

Summary of the International Conference at the Department of Chemistry

The Department of Chemistry, St. Joseph's University (SJU), marked the commencement of its **Centennial Celebrations (2026)** by successfully organising **SMARTCHEM 2026**, a three-day **International Conference on Healthcare, Artificial Intelligence, Nanomaterials, and Sustainability**, held from **15–17 January 2026**. The conference brought together **250 participants from 27 academic, research, and industrial institutions** across India and abroad.

The conference was convened by **Dr Joyce D'Souza** with **Ms Christine Nigli** as Co-Convenor, and was held under the overall supervision of **Prof. Dr Ronald J. Mascarenhas**, Pro-Vice Chancellor, SJU. The inaugural address was delivered by **Rajnish Kumar**, who highlighted carbon sequestration in oceanic sediments and sustainable hydrogen storage solutions supporting India's **Net Zero 2070** vision.

SMARTCHEM 2026 featured **12 plenary lectures, 6 invited lectures, 3 panel discussions, 48 oral presentations, and 52 poster presentations**, reflecting the multidisciplinary nature of modern chemical sciences. Distinguished speakers addressed emerging areas such as **AI-driven chemical synthesis and materials design, green chemistry and circular economy, nanomaterials for healthcare applications, smart surfaces, sustainable energy systems, bioenergy, and AI-enabled drug discovery**.

A key strength of the conference was its strong **industry–academia engagement**, with active participation from industry leaders, including **Merck**. Panel discussions emphasised the role of Green AI, digital twins, toxicity prediction, personalised **medicine, and rapid translation of laboratory research to market-ready solutions**, while also highlighting the need for enhanced internships, collaborative research, and student exposure to real-world industrial challenges.

The conference also provided valuable networking opportunities through industry–student interactions, poster sessions, cultural programs, and focused discussions on sustainability-driven innovation.

Overall, **SMARTCHEM 2026** successfully established SJU as a vibrant multidisciplinary platform at the intersection of **chemistry, artificial intelligence, healthcare, and sustainability**, setting a strong foundation for its centennial year and reinforcing its commitment to socially relevant, future-ready scientific research.

For the Images of the Summary of the International Conference at the Department of Chemistry, kindly refer to the Photo Gallery: <https://sju.edu.in/gallery/133>