

December 31, 2016.

Dear CSIR-CECRI family members:

As 2016 fades into oblivion, let us, on behalf of our 1.3 billion fellow countrymen, warmly welcome 2017 with renewed hope and aspirations. We need to introspect seriously and not consider this as the birth of a new year, but as an opportunity to evaluate our system in terms of goals we had set a year ago. Thanks to your unconditional support and optimism, we have excelled in several domains although certain lacunae need to be evened out. I firmly believe that 2017 will usher in wonderful opportunities and challenges by way of new technologies and industrial partnerships. Let us now recall some salient developments during the year gone by.

- We initiated four fast track translational projects, each led by a dynamic young leader and mentored by a couple of senior scientists. Monthly monitoring of the projects by the administrative collegium helps ensure timely delivery.
- Revenue generation from private industries rose by a notch although it was still below that proposed in the Dehradun declaration. Many new initiatives have sprung up. Let us ride on the momentum gathered thus far to do better. Specific cases in point are new projects from General Electric and Tata Steel.
- We launched a lithium-ion prototype battery fabrication facility for 18650 and pouch cells under the TAPSUN program at our Chennai Unit. Distinguished visitors including Shri. V.K. Saraswat, former DG of DRDO and member of Niti Aayog, Prof. Ashok Jhunjhunwala of IIT-M, and experts from SABIC were highly appreciative of our efforts. A workshop on *Advanced Battery Technology Development for India* was organized in Delhi under the guidance of Dr. Saraswat. Once our technology is validated by external agencies, it will be taken up for commercialization.
- A recently initiated hydrogen dispenser project with IGCAR is bearing fruits as are three others with CSIR-NCL on fuel cells for Reliance Industries, Mumbai, Thermax, Pune, and KPIT Technologies, Pune.
- CECRI won the bronze medal for coordinating the *Energy* theme at Technofest-2016 held in Delhi as part of CSIR's platinum jubilee celebrations. Also, as part of the celebrations and the India International Science Festival, we organized a one-day outreach program at CECRI for school and college students. The program showcased our activities and strengths in order to motivate them to take up a career in science.

- A one-day awareness workshop on cost-effective upgradation of electroplating technology and practices was conducted at CICU, Ludhiana. A two-day workshop on e-office (Digital India) was organized for heads of administrators and ERP coordinators. It was inaugurated by Dr. Anupama, IAS, JS(A), CSIR.
- Hindi month was celebrated during September 2016 with enthusiasm. A Hindi workshop and a hands-on training session on UNICODE were also arranged.
- Despite the odds and political climate, iSAEST-11 was a huge success. iSAEST and NCE organized by SAEST, and the National Corrosion Congress organized by NCCI are true examples of outstanding team work.
- CSIR-CECRI won a host of awards in 2016:

Dr. Vijayamohan Pillai: National Prize for Research on Energy Materials and Devices by JNCASR; MRSI-ICSC Superconductivity & Materials Science Annual Prize; IICT-Avon Padmashri Dr. G.S. Sidhu Chemcon Distinguished Speaker Award; T.L. Ramachar Memorial Lecture Award by ECSI; and Prof. Thimmegowda Endowment Lecture Award by Mangalore University.

Dr. Subrata Kundu: BASE fellowship and Young Scientist award of the Academy of Science, Chennai.

Dr. S. Vasudevan: 2016 MRSI bronze medal; Fellow of Royal Society of Chemistry.

Dr. V. Saraswathy: CIDC Vishwakarma Award.

Ms. Archana Rajendran: Prime Minister's Fellowship.

Messrs R. Rajaram and K. Praveen Kumar: Biotechnology Industry Research Alliance Council Idea-thon award and Rs 1 lakh cash prize.

Several B.Tech. students: scholarships for higher studies abroad.

- CECRI excelled in sports too:

Winner: TNCA-SDCA Cricket League 'C' Division.

