

3 Padma awardees among eminent scientists join 3-day symposium on earthquake resilience at KU



Srinagar, May 25: Three Padma Shri awardees are among a galaxy of scientists who will be a part of deliberations during a three-day national symposium on ‘Earthquake, Landslide and Glacial Hazards’ inaugurated at the University of Kashmir on Thursday.

The Padma awardees include earth scientist Prof Harsh K Gupta, geophysical scientist Dr V P Dimri and geologist Dr V C Thakur.

Vice-Chancellor, University of Kashmir, Prof Nilofer Khan presided over the inaugural session of the symposium as well as the 7th Annual Convention on ‘Advances in Earthquake Sciences’, organised by Indian Society of Earthquake Sciences (ISES) and KU’s Department of Geography and Disaster Management. Mr Nazim Zia Khan, IAS, Secretary to J&K Government, Department of Disaster Management, Relief and Rehabilitation (DDMRR) was the chief guest on the occasion, while Prof Talat Ahmad, former VC KU and Prof Harsh K Gupta were the guests of honour.

In her presidential remarks, Prof Nilofer said that disaster management is a “multidimensional issue” and needs active support from all stakeholders to help develop a disaster-conscious citizenry. She said students can lead effective awareness campaigns on disaster management, while such scientific deliberations in the University can feed into policymaking on the subject.

In his address, Mr Nazim Zia Khan highlighted the importance of capacity building of various stakeholders for effective disaster management on the ground. He said the Government of J&K has developed a multipronged approach for good structuring of the disaster management mechanism, including creation of two separate battalions of SDRF.

In his special remarks, Prof Talat Ahmad called for addressing new challenges in disaster management with active involvement of teachers and students. He also highlighted the fallout of various disasters including landslides and earthquakes in vulnerable places like J&K. Prof Talat also said the KU's Department of Geography and Disaster Management must evolve into a Centre of Excellence given its potential and expertise.

Prof Harsh K Gupta said the best way to deal with natural disasters is to learn to live with natural disasters by developing resilience and capacities in the society at large. He said when other countries like Nepal or Haiti can develop such resilience in the wake of large-scale earthquakes, the same could be replicated in places in the country which are vulnerable to earthquakes and other disasters.

Head, DGDM KU, Prof Pervez Ahmad earlier welcomed the dignitaries and other participants from different parts of the country, while Prof B K Rastogi, President, ISES gave a detailed account of the symposium deliberations and expected outcomes.

Dr Abhay Ram Bhansal delivered the vote of thanks, while Dr Mohammad Shafi Bhat conducted proceedings of the inaugural session.

The three-day event is being attended by 100 delegates and students from different institutions of J&K and elsewhere in the country.