

Kashmir gets back its CSIR-IIIM laboratory

01 July 2013 | News | By BioSpectrum Bureau

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The union science and technology and earth sciences minister, S.Jaipal Reddy on June 30, 2013, rededicated the branch Laboratory of CSIR-Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine (CSIR-IIIM) at Srinagar. Present on the occasion were Mr Omar Abdullah, chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir, Mr Feroz Ahmad Khan, minister of science and technology, govt of J&K and senior officers from the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR) and IIIM.

Speaking on the occasion Mr Jaipal Reddy said he is pleased to see the world class scientific infrastructure being created for globally competitive scientific research relevant to the economic development of J&K state and the country. With the rejuvenation of this lab, it is attracting top class talent from all over the world. CSIR played a significant role in the development of Science and Technology in the country. He Said that J&K has been taken care of very well by CSIR in doing so.

Reddy said his ministry supports the initiatives taken by CSIR-IIIM to create an innovation system for employment and wealth generation. He said as presented to him, this laboratory has made major societal and scientific contributions to the economy of the State of J&K and India. The minister said he would like to announce:

1. Establishment of of Industrial Biotech Parks with the participation and support of Deptt. Of Bio-Technology (DBT), CSIR

2. Technical & strategic support for realizing the full potential of the growth of unique Aroma Industry in the J&K state;

3. Establishment of world class "CSIR Science Center" at IIIM, Srinagar Branch Laboratory including a value-addition center for aroma industry, a state-of-the-art leather-design center, marketing-networking facilities and a Science Museum for children of the Kashmir valley; and

4. Creation of A New Research Centre in the Ladakh region of J&K with the support of CSIR-IIIM to tap the talent and potential of young ones from the Leh and Kargil districts of the region; and

5. Initiation of major Human-Resource Development programmes for the youth of Jammu & Kashmir state, under the umbrella of newly created Academy of Scientific and Innovative Research (AcSIR).

Mr Reddy appreciated the amount of interest taken by Mr Omar Abdullah in the scientific development in the Jammu & Kashmir state to tap the potential of unique biodiversity of this state for rural prosperity and employment generation. He also appreciated the remarkably high interest in science among the youth of J&K and said it is incumbent on governments to provide necessary state-of-the-art lab facilities to fructify their yearnings. He also thanked the Chief Minister for engaging CSIR-IIIM in a meaningful way towards fulfilling these objectives. He also asked DG,CSIR and Director, CSIR-IIIM to carry forward these initiatives, which are of critical importance to the development of J&K State.

The CSIR-IIIM Laboratory which has made major societal and scientific contributions to the economy of the State of J&K and India has an illustrious past since its inception in 1942 by legendary medical scientist Col. Sir Ram Nath Chopra. This Srinagar based laboratory is reported to have suffered major decline in the decade of 1990s and 2000s due to the disturbed conditions in the Valley. The process of rebuilding scientific labs / facilities of this centre started in 2009 with major efforts on the part of DG,CSIR and Director, CSIR-IIIM.

Chief minister of state, Omar Abdullah said we have to work for developing scientific infrastructure and laboratories in colleges and schools to produce competitive children. He said we need to ensure the practical application of research as far as possible and to create an opportunity for its actual application in areas like Agriculture. He said it is a challenge for us to convince the farmers for a shift from conventional cultivation to the cultivation of cash crops. He expressed gratitude for the announcements made by Shri Reddy and hoped that these initiatives will lead to the overall growth of the state and will usher to a great extent in the development of scientific temperament of the young population of the state.

The welcome address was made by Dr Ram Vishwakarma, director, IIIM Jammu who also gave a presentation about the role of the institute while Dr Samir K. Bramhachari, DG, CSIR and secretary CSIR mentioned the efforts of CSIR in this connection.