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# DRDO News

## डीआरडीओ ने गगनयान 'ड्रोग पैराशूट' के लिए मुख्य परीक्षण किया

Source: Punjab Kesari, Dt. 20 Feb 2026

नई दिल्ली, (पंजाब केसरी) : भारत के मानव अंतरिक्ष उड़ान कार्यक्रम गगनयान के तहत एक महत्वपूर्ण उपलब्धि हासिल की गई है, जिसमें रक्षा अनुसंधान एवं विकास संगठन (डीआरडीओ) द्वारा किए गए परीक्षण ने उच्च क्षमता वाले 'रिबन पैराशूट' के डिजाइन और निर्माण में भारत की विशेषज्ञता को साबित किया है। रक्षा मंत्रालय ने बृहस्पतिवार को यह जानकारी दी। मंत्रालय ने एक बयान में कहा कि यह परीक्षण 18 फरवरी को चंडीगढ़ में 'टर्मिनल बैलिस्टिक्स रिसर्च लैबोरेटरी (टीबीआरएल) में डीआरडीओ के 'रेल ट्रैक रॉकेट स्लेड' (आरटीआरएस) प्रतिष्ठान में आयोजित किया गया। इसमें कहा गया कि भारत के मानव अंतरिक्ष उड़ान कार्यक्रम ने गगनयान कार्यक्रम के लिए

'ड्रोग पैराशूट' के सफल विशिष्टता स्तर भार परीक्षण के साथ एक महत्वपूर्ण उपलब्धि हासिल की है। मंत्रालय ने कहा कि इस परीक्षण से उच्च क्षमता वाले 'रिबन पैराशूट' के डिजाइन और निर्माण में भारत की विशेषज्ञता साबित हुई।

यह परीक्षण भारतीय अंतरिक्ष अनुसंधान संगठन (इसरो) के विक्रम साराभाई अंतरिक्ष केंद्र, डीआरडीओ के 'एरियल डिलीवरी रिसर्च एंड डेवलपमेंट एस्टैब्लिशमेंट' और टीबीआरएल की विभिन्न टीमों के सहयोग से आयोजित किया गया। आरटीआरएस एक विशेष गतिशील परीक्षण प्रतिष्ठान है जिसका उपयोग उच्च गति वाले वायुगतिकीय और बैलिस्टिक मूल्यांकन के लिए व्यापक रूप से किया जाता है।

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## DRDO conducts parachute test for Gaganyaan

Source: The Pioneer, Dt. 20 Feb 2026

India's human spaceflight programme has achieved a key milestone with the successful qualification level load test of the Drogue Parachute for the Gaganyaan programme, the Defence Ministry said on Thursday. Giving details, officials said the test was conducted on Wednesday at the Rail Track Rocket Sled (RTRS) facility of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) at **Terminal Ballistics Research Laboratory (TBRL)**, Chandigarh.

The RTRS is a specialised dynamic test facility being used extensively for high-speed aerodynamic and ballistic evaluations. The test was conducted with Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre, ISRO, Aerial Delivery Research and Development Establishment, DRDO, alongside various TBRL's dedicated teams. The test proves India's expertise in designing and manufacturing high-strength ribbon parachutes.



The achievement once again highlights TBRL's immense contributions by providing advanced test facilities, instrumentation and technical expertise for space and defence programmes. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh complimented DRDO, ISRO and industry on the successful qualification test for Gaganyaan Drogue Parachute. The test is another big step in furthering the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat, he said.

<https://dailypioneer.com/news/drdo-conducts-parachute-test-for-gaganyaan>

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## Defence News

### Need naval forces to join hands to tackle maritime threats: Rajnath Singh

*Source: The Indian Express, Dt. 20 Feb 2026*

From piracy, maritime terrorism, disruptions to critical supply chains to climate change besides the traditional threats, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday said that no single Navy, however capable, can address these challenges alone and sought enhanced cooperation among the naval forces to ensure a safer and more secure future.

