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Call to intensify research on drug development

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Protein-based molecules hold the key to the future of the pharmaceutical industry: expert

Need to feed the population has to be balanced with damage to environment: NIIST director

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: The fourth international conference on New Horizons in Biotechnology organised by the Biotech Research Society of India (BRSI) and the National Institute for Interdisciplinary Science and Technology (NIIST) began here on Monday with a call to intensify research on the development of new drugs.

Inaugurating the four-day conference, director of the Institute of Life Sciences, Hyderabad, Dr. Javed Iqbal said research into protein-based molecules held the key to the future of the pharmaceutical industry. He said basic and applied research were equally important in the global race to develop new drugs.

Presiding over the inaugural function, NIIST director T.K. Chandrasekhar highlighted the importance of an interdisciplinary approach to science. Drawing attention to the debate on genetically modified food, crops and micro organisms, he said the need to feed the growing population had to be balanced with the potential damage to the environment. "New diseases and drug-resistant micro organisms have emerged as a threat to humans the world over. Biotechnology has the potential to solve many of these problems", he added.

Convener of the conference Prof. Ashok Pandey, Director of the Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Biotechnology Dr.M. Radhakrishnan Pillai and Prof. C.G. Dussap, UBP, France, also addressed the gathering.

Biotechnologist Prof. G.Padmanabhan was presented with the lifetime achievement award instituted by BRSI. Dr.Sujatha Sarma, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, received the award for the best woman scientist while the award for the best young scientist went to Satyanarayana Gummato from IIT-Chennai. Amit Ghosh, director of the School of Biological Sciences, Ahmedabad and Prof. T.P.Singh, AIIMS, were awarded honorary fellowship of BRSI.

As many as 600 delegates from Asia, Africa, Latin America and Europe are attending the conference which seeks to provide a common platform for scientists, engineers and other experts and help them develop a collaborative network with industry.

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