AERONAUTICAL SOCIETY OF INDIA — CHENNAI BRANCH

EVENT REPORT

3rd Industry Academia Conclave (IAC) 2026

Theme: "Future-Ready Aviation Manufacturing: Role of Industry, Academia & Startups"

Event	3rd Industry Academia Conclave (IAC 2026)
Organized by	Aeronautical Society of India (AeSI), Chennai Branch
Date	Saturday, 22 August 2026
Venue	Welcomhotel by ITC, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu
Duration	9.30 am – 5.00 pm

1. About the Conclave

The Industry Academia Conclave is a flagship initiative of AeSI Chennai Branch aimed at bringing together stakeholders from the aerospace and defence industry, academic institutions, research organizations and startups on a common platform. The 2026 edition was themed "Future-Ready Aviation Manufacturing: Role of Industry, Academia & Startups", focusing on collaborative approaches to advance aviation manufacturing capability in India through industry–academia–startup synergy.

2. Objectives

- To provide a platform for dialogue between industry leaders, academic experts, government/defence representatives and startups in the aerospace manufacturing domain.
- To showcase emerging technologies and best practices in aviation manufacturing, such as large-area additive manufacturing and indigenous R&D.
- To facilitate industry–academia collaboration for future-ready workforce and indigenous defence innovation.
- To provide sponsor organizations a forum to present their capabilities to the aerospace ecosystem.
- To recognize and encourage contributions through prize distribution and felicitation of key contributors.

3. Inaugural Session

The Conclave commenced at 9.30 am with the Welcome Address by Dr S Nadaraja Pillai, Honorary Secretary, AeSI – Chennai Branch, followed by introductory remarks from Dr K Vijayaraja, Chairman, AeSI – Chennai Branch, and an overview of the Conclave presented by Dr P S Premkumar, Vice-Chairman, AeSI – Chennai Branch.

The Chief Guest Address was delivered by Dr S Somnath, President, AeSI and Former Chairman, ISRO. The Keynote Address was delivered by Mr Suju Thomas, Senior Director of Engineering, Honeywell Aerospace, followed by the Inaugural Address by Mr Nikhil K Rao, Director and Chief Engineer, Boeing Engineering India. The inaugural session concluded with a Tea Break.

4. Invited Technical Talks

Following the inaugural session, five invited technical talks were held across the day, covering a range of themes central to the Conclave:

- Invited Talk 1 — Wg Cdr P Madhusoodhanan, Vice President (A&D), TIDCO, on "Ctrl + Alt + Fly: Rebooting India's Aviation with Indigenous R&D."
- Invited Talk 2 — Mr C T Sambandam, Scientist, ADA, Ministry of Defence, on "Challenges in Indian Aerospace Manufacturing: Ecosystem for Future Force Multipliers."
- Invited Talk 3 — Mr Sathish Manoharan, Boeing Engineering India, Chennai, on "Large Area Additive Manufacturing: The Future of Aerospace Production."
- Invited Talk 4 — Dr Raja Singh, Director, DIARCoE, DRDO, IIT Madras, on "Strengthening the Industry–Academia Ecosystem for Indigenous Defence Innovation."
- Invited Talk 5 — P S Ganapathy, Senior Member, AeSI, on "Aircraft Manufacturing: Role of Industry and Academia."

5. Sponsors' Session

A dedicated Sponsors' Session (10 minutes each) was held from 11.30 am, providing participating organizations an opportunity to present their products and capabilities to delegates. Ten organizations participated as sponsors:

- Bharat Forge Limited
- L&T Precision Engineering and Systems
- Philips Electronics
- Janatics India Private Limited
- CIRCOR Flow Technologies India Private Limited
- OrbitAID Aerospace Private Limited
- Honeywell Aerospace Technologies
- Kalaignar Karunanidhi Institute of Technology
- Park Group of Institutions
- Reude Technologies Private Limited

