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NEWS ALERT

Forum for Indian Science Diplomacy

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GLOBAL

[17th Session of the CGRFA meeting in Rome](#)

The seventeenth session of the FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture took place at the FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy from 18th to 22nd February 2019. The session witnessed the launch of the report on the State of the World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture (SOW-BFA), embarking on the development of the post-2020 biodiversity framework. The Commission functions as an evidence-based body that synthesises knowledge submitted by members and informs the global biodiversity and sustainable development agendas.

[EU discusses participation of non-member countries in Horizon Europe](#)

Horizon Europe opens up the possibility for more countries beyond Europe to gain associate membership, a legal status that allows countries to participate in EU research under the same preferential conditions as member states and offers a deeper research relationship with Europe. Some countries expressing interest in association are Canada, China, Japan, Israel, Norway, South Africa, Switzerland, US, and UK (post-Brexit).

[Use of Graphene to develop Nanoscale electronics](#)

A team of researchers from the Technical University of Denmark have carved out graphene to nanoscale dimensions without ruining the electrical properties. This can potentially have impacts on creating new electronics with extremely small dimensions.

[Innovations in Robotics to design Soft Robots](#)

Robotics is seeking inspiration from Mother Nature in designing intelligent robots for the future called the soft robots. The scientists are increasingly using animal motions and principles found in small insects in order to make new innovative designs of the genext robots.

[Development of New technology to tackle Epilepsy](#)

A team of researchers from Netherlands have developed a method to stimulate the brain using electrodes placed on the head. Earlier, deep brain stimulation technique was being used. The new technique not only monitors the brain activity but can also apply targeted current which may help extinguish the epileptic seizure effectively.

[EU-India collaboration for tackling urgent water challenges](#)

The European Union delegation to India, in joint collaboration with India's Department of Science & Technology and Department of Biotechnology have selected 7 projects under the EU-India Joint Call on Research and Innovation for Water. With a key focus on improving drinking water quality and waste water management, the selected projects will provide affordable and innovative solutions to the urgent water challenges being faced by the country.

[India and Argentina boost S&T cooperation](#)

The President of the Argentine Republic visited India from 17th to 19th February 2019 and several significant S&T agreements were signed between the two countries. Among the sectoral agreements signed, space, pharmaceutical, agriculture, mining and renewable energy gathered main importance. Other working areas of significance such as artificial intelligence, biotechnology, financial inclusion, food technology and nano-materials were also featured in the agreements reached.

[DST-FICCI Summit steps up India-Africa Science & Technology Collaboration](#)

Science and technical cooperation between India and Africa made new progress with the announcement of the India-Ethiopia Innovation, Science and Technology Commercialization Programme at the global R&D summit which was organised jointly by DST and FICCI. It was the 6th edition of the annual R&D event and was held along the theme of "International Collaboration in Research and Development for Sustainable Growth".

[National Policy on Electronics 2019](#)

The Electronics Policy 2019 as proposed by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has been approved by the Union Cabinet. The policy envisions positioning India as a global hub for Electronics System Design and Manufacturing by providing a globally competent and enabling environment for the electronics industry.

[India to join Coalition S for open access to research publications](#)

The Principal Scientific Adviser to the PM informed about India joining Plan S by the year 2020. The Plan S is a bold initiative launched last year with support of the European Research Council and 13 national funding bodies. The other supporters include philanthropic organisations such as the Wellcome Trust and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The initiative is aimed towards making scientific research more accessible.

[Business Leaders unite to set up a world-class tech university](#)

More than 40 top CEOs and entrepreneurs, mostly IIT and IIM alumni, have come together to set up a Rs 2,000-crore project that involves setting up a university with a sharp focus on engineering directly aimed towards bolstering entrepreneurship and a home-grown startup ecosystem. Plaksha University, named after the mythical tree of knowledge will come up in Mohali in 2021. With a campus spread over a vast area of 50 acres, the institute will focus on core engineering, deep technology such as artificial intelligence, machine learning and mathematics. It has already entered into a MoU with Stanford Research Institute for joint research and has made collaborations with other Ivy League names such as Berkeley and Purdue Universities.

[Defence Innovation Hubs to be established in Nashik and Coimbatore](#)

In order to create solutions for India's major defence problems, the Government of India has announced setting up of Defence Innovation Hubs in Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu. The initiative comes under the Innovations for Defence Excellence (i-DEX) framework of the government.

Technology to save Sunderbans from rising sea levels

The Indian Government with the help of locals have initiated the Sunderbans Embankment Reconstruction Project to protect the archipelago against the threat of rising sea-levels and extreme weather conditions. A proclaimed UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Sunderbans is threatened by recurring cyclones and rising sea levels due to climate change. This project envisages to build eminent disaster resilience by fortifying protective structures with modern engineering.

Space Technology applications in Agriculture

The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare is using the space technology in its projects for various applications such as crop production forecasting, soil resource mapping and geo-tagging. High-resolution remote sensing data is also being used for improving crop yield estimates.

DRDO advances in Composite Materials Technology Applications

The Composites Research Centre (CRC) of the Research and Development Establishment (Engineers), has the objective of replacing metallic structures by composites to exploit substantial weight reduction and other collateral advantages. Composites are a macroscopic combination of two or more materials, with a distinct interface between the individual constituents. These polymer matrix composites are markedly superior to metals, and find extensive applications in virtually all sectors of defence engineering; aircraft structures, missiles, ship hulls, military bridging, assault vehicles, etc.

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