

# A chat with the chief

## Insights From The Forefront: Dr N Kalaiselvi On Shaping The Future Of Nation

A revered scientist celebrated for her trailblazing work in the field of electrochemical power systems, **Dr N Kalaiselvi**, at present, serves as **director general, CSIR (Council of Scientific and Industrial Research) & secretary, Department of Scientific and Industrial Research**. Remarkably, she created history as the first woman to hold this esteemed position in the 80-year legacy of CSIR, one of India's premier R&D organisations. She was also the first woman scientist to head the CSIR-CECRI (Central Electrochemical Research Institute). As she graced AUUP to deliver an oration on "Energy Management - Indian Perspective", GT reporters caught up with her to know more about her passion for science and research. Here are excerpts...

### Fascination for science

I have always been an ardent nature lover and observer. "Why are the leaves green?", "Why are the trees moving while we are travelling?", "Why does the moon seem to follow us?" et al were some of the questions that used to tickle my fancy a lot. In that regard, I was blessed to have great teachers who gave us enough freedom to ask as many questions as we wanted and made sure to provide us with beautiful answers for each one of them. It was from that point onwards that my passion for science, especially



GT reporters with Dr N Kalaiselvi

chemistry with all its reactions and phenomena, grew stronger.

### Future of green energy

To have a greener planet is certainly the dream, but one that can be easily realised if efforts are made to move to a circular economy, where we recycle, reuse, reconsider, and reorient, not leaving any parasitic waste behind. Though many consider plastic as something that our Mother Earth cannot digest, scientists have found special worms to prove otherwise. Then comes the notion of 'Waste to Wealth,' i.e., to make use of waste in a way that it turns into wealth, this is

where the essence of a circular economy and the path to a green future lies.

### Far away from disparities

Fortunately, there are no gender-related disparities in the field of science. Any work done towards science will get the same amount of recognition for both men and women. Sometimes we, as women, do face difficulties while balancing work with family life. However, science is a domain where you can restart your career even after a break for any length of time. And once women put their mind to it, they never stop till they reach their goals, isn't it?

## INTERVIEW

### Fostering research

If you are interested in research, our government provides several scholarships for students of Class X and XII. Then, of course, there are some exams, qualifying which will get you research stipends from the government. These will help you complete your doctorate for five years. You also have the opportunity of getting fellowship offers, both from within India and abroad. Our country offers immense financial support to researchers, you only have to find where the opportunity lies and truly devote yourself to the pursuit of science. Connect with your nearest laboratory, engage in internships, and take up different projects. You can also follow and reach out to scientists from your nearest CSIR laboratories. Just go for it! **GT**

*Interview conducted by: **Suhani Chauhan XI & Samaya Chauhan, X, AIS PV; Ishaan Pradhan, VIII & Praneel Dev, XII, AIS Noida; Aditya Agarawal, AIS Vas 6, IX; Kanishk Chauhan, AIS MV, X; Yashika Das, AIS Saket, XI; Rajbir Singh, AIS Gur 43, XI; Abhay Bailey, AIS Gur 46, IX; and Shaurya Pratap Singh, AIS Vas 1, IX***

## India This Week

**Arisha Agarwal, AIS Vas 1, IX D**

**W**hile we sit on our couch just breathing, a lot of things happen around us, and sometimes in our very own country. We bring you the ones worth mentioning...

### First private Helicopter FAL

**News:** Airbus Helicopters and Tata Group joined hands to establish India's first private helicopter Final Assembly Line (FAL) in the nation. The FAL will manufacture Airbus' renowned single engine H125 helicopter for the Indian market and also make their supply to the neighbouring countries possible, strengthening the 'Made in India' initiative. It would require over 24 months to establish a production line, which would include aircraft assembly, component part manufacturing, and engineering, and would begin to deliver the first 'Made in India' H125s latest from 2026.



**Views:** This collaboration will help boost the 'Atma Nirbhar Bharat' ideology of India and would reduce our reliance on imports. In addition to this, it will strengthen India's standing as a center for aerospace production, paving the way for international collaboration and boosting economic growth. The new facility is also anticipated to be crucial in transforming

helicopter use in India, fostering both civil as well as military purposes. Moreover, it would lead to the growth of human capital and support businesses. The production of the undisputed H125, as such, will become a symbol of the confident new India. **GT**

**Aditi Gupta**

**AIS Vasundhara 1, XI B**

### First female mahout gets Padma Shri

**News:** Parbati Baruah, the first female elephant mahout in India, was conferred with Padma Shri for her exceptional contribution to elephant conservation and care. In her extraordinary career that has spanned over five decades, she has helped numerous state administrations apprehend untamed wild tuskers and tackle other human-elephant issues. Her endeavours in the profession earned her the nickname 'Hasti Kanya' (Daughter of Elephants) and brought her various other accolades as well, such as the Global 500-Roll of Honour from the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and the Assam Gaurav Award from the state government of Assam.

**Views:** Parbati Baruah has dedicated her



life to bridging the gap between humans and wild tuskers since she was 14 years old. She broke numerous preconceptions and set the path for upcoming generations of female mahouts, all thanks to her father's training. Her in-depth knowledge of these magnificent animals has not only reduced man-animal conflicts, but also guaranteed the security of both. This award, as such, is a celebration of a life devoted to protecting the relationship between humans and animals, demonstrating that compassion has the power to tame even the most ferocious of beings. **GT**

**Kanishka Sharma**

**AIS Vasundhara 1, IX D**