

Report on 34th Foundation Day Celebration of DBT

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The Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Ministry of Science & Technology, Government of India, New Delhi celebrated its 34th Foundation Day on 26th February, 2020 at the National Institute of Immunology (NII), New Delhi.

The Hon'ble Minister for S&T, Earth Sciences and MoH&FW, Dr. Harsh Vardhan graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. The DBT Foundation day lecture was delivered by eminent scientist Padma Shri Dr. D Balasubramaian, Emeritus Director, LV Prasad Eye Institute, Hyderabad. The event was attended by Dr. Renu Swarup, Secretary, DBT, Directors of DBT-Autonomous Institute and more 300 scientists and researchers.

Since its inception, DBT has instituted various awards to encourage and recognize the contribution of scientists working in various research institutes, universities, scientific organizations, national laboratories etc at different levels across the country. The department has named the awards in honour of outstanding scientists who have immensely contributed to the Indian Science and been an inspiration to scientific fraternity across the globe. These awards are considered under an overarching umbrella as DBT- Biotechnology Research Innovation and Technology Excellence Awards (BRITE). The BRITE Awards conferred on occasion included i). Har Gobind Khorana-Innovative Young Biotechnologist Award, ii). S. Ramachandran-National Bioscience Award for Career Development, iii). Janaki Ammal National Women Bioscientist Award, iv). Tata Innovative Fellowship Award, and v). the Biotechnology Social Development Award.

The Hon'ble Minister conferred the BRITE awards to the 34 recipients and praised the Department's efforts in launching three new national level initiatives as a part of the 100 Day Programme. The initiatives include:

- 1. Genome India:** The DBT has launched a Genome India Mission, the first Indian Initiative for Cataloguing the Human Genome. This is the first ever indigenous initiative on Human Genome to map the whole genome of 20000 diverse ethnic populations across the country. This wealth of genetic information will be transformational for the healthcare scenario of the country, particularly for predictive diagnosis and precision medicine.

- 2. Biotech KISAN hub in all Aspirational Districts:** The DBT has created a unique platform in form of establishing Biotech-Krishi Innovation Science Application Network (Biotech-KISAN) Hubs in each of 15 agro-climatic zones of the country, which aims to connect farmers and scientists to promote Agriculture Innovation and take new interventions to the farmers and farms towards increasing the farm productivity and farmers' income.
- 3. Waste to Value Technologies:** Through various supported projects, the DBT has developed technology platforms designed to convert different solid, liquid and gaseous wastes into renewable fuels, energy and useful products like food, feed and polymers & chemicals. It has also identified potential technologies for conversion of Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) and Municipal Liquid Waste (MLW) into energy or value and, proposed to take forward these technologies for scale up/implementation at 10 sites/ states in collaboration with Municipal Corporations/Local Bodies. In this respect 10 MoUs with Municipal Corporations/Local Bodies have already been signed.

The Hon'ble Minister acknowledged the immense contribution made by former Secretary DBT, Prof. M. K Bhan, who passed away recently. In his memory, the Hon'ble Minister announced that the DTB is launching "MK Bhan Young Investigators' Research Award" to promote young investigators working in challenging areas of research.