FLAGGING off the third edition of the four-day India International Science Festival, the Union Minister for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences and Forest Environment & Climate Change, Dr. Harsh Vardhan said that our country fosters millions of innovators at the grassroots level and it is vital to empower them with modern entrepreneurial skills as well as get them acquainted with advanced industrial technologies.

He mentioned that the objective of the Innovators’ Summit is to strengthen the technological innovations at the grassroot level and enrich our outstanding traditional knowledge. This will provide a common platform for a wide array of stakeholders – ranging from students and researchers to innovators and policy makers.

While Minister of State for Ministry of Science & Technology & Earth Sciences, Shri Y.S. Chowdary, welcomed the grand convention, the key participants of the inaugural ceremony included Dr. Vijay Bhatkar, National President, VIBHA, Minister of Higher Education of Afghanistan Shri Abdul Latif Roshan, Science & Technology Minister of Bangladesh Shri Yeafesh Osman and Minister for Higher Education, Science and Technology, Government of Tamil Nadu Shri. K.P. Anbalagan. Dr. M. Rajeevan, Secretary, MoES gave the vote of thanks and stressed the need for translating the scientific knowledge in achieving inclusive and sustainable growth.

IISF 2017, which was kick started on 13 October 2017 at the Anna University in Chennai, was coordinated by the National Institute of Ocean Technology (ESSO-NIOT). “Science for New India” was the theme for the Science Festival. The four-day long event was held simultaneously at five different locations including Anna University (main venue), ESSO-NIOT, CSIR-Central Leather Research Institute (CSIR-CLRI), CSIR-Structural Engineering Research Centre (CSIR-SERC), and Indian Institute of Technology, Madras (IIT Madras). Students, teachers, researchers, scholars, scientists, and people from diverse range of fields like academia, industry, government, social organisations, etc. took part in the event.

The various components of the IISF 2017 included Science & Technology Ministers’ Conclave, Science Village, Round Table Meet on Mass Communication, Grassroot Innovators Summit, International Science Film Festival, Women Scientists & Entrepreneur’s Conclave, National Science Teachers’ Workshop, Industry-Academia Interaction, Mega Science, Technology and Industry Expo, etc.

The Science & Technology Ministers’ Conclave held on 13 October 2017 was attended by Bangladesh Minister of Science & Technology, Yeafesh Osman and Afghanistan Minister of Higher Education, Abdul Latif Roshan who shared their views on Science & Technology cooperation. This summit provided an opportunity to understand the scientific and technological priorities and challenges being faced by some of the third world countries.

The programme Sensitising Youth to Flagship Programs of Government (SYPOG) was an effort to sensitize the younger generation about the Government’s policies and success stories related to national flagship programmes like Swachh Bharat, Make in India, Digital India, Climate Change and Swasth Bharat. Informative Sessions on ‘Swachh Bharat’ and ‘Digital India’ were held as part of the event.
Around 2000 students along with their guides from 22 states participated in the Science Village. The Science Village is focused at providing exposure to the students from rural India and make them aware of India’s achievements in the fields of science and technology. The students and accompanying teachers also paid a visit to the research ship ORV Sagar Nidhi at the Chennai port.

The Mega Science and Technology Expo displayed the achievements and success stories of scientific institutes, academic organisations, research labs, Public Sector Undertakings and Indian Industries.

The Grassroot Innovators Summit was aimed at providing a common platform for various stakeholders – from students, researchers to policy makers under the 'Innovation Exhibition' held at Anna University. More than 100 innovative technologies from all over India were presented at the exhibition, and eminence was given to those that could be utilized for social welfare and to generate employment.

Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister of Science & Technology inaugurated the Women Bio-tech Incubator as part of the IISF 2017 in the presence of Prof. M.S. Swaminathan, Founder Chairman, Women Biotech Park, and Mr M.C. Sampath, State Minister of Industry, Government of Tamil Nadu. While delivering his Address Dr. Harsh Vardhan said that, “In the field of Science and Technology and Entrepreneurship, Indian women have had a major presence over the last 100 years. The DST and DBT have special schemes to attract women scientists and to provide employment opportunities to the unemployed women scientists.”

Dr. Harsh Vardhan announced that in the 2018 March conclave all the women scientists in India would be invited for participation. He appealed to women scientists not to underestimate themselves.

The major highlight of the IISF was the making of a new Guinness World Record for the Largest Biology Lesson. The world record had 1049 students from 20 local schools participating.

The four-day India International Science Festival (IISF) wound up on 16 October 2017 with a valedictory function held at the Anna University complex, Chennai where Vice President Mr Venkaiah Naidu was the chief guest.

Addressing the session he said that science is the stepping stone of civilisation and India has contributed immensely in the development of science, be it in earth science or space. He said that science and technology need to move closely with human resources adding that the main purpose of science is to alleviate and research to help humanity.