

## Event Report: World Tourism Day Celebration 2024

The School of Vocational Studies (SVS) hosted an inspiring and action-packed celebration of World Tourism Day 2024 on 27th September, highlighting the vital role of tourism in fostering global peace and unity. The theme for this year's World Tourism Day, as declared by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), was "Tourism and Peace", which guided the series of events, including academic discussions, competitions, and cultural performances.

The event commenced with the Lighting of the Lamp—a symbolic gesture of dispelling ignorance and ushering in knowledge and enlightenment. This auspicious beginning brought together the event's esteemed guests and dignitaries, as well as students and faculty members.



Following this, Prof. Sitanshu S. Jena, Dean of the School of Vocational Studies, formally welcomed the attendees with a Welcome Address. Prof. Jena set the tone for the day by emphasizing how tourism is more than just leisure and travel. He highlighted tourism's potential to foster cross-cultural connections, create jobs, promote sustainable development, and contribute to peacebuilding efforts globally. He also outlined how SVS has played a significant role in vocational education related to tourism and hospitality.



The keynote address was delivered by Shri Vinod Zutshi, former Secretary of the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, and a leading figure in India's tourism sector. In his address, Shri Zutshi discussed the global impact of tourism, noting how the industry contributes significantly to socio-economic development and international understanding. He outlined tourism's power to bridge divides between nations, enhance cultural exchange, and facilitate peace. He also touched upon the challenges the sector faces, especially in the post-pandemic world, and emphasized the importance of responsible and sustainable tourism practices.



The event then featured a Special Address by Prof. Satyaketu Sankrit, Dean of Academic Affairs and SoL. Prof. Sankrit provided an academic perspective on tourism, focusing on its socio-cultural, economic, and environmental impacts. He stressed the need for students to view tourism not only as a vocational opportunity but as an essential field that contributes to a country's soft power and global standing. Prof. Sankrit also touched on the sustainability aspect of tourism, urging the audience to adopt practices that ensure long-term benefits for both tourists and local communities.





An essential segment of the day was the Prize Distribution Ceremony, where the winners of the competitions held on the eve of World Tourism Day (26th September) were honoured. The competitions, designed to encourage creative exploration of the tourism theme, included:

**Poster Making Competition:** Participants created visually compelling posters highlighting tourism's role in promoting peace and cultural exchange. The winners stood out for their artistic interpretations of the theme.

**Poetry/Shayari Competition:** This competition invited poetic reflections on tourism and its significance. Students showcased their creative writing talents, offering heartfelt and thoughtful expressions of how travel connects hearts and minds.

**Photography Competition:** The photography contest was a visual feast, with participants submitting photographs that captured the beauty and cultural diversity of tourism destinations. The winning entries were celebrated for their technical expertise and storytelling ability through the lens.



The prizes were distributed by the distinguished guests, including Shri Vinod Zutshi, Prof. Sitanshu S. Jena, and Prof. Satyaketu Sankrit. The winners were applauded for their innovative perspectives and contributions to the celebration of tourism through their artistic talents. The inaugural event ended with a Vote of Thanks, delivered by the Mr. Akha Mao, Associate Professor and Deputy Dean of SVS expressing gratitude to all the participants, faculty members, distinguished guests, and students who made the event a grand success.

Following the Vote of thanks, the event featured a thought-provoking Symposium on the theme "Tourism as a Social Phenomenon: A Reflection". The symposium saw insightful discussions from three distinguished speakers:

Dr. G.G. Saxena, Former MD & CEO, Department of Tourism, NCT Delhi, spoke about the historical and cultural aspects of tourism, focusing on how travel has evolved from a luxury for the elite to a global social phenomenon. He discussed how tourism fosters social bonds, promotes understanding between different cultures, and drives economic growth.

Dr. Sunita Badhwar, Former Vice President- Standards, THSC, addressed the ethical and responsible aspects of tourism. She emphasized the need for sustainable tourism practices that respect local cultures, environments, and communities, ensuring that tourism is a force for good rather than a source of exploitation or environmental degradation.

Mr. Prashant Sharma, Head of Hospitality, FFPL Gurugram, highlighted the economic benefits of tourism and its potential to bring peace to conflict-affected areas by promoting dialogue and cooperation. He also amused the audience with his drum performance towards the end of the panel discussion.

The symposium generated valuable discussions among students and faculty, inspiring future research and initiatives in the tourism sector.



The day concluded with a vibrant Cultural Program, which served as a celebration of India's rich cultural diversity and how tourism enables the sharing of cultural heritage. The performances were a reflection of the theme "Tourism and Peace", showing how dance, music, and theater can unite people across borders. Highlights of the cultural program included:

**North-East Folk Dance:** A captivating performance that showcased the rich and diverse traditions of the North-East region of India, highlighting the colourful and vibrant aspects of its culture.

**Kathak Performance:** A classical dance performance mesmerized the audience with its intricate footwork and graceful movements.

**Bhangra Dance:** A lively and energetic dance representing the joyous spirit of Punjab, which enthralled the audience with its exuberance and rhythmic beats.

**Fashion Parade:** The students of SVS walked the ramp representing the cultural heritage of India through vibrant dresses of different states.

**Tableau Play:** The cultural program concluded with a tableau play performed by SVS students, which creatively represented this year's UNWTO theme—"Tourism and Peace." The play reflected on how tourism can act as a bridge between diverse cultures and contribute to a harmonious global society.





The World Tourism Day 2024 celebrations at the School of Vocational Studies were a resounding success, offering a perfect blend of academic, cultural, and creative activities. The event emphasized the power of tourism as a tool for peace and understanding, and it inspired the attendees to reflect on the role they can play in promoting responsible and sustainable tourism practices. Through insightful speeches, engaging competitions, and cultural performances, the event celebrated the spirit of travel as a force for global harmony.

