



# IISER KOLKATA

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## NEWSLETTER

Indian Institute of Science Education and Research Kolkata (IISERK) is an Institute of National Importance established as an autonomous institute for higher education by the then Ministry of Human Resource Development (now Ministry of Education), Government of India, to promote high-quality education and research in basic sciences.

### IISER Kolkata Celebrates International Women's Day



Dr. Rashmi Sharma, Head, NCSTC & SHRI Division, @IndiaDST, delivered an International Women's Day Talk on "India's Transition from Women's Development to Women-Led Development", on 9th March, 2026.

### Quantum Mission Grant

Our institute has secured its first Quantum Mission grant under the "Quantum Algorithms" theme, in collaboration with IISER Pune, AFMC Pune, IIT Kanpur, IIT Kharagpur, and IIT Tirupati. IISER Pune, which hosts the I-HUB Quantum Technology Foundation (I-HUB QTF), a Section 8 company funded by the Department of Science and Technology (DST), is leading this project. Professor Sourin Das is leading this effort from IISER Kolkata. The grant is awarded for an initial period of three years, extendable by another three years based on progress.



### Faculty Members Achievements

Prof. Alakesh Bisai has been selected as the recipient of the prestigious Professor C. N. R. Rao National Prize for Chemical Sciences for the year 2026. This distinguished recognition is a testament to his outstanding contributions to chemical sciences and his sustained excellence in research. As part of this honor, Prof. Bisai has been invited to deliver the C. N. R. Rao National Prize Lecture at the 37th CRSI National Symposium in Chemistry (CRSI-NSC-37), which will be held at the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science (IACS), Kolkata, during July 02–04, 2026. This achievement brings great pride to the Department of Chemical Sciences and to IISER Kolkata as a whole. It reflects the vibrant research environment and the high standards of scientific excellence that our Institute continues to foster.



The proposal of Prof. Alakesh Bisai on 'Natural Products as Inspiration for New Discoveries in Chemical Sciences', is accepted by the ACS Division of Organic Chemistry and will be hosted as part of the ACS Fall 2026 Digital Meeting.



Prof. Sanyal was invited to IMPRESS (acronym for 'Inspiring the Minds of Post-Graduates for Research in Earth and Space Sciences') to deliver a talk on 20 Feb, at Indian Institute of Geomagnetism, Navi Mumbai.



We are glad to share that Dr. Kripabandhu Ghosh of Department of Computational and Data Sciences has been inducted as a Section Editor for NLP and Text Processing to the Journal Artificial Intelligence and Law, Springer (Q1), a reputed journal in the domain. In this role, Dr. Ghosh will endeavour to contribute to the Journal by ensuring the timely and rigorous evaluation of research articles submitted to the journal. This way, he hopes to serve the international AI and Law community better.

Dr. Sreeramaiah N. Gangappa and his team at Department of Biological Sciences, IISER Kolkata, identify molecular switch that helps plants sense heat.

The research was conducted at IISER Kolkata in collaboration with Prof. Mukesh Jain of the School of Computational and Integrative Sciences at JNU, New Delhi.

The project received funding support from the Anusandhan National Research Foundation and the Department of Biotechnology, Government of India.



The collaborative project entitled "AI-Guided Engineering of DNA Aptamers Against Dengue Virus NS5 Protein" lead by Dr. Susmita Roy, Associate Professor, DCS IISER Kolkata has been approved under the DBT-BIRAC Joint Call for Proposals on Bio-AI. The team from IISER Kolkata, consisting of Dr. Susmita Roy as PI, and Prof. Arabinda Chaudhuri and Dr. Sumit Sen Santara as Co-PIs, submitted this proposal in collaboration with distinguished Co-PIs from IICB, IIT Kharagpur, AIIMS Kalyani, and IACS. Following a rigorous six-round screening process, the proposal has been recommended for financial support of Rs. 10.84 Crores for a two-year period.

## Students Achievements

We are glad to share that Mr. Monosij Nandy, PMRF Research Scholar under the supervision of Prof. Alakesh Bisai, Dept. of Chemical Sciences, has received the Best Poster Presentation Award in the broad area of "Chemistry" at the PMRF Annual Symposium 2026, held at IIT Guwahati during 6–7 March 2026.

