

IISc prof delivers Science Day lecture at NITK

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NITK Surathkal celebrated National Science Day with great enthusiasm, inspiring young minds through lectures, exhibitions, and interactive sessions. Prof. Maria Thaker, Professor at the Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore, delivered the keynote address. Prof. Thaker posed the thought-provoking question: Do animals create maps to navigate forests and savanna landscapes?

Drawing from her extensive field research in South Africa and India, Prof. Thaker explained how scientists study the movement of large animals like elephants using GPS collars, radio tracking, satellite data, and temperature sensors. Prof. Thaker also shared insights into her team's ongoing seven-year project mapping mesocarnivores in the Deccan Plateau savanna to better understand predator movement and ecosystem balance. Students from 21 schools across DK and Udupi districts asked questions ranging from animal empathy to the challenges of working in the wild.

NITK Director, Prof. B. Ravi, in his inaugural address, highlighted that curiosity and creativity form the foundation of scientific progress. He spoke about the role of science in building a Viksit Bharat, noting that science provides the basis for engineering, engineering drives technology, and technology enables solutions to humanity's

challenges. He also addressed the growing influence of Artificial Intelligence in education and emphasised NITK's contribution to the Virtual Labs initiative, which allows students across the world to conduct laboratory experiments in an online environment. Over 30 live experiments by research scholars and Master's students were showcased.