

‘Conservation Science and Innovation Laboratory’ inaugurated at Kashmir University

VC Prof Nilofer Khan, PCCF Dr Mohit Gera lead inaugural ceremony at varsity’s CORD



Srinagar, Sep 21: Vice-Chancellor University of Kashmir Prof Nilofer Khan and Dr Mohit Gera, IFS, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Head of J&K’s Forest Force on Wednesday inaugurated the Conservation Science and Innovation Laboratory (CoSI) at the varsity, a state-of-the-art facility that will benefit biodiversity conservation in the region besides help decrease the crimes against wildlife.

Prof Nilofer Khan, who presided over the inaugural ceremony, thanked all collaborating organisations for setting up the facility, which, she said, will boost multidisciplinary research on issues and concerns related to biodiversity conservation in the region of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

Dr Mohit Gera, chief guest at the inaugural function, said the CoSI Lab must undertake research on vast plant life in the region, besides achieving the desired goals related to curbing crimes against wildlife. Dr Gera also gave an account of J&K’s rich forest wealth to highlight the need for its conservation through multidisciplinary research and institutional tie-ups.

Pertinently, the CSIR-CCMB, along with Atal Incubation Centre (AIC) of CCMB and IKP Knowledge Park from Hyderabad partnered with the Kashmir University’s Centre of Research for Development (CORD) to establish the CoSI Lab, with generous support from Rural Electrification Corporation Foundation (RECF) under its CSR initiative. The University of Kashmir further provided space and human resource for setting up the facility, which aims to undertake institutional training

and skill development programmes in DNA technology for forest and law-enforcement officials, besides promoting an ecosystem of innovation and entrepreneurship in conservation biodiversity. The laboratory will also function as a field office and knowledge hub for testing innovative technologies, providing transferable skill training and forensic diagnostic services to interpret legally relevant evidence which can curb wildlife crime in Jammu and Kashmir.

Dr Vinay Nandicoori, Director CCMB, who was a guest of honour, gave a brief about the activities and works being undertaken at the organisation. The CoSI Lab, he said, is a great initiative towards biodiversity conservation, prevention of human-animal conflicts in the long run and to find out which animals are being poached.

Mr. S K Gupta, IFS, Chief Wildlife Warden J&K, also a guest of honour, said 11.5 per-cent of J&K's geographical area is under Wildlife Protected Area Network, which is highest in the country, and this makes wildlife conservation in the region and forensics related to it very important.

Dr Karthikeyan Vasudevan, Senior Principal Scientist, CCMB, highlighted and appreciated the efforts of various collaborators in setting up the facility.

Dr N M Rao, CEO of AIC-CCMB said: "Conservation is a necessity today and we have to collaborate to make it happen with exchange of knowledge and skill development."

Prof Niamat Ali, Director CORD, gave a brief introduction about CORD and its activities, including the current collaboration leading to setting up of CoSI Lab.

Dr Tawqir Bashir, INSPIRE faculty and In-charge CoSI Lab, delivered the vote of thanks.

Senior academics, administrators, scientists and officials from CCMB, RECF, AKP Knowledge Park, J&K Wildlife Department and Kashmir University, including Registrar Dr Nisar A Mir and Dean Research Prof Irshad A Nawchoo, attended the inaugural session.