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Govt launches first national biofoundry network to strengthen indigenous biomanufacturing

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S&T Minister marks one year of BioE3 policy with launch of Youth Challenge

Marking one year of the BioE3 (Biotechnology for Economy, Environment and Employment) Policy, Union Minister of Science and Technology (S&T), Dr Jitendra Singh has launched the BioE3 Challenge for Youth and the country's first National Biofoundry Network, calling it a step towards making biotechnology a driver of India's economy, environment and employment.

The Minister underscored the launch of the first National Biofoundry Network, involving six institutions (ICGEB, New Delhi; NCCS, Pune; THSTI, Faridabad; ACTREC, Mumbai; IPFT, Haryana; and NABI, Punjab) to help scale up proof-of-concept developments, enhance indigenous biomanufacturing, and create employment opportunities.

The BioE3 Challenge for Youth is a nationwide call to young innovators under the theme "Design Microbes, Molecules & More". The initiative, explained by DBT Secretary Dr Rajesh Gokhale, invites school students (Classes 6–12), university students, researchers, faculty, startups and Indian nationals to design safe-by-default biological solutions addressing challenges in health, agriculture, environment, and industry. The challenge will be announced on the first of every month beginning October 2025, with the top 10 winning solutions each receiving a cash award of Rs 1 lakh along with recognition and mentoring support. In addition, 100 selected awardees will be eligible for funding of up to Rs 25 lakh, provided in two tranches through BIRAC, to convert their ideas into proof-of-concept solutions. These projects will also gain access to facilities and incubation support at BRIC+ institutions across India. The programme aims to empower grassroots innovators, foster youth-led change, and strengthen India's journey towards a sustainable and self-reliant bioeconomy.

The BioE3 Challenge for Youth is anchored in the DESIGN framework, which guides participants to Define real needs, build Evidence-first solutions, ensure Sustainability by design, pursue Integration with other technologies and policies, develop strategies to Go-to-market, and create a Net-positive impact through measurable outcomes in jobs, inclusion, and equitable access.