

Press Release

Union Minister Shri Jitendra Singh emphasizes on 'building a strong green economy' while Union Minister MSME, Shri Jitan Ram Manjhi warns against deforestation at conference on 'Environmental Sustainability in the 21st Century' at JMI today

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Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Earth Sciences, Science & Technology, and MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Government of India, Dr. Jitendra Singh called for 'building a strong green economy as the key towards ensuring environmental sustainability', today at the valedictory function of a two-day National Conference on "Environmental Sustainability in the 21st Century: Science, Society and Solutions", organized by the Department of Environmental Science, Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI). The conference showcasing participants hailing from 12 states of India has been sponsored by the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) and aims to foster meaningful academic dialogue and collaboration among eminent academicians, researchers, policymakers, and industry professionals on pressing environmental challenges and sustainable solutions. Vice Chancellor, JMI, Prof. Mazhar Asif and Registrar, JMI, Prof Md. Mahtab Alam Rizvi, felicitated the Honourable Union Minister Shri Jitendra Singh ji in the presence of Chancellor, Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai, and former Chairman, UGC, Prof. D. P. Singh, the guest of honour on the occasion; Dean, Faculty of Engineering and Technology, Prof. Mohammad Sharif; Prof Rajeev Singh, Head, Department of Environmental Science, JMI and the convenor of the conference, and co-convenor of the conference, Prof. Sirajuddin Ahmed.

Shri Jitendra Singh ji emphasized the need to march ahead with time by adopting technologies like Electric Vehicles (EVs), green economy leading to green jobs, focusing on new and renewable energy, biotechnology and biofuel, ocean energy and most importantly on nuclear energy. He said that "India has the capability to become a lead player in the green transition of the Earth". Honourable Minister Dr. Singh ji also added that India has the largest storage of thorium in the world which can go a long way into the attainment of the Government's nuclear mission. Stating that the India will be among the very few countries of the world where the nuclear sector will be opened to private players, Shri Jitendra Singh said that Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) Fund of the Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF), has a total corpus

of ₹1 lakh crore and has the potential to channelize research and development for welfare and employability of the youth.

Union minister of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Shri Jitan Ram Manjhi, who could not attend the event in-person owing to official engagements, in his video message that was played out during the function stated that the biggest challenges faced by the environment were those that emanated from excessive deforestation because of urbanisation, leading to greater concentration of carbon dioxide on earth and UV rays entering the earth due to ozone layer depletion. "These have led to reduced forest cover and rainfall affecting crop production resulting in greater disease, hunger and starvation that we have been experiencing since industrialization posing a threat to not just human beings but also to the entire flora and fauna of the world" he said. Life on earth will be endangered if we continue at this, Shri Manjhi ji cautioned, urging everyone to come together to save the environment and nature that God has created for human beings. "Population imbalances and natural disasters like earthquakes are a sign of the far reaching consequences of our indiscriminate use of nature and natural resources" he said.

Prof. D. P. Singh spoke about the need to nurture global citizens and to develop sustainable and eco-friendly campuses as envisaged in the NEP 2020. He added that the focus should be to make university and college campuses green wherein practices of rainwater harvesting, waste management, reliance on solar energy and eco-friendly means of transport like cycles are encouraged among the future generations and incorporated into day-to-day practices.

Registrar JMI, Prof. Rizvi reminded the audience that a key vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 is its commitment to achieve Net Zero emissions by 2070. He said that under the leadership of Honorable PM Shri Narendra Modi ji, the government has been focused on building a green infrastructure by adopting technologies like Electric Vehicles (EVs) to reduce carbon emission and environmental degradation and curb high pollution levels. Referring to the PM Shri Modi's vision of "Health for All" through the expansion of healthcare infrastructure and increasing medical seats, including the goal of establishing at least one medical college in every district of the country, Prof. Rizvi requested the Honourable Minister Dr, Jitendra Singh Ji to help JMI start a medical college and hospital so as to complement the existing 72 departments and research Centres in the 105-year old university.

Prof. Mazhar Asif, VC JMI, urged the students to recycle, reuse, and reduce waste. He emphasized that the Earth and its natural resources are limited and perishable, and therefore must be conserved and used judiciously. Citing a shloka from the Vedas, "*Sarve bhavantu sukhinah, sarve santu niramayah*", Prof. Asif said that, in keeping with the spirit of Indian philosophy and culture, all of us should pledge to promote

happiness, peace, harmony, and universal well-being. This, he concluded, "is the path to environmental sustainability and the way to save Mother Earth".

Prof Rajeev Singh, the convenor of the conference, held in observance of Earth Day, in his welcome address said, " The theme of the conference has been carefully selected to emphasize that society and science need to synergize and work in a symbiotic and complementary manner so that the environment and Mother Earth can be conserved for future generations. Eminent keynote speakers representing 25 academic and research institutions have been deliberating in various technical sessions in which more than 200 research papers and posters were presented on the important subject of environmental sustainability which is a global concern."

Other highlights of the conference included the keynote by Dr. Jagvir Singh Scientist G, Advisor, Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) who highlighted the various policies by the Government to attain environmental sustainability

The conference was held with the objective of serving as a platform for sharing knowledge, innovative ideas, and best practices in environmental sustainability and to contribute to shaping future environment policy.

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