“There has been an exponential economic growth during the last few decades, leading to a massive increase in international trade and transport,” he said, addressing Navy Chiefs and heads of delegations from 74 countries during the inaugural ceremony of Exercise MILAN at Visakhapatnam. He added there has also been a rise in contests for ownership of straits and channels, sometimes causing threats of flare-up.

“Increasing international attention to underwater resources, particularly rare-earth minerals, is adding a new dimension to this tension. In addition, there is a need to guard our waters from nefarious terrorist activities,” he said. Stating that traditional threats coexist with emerging challenges such as piracy, maritime terrorism, illegal fishing, trafficking, cyber vulnerabilities, and

disruptions to critical supply chains, he said climate change is intensifying natural disasters, making humanitarian and disaster relief operations more frequent and demanding.

“No single Navy, however capable, can address these challenges alone,” he said, underscoring the need for enhanced cooperation among the Navies to ensure a safer and more secure future. He said the robust legal framework provided by 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) to address matters related to international waters can be further strengthened by a comprehensive global naval architecture.



*Defence Minister Rajnath Singh being received by the Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi and other officers upon his arrival for the inauguration of the thirteenth edition of Indian Navy's multilateral exercise 'MILAN', in Visakhapatnam on Thursday*

Talking about MILAN 2026, he said it brings together professional expertise, builds mutual trust, enhances interoperability, and enables coordinated responses to common challenges. “When our ships sail together, when our sailors train together, and when our commanders deliberate together, we build a shared understanding that transcends geography and politics and provides an opportune moment to deliberate on this idea of cooperation,” he said.

Singh said that as a trusted vishwa mitra (global friend), India will continue to play a constructive and dependable role in the region, underlining that holistic maritime security and mutual prosperity are indivisible, and can only be achieved through cooperation, trust, and shared commitment among like-minded nations. Calling MILAN 2026, the reflection of the confidence the global maritime community places in India as a trusted and responsible maritime partner, he said, “We aspire to establish an equitable maritime order based on international rules and freedom of navigation in accordance with international law.”

In his opening remarks, Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi compared MILAN to a “maritime mahakumbh” in which professionals come together, united by a common commitment and purpose to keep the seas safe, secure and open. He said that the approach to this complex maritime environment is rooted in PM Narendra Modi's vision of MAHASAGAR, an inclusive and collaborative approach based on partnership and shared responsibility.

MILAN 2026 is among the largest and most complex editions of the Indian Navy exercise to date, bringing together naval ships, aircraft and professional delegations from 74 countries. It will be conducted in two phases — harbour phase and sea phase. The harbour phase focuses on strengthening professional interaction and fostering mutual understanding. The sea phase will feature a series of advanced operational exercises at sea.

<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/need-naval-forces-to-join-hands-to-tackle-maritime-threats-rajnath-singh-10541526/>

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## भारत-इज़राइल में रक्षा सहयोग पर हुए साइन

Source: NavBharat Times, Dt. 20 Feb 2026

■ भाषा, तेल अवीव: प्रधानमंत्री नरेन्द्र मोदी की इसी महीने के आखिर में प्रस्तावित इस्त्राइल यात्रा से पहले भारत और इस्त्राइल ने रक्षा सहयोग को और गहरा करने के लिए एक समझौता ज्ञापन (एमओयू) पर हस्ताक्षर किए हैं। इस्त्राइल के रक्षा मंत्रालय (आईएमओडी) के अंतरराष्ट्रीय रक्षा सहयोग निदेशालय (एसआईबीएटी) ने दोनों देशों के प्रमुख रक्षा उद्योगों के बीच बैठकों की सुविधा दी, जिसके बाद यह करार हुआ। भारतीय प्रतिनिधिमंडल का नेतृत्व एसआईडीएम के महानिदेशक रमेश के. ने किया। प्रधानमंत्री मोदी 25 फरवरी को दो दिवसीय इस्त्राइल दौरे पर पहुंचेंगे।