6. Panel Discussion

A Panel Discussion on the theme "Future-Ready Aviation Manufacturing: Role of Industry, Academia & Startups" was held from 2.30 pm to 4.00 pm, moderated by Rear Admiral Mohandoss V (Retd), Director Defence, KCIRI. The panel comprised senior representatives from both industry and academia, as detailed below:

Category	Members
Moderator	Rear Admiral Mohandoss V (Retd), Director Defence, KCIRI
Industry Panel Members	Dr Kishora Shetty, Joint DGM, L&T; Mr Saravanan, Group Head – Aerodynamics, ADE, DRDO; AVM Puneet Surindernath Sarin, Advisor, SAPL; Mr Mukundhan Dakshinamoorthy, Director – PM AD & HPC, ePlane; Mr Sriram Krishnaprasad, Senior Manager, Boeing Engineering India
Academia Panel Members	Dr C Senthilkumar, Professor, Aero, MIT; Dr Sai Shyam, CEO, IPTIF, IIT Palakkad; Dr Devaprakash, IIT Madras; Dr P Vasanthakumar, Professor Aero, HITS, Chennai

7. Valedictory Function

The Valedictory Function commenced at 4.00 pm with closing remarks by Dr. K. Sathish Kumar, Co-Convener, IAC 2026, followed by addresses from valedictory guests Dr G Balu, Former DRDL Scientist and Mr C Vasantharaj,

Director, KCIRI. Prizes were distributed by the guests and AeSI-CB office bearers, and the programme concluded with a Vote of Thanks proposed by Mr Dineshkumar G, Hon. Treasurer, AeSI – Chennai Branch, followed by Networking High Tea.

8. Detailed Agenda

The complete schedule of the Conclave, as per the final agenda, is reproduced below for reference:

Time	Session	Speaker(s) / Details
9.30 – 9.35 am	Welcome Address	Dr S Nadaraja Pillai, Honorary Secretary, AeSI – Chennai Branch
9.35 – 9.40 am	Introductory Remarks	Dr K Vijayaraja, Chairman, AeSI – Chennai Branch
9.40 – 9.45 am	About Conclave	Dr P S Premkumar, Vice-Chairman, AeSI – Chennai Branch
9.45 – 10.00 am	Chief Guest Address	Dr S Somnath, President, AeSI (Former Chairman, ISRO)
10.00 – 10.15 am	Keynote Address	Mr Suju Thomas, Senior Director of Engineering, Honeywell Aerospace, India
10.15 – 10.30 am	Inaugural Address	Mr Nikhil K Rao, Director and Chief Engineer, Boeing Engineering India
10.30 – 10.45 am	Tea Break	—
10.45 – 11.00 am	Invited Talk 1	Wg Cdr P Madhusoodhanan, Vice President (A&D), TIDCO — “Ctrl + Alt + Fly: Rebooting India's Aviation with Indigenous R&D”
11.00 – 11.15 am	Invited Talk 2	Mr C T Sambandam, Scientist, ADA, MoD — “Challenges in Indian Aerospace Manufacturing: Ecosystem for Future Force Multipliers”
11.15 – 11.30 am	Invited Talk 3	Mr Sathish Manoharan, Boeing Engineering India, Chennai — “Large Area Additive Manufacturing: The Future of Aerospace Production”
11.30 am – 1.00 pm	Sponsors Session (10 min each)	Bharat Forge; L&T Precision; Philips Electronics; Janatics; CIRCOR Valves; OrbitAID; Honeywell Aerospace; KIT; PARK Institutions; REUDE Technologies
1.00 – 2.00 pm	Networking Lunch	—
2.00 – 2.15 pm	Invited Talk 4	Dr Raja Singh, Director, DIARCoE, DRDO, IIT Madras — “Strengthening the Industry–Academia Ecosystem for Indigenous Defence Innovation”
2.15 – 2.30 pm	Invited Talk 5	P S Ganapathy, AeSI Senior Member — “Aircraft Manufacturing: Role of Industry and Academia”
2.30 – 4.00 pm	Panel Discussion	Theme: “Future-Ready Aviation Manufacturing: Role of Industry, Academia & Startups” — Moderator: Rear Admiral Mohandoss V (Retd), Director Defence, KCIRI
4.00 – 4.05 pm	Closing Remarks	Dr Sathish Kumar, Co-Convener, IAC 2026
4.05 – 4.15 pm	Valedictory Guests	Dr G Balu, Former DRDO Scientist; Mr C Vasantharaj, Director, KCIRI.
4.15 – 4.25 pm	Prize Distribution	Guests & AeSI-CB Office Bearers
4.25 – 4.30 pm	Vote of Thanks	Mr Dineshkumar G, Hon. Treasurer, AeSI – Chennai Branch
4.30 – 5.00 pm	Networking High Tea	—

