Dr. Jitendra Singh Inaugurated National Conference, Highlighted SKUAST-Jammu's Role in India's Next Growth Story

The Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Jammu (SKUAST-J) witnessed the grand inauguration of a prestigious two-day National Conference on "Emerging Innovations in Biochemistry and Biotechnology for Holistic Development in Agriculture." The conference is being held under the aegis of the Annual Convention of the Society of Plant Biochemistry and Biotechnology, New Delhi, and has drawn more than 200 delegates, including eminent scientists, researchers, policymakers, research scholars, and students from leading universities and institutes across India.

Dr. Jitendra Singh, Hon'ble Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science & Technology, Government of India, inaugurated the conference with an insightful keynote address. He urged the industry to invest in agricultural research and development, making use of India's expertise, innovation, and dedication. He further highlighted that North India is a hub of numerous premier research institutes, forming a strong cluster for scientific advancements. He emphasized that the next growth story of India is being shaped by the Himalayan states, with universities like SKUAST-J playing a pivotal role in driving agricultural and technological progress.

Prof. B.N. Tripathi, Hon'ble Vice Chancellor of SKUAST-Jammu, welcomed the guests and participants, emphasizing the university's achievements and commitment to advancing agricultural research, sustainable farming, and industry-academia collaboration. Guest of Honours Dr. S.L. Mehta (Former President of the Society) and Prof. K.S. Chandrasekar (Vice Chancellor, Cluster University of Jammu) also delivered inaugural addresses, underscoring the role of biochemistry and biotechnology in agricultural progress.

Dr. T.R. Sharma, former DDG (CS) and President of the Society of Plant Biochemistry and Biotechnology, outlined the Society's role in advancing research in plant biochemistry and biotechnology. He highlighted the potential of modern biotechnological

tools in tackling key agricultural challenges such as food security, climate change, and crop improvement.

The conference features distinguished lectures, technical sessions, poster presentations, and interactive discussions aimed at advancing agricultural biochemistry and biotechnology research. The event includes seven high-impact technical sessions with plenary and lead lectures from experts representing premier institutions like ICAR, CSIR-IIIM, and NABI. These sessions cover diverse topics in biochemistry and biotechnology. The Society is also organizing the Springer Young Scientist Award Session to recognize outstanding contributions from young researchers in plant biochemistry and biotechnology.

The conference provides a platform for scholars to present research on genetic advancements, crop improvement, sustainable agriculture, and biotechnological innovations. Special sessions focus on fostering collaboration between research institutions, farmers, and the agricultural industry, promoting knowledge exchange and technology transfer.

Other dignitaries were also present at the inaugural session, which concluded with a vote of thanks from Prof. R.K. Salgotra, the Convener, acknowledging contributions from scientists, scholars, and industry experts. Dr. Ranjeet Ranjan, Organizing Secretary, highlighted the conference's role in advancing agricultural research and promoting sustainable, technology-driven solutions for the farming community.