

# PRESS RELEASE



## The Foundation for Advancing Science & Technology (FAST India) Announces the Advisory Board

New Delhi, September 2023

**The Foundation for Advancing Science & Technology (FAST India)**, a nonprofit initiative co-founded by Ashish Dhawan (Founder, Ashoka University and The Convergence Foundation) and Varun Aggarwal (Co-founder, Aspiring Minds and The Change Engine), is dedicated to enhancing the Science and Technology ecosystem in India.

In the coming decade, FAST India aims to position India as one of the top three global giants in Science and Technology, harnessing India's immense potential to drive progress on the economic and societal fronts. In the short term, FAST India's objectives include propelling five Indian universities into the top 100 research ranks, tripling the R&D expenditure in the industry, and ensuring that five Indian firms feature in the world's 100 most innovative companies list.

FAST India is committed to strengthening capabilities and promoting policy solutions that encourage scientific exploration and research. Moreover, it aims to simplify the process of creating, sharing, and implementing new scientific insights.

With the aspiration to emerge as a thought-leader in the domain of science in India and catalyse the setting up of India's narrative for science, FAST India has forged notable collaborations with the **Office of the Principal Scientific Advisor (PSA)** and the **Capacity Building Commission (CBC)**, focusing on policy enhancement, and is working closely with **Banaras Hindu University (BHU)** and **IIT Kanpur** to nurture the research ecosystem. To amplify public engagement with science, FAST India annually hosts the **India Science Festival (ISF)**. ISF 2023 in Hyderabad witnessed an impressive turnout of 18,000 attendees across three days. The upcoming ISF 2024 is slated to be held in Pune in January 2024.

FAST India is pleased to announce the formation of its advisory board. The advisory board will steer the organisation to achieve its mission of fostering innovation and excellence in the realm of Science and Technology.

***"At FAST India, our mission goes beyond science and technology; it is about charting India's trajectory towards global leadership in scientific innovation and excellence. With the expertise of our newly established advisory board, we are well positioned to support the creation and translation of new scientific knowledge that will ultimately boost India's economic growth."***

***- Ashish Dhawan, Co-Founder, FAST India***

**Prof. Tarun Khanna**, Jorge Paulo Lemann Professor at the Harvard Business School, will serve as the Chair of the Advisory Board. His extensive experience as member of Mission High-Level Committee (MHLC) at the Atal Innovation Mission, and former Co-chair of the Science cluster committee at the Office of the Principal Scientific Advisor, lends invaluable depth to his new role.

***“We are excited to nurture, in concert, all aspects of the scientific ecosystem, from research to its application to multiple facets of daily life. ”***

***- Prof. Tarun Khanna, Chair, Board of Advisors, FAST India***

Other esteemed board members include:

- **Prof. K. Vijay Raghavan**, honoured with Padma Shri and previously the principal scientific advisor. He brings vast scientific insight and experience in institution-building.
- **Dr. Soumya Swaminathan**, globally recognized for her role as Chief Scientist at the WHO. Her scientific expertise will be of great value to the FAST India
- **Mr. Thomas Barlow**, a visiting fellow at MIT, USA is recognized as a policy advisor to the Minister for Education, Science and Training, Government of Australia. His international science policy acumen will bring significant value to the FAST India
- **Mr. Shantanu Rastogi**, currently the Managing Director at General Atlantic. FAST India will benefit immensely from his industry insights

This distinguished board underscores FAST India's unwavering dedication to advance scientific research and knowledge. Under the leadership of Ashish Dhawan and Varun Aggarwal, and with the advisory board's guidance, FAST India stands on the cusp of pioneering change, with a mission to boost India's global stature in Science and Technology.

To learn more about FAST India and its transformative initiatives, please visit <https://fast-india.org/>.

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