

Dr. Harsh Vardhan inaugurates new research building 'DesikanBhawan' at ICMR- NJIL & OMD, Agra

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Honourable Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare, Govt. of India, Dr. Harsh Vardhan inaugurated the new research building 'DesikanBhawan' equipped with new COVID-19 diagnostic facility at ICMR-NJIL&OMD, Agra in the presence of Director General ICMR & Secretary, Department of Health Research, Prof. Balram Bhargava.

The building is dedicated for research facilities like animal experimentation, COVID-19 diagnosis, whole genome sequencing of different Mycobacterium species and phytochemical extraction from medicinal plants for anti-TB drug development. The capacity of COVID-19 Diagnostic Laboratory is around 1200 samples per day. This COVID diagnostic lab is loaded with Biosafety level II (BSL I) cabinets, automated RNA extractors, and Real Time PCR machines with which the diagnostic results can be reported within a day.

The honourable minister highlighted and appreciated DG, ICMR for the work done during COVID-19 pandemic which can help in preventing and managing emerging infectious diseases in future, and also the efforts towards ICMR in tuberculosis diagnosis and treatment to achieve the goal of end TB by 2025, the dream of our beloved Prime Minister.

The Director General Prof. Balram Bhargava appreciated the work being carried out at ICMR NJIL&OMD in the field of mycobacterial research. The DG, ICMR also remarked that ICMR has been very robust in managing COVID-19 by intense diagnosis of COVID-19 across the ICMR institute labs which has facilitated the prompt management of the pandemic. It is the effort of ICMR which brought the vaccine for COVID-19 with 81% efficacy.

The Director of the institute, Dr. Shripad A. Patil briefed about the patient care activities related to leprosy and TB at the institute and about the research facilities in the new building at ICMR-NJIL&OMD.

The new building is named after Institute's first Director, Dr. K. V. Desikan, who also graced the occasion by his presence. The Director of ICMR- Regional Medical Research Centre, Gorakhpur, Dr. Rajni Kant and Director BMHRC, Dr. Prabha Desikan were also present on the occasion. On this occasion, people from local administration, MP, State ministers, Vice-chancellors and Principals of Agra University, S N Medical College and other institutes were also present.