My dear friends:

At the outset let me apologize for the delay in my routine communication. The additional directorship of NCL keeps me on my toes. Soon, however, NCL will get a new Director; I will then be able to focus entirely again on CECRI.

Last month I made a truly exhilarating visit to Taiwan. My visits to the laboratories at the National Central University, the Division of Energy Storage Materials at the Industrial Technology Research Institute and the Lithium-ion Battery Incubation Centre at the Tinan University were real eye-openers. I was much impressed by this tiny country's tremendous infrastructure. I still contemplate the reasons behind their achievements in areas such as semiconductor devices. I am also yet to come to grips with a category-3 typhoon (*Soudelor*) that hit Taiwan during my stay there. There was hardly any damage of note. I hastened to imagine the ravage a typhoon of this intensity could have inflicted on our coasts. The results of investing their energies and training their people were for all to see. Naturally, these thoughts took me back to the June 'Chintan Shivir' at Dehradun where we had discussed issues such as return on investment on projects and target-setting. My experience from Taiwan tells me that we have to invest our energies more in training people, which, in turn, will have a spill-over effect on their output. It is, therefore, my request to all division and section heads to involve their team members in the decision making process and to train them. Such HR activities can boost our position to those among the top R&D laboratories at both the national and international levels.

This month at the Cluster Directors' meet, we made the following decisions:

- Each laboratory in the cluster should give to the Cluster Director 5–10 projects aimed at converting low-hanging fruits into technologies and products in a timeframe of 6–18 months. The proposed projects will be screened at the cluster level.
- Facilitate cluster-wise interactions to map and discuss such projects.
- Bring in more focus on scale-up and skill development.
- Develop model for partnerships with strategic sectors with high credit or high return.

- Form product development teams in cluster and trans-cluster modes.
- Launch YouTube videos on CSIR technologies after due IP protection and approvals.
- Constitute a Task Force to identify and design courses for skill development. Areas of focus to include corrosion, electronics, petroleum, ayurveda, genomics, microbial/fermentation technologies, minerals, metals, etc.
- Set up an incubation centre at each laboratory.

Let me now give a glimpse of events in the last three months at our institute. First, let me applaud the commendable efforts of all the people involved in the refurbishment of the Science Auditorium. A word of praise must also go to the Staff Club for meticulously organizing the events on Independence Day, Open Day and Foundation Day. In the same breath, let me also extend my thanks to SAEST for organizing a two-day workshop on *Durability enhancement of marine and offshore structures* in collaboration with AMET University, Chennai. I am also pleased with the Hindi Month celebrations and appreciate the hard work put in by Mr. Someshwar Pandeya and his team.

We had a series of lectures too during this period: *Green Chemistry: A Chemist's Philosophy* by Prof. P. Manisankar of Alagappa University, celebrating the birth anniversary of P.C. Ray; *Surface Science Studies on Model and Real Catalysts* by Dr. K. Thirunavukkarasu of the Indian Institute of Technology Madras as part of a workshop on X-ray photoelectron spectroscopy; *Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases—Global & Indian Perspectives* by Prof. Arun Chockalingam of the University of Toronto; and *Coordination Complexes with Aminophenol-based Redox-Active Ligands*, a CSIR Foundation Day Lecture by Prof. R.N. Mukherjee of the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Kolkata.

My congratulations to Dr. B. Subramanian for his selection as a Visiting Scientist at the Thin Films & Nanostructures Laboratory of CSIRO Manufacturing Flagship, Sydney, and to Dr. S. Vasudevan for having been chosen for the 2015 MRSI medal. Let me also share my happiness with you on receiving the *MRSI-ICSC Superconductivity & Materials Science Annual Prize 2016.*

This recognition is a result of the sustained efforts of you all. Our administrative staff strength has now increased with the recruitment of Mr. Kalinga Krishna, Ms. Swathy Vinaykam and Ms. P. Binsha. The screening process for the recruitment of 21 staff will be completed this month; in parallel, an advertisement for another 15 posts is being planned.

There is also some disquieting news by way of thefts at the staff quarters, gymnasium and sewage treatment plant. In order that such incidents do not recur, we need to adopt the following steps:

- ✓ Community policing, a problem-solving model and a public safety philosophy that foster partnerships between campus residents, the Safety Officer and Security-in-Charge.
- ✓ A comprehensive crime prevention program with yearly presentations on crime prevention by Safety and Security officers.
- ✓ Implementation of awareness programs on theft prevention.

Before ending this note, let me inform you that the new DG-CSIR has unfolded his vision to make CSIR stronger. I request all CECRI staff to work a notch up to fulfil his commitment.