

NIFT Emerges as Key Economic Driver for Textile Sector; India Moving Towards Indigenous Design Standard : Union Minister of Textiles, Shri Giriraj Singh

NIFT International Conference 2026 on “Design for Inclusive Futures” Opens at NIFT Mumbai

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The two-day NIFT International Conference 2026, titled “Design for Inclusive Futures”, successfully concluded on 22 January 2026 at the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), Mumbai campus. The two day international conference marks a significant milestone as it coincides with the completion of four decades of NIFT’s contributions to fashion education, design innovation, sustainability and industry engagement in the country. The day witnessed a plenary session addressed by Shri. Giriraj Singh, Union Minister of Textiles.



Addressing the gathering, the Union Minister stated that NIFT has emerged as a key economic driver for India’s textile and craft sectors, with each graduate supporting an estimated 8,000 to 10,000 jobs over their lifetime. He noted that India is moving away from reliance on foreign benchmarks and is developing its own standards through indigenous initiatives such as IndiaSize and VisionNxt, in line with the vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat by strengthening India-specific design forecasting and identity.



Highlighting the Government's continued support to the sector, the Minister referred to measures such as the reduction of GST on affordable clothing from 18 per cent to 5 per cent and the removal of trade barriers, including cotton import duties, which have contributed to industry growth. He further observed that NIFT's design expertise has expanded beyond fashion to sectors such as automobiles and logistics, underscoring the institute's growing relevance. Emphasising the role of NIFT alumni in realising Vision 2047, he encouraged them to build strong global networks and represent the "I AM NIFT" identity with pride at the global level.

The inaugural session was graced by Neelam Shami Rao, Secretary, Ministry of Textiles, Tanu Kashyap, Director General, NIFT, Prof. (Dr.) Noopur Anand, Dean, NIFT; Prof. (Dr.) Ajit Kumar Khare, Director, NIFT Mumbai; Prof. (Dr.) Sudha Dhingra, NIFT and Director, Centre of Excellence for Khadi; and Prof. (Dr.) Rupa Agarwal, Conference Chair.

The session saw the release of the book NIFT @40 "धरोहर", chronicling four decades of NIFT's journey, followed by the unveiling of the NIFT@41 logo and the inauguration of the Craft Bazaar by the Chief Guest.



Addressing the gathering, the Secretary, Ministry of Textiles highlighted the role of design in national development and appreciated NIFT's initiatives such as VisionNxt, IndiaSize, and curriculum restructuring. She underlined NIFT's contribution to the Prime Minister's 5F Vision—Farm to Fibre, Fibre to Factory, Factory to Fashion and Fashion to Foreign—and emphasised respect for artisans, ethical design practices, and the need for standardisation and documentation of traditional knowledge to shape inclusive and future-ready fashion.

The first day of the conference witnessed vibrant academic and industry engagement through parallel technical sessions conducted across four thematic tracks. A total of 23 peer-reviewed research papers were presented, reflecting a multidimensional discourse on inclusive design. A series of workshops further enriched the academic engagement, addressing key themes of accessibility, ethics, sustainability, and future-ready design practices. Running parallel throughout the day were curated exhibitions and craft bazaars.

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