Press Release on the 409th Report of the Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Science and Technology, Environment, Forests and Climate Change

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The Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Science and Technology, Environment, Forests and Climate Change under the Chairmanship of Shri Bhubaneswar Kalita, M.P., Rajya Sabha presented/laid on the Table its 409th Report on Demands for Grants (2026-27) of the Department of Science and Technology, in both the Houses of Parliament on the 25th March, 2026. The Committee considered and adopted the draft Report in its meeting held on 24th March, 2026. The Recommendations/observations made by the Committee in this Report are enclosed.

2. The entire Report is also available on *https://sansad.in/rs*.

409th Report on Demands for Grants (2026-27) of the Department of Science and Technology

RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS-AT A GLANCE

OVERALL BUDGETARY DETAILS FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2025-26 (BE, RE & ACTUAL EXPENDITURE) AND ALLOCATION FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2026-27.

The Committee observes that the overall fund utilization of the Department for the Financial Year 2025-26 is approximately 59.95% of the RE 2025-26 allocation of ₹11,921.58 crore. The Committee also observes that the BE allocation of ₹28508.90 crore was reduced to ₹11,921.58 crore at RE primarily due to the reduction of allocation in RDI scheme from ₹20,000 crore BE to ₹3,000 crore RE. While the Committee notes that the Scheme was official launched in November 2025, the fact remains that no funds could be utilized under the scheme and the actual expenditure under this head as of 31st January 2026, remained at zero. The Committee therefore recommends that the Department should make a realistic approach at the time of seeking BE for its schemes. Guidelines and administrative frameworks for all new schemes must be finalized before seeking its respective budget so that there is no drastic reduction of funds at RE stage due to administrative and procedural delays. (Para 2.7)

The Committee notes the extension of period of National Supercomputing Mission upto 30th September 2026. The Committee hopes that requisite funds for the Mission would be allotted at the earliest. The Committee recommends that the Department should ensure the sustenance and maintenance of the existing 47 Petaflops infrastructure and suggests that the Department should explore the next phase of NSM and a roadmap for the next generation of Exascale computing may be drawn. (Para 2.10)

The Committee observes from the above chart that, for the first time in recent years, the Budget Estimate (BE) for 2026–27 (₹28,049.32 crore) reflects a marginal decline of approximately ₹459 crore as compared to the preceding financial year. Although the decrease is modest in absolute terms, it marks a deviation from the consistent upward trajectory observed in previous years and therefore merits careful consideration in the context of prevailing fiscal priorities and resource rationalisation. (Para 2.12)

The Committee views this consistent upward trend as reflective of the strategic priority accorded by the Government to quantum technologies as a critical and emerging frontier area. The Committee hopes that adequate budgetary support of the Government will continue in future also for such an important mission to strengthen the national capabilities in advanced and disruptive technologies with long-term implications for scientific leadership, technological sovereignty and global competitiveness. (Para 2.14)

RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT & INNOVATION (RDI) FUND

The Committee acknowledges that the nomination of TDB and BIRAC as Second Level Fund Managers (SLFMs) is a positive start under the RDI Fund. The Department could not utilize any amount out of the RE allocation of ₹3,000 crore in the current FY 2025-26 (as on 31.01.2026). The Committee recommends that in FY 2026-27, the Department must make an early start and expedite the selection and appointment of additional SLFMs from the private sector; financial institutions; and venture capital firms. Diversifying the fund management pool will enhance the scheme's reach across different industry segments and ensure that the evaluation process for projects is both technically rigorous and commercially viable. (Para 4.6)

The Committee also recommends that the Department establish a quarterly disbursement and progress review mechanism. This will ensure that the massive corpus is utilized effectively throughout the year, preventing mid-year surrenders and ensuring that the momentum of industrial R&D is maintained and the funds allocated for the RDI are also utilized to the maximum. (Para 4.7)

Given that the RDI Fund specifically targets Technology Readiness Levels (TRL) 4 and above, the Committee recommends that the Department should define clear commercialization metrics for the projects it funds. The success of the RDI Fund should be measured not just by the amount of capital disbursed, but by the number of indigenous technologies that successfully transition from the laboratory to the commercial market. The Department should prioritize projects with a clear path to production, especially in 'Sunrise sectors' like semiconductors and green energy. (Para 4.8)

ANUSANDHAN NATIONAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION

The Committee notes the work initiated by the Department under ANRF. However, the Committee also observes that for the current FY 2025-26, the Department has been able to utilize only ₹1,191 crore (as on 31.01.2026) out of RE allocation of ₹1,948 crore, which is merely 61.13% of the RE. The Committee is apprehensive whether the Department will be able to utilize the allocated amount during the current financial year. The Committee therefore recommends that the Department must make efforts to optimally utilize the funds made available to it during FY 2025-26 in order to strengthen the research framework of the country.

(Para 5.9)

The Committee appreciates the successful launch of the Partnership for Accelerated Innovation and Research (PAIR) and its hub-and-spoke model. However, to truly democratize science, the Committee recommends that the Department set a target to expand the 'Spoke' network to include at least one state university or college from every aspirational district. This will ensure that the mentor-mentee relationship transcends elite institutions and reaches the grass-roots level of the national education system. (Para 5.11)

The Committee views the plan to list the ANRF on the Social Stock Exchange as a pioneering step for scientific funding. The Committee recommends that the Department should prioritize the finalization of the legal and financial frameworks required for this listing. This would allow the foundation to tap into global CSR funds and the Indian Diaspora's contributions, creating a diversified and sustainable funding base that is less dependent on annual budgetary grants. (Para 5.12)

VIGYAN DHARA

The Committee is satisfied with the fund utilization under Vigyan Dhara, which is approximately 83.54% of the RE 2025-26. The Committee is of the view that the stability of funding under this consolidated scheme ensures continuity of core interventions, including extramural research support, fellowship and scholarship programmes. The Committee recommends that a strategic focus be given on increasing collaboration between academia, government, and industry to ensure that scientific research translates into market-ready technologies.

