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Health Ministry puts focus on technology and innovation

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Dr Harsh Vardhan launches 2ndCall for Proposal for Joint Applied Research under India-Korea Future Strategy Group



The 8thFoundation Day of Global Innovation and Technology Alliance (GITA) (PPP between Department of Science & Technology (DST) and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)) was addressed by the Union Minister of Health & Family

Welfare, Science & Technology and Earth Sciences, Dr. Harsh Vardhan, in New Delhi recently.

The Minister recognized and felicitated the exceptional performance of GITA project in contributing towards enhancing the country's innovation ecosystem. The theme of the event was 'Making India Future Ready'.

Dr. Harsh Vardhan said, "For India to grow at a sustained pace, technology and innovation have to become all-pervasive across all sectors of development." and he also spoke about India's aspiration to emerge as one of the top five knowledge powers in the world in the area of science, technology and innovation. The Minister congratulated GITA for successfully completing its 8th year of operations and mentioned that GITA has managed to create a niche for itself as a catalyst for fostering innovation as well as generating awareness and interest of industry to enable them to benefit from the various Government schemes/funds being managed by GITA.

Highlightingthe nation's progress,Dr. Harsh Vardhan said that India is aggressively working towards establishing itself as a leader in industrialization and technological development and the Government has a strong focus on science and technology, realizing that it is a key driver of long-term economic growth. Expressing confidence in the abilities of Indian scientists to rise up to the challenges and provide solutions to improve the lives of the common man, Dr. Harsh Vardhan said that creating a new eco-system of innovation and technology led entrepreneurship has become a national movement.

The Union Minister also launched the 2nd Call for Proposal for Joint Applied Research under the India-Korea Future Strategy Group. The India-Korea Future Strategy Group was created in July 2018 by the two Governments to expand and enhance cooperation in applied science and commercialization of industrial innovation for purposes of promoting sustainable development and enhancing the quality of life.

The eligible sectors under this call are Future Manufacturing (smart factory, electric vehicle, 3D printing, robotics and automation, advanced material), Future Utilities (Renewable Energy (Renewable Energy including hydrogen and fuel cells)), energy efficiency, smart grid, Waste-to-Energy (WtE) technologies), digital transformation (information & communication technologies including Big Data, software) and biotechnology/healthcare (affordable healthcare for the elderly and disabled; natural healthcare products).The Minister said that if India has to emerge as a true knowledge economy of the 21st century, it is inevitable that research and development leading to technology deployment has to be looked at as an in-house enterprise by all our leading industries including the SME sector as well. Hence, it is in the national interest of India to stimulate the private sector investments into R&D at levels of at least 1:1, in order to propel India as a leading scientific and technological power house.

Dr. Harsh Vardhan emphasized on 'Start-up India' initiative and said that the Government is extensively promoting Research Parks (RPs) and Technology Business Incubators (TBIs) which would promote the innovative ideas till they become commercial ventures. India is world's largest technology start-up hub with more than 66,000 start-ups.

India improved its rank on the Global Innovation Index for the fourth year consecutively. From being ranked at the 81st position in 2015, India improved its ranking steadily to reach 52nd position in 2019. GITA has been able to successfully engage in implementation of bilateral industrial R&D collaboration with some of the most innovative nations of the world including Canada, Finland, Israel, Italy, Korea, Spain, Sweden and the UK.

The role of institutions such as GITA is increasingly relevant as we progress on the journey of creating India as an innovation nation in order to create a New India, which nurtures and cultivates a blossoming scientific temperament in the country.