

## Registrations Open - India Science Festival 2026



We're excited to share that the next edition of the Indian Science Festival (ISF 2026) is officially live. This year, we're pushing the festival one step further with more public engagement, more young voices, and a stronger spotlight on cutting-edge Indian science. Over the past editions, ISF has grown into a space where industry leaders, researchers, innovators, students, and science communicators come together not just to "attend an event" but to shape the conversation around science in India. ISF 2026 carries that same spirit forward, with new formats, interactive sessions, and a deeper focus on making science accessible and fun.

If you'd like to be part of the festival, whether as a participant, volunteer, or contributor, you can register using the link below. We'd love to have you join us.

Date & Venue: 10th and 11th Jan 2026 at IISER Pune

[Register Here](#)

## Updates

[On the Mic: Swapnil Jain \(Ather Energy\)](#)



A new milestone for us at FAST in November, our very first podcast episode was recorded. The team sat down with the folks behind one of India’s most interesting clean-tech stories - Swapnil Jain. The episode goes beyond the usual “startup journey” narrative and digs into how deep engineering, long-term R&D bets, and disciplined product thinking helped them build a category from scratch. It’s a candid, grounded discussion that offers a rare inside look at what it really takes to build new technology in India.

**Panel Discussion on scaling research translation in India**



FAST India hosted a panel discussion titled '*From Discovery to Deployment: What Will It Take to Scale Research Translation in India*' on 29th November 2025. The conversation brought together leading voices from India’s top S&T institutions to explore how we can strengthen our national research translation ecosystem. Panelists discussed various approaches to translational research, including experiences from academic centers and the importance of balancing industry collaboration with academic publishing.

## Collaboration for a Stronger National R&D Ecosystem



NITI Aayog has signed a Statement of Intent (SOI) with FAST India. Through this partnership, FAST India will bring its technical expertise and policy research capabilities to support NITI Aayog's strategic vision and institutional priorities in science and technology. The collaboration will focus on co-developing insights and recommendations on emerging and systemic issues in the S&T domain. Together, the two institutions will produce working papers, policy briefs, reports, and other research outputs to inform ongoing and future reform efforts across India's science and technology ecosystem.

**FAST India @ Emerging Science, Technology, and Innovation Conclave (ESTIC) 2025**



This year's edition of ESTIC saw participation from FAST India's founder, Varun Aggarwal, who joined the judging panel PitchX for the national finals. ESTIC has grown into one of the country's leading platforms for young innovators, encouraging students to turn ideas into practical, socially relevant solutions. Varun's involvement added to the momentum, as the event brought forward some of the most promising problem-solvers from across India.

### [Professor Tarun Khanna @ NDTV World Summit 2025](#)



At the recent summit, Harvard Business School's Professor Tarun Khanna delivered a compelling message: no nation has escaped the middle-income trap without serious investment in its scientific base. He warned that India's innovation engine will stall unless we bridge the divide between entrepreneurs and scientists, "a mutual suspicion which needs to be debugged." For the

growing R&D ecosystem, his words are both a wake-up call and an invitation to action.

### **When Industry Speaks, We Listen**

October 14, 2025: We hosted a closed-door industry roundtable under the title '*Catalyzing R&D in Industry - Learnings and Way Forward*', that brought together some of the most influential voices from India's technology and manufacturing sectors. The discussion was moderated by Mr. Kris Gopalakrishnan and Prof. Tarun Khanna, with Prof. K. VijayRaghavan as its keynote speaker. The discussion focused on what it will take to meaningfully increase private-sector investment in R&D, everything from early-stage risk financing to designing better pathways for industry-academia collaboration. The insights gathered from this session will directly feed into the next phase of FAST-India's work on strengthening the country's R&D ecosystem.

The panel included Ajai Chowdhry (HCL Technologies), Satish Reddy (Dr.Reddy's), Manish Gupta (Indegene), Ashok Atluri (Zen technologies), Sunil Vachani (Dixon Technologies), Sanjay Nayak (Tejas Networks), Swapnil Jain (Ather Energy), Taslimarif Saiyed (C-CAMP).

### **India Science Book Fellowship 2025-26**

This year, we received the highest number of applications across all previous versions of the India Science Book Fellowship, which speaks to the continued enthusiasm of the Indian diaspora in filling the lacunae of non-fiction science books in India.

