**Dr Harsh Vardhan addresses the curtain raiser event of RGCB for IISF 2020**

**Aim of the Science Festival is to engage the public with science and celebrate the joy of science: Dr Harsh Vardhan**

The Minister for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences, Health & Family Welfare, Dr. HarshVardhan today addressed the virtual curtain raiser program of IISF 2020 hosted by Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Biotechnology, Thiruvananthapuram. Various outreach and popularization programs  are going on across the country in the run up to IISF 2020.

 Addressing at the curtain raiser event, Dr. HarshVardhan said , “The aim of theScience Festival is toengage the public with science and celebrate the joy of science and show the ways how Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics(STEM) provide us with the solutions to improve our liveslives”.He further elaborated  that the unique platform of India International Science Festival has been created which intends to inspire curiosity and make learning more rewarding.IISF, 2020, being organized in virtual platform will help in connecting to the science loving people from the remotest corner of the country in a single click, thereby increasing the digital footprint, the Minster explained.

Appreciating the work done by RGCB, Dr. Harsh Vardhan said that RGCB, in addition to testing for infectious and non-infectious diseases, has been at the forefront of COVID testing since the outbreak  started in India.   RGCB has done over one lakh of COVID testing till now, he disclosed.

The Union Minister said, “The proposed theme for IISF 2020, ‘Science for Self-Reliant India and Global Welfare’ is very relevant in the present context, when the country is looking towards Science & Technology for accelerating growth and for spearheading the vision of our Honorable Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi ji on an Atmanirbhar Bharat, playing a bigger and more important role in the global economy”.

In her address, Secretary, Department of Biotechnology, GOI, Dr. RenuSwaroop said that the journey of science in our country should be celebrated which events like the Science Festival can help to highlight. The festival has a vast canvas including going down to the grassroots,engaging with students, highlighting new technologies, engaging with diaspora, working on inter agency participation among others, the Secretary explained.

The Organizing Secretary of Vijnana Bharti (ViBha), Shri Jayant Sahastrabudhe spoke about the rationale of IISF and its importance in inculcating scientific thinking in the public. Earlier welcoming the dignitaries, Director RGCB, Pr. Chandrabhas Narayana assured that RGCB is making all out efforts to make the IISF 2020 a big success.

## Source

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