

Largest ISL Digital Repository with 3,189 e-Videos and other initiative Launched at Sign Language Day 2025 Celebration

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Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre (ISLRTC), an autonomous institute under the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD), Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, launched the world's largest Indian Sign Language (ISL) digital repository with 3,189 e-content videos at the celebration of "Sign Language Day – 2025" held today at Bhim Hall, Dr. Ambedkar International Centre, New Delhi. The event, organized to mark the International Day of Sign Languages as declared by the United Nations, was graced by Dr. Virendra Kumar, Hon'ble Union Minister, who launched a series of landmark initiatives to strengthen ISL, promote inclusive education, and empower the Deaf community in the presence of Shri Ramdas Athawale, Hon'ble MoS, Shri B.L. Verma, Hon'ble MoS, Shri Rajesh Aggarwal, Secretary, DEPwD, and Ms. Manmeet Kaur Nanda, Additional Secretary, DEPwD.



Dr. Virendra Kumar, in his keynote address, emphasized that the right to use sign language is essential for ensuring equality and dignity of Deaf citizens, adding that "language rights are intrinsic to human rights." He reiterated the Government's unwavering commitment to inclusivity and accessibility for all Divyangjan, affirming that these initiatives will pave the way for education, skills, employment, and empowerment of the Deaf community. Shri Ramdas Athawale highlighted the Government's focus on accessibility and equal opportunities for the Deaf, while Shri B.L. Verma commended ISLRTC's efforts and called for stronger collaborations to realize the Prime Minister's vision of an "Inclusive India." Shri Rajesh Aggarwal stressed that ISL must be integrated across education and social inclusion, expressing the hope that every Deaf school would soon have a skilled Deaf teacher. Ms. Manmeet Kaur Nanda lauded the initiatives, underlining that sign language is a medium of dignity and empowerment.

The event commenced with the ceremonial lamp-lighting and a welcome address by Shri Kumar Raju, Director, ISLRTC, who highlighted the institution's achievements since its inception in 2015. Deaf students

of DTISL and DISLI courses showcased vibrant cultural performances including song interpretations, mime, and group dance, reflecting the richness of Deaf culture. Along with the digital repository, other key launches included the ISLRTC Bi-Annual Newsletter, Post Graduate Diploma Courses (PGDISLI & PGDTISL), a Six-Month Online ISL Training Programme, standardized Teaching-Learning Materials for DISLI & DTISL, 100 STEM Terms in ISL, an English Language Teaching Programme with TEACH, integration of ISL with the “Project Inclusion App,” and the release of 18 NBT Books in ISL.



Representatives of the National Association of the Deaf (NAD), All India Federation of the Deaf (AIFD), All India Foundation of Deaf Women (AIFDW), educators, researchers, students, and media representatives were also present in large numbers. Collaborating organization like TEACH Mumbai, NCERT, NBT, Aurobindo Societies, and CSIR were also participated. The event commenced with lighting of the ceremonial lamp followed by a welcome address by Shri Kumar Raju, Director, ISLRTC, who highlighted ISLRTC’s achievements since its inception in 2015. Deaf students of DTISL and DISLI courses presented patriotic and vibrant cultural performances, including song interpretation, mime, and group dance, showcasing the richness of Deaf culture. The programme was coordinated by Shri Harish Soni, Assistant Professor, ISLRTC, and co-coordinated by Ms. Sneha Tiwari, Master Trainer, ISLRTC along with the entire team of ISLRTC. The event concluded with a Vote of Thanks by Shri Sanjay Kumar, Deputy Director (Admin), ISLRTC. The winners of the 8th National Indian Sign Language Competition, 2025, held across 13 categories, were felicitated with trophies and certificates. Students from 30 Deaf schools and Teacher Training Institutes (TTIs) participated, showcasing their creativity and linguistic competence in ISL.

The celebration reaffirmed that sign language is not merely a medium of communication but a fundamental human right. With these initiatives, India has taken a decisive step towards building a truly inclusive and empowered society where no human rights can be realized without sign language rights.

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