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Home-grown technology for currency printing



• [T. Nandakumar](#)



The fluorescent material in a currency notes seen under ultraviolet light.

Bank Note Press in Madhya Pradesh approaches NIIST for inputs

The CSIR-National Institute for Interdisciplinary Science and Technology (NIIST) here is set to don the role of technology provider for the domestic security printing industry.

The institute is preparing to tap the industry demand for technology to support the indigenous manufacture of fluorescent ink and pigments used to print currency notes and other documents with security features. The Bank Note Press at Dewas in Madhya Pradesh, a unit of the Security Printing and Minting Corporation of India, has approached the NIIST for technology inputs.

Currently, India depends on China and other countries for the industry requirement for fluorescent materials used in security printing of bank notes, cheques, passports, stock certificates, and other high-value documents. Fluorescent inks contain materials that glow under ultraviolet light. They can be printed as a transparent feature or a visible design element on currency to prevent counterfeiting and forgery.

A team from Bank Note Press, Dewas, (BNPD) is scheduled to visit the NIIST later this month to hold discussions on technology support for indigenous manufacture of fluorescent ink under the Make in India programme. The NIIST holds a patent on a molecule that has potential application in security printing of bank notes. The BNPD prints bank notes of Rs.20, Rs.50, Rs.100, and Rs.500 denomination. It has its own security printing ink manufacturing unit to meet the requirements of currency printing units in India. "If the partnership materialises, it will be a major step leading to India's self reliance in materials for strategic applications," says A. Ajayaghosh, Director, NIIST. The institution has also received enquiries from a couple of firms in Bengaluru and Manipal for technology to manufacture fluorescent ink, dyes and pigments used in textiles, safety equipment and security applications.

"If the pact goes through, the NIIST may go in for reverse engineering after evaluating the molecules we have already isolated," Dr. Ajayaghosh said. "The industry partnership is expected to help us reorient our research activities towards a need-based approach". He said the manpower resources of the Chemical Sciences and Technology division at the NIIST would be augmented by appointing more scientists with expertise.

• **Requirement for cheques, passports, ID cards etc**

• **India now imports materials used in printing**

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