

IGNCA signed MoU with BSIP to mark India's Unified Platform for Science and Culture

PG Diploma Programmes Commence at IGNCA with Emphasis on Experiential Learning

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The Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), New Delhi, an autonomous trust under the Ministry of Culture, along with the Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeosciences (BSIP), Lucknow, an autonomous institute under the Department of Science and Technology, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) at IGNCA, New Delhi. On the occasion, an orientation programme for the eleven PG Diploma Courses conducted by the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts was also held. The Chief Guest for the event was Prof. Mahesh G. Thakkar, Director, BSIP. Dr. Sachchidanand Joshi, Member Secretary, IGNCA, along with Dean (Academics) Prof. Pratapanand Jha, Prof. Arun Bhardawaj, Incharge Academic Unit, and other heads and deans of the respective divisions were also present on the occasion.



The MoU represents the first initiative in India to integrate science and culture on a unified platform, with the aim of showcasing the nation's scientific and cultural achievements to both domestic and international audiences. On this occasion, an orientation programme was organised for the students of eleven PG Diploma courses conducted by IGNCA, spanning areas from Cultural Informatics to Indian Literature, with the objective of embedding traditional knowledge within contemporary education. These courses, designed to develop skilled professionals, provide practical training and hands-on experience, fostering a meaningful exchange between learners, experts, and living traditions.

The MoU was signed by Dr. Sachchidanand Joshi and Prof. Mahesh G. Thakkar. Dr. Achal Pandya, Head & Professor, Conservation Division, IGNCA and Dr. Shilpa Pandey, Senior Scientist, BSIP, will serve as nodal officers for the collaboration. The MoU between IGNCA and BSIP seeks to integrate science and culture through interdisciplinary research, joint events, and shared expertise. It focuses on digitisation, education, and supporting Project Mausam on climate change in maritime

history. Collaboration will cover research, documentation, conservation, museum development, fieldwork, audio-visual records, joint publications, and training in conservation and heritage management, along with public outreach. The initiative aims to preserve, interpret, and present India's heritage through innovative programmes, fostering awareness nationally and globally.



On this occasion, Prof. Mahesh G. Khattar said that the collaboration between the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) and BSIP is a significant effort to bring science, art, and culture together. Through this initiative, public awareness about the past, present, and future will increase, and the younger generation will be inspired. He stated that this initiative is not only about understanding our history and heritage but also represents an important step towards their preservation for the future. He further mentioned that it is a joint effort with IGNCA to bring science, art, and culture onto a single platform. This, he added, is precisely why the MoU is being signed today-so that in the future, more exhibitions, research, and publications can be undertaken, and people can be made aware of the past, present, and future of the Earth.

On this occasion, Dr. Sachchidanand Joshi described IGNCA as a ship, with only one-third visible above water while two-thirds remain hidden beneath, symbolizing the vast cultural repository still to be explored. After assuming charge in 2016, he identified the pressing need for skilled manpower and consequently launched three postgraduate diploma courses in 2017. These programmes have since expanded to eleven specialised, need-based courses, attracting a diverse range of participants-from enthusiastic youth to experienced elderlies. Education here is voluntary and passion-driven, making learning vibrant and practical. Dr. Joshi highlighted IGNCA's extensive activities-from the new Parliament building's artworks and the world's largest Ashtadhatu Nataraja statue at Bharat Mandapam to the India Pavilion at Osaka Expo and the ambitious 'Mera Gaon, Meri Dharohar' project mapping 650,000 villages' cultural heritage. He emphasized that opportunities at IGNCA are limitless and urged students to engage actively to become true cultural ambassadors.

Dr. Shilpa Pandey said that the MoU will renew focus on Indian culture, arts, and science, highlighting overlooked connections between science, culture, and society. The collaboration will create documentaries, articles, and awareness campaigns to promote the protection of endangered cultural traditions across India-from the Himalayas to Kanyakumari's coasts. Prof. Achal Pandya added that the alliance bridges past and future by combining scientific precision with cultural essence to share India's story globally. It is noteworthy that the contributions of Shri Pratapanand Jha, Director of Cultural Informatics, and Shri Ajit Kumar, Project Director of Project Mausam, were crucial in shaping the MoU and defining its objectives, ensuring that its scope effectively bridges the domains of science and culture.

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