

Dr Kaushik Banerjee participated in the inaugural meeting of the Foundation for the Growth of New India on March 24, 2023.

Dr Kaushik Banerjee, Director, ICAR-NRC Grapes, participated in a day-long meeting in New Delhi to mark the launching of the Foundation for the Growth of New India (FGNI). Dr Himanshu Pathak, DG, ICAR, presided over the event, which was attended by a number of dignitaries, including Prof. R.B. Singh, Dr. S.L. Mehta, Dr. H.P. Singh, Dr. P.K. Chakrabarty, Dr. D. Kanungo, Dr. Sain Dass, Dr. Man Singh, Dr. S. Walia, and Dr. A.K. Dikshit. The participants unanimously decided Dr. Pathak to be the patron of this organization.

Shri R.G. Agarwal, the Advisor-FGNI, welcomed the participants, and informed them about the genesis and anticipated roles of FGNI in the *Amritkal* of the country.

Speaking at the inaugural session of the meeting, Dr. Pathak spoke about the importance of accepting India's agricultural potential as a key to a prosperous economy. While highlighting the role of ICAR in achieving national food security, he stated that India will write a better and more glorious story in this *Amritkal*, in which agriculture will continue to play a central role. He also highlighted the significance of stakeholders' participation in enhancing the quality and output of agricultural research.

In his presentation titled "Incentivization and Enabling Policies for the Introduction of New Pesticides in India," Dr. Banerjee (Director, NRCG) underlined the importance of introducing new pesticides in India simultaneously with Europe and the United States. In addition, he mentioned the emerging pest and disease issues caused by climate change and urged the CIB&RC to develop provisions for ad hoc label claims of new-generation pesticides to provide farmers with safer and better options for pest management.

Every speaker urged for all-inclusive, and sustainable development in line with India's goal of achieving an equitable and prosperous nation. They deliberated about a number of issues that are affecting Indian farmers' income and expressed concerns about spurious pesticides in open markets that are harming crops as well as ecology. The use of poor-quality pesticides by farmers is not only failing to achieve desired crop protection but also causing pest resistance, pest resurgence, and pesticide residue problems in trade.

The FGNI members decided to organize awareness programs across the country and develop policy documents to support the government in achieving a USD 5 trillion economy by 2025-26.

