

Honouring grassroots innovators and traditional knowledge holders

By Sunderarajan Padmanabhan

New Delhi, March 6 (India Science Wire): Spring is in the air. It is time for Rashtrapati Bhavan, the house of the President of India, to host an exhibition where innovators from villages and small towns exhibit their talent to produce solutions to various social problems without any formal training whatsoever.

The festival of grassroots innovators and traditional knowledge holders began on March 4 and will go on till March 10. It is open to the public. One can visit the exhibition from 10 am to 5 pm.

Going around the sprawling exhibition put up next to Rashtrapati Bhavan Cultural Centre one is struck by the high level of creativity amongst the common man and woman of the country.

The participants were selected following a rigorous screening process at different levels. In all, there were 33,000 submissions and in the end 77 innovators and traditional knowledge holders were selected. The contest was organised by National Foundation of Innovation, an autonomous organisation under the Union Ministry of Science and Technology.

All the entries were subjected to elaborate technical and patent prior art search to ascertain novelty/distinction and /or cost effectiveness. The research advisory committee that screened the entries included heads of top R&D institutions, experts from engineering, agricultural and veterinary colleges, and vice chancellors of various universities from all parts of the country.

Besides the exhibition, the festival features a 10-day in-residence programme. Several eminent artists and writers from different parts of the country are sharing rooms with the grassroots innovators and traditional knowledge holders. The aim is to provide a platform for a confluence of minds from different streams of creativity.

What will come out of it? It is anybody's guess. But, one thing is for sure. It would be for the betterment of the country. This is the fourth such multi-disciplinary conclave of innovators and traditional knowledge holders and artists and writers hosted by Rashtrapati Bhavan. (India Science Wire)