

CSIR-NEERI Celebrates 85th Foundation Day; Chandrayaan Missions and Future Lunar Exploration Highlighted

- India's Space Journey Enters a New Era: Dr. Prakash Chauhan

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CSIR-National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (CSIR-NEERI) celebrated its 85th Foundation Day on October 1, 2026, at the NEERI Auditorium in Nagpur, with a series of programmes highlighting India's scientific achievements and the institute's contributions to environmental research.



Dr. Prakash Chauhan, Director, National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC), ISRO, Hyderabad, was the Chief Guest, while Dr. S. Venkata Mohan, Director, CSIR-NEERI, was also present.

Delivering the Foundation Day Lecture on 'Exploring Earth's Moon with Indian Lunar Missions', Dr. Chauhan said that India had emerged as a major space-faring nation, making remarkable progress from its early space programme to advanced lunar and

planetary missions.

Tracing India's space journey from the establishment of the Thumba Equatorial Rocket Launching Station in 1963 to the development of indigenous launch vehicles, satellites and space infrastructure, he highlighted the growing participation of public and private organisations and start-ups in the space sector.

Dr. Chauhan outlined the scientific and technological achievements of India's lunar exploration programme, from Chandrayaan-1 to Chandrayaan-3. He also discussed Chandrayaan-4, the planned lunar sample-return mission, and the technological challenges involved in collecting, preserving and safely bringing lunar samples back to Earth.

He highlighted Chandrayaan-5/LuPEx, the planned ISRO-JAXA mission to explore the Moon's southern polar region and study lunar volatiles, including water in permanently shadowed regions.



Emphasising that several mysteries of the Moon remain unexplored, Dr. Chauhan said that future lunar missions would deepen scientific understanding of the Moon's origin, evolution, surface and resources, while strengthening India's capabilities in space science and technology.

In his welcome address, Dr. S. Venkata Mohan highlighted CSIR's contribution to building a knowledge-driven and globally competitive India. He outlined CSIR-NEERI's research on key environmental challenges, including water, air quality, climate change, waste management and carbon circularity, with emerging applications of artificial intelligence. He also highlighted initiatives such as NEERI-ZAR for flood-affected areas of Assam, eco-rejuvenation of around 110 hectares of degraded land and research on emerging contaminants.

On the occasion, the CSIR-NEERI Newsletter for April–September 2026 and a policy brief on 'A Roadmap for Climate-Attributed Economic and Non-Economic Ecosystem Loss and Damage Reporting for India' were released. Employees completing 25

years of service and those who retired on superannuation between September 2025 and August 2026 were also honoured. Meritorious children of CSIR-NEERI employees were felicitated.



As part of the celebrations, the institute opened its campus to the public, with around 1,000 students from 20 schools and colleges visiting to learn about CSIR-NEERI's research and development activities through laboratory demonstrations.

The programme was conducted by Dr. Shalini Dhyani, Scientist-F, while Shri Prakash Kumbhare, Scientist-F, proposed the vote of thanks.

Saurabh Khekde/Parshuram Kor

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