

# VAISHALI FESTIVAL OF DEMOCRACY



The first of its kind Vaishali Festival of Democracy was held on Friday, 15 September 2023 at Nalanda University, Rajgir in Bihar. This event was jointly organized by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), and Nalanda University, celebrating the International Day of Democracy.

The Vaishali Festival of Democracy witnessed the presence of several esteemed dignitaries which signified its importance. President, ICCR, Dr. Vinay Sahasrabuddhe in his inaugural address emphasized the essence of democracy, while hon'ble former President Shri Ram Nath Kovind highlighted India's enduring cultural and political ideals in his keynote address. He said, "Bharat, that is India, has maintained a continuity of cultural and political ideals, providing strength and resilience throughout countless centuries." Similarly, hon'ble Chief Minister of Assam, Shri Himant Biswa Sarma underscored the inclusive nature of Indian democracy, and Minister of State for External Affairs and Culture, Smt. Meenakshi Lekhi emphasized its intrinsic connection to India's DNA.



Another highlight of the festival was the book release ceremony of 'India: Mainspring of Democratic Traditions,' edited by Dr. Priyadarshi Dutta and Dr. Shantishree Pandit, Vice Chancellor, Jawaharlal Nehru University. In her address, she said that this book is an ensemble of scholarly contributions highlighting democratic values, their historical contexts, and their modern-day application.

A significant component of the Vaishali Festival of Democracy was panel discussions. The first panel focused on the 'Culture of Democracy And the second on the topic 'Implementation of Democracy'. The esteemed panelists included the Director General, ICCR, Shri Kumar Tuhin, Ambassador of the Argentine Republic, H.E. Mr. Hugo Javier Gobbi, Ambassador of Chile, H.E. Mr. Juan Rolando Angulo Monsalve, Ambassador of Egypt, Mr. Wael Mohamed Awad Hamed, Ambassador of Nepal, H.E. Dr. Shankar Prasad Sharma, and High Commissioner of Sri Lanka, H.E. Mr. Milinda Moragoda. Their insights and contributions enriched the discussions, shedding light on the underpinnings of democratic values.