Around 250 PMRF fellows participated in the symposium across 10 broad research areas, and one Best Poster Award was selected in each area. Mr. Monosij Nandy was awarded for his work on the total synthesis of staphacidins.



Jayant Karwadiya, Ph.D. student from the Department of Earth Science received the Best Oral Presentation Award at the 2nd International Conference on Recent Trends & Advances in Water Science, Remote Sensing, and Climate Change: Sustainable Environmental Management (WSRSCC), held from 5-7th Feb, 2026, at IIT Jammu.



Abhishek Biswas, Ph.D. student from the Department of Earth Science received the Best Poster Award (1st Prize, Rs 20000) at Greenshift 2026: National Conference on Innovative Design for Sustainability and Microplastic Mitigation, held from 30-31th Jan 2026, at IIT Kharagpur.

## Alumni Accolades



We are delighted to share that Dr. Shibani Mohata, who completed her PhD under the supervision of Prof. Rahul Banerjee in the Department of Chemical Sciences, has been awarded the prestigious Humboldt Research Fellowship for Postdoctoral Researchers. This remarkable achievement reflects her dedication to research excellence and brings great pride to the institute. We extend our heartfelt congratulations to Dr. Mohata and wish her continued success in her academic and research journey.

Dr. Neha Sharma has joined the highly prestigious Nanjing Institute of Geology and Palaeontology (NIGPAS) under the Chinese Academy of Sciences as a Postdoctoral Fellow. At NIGPAS, she will be associated with the State Key Laboratory of Palaeobiology and Stratigraphy, a globally recognized centre that plays a pivotal role in advancing cutting-edge research in paleobiology and deep-time evolutionary studies.



Dr. Aniket Choudhary has been awarded the most prestigious and competitive Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowship to work at Imperial College London (Ranked 2nd in the world in the QS World University Rankings 2026). He completed Ph.D. in 2025 from the Environmental Nanoscience Laboratory, Department of Earth Sciences.



We are incredibly proud to share that our 2017 BS-MS alumnus, Dr. Ashwani Kumar, has joined the Centre for Nanotechnology at IIT Roorkee as an Assistant Professor (Grade-I).

Dr. Kumar's journey since graduating has been nothing short of inspiring:  
PhD (2022): Sungkyunkwan University (Natural Science Suwon Campus), Republic of Korea.

Postdoctoral Research: Two postdocs at Max-Planck-Institut für Kohlenforschung, Germany as MPI-KOFO Fellow and Alexander von Humboldt Postdoctoral Research Fellow, respectively. Max-Planck-Institut für Kohlenforschung, Germany.

It is a joy to see our alumni returning to India's premier institutions to lead the next generation of researchers.



Dr. Sambit Ghosh, who completed his Ph.D. with Prof Prasanta Sanyal, has joined the Department of Geology and Geophysics at IIT Kharagpur as an Assistant Professor.

### A Year of Innovation for IISER Kolkata:

21 Patents Granted and 31 Research Projects Sanctioned in FY 2025–26

## Department of Mathematics & Statistics (DMS) Day, 2026



On January 30–31, 2026, the Department of Mathematics and Statistics (DMS) at IISER Kolkata organized DMS Day 2026, featuring the DMS Symposium 2026. The two-day event brought together students, research scholars, alumni, and faculty members to celebrate academic achievements and foster discussions across diverse areas of mathematics and statistics. The program included alumni lectures, plenary talks, student presentations, poster sessions, and cultural activities.

The symposium commenced on January 30, 2026, with registration followed by two engaging alumni lectures. Dr. Nil Kamal Hazra, Associate Professor, Department of Mathematics, IIT Jodhpur delivered the first lecture titled “On Generalized Likelihood Estimation Based on the Logarithmic Norm Relative Entropy,” presenting insights into statistical inference and information-theoretic approaches. The second alumni lecture was delivered by Dr. Raghvendra Singh Rohit, Assistant Professor, Department of Computer Science and Engineering, IIT Roorkee who spoke on “Cryptographic Competitions — An Interplay Between Academia, Government and Industry,” highlighting the collaborative ecosystem that drives modern developments in cryptography. The afternoon continued with a poster presentation session, where students showcased their understanding of research work and interacted with participants and faculty members. The first day concluded with a cultural program, followed by dinner, providing a relaxed setting for informal interactions within the DMS community.

