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Novartis Indiaâ??s NEST 2.0 spotlights emerging talent shaping future of healthcare

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NEST 2.0 (Nurturing Excellence Strengthening Talent) led by Novartis Development Hub in India

Novartis India has successfully concluded the 2026 edition of NEST (Nurturing Excellence, Strengthening Talent) — its flagship real-world, case-based initiative.

In its second edition, NEST evolved from a competition-led format to a more partnership-driven model, with a stronger emphasis on collaboration and co-creation with academic institutions.

The initiative enabled decentralized ideation, encouraging students to develop solutions within their own campuses under the guidance of faculty mentors and with structured support from Novartis experts. This year, the platform received over 33,000 individual registrations, over 24,000 teams and more than 7,000 colleges participating.

Following multiple evaluation stages that assessed technical depth, problem-solving ability, collaboration and potential real-world impact, the grand finale of NEST 2.0 recognised three winning teams –

1. Nova Nexus- Indian Institute of Technology, Patna
2. Parzival Prime- Gokaraju Rangaraju Institute of Engineering & Technology & Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay
3. â• Codeies- Vishwakarma Institute of Technology, Pune

The winners shared a total prize pool of Rs 7,50,000. In addition, the finalists will have the opportunity to be considered for pre-placement interviews with the Novartis Development Hub in India. Notably, in the previous edition, one of the student finalists successfully secured a placement through this process and is now an employee at Novartis, underscoring the tangible career pathways the platform enables.

Sadhna Joglekar, Head, Development Hub, India, said, “NEST was created to provide a credible platform for young talent to engage with real-world challenges in clinical development. Through this platform, we are not only challenging participants to solve complex, real-world problems, but also helping them build the mindset, skills, and confidence required to operate in a global environment. The quality of ideas and depth of engagement we witnessed this year reinforces our confidence in India’s next generation of healthcare innovators.”

Designed as more than a competition, NEST 2.0 focused on learning, collaboration, and capability building, equipping participants with skills relevant to the rapidly evolving healthcare and life sciences landscape.

"NEST is a strong example of how industry-led initiatives can meaningfully strengthen India’s life-sciences ecosystem,” said Sarvesh Singh, Director & CEO, Telangana Lifesciences. “By aligning policy intent with on-ground talent development, and by giving students early exposure to real-world problem-solving at the intersection of technology and biology, the programme is helping build a future-ready workforce. Platforms like this effectively bridge academia, industry, and entrepreneurship, and play an important role in ensuring that our innovation ecosystem continues to grow in depth and global relevance.”