

108th Indian Science Congress

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Why in news?

- PM inaugurated the 108th Indian Science Congress (ISC) being held in Nagpur via video conferencing.
- The **focal theme** of this year's ISC is "*Science and Technology for Sustainable Development with Women Empowerment*".

What is Indian Science Congress (ISC)?

- ISC is a one-of-its-kind event in the country which brings together the scientific communities on a platform for their interaction with students and the general public on matters related to science.
- The event is organized by the Indian Science Congress Association (ISCA).
 - ISCA is an independent body functioning with the support of the Department of Science and Technology (DST) in the central government.
- Dubbed as the largest gathering of scientists and students in the country, the Science Congress is an annual five-day event from January 3 to 7, a permanent fixture on the Prime Minister's calendar.
- The first session of the Indian Science Congress was held in 1914 at the premises of the Asiatic Society, Calcutta.

What are the reasons for declining significance of ISC in recent times?

- In more recent times, the event has attracted attention for all the wrong reasons:
 - lack of serious discussion, the promotion of pseudoscience, outlandish claims by random speakers, and the absence of useful outcomes.
- As a result, several top scientists have advocated the discontinuation of the event, or at least withdrawal of government support.
 - For organising the Science Congress, the government provides an annual grant.
 - Besides this, the government has no role to play in organising the ISC.

News Summary of 108th Indian Science Congress

Key highlights of the PM speech at the 108th Science Congress

What are the recent achievements of India in the field of Science, Technology and innovation?

- India is now one of the top three countries in the world when it comes to the number of PhD research works and startup ecosystems.
- The country is now ranked 40th on the Global Innovation Index 2022, up from the 81st rank in 2015.
- He underlined that scientific developments should ultimately make the country atmanirbhar.

What is the need to increase women's participation in the field of Science and Technology?

- While highlighting the importance of women's involvement in scientific research, PM Modi said that the increasing participation of women is a reflection of the progress of society and science.

- Today, the country's thinking is not only that women should be empowered through science, but science should also be empowered with the participation of women.
- He pointed out that women's participation in extramural research has doubled over the last eight years.
- India has been given the opportunity to preside over G20. Women-led development is one of the high-priority subjects taken up by the chair.

Why science must come out of the lab and reach the land?

- The efforts of Science can bear fruit only when they go from labs to land.
- With 2023 being declared as the International Year of Millets, India's millets and their use should be further improved with the use of science.
- He also urged the scientific community to work towards reducing post-harvest losses with the help of biotechnology.

Why India needs to focus on energy innovation?

- He pointed out the need to focus on energy innovation, with energy needs continuing to be on the rise.
- He endorsed the need for the scientific community to focus on working on a National Hydrogen Mission and stressed the need to manufacture critical equipment like electrolyzers in India to make it a success.
 - **National Hydrogen Mission** was launched on India's 75th Independence Day (15th August, 2021).
 - The Mission aims to aid the government in meeting its climate targets and making India a green hydrogen hub.
 - This will help in meeting the target of production of 5 million tonnes of green hydrogen by 2030.

H2: Highlights of PM's speech delivered at the ISC?

- PM stressed on the increasing importance of data gathering and analysis as well as the importance of traditional knowledge alongside modern knowledge.
- He also acknowledged the role of low-cost satellite launch vehicles in the booming space sector in India and pointed to the importance of quantum computing.
- The Prime Minister stressed the need to focus on futuristic ideas and areas where no work is happening anywhere as well as the importance of keeping Artificial intelligence (AI), augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) as priorities.

Q1) What is the aim of Indian Science Congress (ISC)?

ISC is a one-of-its-kind event in the country which brings together the scientific communities on a platform for their interaction with students and the general public on matters related to science.

Q2) What is the status of Women's participation in science and technology sector?

In India, nearly 43% of the total graduates in STEM being women, which is one of the highest in the world.

Source: [PM addresses 108th Indian Science Congress via video conferencing](#) | [Indian Express](#) | [PIB](#) | [PMO India](#)

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mlyMtKeGIng&t=430s>

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