(Para 6.7)

The Committee also hopes that in FY 2026-27, the Department would work with the same pace and utilize the allocated funds to the optimum to strengthen the foundational research ecosystem and institutional capacities across universities and research institutions.

(Para 6.8)

The Committee notes that the information related to sanctioned projects under the SEED Scheme, including the SUNIL programme, is not up-to-date on the website of the Department. The Committee recommends that transparency may be brought in this direction to ensure that complete information is available in public domain, including the total number of proposals received and the proposals which were sanctioned. Further, a mechanism may be put in place to ensure that applicants whose requests have not been sanctioned are duly notified of the decision.

(Para 6.9)

NATIONAL MISSION ON INTERDISCIPLINARY CYBER PHYSICAL SYSTEM (NM-ICPS)

The Committee observes that the financial trajectory of NM-ICPS reflects a strategic 'right-sizing' of funds based on implementation progress and TPE review. The Committee also appreciates the significant milestone of BharatGen completing text services for all 22 official languages. The Committee recommends that the Department should transition from Model Development to Ecosystem enabling. The Committee further recommends that the BharatGen may be made available to the Indian startups and government departments (e.g., Agriculture, Health, Justice) to

build localized, multilingual applications on top of these sovereign foundational models. This will ensure that the public investment in AI translates into tangible citizen-centric services.
(Para 7.6)

The Committee commends the successful upgrading of four TIHs (IISc, IIT-K, ISM Dhanbad, and IIT Indore) into Technology Translational Research Parks (TTRPs). It is recommended that the Department should establish a transparent, merit-based pathway for the remaining 21 TIHs. A performance-based evaluation based on Technology Readiness Levels (TRL) and private-sector investment should be used to identify the next cohort of 3 to 5 hubs for TTRP status. This transition is critical to shifting focus from academic research to industrial-scale application.
(Para 7.7)

PERFORMANCE OF THE AUTONOMOUS INSTITUTIONS UNDER THE DEPARTMENT DURING 2025-26

The Committee notes that during the last three financial years, the Autonomous Institutions have largely spent the allocations made to them. The Committee hopes that these institutions would carry the same momentum and optimally utilize the funds allocated to them during the next financial year while ensuring achieving the requisite physical outcomes. (Para 8.4)

The Committee commends the efforts of SCTIMST in advancing biomedical technology development, fostering industry collaboration, and translating research into commercially viable products. Given the impact of these developments, the Committee recommends that the Department create a procurement policy for the second-generation Titanium Chitra Heart Valve in all central government hospitals to reduce healthcare costs and import dependency. The Committee also recommends scaling the Heart Failure Bio-bank and genetic studies into a digital observatory that provides real-time genomic data to the national health mission for precision medicine.
(Para 8.8)

The Committee also acknowledges the significant contributions of the ARCI in advancing research across critical domains such as energy storage, nanomaterials, engineered coatings, additive manufacturing, and advanced powder metallurgy. The Committee recommends the adaptation of the high-performance Thermal Barrier Coatings (TBCs) developed for scramjet engines for use in civilian heavy-duty gas turbines and industrial furnaces to improve energy efficiency. It is also recommended to scale the 1kW alkaline electrolyzer technology into a bigger modular system for field testing at green hydrogen refueling stations in collaboration with public sector oil companies.

(Para 8.11)

The Committee commends the significant achievements made by ARI across basic and applied research in the areas of Biodiversity, Bioenergy, Bioprospecting, Developmental Biology, Genetics and Plant Breeding and Nano-bioscience. The Committee recommends that the Department facilitate a formal partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture to distribute ARI's methanotroph bioinoculants across major rice-growing states, aiming for a 10% national yield increase in targeted clusters. The Committee further recommends using the biohydrogen and biomethane pilot plant as a Proof of Concept to create a scheme for decentralized, waste-to-fuel units in rural municipalities, promoting a circular economy. (Para 8.14)

The Committee observes that the expenditure of NECTAR has declined substantially during the past two financial years and hopes that it would take remedial measures for the same in future. The Committee emphasizes that the success of NECTAR in applying S&T for livelihood enhancement in the North East should be used as a template for other underdeveloped regions. (Para 8.17)

The Committee acknowledges the work being done by NECTAR for the development and skill-enhancement of North Eastern India to give a boost to economic activities and improve the employment potential in the region. The Committee recommends scaling the Banana Pseudostem and Asharikandi Pottery projects into regional brands to connect NE artisans directly with rest of India and global markets. It is also recommended to transform the STEMagine exhibition model into Science & Innovation Hubs in all eight NE states to foster a startup and innovation culture among regional youth. (Para 8.18)

The Committee commends the research work being done by ARIES in Astronomy & Astrophysics, Solar Physics and Atmospheric Sciences. With the increase in satellite launches, ARIES's work in Space Situational Awareness (SSA) is now a matter of national security, Committee suggests that ARIES be designated as a Technical Partner for the National SSA framework (led by ISRO), leveraging their optical/infrared telescopes to track orbital debris and protect Indian satellites. The Committee also recommends integrating the five-year Himalayan GHG monitoring data into the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) to refine carbon sequestration strategies for the mountainous regions.

(Para 8.21)

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