



9th Molecular Virology Meeting brings together India's virology community to advance research, translation and preparedness

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The **9th Molecular Virology Meeting (MVM 2026)** concluded on 18th September 2026 at **BRIC–National Institute of Immunology (BRIC–NII), New Delhi**, bringing together around 200 clinicians, researchers and students from across India to discuss emerging questions in viral biology and the translation of virology research into vaccines, therapeutics, diagnostics and public-health capabilities.

Initiated in 2009, the Molecular Virology Meeting has grown into an annual forum for the Indian virology community, bringing together researchers working across the continuum from molecular mechanisms of viral infection and host–virus interactions to viral pathogenesis, immunity, evolution and immune evasion, epidemiology, clinical virology and translational research.

The 2026 edition was hosted by BRIC–NII with the support of the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB) and the Regional Centre for Biotechnology (RCB), providing a platform for researchers across institutions and disciplines to exchange findings, identify emerging research directions and discuss opportunities to strengthen the translation of virology research into technologies and solutions for public health.

The two-day meeting opened with a keynote address by Dr. Naveen Kumar, Director, ICMR–National Institute of Virology, Pune, titled *“Flip the Switch: Host Factors That Block or Boost Viruses.”* The scientific programme brought together research on diverse viral systems, including influenza, dengue, chikungunya, HIV, hepatitis E, West Nile virus, coronaviruses and respiratory syncytial virus, with discussions spanning viral entry and replication, host responses, immune regulation, viral adaptation and molecular mechanisms of pathogenesis.

A significant focus of MVM 2026 was the interface between fundamental virology and translation. The session on *Translational Virology: Vaccines & Therapeutics* featured work on antiviral therapeutics, antibody discovery and theranostics, alongside studies addressing viral evolution and epidemiology.

The meeting also looked beyond individual research programmes to examine how India can build a stronger national virology innovation and preparedness ecosystem. A panel discussion, *“Future of Virology Research and its Contribution in BioE3 Policy: Advancing Towards Viksit Bharat,”* brought together representatives from academia, research institutions, and industry. Moderated by Dr Nimesh Gupta (BRIC–NII), the panel brought together Dr Naveen Kumar (ICMR–NIV), Prof Saumitra Das (IISc), Dr Sudhanshu Vratil (RCB), Prof Sanjeev Galande (Shiv Nadar University), and Dr Subeer Mazumdar (Sun Pharma Science Foundation).

The discussion centred on a fundamental challenge: How can the Indian virology community translate its scientific strengths and capabilities that contribute to the broader vision of BioE3 and Viksit Bharat? Panelists examined the need for a more connected pathway from discovery and validation to scale-up and

products, the development of platform technologies for vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics, funding mechanisms that support translation beyond individual projects, stronger academia–industry–government partnerships, and capabilities required for viral disease surveillance and health security. The panel discussion made it clear that virology has a much larger role to play in the vision of Viksit Bharat.

By bringing basic scientists, clinicians, translational researchers, funding agencies and industry perspectives into the same forum, MVM 2026 highlighted the increasingly interconnected nature of modern virology—where understanding viral mechanisms must go hand in hand with the ability to translate that knowledge into preparedness, technologies and solutions for emerging health challenges.

The programme comprised seven scientific sessions, spotlight talks, poster presentations and the panel discussion, followed by an award ceremony and concluding session.

“As a student, being part of MVM 2026 was a valuable learning experience. It was inspiring to hear leading virologists discuss diverse areas of virus biology and also gave us an opportunity to interact with researchers from across the country. Being involved in organising the meeting made the experience even more meaningful, as we got to see first-hand how scientific ideas, discussions and collaborations come together to create a vibrant research community.”—Bhavya Ahuja, PhD Scholar, BRIC-NII

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