

India Assumes Chair of RCA; 48th Meeting of National Representatives Commences in Navi Mumbai

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- India assumes the Chair of the Regional Cooperative Agreement (RCA) for 2026
- 48th Meeting of National Representatives (NRM) of RCA commences in Navi Mumbai
- 29 Delegates from 17 Asia-Pacific Nations and 3 delegates from three African countries as part of AFRA delegation participating in the meeting
- RCA promotes peaceful applications of nuclear science and technology for sustainable development
- DAE highlights India's commitment towards regional cooperation under the spirit of *Vishwa-Bandhu Bharat*

The 48th Meeting of National Representatives (NRM) under the Regional Cooperative Agreement (RCA) of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) commenced yesterday in Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra. The meeting is being hosted by the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE), Government of India, from **19–22 May 2026**.



The inaugural session witnessed participation of National Representatives, experts, scientists, and officials from 17 member countries of the Asia-Pacific region, along with representatives of the IAEA and RCA Regional Office (RCARO) and the Three special invitees from the African Regional Cooperative Agreement (AFRA).



As part of the proceedings, India formally assumed the Chair of RCA for the year 2026, marking an important milestone in India's longstanding engagement with regional cooperation through peaceful applications of nuclear science and technology.

Speaking on the occasion, Shri Vivek Bhasin, Director, Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), highlighted India's longstanding and impeccable track record in peaceful applications of nuclear energy for societal and industrial development. He underscored the significant contributions of India's atomic energy programme in key nation-building sectors such as healthcare, food preservation, agriculture, radiation technologies, and environmental sustainability.



Shri Rajeev Keswani, Head, Nuclear Controls & Planning Wing (NCPW), DAE, emphasised the importance of regional cooperation in addressing shared developmental challenges through science and technology. He noted that India's hosting of the 48th RCA NRM reflects the country's enduring commitment towards partnership-driven scientific cooperation across Asia and the Pacific.



National RCA Representative of India, Shri Puspendra Kumar Sharma, outlined the agenda and proceedings of the meeting, which include deliberations on RCA programme implementation, future project development, regional cooperation frameworks, activities of the RCA Regional Office, and discussions relating to side events planned during the 70th IAEA General Conference.

Shri Sampathkumar Raghunathan, National Liaison Officer (NLO), set the context by providing an introductory note highlighting the role of India as a founder member of RCA and welcomed the delegates by conveying India's traditional spirit of hospitality embodied in the ethos of *Atithi Devo Bhava*, while extending warm greetings to all participating countries and representatives.

The NRM will deliberate upon ongoing and future collaborative programmes in areas including healthcare, nuclear agriculture and food technology, water resource management, radiation technologies, environmental sustainability, and capacity building. As part of the programme, a technical visit to ACTREC — the Advanced Centre for Treatment, Research and Education in Cancer, Tata Memorial Centre's premier hub for cancer care, research, and education — has been arranged for the delegates. A technology exhibition showcasing the non-power applications of nuclear energy will also be organised to facilitate interactions between delegates and scientists and engineers from BARC working across diverse sectors of societal relevance. In addition, a cultural visit has been planned to offer delegates an experience of India's rich cultural heritage and traditions as part of the overall proceedings. The deliberations during the NRM will also contribute towards discussions and collaborative engagements planned during the upcoming 70th General Conference of the IAEA in Vienna later this year.

India as Chair of RCA for 2026 reflects its continued commitment towards partnership-driven regional cooperation and peaceful applications of atomic energy for societal benefit.

Guided by the spirit of *Vishwa-Bandhu Bharat* and the theme *India By Your Side*, India's approach during its tenure as Chair of RCA, seeks to further strengthen collaborative pathways among member states through science, innovation, and shared progress.

The meeting agenda includes technical deliberations, review of RCA programme implementation, discussions on future cooperative activities, side events planned during the 70th IAEA General Conference, cultural engagements, and technical

visits.

About RCA

The Regional Cooperative Agreement (RCA) is an intergovernmental framework established under the aegis of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for promoting cooperative research, development, and training related to nuclear science and technology in Asia and the Pacific. The Agreement came into force in 1972 and currently comprises 22 Government Parties from the Asia-Pacific region.

India's Role in RCA

India has played a foundational role in the evolution of RCA since its inception. The origin of RCA traces back to discussions held during an IAEA conference at Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), Mumbai, in 1964, where the idea of regional cooperation in nuclear science for Asia and the Pacific was first proposed. As a founding member of RCA, India has consistently contributed to regional cooperation through scientific expertise, training programmes, technology dissemination, expert missions, and institutional partnerships.

Indian institutions under DAE have actively contributed to RCA programmes in healthcare, agriculture, isotope hydrology, radiation technologies, environmental applications, and human resource development.

India assuming the role as RCA Chair in 2026 marks a renewed commitment towards strengthening regional partnerships for peace, progress, and prosperity through peaceful applications of nuclear science and technology.

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