The second day of the symposium, January 31, 2026, began with an address by the (Acting) Director and the Head of the Department, setting the tone for a day filled with scientific discussions.

The morning session featured Plenary Lecture I by Professor Mainak Poddar, Department of Mathematics, IISER Pune titled “Bundles Over Toric Deligne–Mumford Stacks,” which explored advanced concepts in algebraic geometry. This was followed by a series of talks by students and visiting scholars. Ahan Nandi (BSMS student) presented a talk on Differential Inclusions, while Dr. Sandip Samanta, a visiting scholar, spoke on Fibre Bundles and Classifying Spaces. Another BSMS student, Sagnik Das, delivered a presentation titled “Beyond Fourier: Unmasking Signals with Wavelets,” highlighting modern techniques in signal analysis.

The afternoon session continued with research presentations by graduate students. Choudary Ashwini Nandlal (MP student) presented a talk titled “Counting Handles: A Guide to Surface Coverings,” followed by Habibur Rahaman (PhD student) who discussed “Diophantine Approximation with Piatetski-Shapiro Primes.” The event concluded with Plenary Lecture II by Professor Parthanil Roy, Department of Mathematics, IIT Bombay titled “Phase Transition for Elephant Random Walks with Two Memory Channels,” which addressed fascinating developments in probability theory and stochastic processes.

Throughout the symposium, poster sessions, tea breaks, and informal discussions created opportunities for participants to exchange ideas and build collaborations. DMS Day 2026 successfully brought together researchers and students across different academic levels, encouraging scholarly interaction and promoting enthusiasm for mathematical research within the IISER Kolkata community.

## Ugadi 2026 Feast Celebration



On 19th March 2026, the Telugu-Kannada community marked the occasion of Ugadi by distributing Ugadi pachadi, embracing the various flavours of life and warmly welcoming the Telugu New Year.

On 27th March 2026, we celebrated Ugadi with a grand feast attended by over 600 people in our institution. The event brought together students, faculty, and staff, creating a vibrant and festive atmosphere to mark the Telugu New Year.

A thoughtfully curated menu of 16 traditional dishes was served, featuring highlights such as pulihora, mamidikaya pappu, bisibele bath, poornam burelu, pineapple kesari bath. The spread also included a variety of accompaniments, sweets, and savories, offering a rich and authentic culinary experience.

The successful organization of the large-scale event reflected excellent teamwork, with volunteers and staff. The celebration not only honored tradition but also strengthened the sense of community within the institute.

## Opening of the Open Gym Facility



As we believe that academic and professional excellence start with physical health, we are thrilled to announce the opening of the Open Gym Facility, inaugurated by Prof. Sunil Kumar Khare, Director of IISER Kolkata.

Our new space is designed to help the IISER Kolkata fraternity de-stress, recharge, and maintain a healthy lifestyle right here on campus.

## Chitrakavyam 2026

Chitrakavyam 2026 was a vibrant celebration of creativity and artistic expression, held from 28th to 31st March at the R. N. Tagore Auditorium. With enthusiastic participation from students across all batches, as well as professors and faculty members, the exhibition showcased a diverse range of works including paintings, sketches, digital art, sculptures, and handcrafted pieces.

Alongside the exhibition, several students set up stalls featuring handmade crafts, prints, and accessories, creating a lively and interactive environment. One of the key highlights of the event was the auction, which generated significant engagement and appreciation for student creations. The event witnessed substantial footfall, reflecting the strong enthusiasm for art within the IISER Kolkata community.

Overall, Chitrakavyam 2026 provided a valuable platform for artists to showcase their talent, encouraged creative expression, and fostered a deeper connection with art across the campus.



## Distinguished Academic Visitors to Department of Chemical Sciences



Prof J. K. Bera, recipient of the NASI Dr. S. K. Joshi Memorial Lecture award has visited DCS IISER Kolkata on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2026. He has delivered a truly thought-provoking lecture under the "Distinguished Lecture Series" of NASI entitled "Metal footprint". He has interacted with masters and PhD students and faculty members. The occasion also provided a wonderful opportunity to reconnect with NASI Fellows at IISER Kolkata.