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## 19 foreign ships join Indian Navy for exercise 'Milan'

Source: The Tribune, Dt. 20 Feb 2026

The week-long multi-nation maritime exercise 'Milan', which commenced here on Wednesday, will feature a series of complex drills, including anti-submarine warfare operations and live weapons firing. Indian Navy Eastern Naval Command Chief Vice Admiral Sanjay Bhalla, under whose command the exercise is being hosted, said, "Milan has a set of complex exercises". Nineteen foreign warships and representatives from 74 countries are participating in the multi-phase exercise scheduled from February 19 to 25.

The concept of a 'Milan'-style engagement began in 1995 with just four participating navies at the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. As the scope expanded, it was shifted to Visakhapatnam in 2022. The 2022 edition saw participation from 40 countries and 13 ships, while the 2024 edition involved 47 countries and 16 ships, Vice Admiral Bhalla said, outlining its growth.

The exercise will have a harbour phase featuring deliberations by subject-matter experts on various issues, followed by operational drills at sea. "The drills are for building mutual understanding and interoperability," he added. On February 16, Vice Admiral Bhalla inaugurated a cultural and social hub for visiting delegations. The facility provides what officials described as the "lighter side" of engagement, even as warships, submarines, aircraft and helicopters undertake complex maritime exercises in the Bay of Bengal.

The 'village', conceptualised as an experience zone, is intended to foster camaraderie and friendship among delegates and naval personnel. It serves as a platform for social and cultural exchange beyond professional interactions. Exercise Milan is among the largest multilateral naval

engagements in the Indo-Pacific region. It aims to enhance interoperability, maritime domain awareness and collective response capabilities. The operational phase will include anti-submarine warfare, air defence, search and rescue, and cooperative security missions, reinforcing what participating navies describe as a commitment to free, open, inclusive and rules-based seas.

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/top-headlines/19-foreign-ships-join-navy-for-exercise-milan/>

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## MILAN 2026: Raksha Mantri interacts with visiting Navy Chiefs and Naval delegations from nine ASEAN member states

*Source: Press Information Bureau, Dt. 19 Feb 2026*

On the sidelines of the MILAN 2026 Naval exercise, Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh held an interaction with visiting Navy Chiefs and Naval delegations from nine ASEAN member states in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh on February 19, 2026. The meeting underscored India's commitment to its 'Act East Policy' and the vision of Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions (MAHASAGAR).



Raksha Mantri welcomed the significant participation of ASEAN navies in MILAN 2026, noting that the exercise has grown from its modest 1995 beginnings with four foreign navies to its largest-ever edition in February 2026, involving 74 nations. He emphasised the importance of the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) - Conclave of Chiefs and the International Fleet Review 2026 in fostering trust and operational familiarity among Indo-Pacific partners. The discussions also covered the ongoing Sea Phase of MILAN 2026, focusing on complex maritime drills including anti-submarine warfare (ASW), air defence, and search-and-rescue operations.

Shri Rajnath Singh described ASEAN as a central pillar of India's Indo-Pacific strategy, stating that shared security is the foundation of regional prosperity. He invited ASEAN partners to benefit from India's defence technology ecosystem which has matured due to the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' efforts

of the Government, led by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. He highlighted the INS Vikrant and Visakhapatnam-class destroyers as symbols of India's transformation into a 'Builder's Navy'.

Reiterating sentiments from India-ASEAN informal meeting in late 2025, the ASEAN delegates lauded India's role as a first responder in the region. Raksha Mantri proposed expanding joint activities, specifically through the ASEAN-India Defence Think-Tank Interaction and initiatives involving younger generations of naval officers to ensure long-term maritime stability. The interaction concluded with a shared commitment to a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific, anchored by the spirit of 'Camaraderie, Cooperation, and Collaboration' - the official theme of MILAN 2026.