9. Observations / Significance

- The Conclave brought together senior representation from ISRO, DRDO, Boeing, Honeywell, TIDCO, L&T, ePlane, SAPL and leading academic institutions, reflecting strong multi-stakeholder engagement.
- The technical talks and panel discussion addressed contemporary themes in aerospace manufacturing, including indigenous R&D, additive manufacturing, defence innovation ecosystems, and industry–academia collaboration models.
- Ten sponsor organizations participated in the event, an increase over previous editions, reflecting growing industry interest in engaging with the AeSI platform.
- The five-member industry panel and four-member academia panel provided balanced, cross-sectoral perspectives on future-ready aviation manufacturing.
- The event structure — inaugural session, technical talks, sponsor engagement, panel discussion and valedictory function — ensured comprehensive coverage of the stated theme within a single-day format.

10. Few Glimpses of IAC 2026



The AeSI CB Chairman Dr. K. Vijayaraja welcoming the Chief guest Dr. S. Somanath. The Former Chairman of ISRO and President of the AeSI.



During Inauguration Session of the Conclave



Chief guest Dr. S. Somanath, the Former Chairman of ISRO and President of the AeSI, addressing the gathering.



The AeSI CB Chairman honoring the Chief guest Dr. S. Somanath, the Former Chairman of ISRO and President of the AeSI, during the inauguration Session of the Conclave.



The AeSI CB Vice Chairman, Dr. P. S. Prem Kumar honoring the Chief Guest Mr. Suju Thomas from Honeywell Aerospace Technologies during the Inaugural Session of the Conclave.



Mr. Nikil K Rao, Director and Chief Engineer, Boeing Engineering India, addressing the gathering during the Inaugural Session of the Conclave.



The AeSI CB Hon. Secretary honouring the Chief Guest Mr. Nikil K Rao, Director and Chief Engineer, Boeing Engineering India.



Panel Discussion held during the Conclave.



Stall visit by the Chief Guest, Dr. S. Somanath, the Former Chairman of ISRO and President of the AeSI.



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Panel Discussion Moderator Mr. V. M. Doss, honoring the Panelist Dr. C. Senthil Kimar, Professor, Aerospace Engineering, Madras Institute of Technology, Chennai.



Panel Discussion Moderator Dr. V. M. Doss, honoring the Panelist Dr. Sai Shyam, CEO, IPTIF, IIT Palakkad.



Winners of the Design Competition receiving the Awards during the conclave.



The Events sponsors receiving the gratitude memento from the Chief Guest Dr. S. Somanath, the Former Chairman of ISRO and President of the AeSI.



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Chief Guest Dr. Somanath, the Former Chairman of ISRO and President of the AeSI, honoring the Valedictory session guest Dr. G. Balu, the Outstanding Scientist of DRDL, Hyderabad.



Winners of the Project Competition receiving the Awards during the conclave.



Group Photograph with Students Participants



Group Photograph with AeSI CB Executive Committee members.

This report is submitted for the kind information and record of the Aeronautical Society of India.

Report prepared by: AeSI – Chennai Branch.