

NEERI to have its own biotech park soon

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The union minister for science and technology, Dr Harsh Vardhan after attending a series of events at the National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (CSIR-NEERI: a wing of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research) in Nagpur on June 05, mentioned, "We must join the growing world community of safety and environment conscious consumers who are aware of the cradle to grave implications of the production of whatever they buy. We must also conserve with a view to tomorrow -spare enough for the coming generations."

Dr Harsh Vardhan went around the facilities of CSIR-NEERI, an institution he dubbed as the "gold standard" among comparable foundations all over the world. He inaugurated a "Harit Sanghralaya", flagged off the MEMCL and laid the foundation of a Biotechnology Park which is to come up with the objective of developing a state-of-art technology development laboratory for transformation of lab-scale processes to demonstrable technologies.

The achievements of CSIR-NEERI have been displayed under 12 themes: "Glorious past", "Air environment", "Water environment", "Wastewater technology", "Eco-restoration", "Environment and health", "Solid and hazardous waste management", "Waste to wealth", "Renewable energy", "Climate change", "Analytical instruments" and "Environmental modelling".

The objective is to promote green solutions in the air, water, energy and other environmental sectors at local, regional, and international levels. The Harit Sangrahalaya proposes to open its doors to individuals, industries and organisations to adopt best eco-friendly practices, to raise their contribution to sustainable development. Its theme is: "Join us and be part of a sustainable future".

Dr Harsh Vardhan described the museum as a "gift to the people of Nagpur" who are already famous for their high degree of cultural awareness. It includes a "Kids Section" under which the virtue of Biodiversity has been showcased with beautiful illustrations. Some working models have been prepared based on the CSIR-NEERI technologies and placed in the Sangrahalaya to highlight the Electrolytic defluoridation process used to remove fluoride from water, phytoid technology for sewage treatment, "NEERI-ZAR" portable instant water filter, solid waste to biogas plant, decolourisation of effluent of textile

industry, and common effluent treatment plant for industrial wastewater treatment.

"I hope that through this museum the people of Nagpur, who are dwelling at the hub of Maharashtra and India's industrial growth, would see for themselves how they can themselves play a role in striking a balance between the demands and responsibilities of modern living. I congratulate the scientists and technologists of CSIR-NEERI for coming up with this wonderful idea," he said.

The MEMCL is capable of real time sampling, analysis and control of air pollution from sources through flue gas treatability studies. It is equipped with a number of innovative technologies that enhances the CSIR-NEERI's air monitoring capabilities.

"I have suggested to the Director, CSIR-NEERI and his able team that instead of keeping MEMCL confined to just Nagpur they should send it to all the major cities because every one of them is suffering under the burden of air pollution. CSIR-NEERI's good name will be leveraged on a nationwide scale and resultantly all the state governments will adopt its air cleansing proposals on a war footing by the time of next year's World Environment Day," he said.

The proposed Biotechnology Park Project envisages the utilisation of municipal solid waste (MSW) and organic biomass as raw material for bio-fuels to address the waste management issues at reduced cost. The project would deploy biological and thermal processing options to propose the most economic and strategic option.

Dr Harsh Vardhan said that waste management is one of the key priorities of the Narendra Modi government's environment policy. The long-term goal for the development is to become a recycling society that uses waste as a resource. Multitudes of the processes are available for utilization of waste for bio-fuels, he added.