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2230222&reg=3&lang=1>

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## Top US military commander visits Tejas facility in Bengaluru

*Source: The Tribune, Dt. 20 Feb 2026*

Amid efforts to further strengthen India-US defence ties, Admiral Samuel J Paparo, head of the Hawaii-based United States Indo-Pacific Command, visited the production facility in Bengaluru where India's indigenous fighter aircraft, the Tejas, is manufactured. The Tejas is produced by the public sector undertaking Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) and powered by US-origin engines. Around 180 aircraft are on order, while the Indian Air Force currently operates 40 jets.



*US Admiral Samuel J Paparo sits inside a Tejas jet in Bengaluru.*

During his visit, Admiral Paparo also met US and Indian industry and technology leaders to advance cooperation in emerging domains. The tour underscored expanding defence-industrial collaboration and aerospace innovation between the two countries.

According to an official statement, Admiral Paparo was in India from February 14 to 19 to discuss shared security interests and strengthen bilateral military ties. He also visited New Delhi and Chandimandir, the headquarters of the Army's Western Command. The United States designated India a Major Defence Partner in 2016. In October last year, US Secretary of War Pete Hegseth

and Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh signed the 2025 Framework for the US-India Major Defence Partnership at the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus in Kuala Lumpur.

[https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/india/top-us-military-commander-visits-tejas-facility-in-bengaluru/#google\\_vignette](https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/india/top-us-military-commander-visits-tejas-facility-in-bengaluru/#google_vignette)

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## Science & Technology News

### AI-Driven Gene Sequencing to Power Personalised Medical Prescriptions: Dr. Jitendra Singh

*Source: Press Information Bureau, Dt. 19 Feb 2026*

Artificial Intelligence (AI)-driven gene sequencing, undertaken by the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) in Govt of India, promises to power India's transition toward personalised medical prescriptions and predictive medicine, Union Minister for Science & Technology Dr. Jitendra Singh said, asserting that some of the country's most substantive AI applications are currently unfolding in genomics.

In the backdrop of the ongoing AI Impact Summit, the Minister emphasised that large-scale genome sequencing initiatives supported by DBT are already AI-enabled, and future medical prescriptions will increasingly be based on individual genetic profiles analysed through AI-facilitated platforms. "Our gene sequencing work is AI-driven. Tomorrow, when we move toward personalised prescriptions, they will be based on our gene studies facilitated by Artificial Intelligence," Dr. Jitendra Singh said, underlining that DBT's genomics ecosystem is positioning India to move beyond conventional treatment models toward precision healthcare driven by data and computational biology.

Reinforcing this shift, Dr. Jitendra Singh announced that DBT, along with BIRAC, will establish "Bio-AI Mulankur" hubs in 2026 to create integrated, closed-loop research platforms where AI-based predictions, laboratory validation and data analytics operate in a unified framework. The hubs will focus on genomics diagnostics, biomolecular design, synthetic biology and Ayurveda-based research. He said the objective is to institutionalise AI as a core scientific engine within biotechnology rather than as a peripheral analytical tool, in alignment with the BioE3 policy aimed at strengthening high-performance biomanufacturing for economic growth, environmental sustainability and employment generation.

Citing ongoing applications, the Minister pointed to the Indian Tuberculosis Genomic Surveillance Consortium (InTGS), supported by DBT, where AI is being used to catalogue drug-resistance mutations in Mycobacterium tuberculosis. AI-enabled analysis of whole-genome sequencing data has reduced confirmation timelines for drug resistance from weeks to days, allowing faster clinical response and strengthening public health surveillance. In maternal health research, the GARBH-Ini programme has deployed AI-driven ultrasound image analysis and genomics tools to identify 66 genetic markers linked to preterm birth risk. Dr. Jitendra Singh said such initiatives demonstrate how AI-supported genomics can enable early risk prediction and targeted intervention, forming part of a broader effort to develop AI-based risk models for cancer, diabetes and cardiovascular diseases.