Runner-up: Hussain Zaheer Memorial Bridge Tournament.

Qualification to the finals: SSBMT Indoor Zonals in bridge, chess and carrom.

Part of champion team: Thacker Memorial Lawn Tennis Tournament.

Gold medal: Mr. S. Rukesh Kumar (CFE) in Anna University judo (men) tournament. He also participated in the All India Inter-University Judo (men) tournament.

- New recruitments/transfers:

Mr. Karthiek (assistant); Messrs Devendra Prajapathi, K. Ranjith Kumar V. Gopalakrishnan (technical assistants); and Mr. Gopal Mahanta (Hindi typist). Dr. M. Eashwar on transfer from CECRI Mandapam Unit. We have been able to recruit new talent in a globally competent manner and many of these young people with abundance talent will take CECRI to enduring heights of excellence. Mr. Thippe Rudraswamy, a first-batch CECRI B.Tech. alumnus, has already joined us; the others are expected to join soon. We also have received approval from DG-CSIR for appointing a full-time lady medical officer and all our administrative, purchase, finance and support systems are geared up for an exponential growth in efficiency. General Electric, Bangalore is likely to come up with a new project and a Tata Steel project is just finalized. Reliance is strongly interested in a new program and GAIL is planning to visit us for a collaborative work. In strategic sector we are doing well with ISRO and DRDO labs and our collaborative work with RDSO(Railway) has generated remarkable results. We have ambitious plans to bolster CSIR's Integrated Skill Development Initiative and our small group (of only two scientists) works with strong commitment and dedication.

Over the past four years, we have elevated ourselves to new levels of excellence in research, leading to several of our colleagues receiving accolades. However, a few do not seem active, either due to skepticism or personal apprehensions about individual credits; their mindset needs change. India's digital ecosystem is gearing up, ensuring transparency (e.g., recruitment, expenditure monitoring, Aadhar-based biometric attendance). Therefore, in order not to be left behind, we must contribute our might especially to FTTPs, industry-sponsored projects, and CSIR mission-mode projects [Energy (CECRI); Catalysis (NCL); Medical Devices (CSIO); Water (NEERI); Potash and Salt (CSMCRI); and Aroma mission]. Of late, there has been increasing instances of our research falling prey to predatory journals. Let me urge you to exercise caution and avoid publishing in such journals, especially when the performance of CSIR in the recent past has not been gauged well by many industrial and media groups. I am also at pain to tell you that work on the proposed international hostel is moving at snail's pace although civil, electrical, HLS, Horticulture sections are working seamlessly with our colony affairs committee to make our campus green, clean and elegantly lighted. Reengineering of TTBD/PPMG/S&T/ICP divisions is urgently needed to enhance the performance as one weak link can affect the entire system, no matter how efficient others are!

As per the advice of the Ministry of Finance, CSIR has formed an apex committee to tier review the entire CSIR. The committee has been bestowed with extraordinary powers to suggest remedial measures to enhance the usefulness and relevance of laboratories in the light of India's switch to a cashless and digital society fueled by technological innovations. Hence, it is imperative that CECRI registers improved performance. We need an inclusive agenda that accommodates all levels of activities. Specifically, more industry-sponsored projects need to be undertaken. A handful of scientists do handle a multitude of projects; but many are seemingly inactive or busy themselves with traditional work, adding to the burden of the laboratory and the nation. We should rid ourselves of such activities and focus on roadmaps to the future.

Let the new year witness a systemic transformation at CECRI. Let us contribute significantly and with a sense of urgency. All of us must pledge to use only official email (cecri.res.in) for communication and ensure compliance for effective planning at divisional level followed by team work. Only timely delivery of technology and products can enhance our credibility. Let us infuse more professionalism in our work. Let us face 2017 with well crafted goals. Let the new year be a wonderful one for you and your dear ones!

Wishing you the best both in your professional and personal spheres of activities.

Vijay