

Dr. Jitendra Singh Calls for Mission-Driven India–Australia Tech Collaboration

Five Joint Projects Finalised Under 20-Year "Australia–India Strategic Research Fund" (AISRF) Framework

India Seeks Industry-Linked, Impact-Focused Research Expansion with Australia: Dr. Jitendra Singh

Minister Bats for Deeper Quantum, Critical Minerals Partnership with Australia

Posted On: 18 FEB 2026 5:17PM by PIB Delhi

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 18 : India and Australia on Tuesday agreed to expand and realign their science and technology partnership towards mission-oriented collaboration in critical and emerging technologies, following talks between Union Minister for Science and Technology Dr. Jitendra Singh and Australian Assistant Minister for Science, Technology and Digital Economy Dr. Andrew Charlton MP.

The Australian Minister called on the Indian Minister, accompanied by a high level official delegation.

The two Ministers reviewed the progress of the Australia–India Strategic Research Fund (AISRF), which completes two decades in 2026, and welcomed the finalisation of five joint research projects under Round-16 of the programme. The projects span critical minerals processing, quantum technologies, advanced manufacturing, climate-resilient agriculture and cellular immunotherapy, reflecting a sharper alignment of bilateral research with clean energy transitions, supply chain resilience and advanced biotechnology priorities.

Three of the selected projects, supported by India's Department of Science and Technology, focus on high-value electronic waste recycling through photovoltaic panel reuse, green chemistry for recovering critical minerals from batteries, and adversarial resilience in quantum machine learning systems. Two projects supported by the Department of Biotechnology will advance engineering of thermotolerant crops and cellular immunotherapy solutions for viral infections in immunocompromised patients. The Ministers noted that the joint announcement of the Round-16 outcomes would mark a significant step in strengthening applied research partnerships.

During the discussions, Dr. Jitendra Singh emphasised that India is pursuing a mission-mode approach in frontier domains such as advanced materials, quantum technologies, AI-enabled research, clean energy transitions and critical minerals, and highlighted the BioE3 policy aimed at positioning India as a globally competitive bio-economy hub. He underscored the importance of embedding industry participation and ensuring translation of research into scalable solutions.

Both sides reaffirmed the role of the India–Australia Joint S&T Committee and Joint Biotechnology Committee as the apex mechanisms guiding bilateral cooperation, and took note of the deliberations held at their 10th meeting in November 2024 on innovation policy alignment and research translation. The Ministers agreed that future collaboration should focus on larger, impact-driven and multi-institutional projects aligned with shared national priorities and sustainable development goals.

The AISRF, launched in 2006, has supported more than 370 collaborative activities including joint research projects, fellowships and workshops. Australia committed AUD 90 million to the Fund between 2006 and 2020 and has announced continued allocations for subsequent rounds, while India's DST and DBT have collectively supported projects worth around ₹140 crore since inception . Joint publications have more than tripled over the period, and the partnership has yielded technology demonstrators, patents and sustained researcher mobility between the two countries.

The Ministers also discussed expanding cooperation in space, including Earth observation for climate resilience, agriculture, disaster management and maritime applications, as well as space situational awareness and long-term sustainability of outer space. They noted the potential for closer engagement between space agencies, research institutions and private enterprises across the full space value chain.

Both sides agreed to deepen two-way mobility of researchers, including joint doctoral and postdoctoral programmes, industry-linked fellowships and co-supervision models, to ensure that the partnership remains future-ready.

The meeting underscored the growing centrality of science, technology and innovation in the broader India–Australia strategic partnership, with both countries signalling their intent to move beyond conventional collaboration towards co-development, co-creation and industry-integrated innovation in the Indo-Pacific context.



PHOTO: A high-level delegation led by Australian Assistant Minister for Science, Technology and Digital Economy Dr. Andrew Charlton MP calling on Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh at Kartvaya Bhawan-3, New Delhi on Wednesday.



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