

**Inauguration of the 40th Jawaharlal Nehru National Science,
Mathematics and Environment Exhibition 2013 for Children**

Organised by NCERT

Speech by Dr. Shashi Tharoor

Hon'ble Minister of State for HRD

Gangtok, 11th November, 2013

Hon'ble President of India, Shri Pranab Mukherjee ji, Hon'ble Governor of Sikkim, Shri Shriniwas Patilji, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Sikkim, Shri Pawan Chamlingji and Hon'ble HRD Minister of Sikkim, Shri N.K. Pradhanji, other distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure and privilege for me to be with you to celebrate the inauguration of the 40th Jawaharlal Nehru National Science, Mathematics and Environment (JNNSME) Exhibition 2013 for Children being organised jointly by the National Council of Education Research and Training (NCERT) and the Government of Sikkim.

I would like to add my word of thanks to the Hon'ble President of India Shri Pranab Mukherjee for gracing this occasion. His own life and work has been a source of inspiration to all of us who are passionate about India's progress. I also wish to thank the Government of Sikkim for hosting the exhibition this year amidst these splendid surroundings. The NCERT has been organising the JNNSME Exhibition for the last four decades in various State capitals. I congratulate the NCERT for sustaining and nurturing this important programme for so many years.

As you all know, today, the 11th of November, is celebrated as the National Education Day to commemorate the birth anniversary of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, a stalwart of the freedom struggle and the first Education Minister of Independent India. His contribution as a thinker about education with a universal vision and a secular humanist

outlook, and the role he played in setting up the national education system, are amongst his most enduring legacies.

As a passionate believer in the power of science and education to transform India, Nehruji continues to inspire us. His love for children was perhaps matched only by his passion for science. It is therefore doubly heartening to see that an event inspired by these two giants of modern India has exhibits from Kerala to Kashmir.

Science and Society, the theme for the 2013 exhibition, is a most apt topic in today's context. Science is vital for development but it should respect society's broader needs. Our planet has limited resources, and our developmental activities should take into account their impact on the environment. Only then shall we be able to conserve our resources for our future generations. Sikkim, with its pristine environment, its pure and smoke-free air, its organic farming practices and its clean streets, is the perfect embodiment of this principle. I am confident that the models displayed here will provide glimpses of the role science and mathematics can play in solving the great problems of our time.

At this point in human history, science and education need each other more than ever. On the one hand technology has enabled us to truly make education accessible to all at all times. On the other hand, a progressive, liberal, humanist outlook is more essential than ever, so that scientific creativity can be better directed to solve the problems that collectively challenge all humanity, such as climate change, poverty, hunger and affordable health care. Our scientific and educational establishments must nurture and expand the scope of the very Indian tradition of frugal innovation, sometimes called 'jugaad', to find affordable and locally-relevant solutions to our problems.

So on the occasion of National Education Day I am happy to wish the organisers and participants of this exhibition all success in inspiring our young minds. I take this opportunity on behalf of my Ministry to thank the Hon'ble President to have taken time to inaugurate this exhibition, and the dynamic Chief Minister Pawan Chamling for having given us such a perfect setting for it. I hope this event helps ignite the minds of the students to innovate and create many more scientific inventions to shape the kind of India that was dreamt of by Pandit Nehru and Maulana Azad.

Thank you, and Jai Hind!