



Union Minister of Textiles inaugurates IIHT SUTRA 2026, the first National Conclave of Indian Institutes of Handloom Technology

Three landmark MoUs signed to strengthen industry, research and academic partnerships for transforming handloom education

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The Office of the Development Commissioner (Handlooms), Ministry of Textiles, Government of India, today organised **IIHT SUTRA 2026 – The Inaugural National Conclave of the Indian Institutes of Handloom Technology** at Dr. Ambedkar International Centre, New Delhi.

Conceived as a first-of-its-kind national platform, IIHT SUTRA 2026 brought together policymakers, academia, industry leaders, research institutions, distinguished alumni and students to deliberate on the future of handloom education and its role in strengthening India's handloom ecosystem.

Organised under the theme "**IIHTs: Weaving the Future of the Indian Handloom Sector – Educate. Innovate. Transform.**", the conclave marked a significant step towards repositioning the Indian Institutes of Handloom Technology (IIHTs) as centres of excellence for technical education, research, innovation, entrepreneurship and industry collaboration.

The conclave was inaugurated by **Shri Giriraj Singh, Union Minister of Textiles**, in the presence of **Smt. Neelam Shami Rao, Secretary, Textiles**, **Dr. Beena M., Development Commissioner (Handlooms)** and other distinguished dignitaries representing Government, industry, academia and the handloom sector.



Addressing the gathering, **Union Minister for Textiles Shri. Giriraj Singh**, emphasised that India's handloom sector is one of the finest expressions of the country's cultural heritage while also serving as an important source of livelihoods, women's empowerment, exports and sustainable economic development. He observed that preserving India's handloom traditions must go hand in hand with technological

advancement, innovation, entrepreneurship and research. He underscored the important role of the IIHTs in developing skilled technocrats capable of supporting productivity enhancement, design innovation, technology upgradation and the long-term competitiveness of the handloom sector.



The Minister highlighted that the six Central IIHTs and five State IIHTs have, over the past seven decades, produced generations of skilled professionals who today contribute significantly to industry, entrepreneurship, exports, research and public institutions. He also noted the recent expansion of B.Tech programmes, strengthening of research initiatives, modernisation of laboratories and infrastructure, student support measures and international training programmes undertaken by the IIHTs.

In her address, **Smt. Neelam Shami Rao, Secretary, Ministry of Textiles**, emphasised the need to continuously modernise handloom education by aligning curricula with emerging technologies, strengthening industry partnerships, promoting applied research and encouraging innovation-led learning. She observed that IIHTs must evolve as institutions capable of preparing graduates not only for employment but also for entrepreneurship, leadership and research in the textile and handloom sectors.

Welcoming the participants, **Dr. Beena M., IAS, Development Commissioner (Handlooms)** described IIHT SUTRA as a long-term institutional initiative of the Ministry of Textiles aimed at creating a collaborative national platform for the Indian Institutes of Handloom Technology. She stated that the initiative seeks to strengthen partnerships among Government, industry, academia, research institutions and alumni while enabling IIHTs to emerge as future-ready institutions supporting innovation, sustainability, entrepreneurship and technological advancement in the handloom sector.

A major highlight of the inaugural session was the exchange of **three strategic Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs)** designed to strengthen institutional collaboration across complementary domains:

- **Grasim Industries Limited** – Industry Partnership for curriculum enrichment, internships, industry exposure, skill development and collaborative initiatives.
- **Northern India Textile Research Association (NITRA)** – Research and Technology Partnership for collaborative research, testing, innovation, technical support and capacity building.
- **Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Sambalpur** – Academic and Management Partnership for leadership development, entrepreneurship, innovation, faculty development and institutional

capacity building.

These partnerships are expected to provide a structured framework for closer engagement between IIHTs and leading institutions from industry, research and management education, thereby enhancing the quality and relevance of technical education in the handloom sector.





During the programme, meritorious students from the IIHTs were honoured with **Gold Medals and Rank Certificates** in recognition of their outstanding academic performance. The Ministry also released **"Handloom Change Makers"**, a publication celebrating the achievements of distinguished IIHT alumni who have made notable contributions across industry, entrepreneurship, exports, research and public service.





The Union Minister also launched the Ministry's film on IIHTs titled **"Weaving India's Handloom Future"**, presenting the journey, achievements and future vision of the Indian Institutes of Handloom Technology. The film highlights the contribution of IIHTs in developing skilled professionals and supporting the transformation of India's handloom sector.

The conclave also featured an exhibition showcasing student innovations, institutional achievements, live demonstrations, research initiatives and emerging technologies adopted by the IIHTs. Participants had the opportunity to interact with students, faculty members and alumni while experiencing the technological and educational capabilities of the institutes.

The post-lunch technical session included a panel discussion on **"Strengthening Handloom Education through Industry–Academia Collaboration: Curriculum, Skills and Future Readiness."** Eminent representatives from industry, academia, research institutions and distinguished alumni deliberated on curriculum reforms, industry partnerships, applied research, entrepreneurship, emerging technologies, skill development and institutional collaboration required to prepare the next generation of professionals for the evolving textile and handloom sector.



IIHT SUTRA 2026 represents a significant step towards strengthening the Indian Institutes of Handloom Technology through strategic partnerships, innovation, research and academic excellence, while preparing future-ready professionals for the evolving needs of the Indian handloom sector.

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