public.

The Hub provides a direct interface between scientific knowledge and public engagement, with its different facilities designed to make India's plant diversity, conservation efforts and botanical heritage accessible through experiential and interactive learning. Dr Jitendra Singh said such initiatives can help strengthen the connection between scientific institutions and society while creating greater awareness of the practical value of scientific knowledge.

A defining feature of the Hub is PAaVan Path (Plants and Associated Vegetations for Appreciating Nature), an interpretive heritage trail that forms the central experiential component of the campus. The trail takes visitors through curated plant collections representing diverse ecological regions and associated vegetation.

At the heart of the Hub is the Indian Heritage Garden, which brings together heritage trees propagated from historically significant locations across the country. The garden includes the Bawan Imli Tamarind Tree from Fatehpur, associated with the sacrifice of 52 freedom fighters; the Mother Dussehri Mango Tree from Lucknow; the Patalpuri Banyan of Prayagraj; the Mango Tree planted by Mahatma Gandhi at Bhitiharwa, Champaran; and descendants of trees associated with the historic Dandi March route in Gujarat.

The garden also uses QR-enabled audio systems to provide visitors with historical, cultural and botanical information about the heritage trees through their smartphones, converting the landscape into an interactive learning space.

The Vibhav Enclave- Threatened Plants of India Garden provides a dedicated space for rare, endangered and threatened plant species and promotes awareness about biodiversity loss, habitat degradation, climate change and the need to conserve plant genetic resources. The Bhairav Enclave – State Plants of India Garden brings together officially designated State Plants of States and Union Territories, presenting their ecological, cultural and symbolic significance.

Another major attraction is the Bamboosteum, which houses 43 indigenous and exotic bamboo species. The facility demonstrates the importance of bamboo as a renewable bioresource with applications in ecological restoration, carbon sequestration, soil conservation, sustainable livelihoods, traditional craftsmanship and green infrastructure.

The Hub's science-to-society orientation was also reflected in the technologies and products launched and transferred during the programme. An herbal formulation for male reproductive health, developed in collaboration with Himalaya, was formally launched. Four plant-based technologies, Herbal Anti-Dandruff Hair Care Oil, Frotus: Lotus-inspired Perfume, Frotus: Rudra Perfume and Herbal Nano Serum, were transferred to the Kudumbashree State Poverty Eradication Mission, Kerala, with the objective of promoting women-led entrepreneurship and livelihood generation through science-based value-added products.

Further strengthening industry-academia collaboration, CSIR-NBRI transferred the Design and Development of a Low-Cost Photobioreactor technology to Witwake Solutions Pvt. Ltd., Lucknow. The transfer demonstrates how research developed within a scientific institution can be taken forward for wider technological and industrial applications.

Dr Jitendra Singh also called for scientific institutions to make greater use of their success stories and technological achievements for public outreach, not merely as a communication exercise but as a means of making potential users and stakeholders aware of solutions that can contribute to livelihoods and economic opportunities. The technology transfers at the programme provided a practical example of this approach, connecting institutional research with entrepreneurship, industry and livelihood generation.

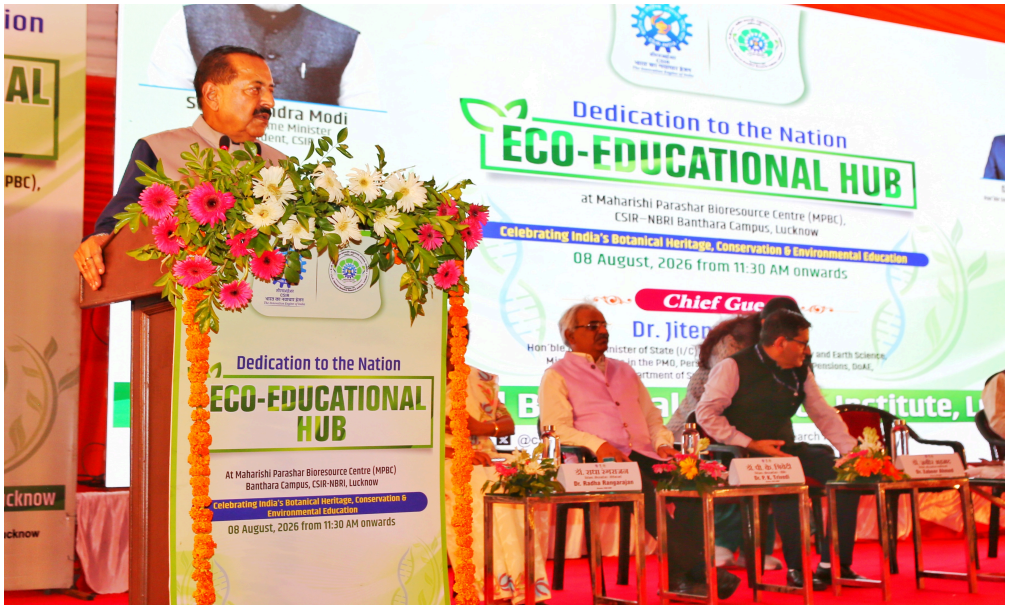
He also stressed the importance of integrated work across Departments, Ministries and institutions wherever projects and objectives are aligned. Such collaboration, he said, can help bring together complementary scientific capabilities and ensure that successful initiatives have a wider reach and impact.

The Minister also appreciated CSIR-NBRI's contribution towards translating plant science research into technologies and products for farmers, industry and the general public, and emphasised the continued need to combine traditional knowledge with modern technologies to address emerging environmental and climate challenges.

During the programme, Dr Jitendra Singh released a documentary showcasing India's Heritage Gardens, presenting the country's botanical wealth and the cultural, historical and ecological significance associated with its plant diversity.

Earlier, welcoming the Chief Guest and dignitaries, Dr Zabeer Ahmed, Director, CSIR-NBRI and CSIR-IIIM Jammu, spoke about the institute's contributions in plant science research, conservation and technology development. He said the Eco-Educational Hub has been conceived as a living repository of India's botanical diversity, enabling visitors to engage with the country's plant heritage through interactive and immersive learning.

The Eco-Educational Hub at MPBC, Banthra Campus is envisaged as a national destination for experiential learning and public engagement, bringing together botanical diversity, conservation, heritage and scientific outreach. Through its combination of living collections, heritage trails, digital interpretation and technology-oriented initiatives, the Hub seeks to foster a deeper connection between people and nature while strengthening the interface between scientific institutions and society.



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