The Minister highlighted that the National Genomics Core, established at the National Institute of Biomedical Genomics in Kalyani and the Centre for DNA Fingerprinting and Diagnostics in Hyderabad, provides high-throughput sequencing and big data analytics infrastructure critical for AI-led research. Data generated under the GenomeIndia project, which maps the country's genetic diversity, is being analysed using AI and machine learning techniques to identify disease-associated variants and strengthen translational medicine.

Referring to research under the Centre of Excellence in Genome Sciences and Predictive Medicine, Dr. Jitendra Singh said scientists are applying computational prediction and AI-based structural analysis to identify potential drug targets for rheumatoid arthritis. AI applications are also being extended to single-cell and spatial genomics to profile tumour microenvironments, as well as to protein engineering and therapeutic molecule design.

The Minister said the thrust now is to transition AI in biotechnology from proof-of-concept research to scalable, industry-ready solutions through partnerships supported by BIRAC. Positioning the initiatives within India's broader science and innovation framework, he said embedding AI across DBT's genomics platforms will strengthen predictive healthcare, disease surveillance and advanced biomanufacturing capabilities, reinforcing India's competitiveness in the global biotechnology landscape.

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2230352&reg=3&lang=1>

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## Scientists unlock new cathode material enabling Zinc-Ion Batteries for grid storage

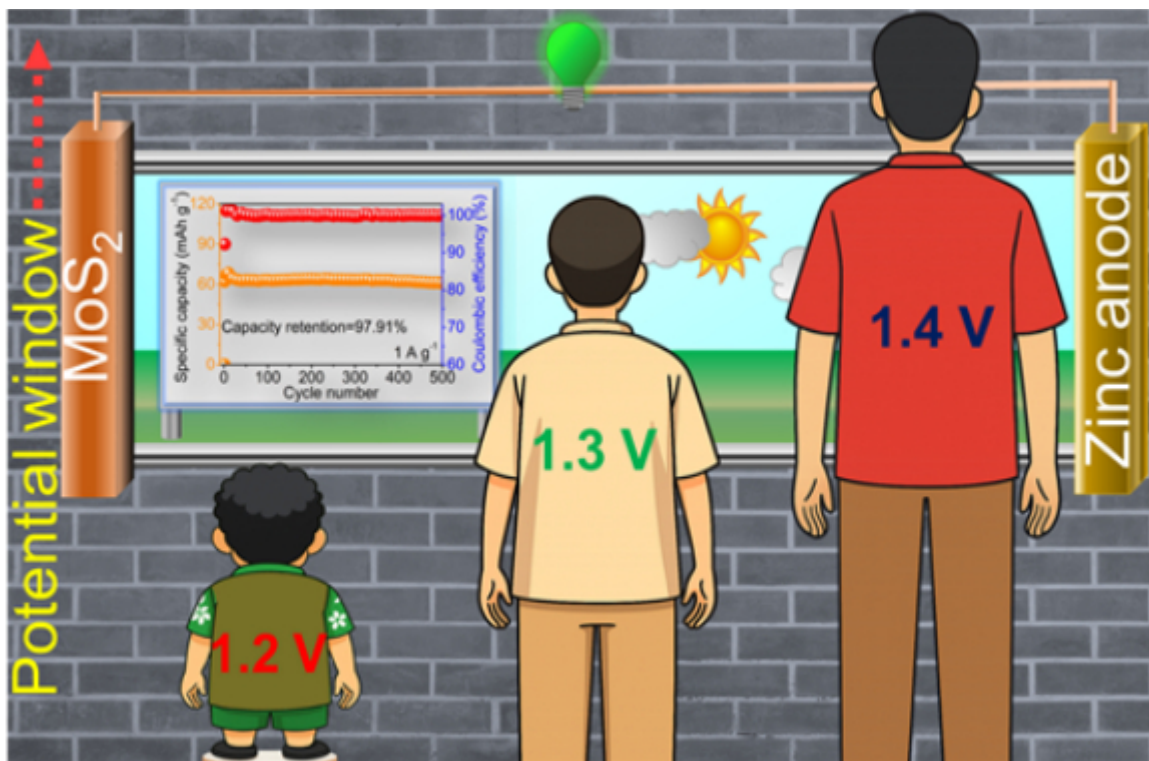
*Source: Press Information Bureau, Dt. 19 Feb 2026*

