

Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) and Drone Federation India (DFI) launch NIDAR 2.0

NIDAR 2.0 challenges students to build smarter drones powered by an Indian-made chip

Offers a prize pool of over Rs 65 lakh, along with startup incubation, cloud credits, software support and internships for student teams

प्रविष्टि तिथि: 13 JUL 2026 6:31PM by PIB Delhi

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), in collaboration with Drone Federation India (DFI), today launched the second edition of the **National Innovation Challenge for Drone Application and Research (NIDAR 2.0, 2026-27)** under the SwaYaan initiative. The programme was held at Electronics Niketan, New Delhi, in hybrid mode, with students, faculty, government representatives and industry leaders joining in person and online from across the country.

Shri S. Krishnan, Secretary, MeitY, launched the problem statements, poster and rulebook for NIDAR 2.0. This was followed by a special address by Shri Amitesh Kumar Sinha, Additional Secretary, MeitY and CEO, India Semiconductor Mission. Smt. Tulika Pandey, Scientist G and Group Coordinator, MeitY, and Shri Smit Shah, President, DFI, also addressed the gathering highlighting the salient aspects of SwaYaan Capacity Building initiative and the NIDAR 2.0 challenge. Other senior officials from MeitY, the Ministries of Civil Aviation, Defence and Home Affairs, the DGCA, the armed forces, and leading academic and industry figures also took part in this event.

Speaking on the occasion, Shri S. Krishnan said, *“NIDAR 2.0 takes our students from just flying drones to building the drone’s brain. When the drone’s brain runs on India’s own VEGA processor, we are not just training engineers. We are laying the foundation of a self-reliant drone industry. VEGA is developed under the Digital India RISC-V (DIR-V) programme, a MeitY-driven initiative to reduce the country’s dependence on foreign chip designs and their licensing costs.”*

The first edition of NIDAR 2025-26 was launched in March 2025. It drew 3,448 students from 22 States, 4 Union Territories and 109 cities, who built autonomous drone solutions for Disaster Management and Precision Agriculture. Ninety-three teams reached the Grand Finale out of which Twenty-four teams won prizes worth a total of Rs. 40 Lakh.

NIDAR 2.0 raises the level of the challenge. It moves the focus from conventional airframes to autonomous systems, indigenous avionics and core drone components. The challenge runs across two tracks.

Track 1, Drone Innovation, tasks student teams to build fully autonomous swarm drones that can locate survivors and deliver medical parcels in a disaster zone without any external communication network. It also challenges teams to develop a GPS-denied drone that can navigate confined indoor spaces for industrial inspection.

Track 2, Component Innovation, challenges teams to design an indigenous flight controller and autopilot built around the VEGA processor, using indigenous electronic components. After technical evaluation, the top 100 teams will each receive two VEGA processors kits for development, testing and integration.

The VEGA processor is a family of indigenous microprocessors designed by the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) under MeitY's Microprocessor Development Programme, based on the open-standard RISC-V architecture. By placing this processor at the centre of the Component Innovation track, NIDAR 2.0 encourages students to build the control systems of Indian drones on Indian-made chips.

To match the wider scope, the prize pool for NIDAR 2.0 has grown to over Rs 65 lakh. Winning teams will also receive corporate internships, incubation support and cloud computing credits to help turn their prototypes into commercial products. Civilian and defence drones share much of the same core technology. The ideas emerging from NIDAR can therefore strengthen both civilian and defence applications, in line with the goals of Atmanirbhar Bharat and Viksit Bharat @2047.

About SwaYaan

Capacity Building for Human Resource Development in Unmanned Aircraft Systems (Drone and Allied Technologies)

The SwaYaan initiative, approved by MeitY in July 2022 with an outlay of about Rs 89.87 crore over five years, builds the skilled workforce needed for India's drone sector. It runs through a Hub-and-Spoke model of 30 premier institutions, including IISc, IITs, IIITs, NITs, C-DAC and NIELIT, across five work themes: Aeromechanics, Drone Electronics, GNC Algorithms and Simulation, Drone Applications, and Allied UAS Technologies. The project has trained more than 51,000 people so far. It has also supported M.Tech and minor degree programmes, retrofitting electives, online courses, research papers and patents in drone technology. NIDAR is its flagship innovation platform. For more details, visit <https://swayaan.meit.gov.in>

Dharmendra Tewari / Kanishk Sharma / Vanshita Jaiswal

(रिलीज़ आईडी: 2284236) आगंतुक पटल : 912

इस विज्ञप्ति को इन भाषाओं में पढ़ें: Gujarati , Urdu , Marathi , हिन्दी