

CSIR GETS ITS FIRST WOMAN CHIEF

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Credits galore: Ms. Kalaiselvi (second from right) published many research papers, holds six patents. Special Arrangement HANDBOUT

The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) has, for the first time in its 80-year history, appointed a woman Director-General.

N. Kalaiselvi, currently Director of the CSIR-Central Electro Chemical Research Institute (CSIR-CECRI), Karaikudi, Tamil Nadu, will now lead the network of 38 laboratories and nearly 4,500 scientists, and has been appointed for two years, said a note from the Appointments Committee of the Union Cabinet.

Ms. Kalaiselvi's research spans over 25 years and is focused on electrochemical power systems and developing electrode materials, custom-design synthesis methods, optimising reaction parameters and electrochemical evaluation of in-house prepared electrode materials for making energy storage devices.

Her research interests include lithium and beyond lithium batteries, supercapacitors and waste-to-wealth driven electrodes and electrolytes for energy storage and electro-catalytic applications.

She has been involved in projects to increase electric mobility in India and her expertise in these sectors will likely help with India's push towards increasing the number of electric vehicles. India has around 1.4 million electric vehicles comprising motorbikes, cars, three-wheelers and buses.

The Centre announced the second phase of a programme, FAME (Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of (Hybrid &) Electric Vehicles in India), that will invest Rs. 10,000 crore in developing electric vehicle infrastructure.

A long journey

From Ambasamudram village in Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu to heading the CSIR as its first woman Director-General, it has been a long journey for Ms. Kalaiselvi. Having studied in a Tamil-medium school in the district, she had gone on to pursue her Ph.D. degree from Annamalai University in Chidambaram.

In February 2019, Ms. Kalaiselvi was appointed Director of the Karaikudi-based Central Electro Chemical Research Institute (CECRI). This is the first time a scientist from the CECRI has been appointed Director-General of the CSIR.

A scientist from the CECRI said Ms. Kalaiselvi was better known as "lithium battery expert" among the academics. She was instrumental in bringing out a number of research papers, has six patents to her credit and was a guide to research scholars in pursuing their Ph.D. degrees.

The CECRI will be celebrating its platinum jubilee in 2022 from where Ms. Kalaiselvi has been elevated to the top position in the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research as its Director-General, New Delhi, the scientist added.

(With inputs from

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