Prof. Bhisma K. Patel, a distinguished synthetic chemist from IIT Guwahati have visited DCS, IISER Kolkata on 9 March 2026. He interacted with BS-MS students, MSc Chemistry students, MSc Sustainability students, PhD students, post-doctorate researchers and faculty members. He has delivered an excellent DCS seminar on recent synthetic organic chemistry from his laboratory.



The Novartis-India site head Dr. Atul Tiwari accompanied by Dr. Saumya Roy visited DCS, IISER Kolkata on the 16th of March 2026. They interacted with Masters, PhD students and faculty members associated with research in medicinal chemistry, biology, drug discovery, protein sciences, mathematical modelling, Computational biology, AI computational sciences and translational biology. Dr Atul Tiwari also delivered a talk entitled "Biomedical Research at Novartis-Reimagining Medicines". There were 55 participants comprising of BS-MS students, MSc Chemistry students, MSc Sustainability students, PhD students, post-doctorate researchers, Ramanujan faculty fellow, Inspire faculty fellows, faculty and staff members.

## Welcoming New Faculty Members to Our Academic Community



Dr. Subila Kurukkal Balakrishnan has joined Department of Chemical Sciences IISER Kolkata as an Assistant Professor of inorganic chemistry on 19 March 2026. Her research interest includes defect tolerant materials towards energy applications, semiconductor photo-physics, photocatalysis, and photovoltaics.



Dr. Ritambhara Gond has joined Department of Chemical Sciences IISER Kolkata as an Assistant Professor of inorganic chemistry on 23 March 2026. Her research interest includes battery science, mainly sodium-ion batteries and other energy harvesting materials.

## Seminars and Colloquia

[DPS Group Seminar] Akash Kumar Saha (Centre for High Energy Physics (CHEP), IISc) -- Searching for dark matter with gamma rays and neutron stars, Date: Monday, Mar 02, 2026.

[DCS Visitors Seminar] Prof. Bhisma K. Patel (IIT Guwahati) -- TBA, Date: Monday, Mar 09, 2026.

[DMS Seminar] Venkata Karthik Timmavajjula (Alumnus, IISER Kolkata) -- Noncommutative Riemannian geometry on the symmetric group  $S_3$ , Date: Wednesday, Mar 11, 2026.

[DBS seminar] Dr. Som Dev, Assistant Professor at AIIMS Kalyani (AIIMS Kalyani) -- Myeloid ATP7B-maintained copper stores are required for functional maturation of neutrophils, Date: Wednesday, Mar 11, 2026.

[DPS Group Seminar] Dr. Sai Chaitanya Tadepalli (Indiana University, USA) -- Hidden Degrees of Freedom: Isocurvature in Cosmological Inference, Date: Monday, Mar 16, 2026.

[DPS Seminar] Prof. Shankaranarayanan S (IIT Bombay) -- The Dark Sector and the Memory of the Universe: New Probes for Cosmological Tensions, Date: Tuesday, Mar 17, 2026.

[DPS Seminar] Prof. Vaibhav Madhok (IIT Madras) -- Quantum Signatures of Chaos, Date: Wednesday, Mar 18, 2026.

[DPS Seminar] Dr. Tanmoy Biswas (Los Alamos National Laboratory, USA) -- Catalytic Advantage in Otto-like Two-Stroke Quantum Engines, Date: Tuesday, Mar 24, 2026.

[DPS Seminar] Prof. Sudip Bhattacharyya (TIFR) -- XSat: A proposed large area X-ray astronomy space mission Date: Wednesday, Mar 25, 2026.

[DBS Seminar] Anshuman Das (Project Associate, DBS, IISER Kolkata) -- Integrating Secretion and Metabolic Sensing for Lignocellulosic Biomass Bioprocessing, Date: Wednesday, Mar 25, 2026.

[DPS Seminar] Dr. Tamaghna Hazra (Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, Germany) -- Obstructed Cooper pairs in flat band systems - weakly-coherent superfluids and exact spin liquids, Date: Monday, Mar 30, 2026.



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