

Round table meeting held at NITK as pre-summit event for India-AI Impact Summit 2026

MANGALURU, DHNS

The National Institute of Technology Karnataka (NITK), Surathkal, in collaboration with Education and Research Network of India (ERNET India), an autonomous scientific society under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), on Tuesday held a round table meeting on Artificial Intelligence for Smart and Sustainable Agriculture as a pre-summit event for the India-AI Impact Summit 2026.

The meeting was attended by experts from ERNET India, ICAR-National Research Centre on Pomegranate, ICAR-Central Plantation Crops Research Institute (CP-CRI), Regional Station, Vittal; University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad; ICAR-Indian Institute of Spices Re-



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search, Calicut; ICAR-Directorate of Cashew Research, Puttur; Casper AgriScience, Bengaluru; and IIIT Dharwad.

NITK Director Prof B Ravi welcomed the participants and highlighted the institute's strong research infrastructure.

He stressed that AI solutions must be rooted in real field-level challenges and deliver tangible benefits to farming communities, particularly in regions such as coastal Karnataka.

He emphasised closer engagement between technology developers and domain institutions, including ICAR research centres, through joint problem identification and collaborative research. He also shared NITK's plans to set up a Research and Innovation Park focusing on sustainable agro-marine units.

Preeti Nath, Economic Advisor (MeitY), and Director General, ERNET India, underlined the significant contribution of agriculture to India's economy. She noted that the pre-summit round table aimed to identify research gaps, India-specific constraints, and scalable AI-driven solutions.

She highlighted the importance of affordability, deployability, and interoperability in low-connectivity environments, reliable field validation, and measurable welfare outcomes for farmers.

The meeting featured presentations and discussions by agricultural scientists and experts on domain-specific problem statements that could be addressed using AI-based technologies.

Dean (Research and Innovation) Prof K Udaya Bhat outlined how NITK could support multi-institutional research and large-scale implementation through coordinated project management and innovation translation.

The event was coordinated by Dr Jency Rajan and Dr Sourav Kanti Addya (NITK Surathkal) and Dr Pavanthan (ERNET India).