We opened up entries in multimedia format this year as well, giving more creative room to the applicants. With an eclectic jury of accomplished authors like Archana Sharma (CERN), Karthik Venkatesh (Penguin Random House India), Jahnvi Phalkey (Science Gallery Bengaluru) and Luis Miranda (ISPP), FAST India is determined to provide the ecosystem for budding science authors for their writing journeys.

## **Recent Publications**

## The Translational Research Playbook

A compendium of models and enablers of translational research as identified from leading Indian S&T institutions



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## *The Translational Research Playbook*

India's journey towards becoming a global leader in science and technology hinges on its ability to translate cutting-edge academic research into impactful real-world applications. This report, developed by FAST India, explores how leading Indian S&T institutions are pioneering this effort through innovative translational research initiatives. It captures both differentiated practices and foundational enablers that together build effective research-to-market ecosystems.

[Read here](#)

## Global Benchmarks in Translational Research

Lessons from translational research models from leading S&T institutions across the globe



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INDIA

## *Global Benchmarks in Translational Research*

This report illustrates diverse models of research translation that have proven successful and serve as effective benchmarks for India. The models and programs span the United States, China, Germany, Israel, and Australia, and look at examples of higher education institutions, state-owned subsidiaries, independent research organisations, and philanthropic foundations.

[Read here](#)



## National Survey on Scientific Awareness and Engagement

Science Perception, Literacy, and Career Aspirations of STEM Students in India



# National Survey on Scientific Awareness and Engagement

The National Survey on Scientific Awareness and Engagement is a first-of-its-kind nationwide survey aimed at enhancing our current understanding of young people and the public's interest in science, their understanding and awareness of science and technology. This survey aims to significantly contribute to a better understanding of the enablers, barriers and opportunities in STEM education and Science Communication in India, allowing for the development of appropriate policy and programmatic interventions to bridge the science and society gap.

[Read here](#)

## Op-eds by FAST leadership

**RDIF as an engine of knowledge economy**

*Ashish Dhawan & Varun Aggarwal*

India's new Research, Development and Innovation Fund (RDIF) is being positioned as a major push to strengthen the country's innovation backbone. The op-ed argues that while India has made progress in research output, the real gap lies in weak industry participation and the limited flow of capital into high-risk, deep-tech ventures. With long-tenor concessional loans and equity support for frontier technologies, RDIF aims to fix this disconnect and create a stronger path from ideas to market. The piece stresses that India's ability to compete globally, especially in advanced manufacturing and deep tech, will depend on how effectively this fund catalyses private-sector R&D.

[Read more](#)

**Crackdown on science abroad opens India a historic window**

Amid global shifts in science funding and talent flows, a unique window has opened for India. The article argues that while major science funders abroad scale back and visa regimes tighten, India now has the chance to attract global researchers and build sovereign capabilities. With institutions like the Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF) and the ₹1 lakh crore Research, Development & Innovation Fund (RDIF) in place, the real challenge is creating credible pathways for world-class talent to join and stay.

[Read more](#)

### **From UPI to innovation: How digital infrastructure can transform India's research ecosystem**

*Varun Aggarwal & Aditya Sinha*

India's success with digital payments and identity platforms, most visibly through Unified Payments Interface (UPI), is now being held up as a blueprint for research and innovation infrastructure. According to the piece, the same open protocols, standardised tools and interoperable systems that cut transaction costs and plugged leakages in finance can also radically speed up collaboration, funding flows and translational research. It argues that unless the research ecosystem adopts that 'public-infrastructure' mindset, India risks building great science but missing the final step to innovation.

[Read more](#)

### **To lead globally, India must not just invite R&D global excellence - it must be ready to host it**

*Sheel Kapoor & Aditya Sinha*

As global R&D talent reconsiders the US amid funding uncertainty, India faces a rare opportunity to emerge as a leading research hub. The article argues that inviting global excellence is not enough – India must be prepared to host it through sustained funding, world-class infrastructure, and mission-driven research ecosystems. Otherwise, India risks attracting short-term collaborators, not long-term scientific builders.

[Read more](#)

# Foundation for Advancing Science and Technology

Publications

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