

India's space journey enters a new era: Dr. Prakash Chauhan

CSIR-National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (CSIR-NEERI) celebrated the 85th CSIR Foundation Day on 1 October, 2026 at the NEERI Auditorium. Various programmes were organized on this occasion. Dr. Prakash Chauhan, Director, National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC), ISRO, Hyderabad was the Chief Guest. Dr. S. Venkata Mohan, Director, CSIR-NEERI, was also present on the occasion.

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

Dr. Chauhan traced India's space journey from the Thumba Equatorial Rocket Launching Station established in 1963 to indigenous launch vehicles, satellites, space infrastructure and planetary missions. He also highlighted the growing participation of public and private organisations and start-ups in the space sector.

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

Dr. Chauhan further spoke about Chandrayaan-5/LuPEX, the ISRO-JAXA mission planned to explore the Moon's southern polar region and study lunar volatiles, including water, particularly in permanently shadowed regions.

Emphasising that many lunar mysteries are yet to be solved, Dr. Chauhan said future missions would deepen 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, Director, CSIR-NEERI, highlighted CSIR's contribution towards a knowledge-driven and globally competitive India. He outlined CSIR-NEERI's work 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 about 110 hectares of degraded land, and research on emerging contaminants.

The CSIR-NEERI Newsletter (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 on this occasion. Employees completing 25 years of service and those who retired on superannuation between September 2025 and August 2026 were honoured. The Institute was opened to the public, with around 1,000 students from 20 schools and colleges visiting the campus to learn about CSIR-NEERI's R&D activities and laboratory demonstrations. Meritorious children of CSIR-NEERI employees were also felicitated.



Dr. Prakash Chauhan, Director, National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC), ISRO delivering the CSIR Foundation Day Lecture



Dr. S. Venkata Mohan, Director, CSIR-NEERI delivering the welcome address



Release of a Policy Brief on Roadmap for Climate-Attributed Economic and Non-Economic Ecosystem Loss and Damage Reporting for India