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India's first Ferret research facility opens in Translational Health Science and Technology Institute

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To serve as a crucial resource for vaccine development, therapeutic testing



India's commitment to cutting-edge biomedical research and innovation has taken a significant leap forward with the dedication of the nation's first Ferret Research Facility, the launch of the GARBH-INi-DRISHTI data repository, and the execution of a key technology transfer agreement.

The events, held at the Translational Health Science and Technology Institute (THSTI) in the NCR Biotech Science Cluster, Faridabad, Haryana, were presided over by Dr. Rajesh Gokhale, Director General, Biotechnology Research and Innovation Council and Secretary, Department of Biotechnology (DBT).

The newly inaugurated THSTI Ferret Research Facility, a state-of-the-art establishment adhering to the highest biosafety and research standards, marks a pivotal moment in India's fight against infectious and non-communicable diseases.

This pioneering facility will serve as a crucial resource for vaccine development, therapeutic testing, and research into emerging infectious diseases, significantly bolstering India's pandemic preparedness strategy and positioning the nation at the forefront of global scientific endeavors.

Dr Gokhale launched GARBH-INi-DRISHTI, the DBT Data Repository and Information Sharing Hub at THSTI. This groundbreaking platform, developed under the GARBH-INi programme, provides access to an unprecedented wealth of clinical data, images, and biospecimens collected from over 12,000 pregnant women, newborns, and postpartum mothers.

As one of South Asia's largest maternal and child health databases, GARBH-INi-DRISHTI will empower researchers worldwide to conduct transformative research aimed at improving maternal and neonatal health outcomes. Its foundation lies in collaborative efforts across India's leading research institutions and hospitals, representing a powerful synergy of expertise.

Furthering the drive to translate research into tangible benefits, THSTI executed a Technology Transfer Agreement with Sundyota Numandis Probioceuticals. This agreement facilitates the commercialisation of THSTI's innovative, genetically defined synthetic microbial consortium, *Lactobacillus crispatus*. Isolated from the reproductive tracts of women enrolled in the GARBH-INi cohort, this consortium holds immense promise for nutraceutical applications, promoting overall health and well-being through targeted microbiome-based interventions.