Ministry of Science and Technology
Department of Science & Technology

Curtain-raiser for ESTIC 2026 underline importance of Autonomous Systems, Physical AI and Robotics

The curtain-raiser for the second edition of India's flagship Science, Technology and Innovations Conclave, Emerging Science, Technology and Innovation Conclave (ESTIC 2026) organised on 15.10.2026 at the Department of Science and Technology's (DST) Technology Bhawan highlighted the stellar dignitaries and Nobel Laureates that the Conclave would bring together. It also projected the importance of Autonomous Systems, Physical AI and Robotics as one among the 12 thematic areas of the Conclave.

"The idea for ESTIC came from the Prime Minister, who wanted a forum to bring together the wider science, technology and innovation ecosystem. This year's theme on "Creative minds catalyzing science and empowering technology" is really apt in the context of the creative minds working for scientific innovations and then converting them into technologies for serving the society," said Prof. Abhay Karandikar, Member, NITI Aayog, was the Chief Guest at the curtain raiser program.

He added that Physical AI is definitely going to be the next thing in the evolution of AI and that the conclave should be used as an opportunity to brainstorm on how we can plan for the next edition of the cyber-physical mission.

In his address, DST Secretary Prof. Umesh Waghmare said ESTIC 2026 would bring together Indian and international scientists, Nobel laureates, industry representatives, technology companies, start-ups, entrepreneurs and young researchers. The conclave will provide an opportunity to exchange ideas and build partnerships to strengthen India's science and technology ecosystem in support of Viksit Bharat 2047.

Connecting to the theme, Prof. Waghmare pointed out that Autonomous Systems, Physical AI and Robotics could support safer and more productive applications in manufacturing, precision agriculture, healthcare and rehabilitation, logistics, infrastructure monitoring and disaster response.

He highlighted the importance of developing technologies that are reliable, safe, affordable and suited to Indian conditions. Under the National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber-Physical Systems, DST has established 25 Technology Innovation Hubs. These include TiHAN at IIT Hyderabad, IHFC at IIT Delhi and ARTPARK at IISc Bengaluru. The hubs connect research with engineering, experimentation and real-world applications.

Referring to the National Quantum Mission, Prof. Waghmare said that it reflected a similar focus on taking research towards practical applications through technology development, translation and entrepreneurship.

Prof. Waghmare invited scientists, academic and autonomous institutions, industry leaders, start-ups, investors and young innovators to participate in ESTIC 2026 and work towards translating creative ideas into deployable technologies.

The program featured a presentation on ESTIC 2026 by Ms. A. Dhanlakshmi, Joint Secretary, DST, followed by the screening of the ESTIC promotional video. The brochure for ESTIC 2026 was soft-launched by Chief Guest Prof. Karandikar and Prof. Waghmare. A video of ESTIC and one on DST's thematic session was screened.

The event organised in Hybrid mode brought together senior officials from DST as well as scientists and representatives from the science, technology and innovation ecosystem.

This year's edition is being organised by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). ESTIC 2026 will be held from 27 to 29 October at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi.





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