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Defence Establishment Explores Brain-Computer Interface Technology for Future Warfare

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The Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff (HQ IDS), in collaboration with the Centre for Joint Warfare Studies (CENJOWS), organised a national conference on “Brain-Computer Interface (BCI): Expanding Neural Frontiers & Its Strategic Implications” at the Manekshaw Centre, New Delhi. The conference was inaugurated by General Anil Chauhan.

Focus Areas of the Conference

The conference focused on the growing role of Brain-Computer Interface (BCI) technologies in:

Future warfare systems

Human-machine integration

Military decision-making

Cognitive enhancement

Indigenous defence innovation

The deliberations also examined ethical concerns, neuro-security challenges, and operational applications of BCI technologies in defence environments.

What is Brain-Computer Interface (BCI)?

Meaning of BCI

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Plot A P.127, AF block, 6 th street, 11th Main Rd, Shanthi Colony, Anna Nagar, Chennai, Tamil Nadu 600040

Phone: **044 4353 9988 / 98403 94477 / Whatsapp : 09710729833**

Brain-Computer Interface (BCI) is a technology that enables direct communication between the human brain and external devices by converting neural signals into digital commands.

Types of BCI:

Invasive BCI

Uses implanted electrodes inside the brain

Offers higher precision and signal quality

Non-Invasive BCI

Uses external devices such as EEG headsets

Safer and widely used for research and rehabilitation

Strategic Importance of BCI in Defence

Potential Military Applications

BCI technology can be used for:

Enhancing soldier performance

Faster command-and-control systems

Silent communication during operations

Drone and autonomous system control

Monitoring stress and fatigue levels

Rehabilitation of injured soldiers

Human-Machine Integration:

The conference highlighted the convergence of neuroscience and computational systems, where human cognition may increasingly integrate with advanced digital systems and Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Participation of Key Institutions:

Experts from several institutions participated in the conference, including:

Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)

Indian Institute of Technology Delhi

National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS)

Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC)

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Defence officials, start-ups, and industry representatives

Ten start-ups also showcased innovative BCI devices and technologies during the event.

Challenges Associated with BCI Technology:

The conference discussed major concerns such as:

Privacy of neural data

Cybersecurity threats to brain-linked systems

Ethical use of neurotechnology

Risks of cognitive manipulation

International humanitarian law implications

About Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff (HQ IDS):

HQ IDS supports integration among the three armed services and assists in joint military planning, coordination, and strategic policy-making. It functions under the Ministry of Defence.