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## DRDO's 'Dare to Dream' contest

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has launched 'Dare to Dream', a contest to encourage startups and individuals to come up with innovative defence and aerospace technologies.

Applicants are invited to send innovative, workable proposals that can impact various related domains. The winning entries, which should specify the plan of executing it into a prototype, stand to get one of five prizes ranging from ₹3 lakh to ₹10 lakh in two categories.

The military R&D organisation has asked for solutions in the areas of Artificial Intelligence, Autonomous Systems, Cybersecurity, Hypersonic Technologies, Smart Materials, Quantum Computing, and Soldier as a System. DRDO labs are already working in these areas, an official said.

Last April, the Ministry of Defence initiated a wider plan — iDEX or Innovation for Defence Excellence — aimed at financially supporting innovators from among small- and medium-sized industries, individuals, startups, and institutes.

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/karnataka/drdo-dare-to-dream-contest/article26240991.ece>



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## DRDO growing Nauni varsity's temperate plants in high altitude areas of J&K

Over 30000 plants including apple supplied in the past ve years Every year, the Dr YS Parmar University of Horticulture and Forestry (UHF), Nauni gets an overwhelming response from farmers for the quality planting material prepared by it. Besides the farming community, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has also become a regular buyer of temperate fruit plants from the University.

For the past five years, Leh based Defence Institute of High Altitude Research (DIHAR); a constituent laboratory of the DRDO has been purchasing temperate fruit plants from the university.

This year, the premier research laboratory bought 6070 plants of apple, pear plum and peach. With this number of plants bought by DIHAR in the past ve years has crossed 30,000. This planting material is being used for raising fruit plantations in high altitude areas of Jammu and Kashmir where the army is posted.

Dr Anand Kumar Katiyar, Scientist D of the DRDO who has been visiting the university every year explained that the objective is to ensure regular supply of fresh fruits to the army personnel in these tough terrains. Moreover, some of the plants are also distributed to the farmers in these areas in order to improve their socio-economic conditions as the excess fruit produce can be sold at the army counters.

“Traditionally, there were very few fruit trees in these high altitude regions. Some wild species of apples were present, but the fruit was of poor quality and highly perishable. The apple plants which are bought from the university are of good varieties which are performing quite well in these conditions,” said Dr Katiyar.

He added that the planting material has been planted in various places including Nubra Valley, Leh, Kargil, Karu regions of Jammu and Kashmir. In addition, some plantations have also been carried out in the Twang area of Arunachal Pradesh.

Besides ensuring easy availability of fresh fruits to the defence forces, these plantations carried out between 11,000 to 13,000 feet above sea level is helping scientists to undertake research and determine the ideal fruit varieties for these extremely cold regions. The scientists of DRDO undertake the scientific handling of the plants and also provide trainings to defence sta and civilians.

“The plants, especially apple supplied by the university have shown excellent results in the areas where the DRDO scientists have undertaken plantations. The university is not only supplying plants, but the two organisations are also collaborating in research. Varietal trials at dierent altitudes and studies like zero energy cold storage cellar at DIHAR have also helped to maximize the survivability of these fruit plants,” said Dr JS Chandel, Professor and Head Department of Fruit Science of the University. He added that the scientists of DIHAR and UHF have also published joint research publications.