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Union Budget 2025 A Significant Step Towards Advancing S&T Landscape

IT is well-known that the key to the progress of any nation lies in advancements in science and technology. Aligning with the same, the Union Budget 2025 has allocated increased funds for key sectors. Paying much attention to innovation, infrastructure development, and sustainable advancement, the recently unveiled budget presents a boost to strengthen research and development. This fiscal year marks a significant turning point with



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an attempt to boost the standing of our country as a global leader in innovation.

In the budget, there is a substantial increase in support for startups with an aim to promote entrepreneurial growth. In an effort to enhance the innovation ecosystem among youth, 50,000 more Atal Tinkering Labs are in plan across government schools over the next five years. The PM Research Fellowship scheme will provide 10,000 fellowships over five years at top institutions like IITs and IISc. Setting up specialised research hubs in emerging areas, including artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and robotics, are some of the most notable initiatives in the budget. The purpose of these hubs is to promote innovation-driven entrepreneurship and facilitate collaborations. With missions like the Chandrayaan-3 success and the Gaganyaan human spaceflight programme on the horizon, India's space capabilities are poised for substantial growth and so the budget has also been increased for space explorations.

By prioritising key sectors like green technologies, AI, space, research, etc., the budget has presented a progressive approach, which will help in economic growth and solving societal challenges. With a commitment to inclusivity, sustainability, and digital advancement, the budget offers a roadmap for India to harness its scientific potential in ways that will benefit generations to come. However, realising this vision depends on efficient implementation and strategic collaboration across sectors, with a clear focus on overcoming the challenges that lie ahead.

Well! The month of February was special with the release of the budget, while the month of March focuses on another crucial aspect — Forest and Wildlife. Every year, World Wildlife Day is celebrated on 3 March and World Forest Day is celebrated on 21 March. On these occasions, the *Science Reporter* has dedicated its March issue to forests and wildlife, featuring a cover story on the devastating impact of wildfires on these vital ecosystems. The issue also includes an interview with Padma Shri Jadav Payeng, who is known as the Forest Man of India. This special edition intends to shed some light on various issues related to forests and wildlife.

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