In a significant stride for sustainable energy storage, researchers have developed a novel cathode material that dramatically enhances the performance and stability of aqueous zinc-ion batteries (AZIBs). Aqueous zinc-ion batteries, which use water-based electrolytes, are hailed as safe, cost-effective, and environmentally benign contenders for storing energy from renewable sources like solar and wind. Zinc metal offers high theoretical capacity, abundant reserves and used directly as the anode. However, the development of high-capacity, long-lasting cathode materials has been a key challenge.

Researchers from the Centre for Nano and Soft Matter Sciences (CeNS), Bengaluru, an autonomous institution of Department of Science and Technology (DST), synthesised sulfur vacancy-induced 1T-phase Molybdenum Disulfide (1T-MoS<sub>2</sub>), a material that promises to make zinc batteries more viable for large-scale grid storage.

The team comprising Mr. Ganesh Mahendra, Dr. Rahuldeb Roy, and Dr. Ashutosh Kumar Singh, used a carefully controlled hydrothermal method to produce sulphur deficient 1T-phase MoS<sub>2</sub> nanoflakes. This metallic-phase material possesses a high surface area and enhanced conductivity, which facilitates faster electrochemical reactions and greater charge storage. A critical aspect of their work was a systematic study to optimize electrochemical potential window—the voltage range within which the battery operates stably. They identified 0.2 to 1.3 Volts (vs. Zn<sup>2+</sup>/Zn) as the ideal operational window. This optimization was pivotal in achieving exceptional performance metrics.

The fabricated zinc-ion battery demonstrated remarkable cyclic stability, retaining 97.91% of its initial capacity after 500 continuous charge-discharge cycles at a high current density of  $1 \text{ A g}^{-1}$ . The device exhibited a Coulombic efficiency of 99.7%, indicating highly reversible zinc-ion insertion and extraction with minimal side reactions. The research team used this to successfully power a commercial LCD timer using a coin-cell prototype, showcasing the material's potential in real-world applications.



*Fig: Schematic showcasing the performance parameters optimized for Zn-ion batteries*

The research work which was published in the journal of Energy & Fuels under American Chemical Society (ACS) Publishers, provides a comprehensive roadmap for designing high-performance cathode materials. The breakthrough can help us make affordable, safe and efficient batteries that could store massive amount of renewable energy on the grid.

Publication details (DOI): 10.1021/acs.energyfuels.5c05072

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2230223&reg=3&lang=1>

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## **CSIR–NIIST Showcases 11 Technology Transfers and Signs MoU at “Lab to Market” Event in New Delhi**

*Source: Press Information Bureau, Dt. 19 Feb 2026*

CSIR–National Institute for Interdisciplinary Science and Technology (CSIR–NIIST), Thiruvananthapuram, organised “CSIR–NIIST Tech Connect: Lab to Market” at CSIR Headquarters, New Delhi, marking a major milestone in technology translation and industry engagement. The event witnessed the transfer of 11 technologies and the signing of one Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), underscoring CSIR’s commitment to taking research outcomes from laboratories to industry and society.

Addressing the gathering, Secretary, Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR) and Director General, CSIR, Dr. (Mrs.) N. Kalaiselvi, emphasised the importance of transitioning from conventional R&D to “R&D Innovation,” where research begins with market needs and moves backward to design impactful solutions. She underlined that research institutions must focus not only on knowledge generation but also on translation, validation, scalability, and commercialization to ensure societal benefit.

Highlighting the growing synergy between CSIR laboratories and industry partners, Dr. N. Kalaiselvi noted that technology transfer is no longer a peripheral activity but a core institutional mandate, aligned with national priorities of self-reliance, sustainability, and nutrition security. Dr. Kalaiselvi lauded CSIR–NIIST’s expanding innovation ecosystem, including its focus on interdisciplinary research areas such as biosciences, bioengineering, Ayurveda research, artificial intelligence, and sustainable materials.

DG CSIR highlighted the establishment of the CSIR–NIIST Innovation, Technology and Entrepreneurship Hub, aimed at fostering startups, SMEs and industry collaborations in areas including sustainable packaging, spice incubation, coir and rubber technologies, and green hydrogen-enabled bio-manufacturing. She noted that strengthening external cash flow, increasing non-governmental revenue sources, and significantly scaling up technology transfer volumes reflect a strategic shift towards translational research and commercialization-driven growth.



Among the major technologies transferred was a high-protein, low glycaemic index rice enriched with micronutrients, including iron, folic acid, and Vitamin B12. Developed to address anaemia and diabetes concerns, the rice varieties demonstrated enhanced protein content and reduced glycaemic index while retaining cooking and sensory properties. Another key transfer included a novel instant coffee foam technology capable of sustaining foam at high temperatures without milk addition.

In addition, a low-sodium salt technology with significant sodium reduction was introduced, with an MoU signed for further collaborative research and scale-up. Several other technologies, including cardanol polyol-based polyurethane dispersions, osmotic dehydration processes, ready-to-cook

vegetable mixes, fruit roll technologies, composting bio medium (JAIVAM), and vegan leather, were also transferred to industry partners. In his address, Director, CSIR–NIIST, Thiruvananthapuram, Dr. C. Anandharamakrishnan, described the event as a “festival of technology transfers,” reflecting NIIST’s strategic decision to expand its national footprint and enhance industry visibility. He highlighted the institute’s significant performance indicators, including a sharp rise in external revenue generation, technology transfer volumes, industry projects, CSR projects, and research output.

Director CSIR–NIIST explained that the institute consciously shifted its approach from traditional R&D to R&D innovation, where product design is guided by market demand, and technologies are continuously refined post-transfer. He also elaborated on the science and development journey behind key technologies such as protein-enriched rice, foam-stabilised instant coffee, and sodium-reduced salt, emphasising the importance of industry collaboration in scaling laboratory breakthroughs.

Chairman & Managing Director, National Research Development Corporation (NRDC), Commodore Amit Rastogi (Retd), highlighted the renewed synergy between CSIR and NRDC in strengthening technology commercialization. He noted that over the past two years, NRDC has commercialised a substantial number of CSIR technologies and generated significant royalty and premium revenue. He outlined NRDC’s expanded role beyond conventional licensing, including the creation of incubation infrastructure, technology readiness level assessment (NETRA), design clinics, system engineering support, financial assistance up to ₹1 crore for technology development, seed funding support, and IP facilitation. He also spoke about NRDC’s plans for a National Technology Translation Organization and an AI-enabled technology exchange platform to enhance visibility and conversion of research outputs into market-ready products.

The event also witnessed active participation from industry leaders, researchers, and media, reinforcing CSIR–NIIST’s vision of building a robust lab-to-market pipeline. With the transfer of 11 technologies and one MoU exchange, the programme demonstrated CSIR’s strengthened focus on industry connect, innovation-led growth and national impact.

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2230180&reg=3&lang=1>

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The Tribune  
The Statesman  
ਪੰਜਾਬ ਕੇਸਰੀ ਜਨਸੱਤਾ  
The Hindu  
The Economic Times  
Press Information Bureau  
The Indian Express  
The Times of India  
Hindustan Times  
नवभारत टाइम्स  
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