

**India Science Media Fellowships: A joint venture of the Wellcome Trust/DBT India Alliance and Nature India to strengthen science journalism in India**

*The India Science Media Fellowship aims to strengthen science journalism in the country and help establish science as a distinct genre of journalism. This fellowship will enable science writers and journalists to explore science and the craft of journalism in depth and to write nuanced science stories.*

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The **Wellcome Trust/DBT India Alliance** (henceforth, India Alliance), a public charity enabling biomedical research in India through funding and engagement, in collaboration with *Nature India*, an India-focused online publication of Nature Research, launched **India Science Media Fellowship** (ISMF) today that aims to strengthen science journalism in the country. The fellowship will provide a grant of INR 100,000 to five grantees selected through a nation-wide call for applications.

Prof K. VijayRaghavan, Principal Scientific Advisor to the Government of India, formally launched the fellowship and opened the ‘call for application’ today in a gathering of eminent science journalists and scientists at Avni Hall, Ministry of Earth Sciences, Lodhi Road, New Delhi. In his keynote address, *he emphasized that science needs to have a connect with science, and science journalists can play a significant role in achieving this by exciting the society about science, analysing science-related issues, and building in-depth, high quality literature with science focus.*

Prof. L. S. Shashidhara, Distinguished Visiting Professor, Ashoka University and IISER Pune; Vibha Varshney, Associate Editor, Down To Earth; Subhra Priyadarshini, Chief Editor, Nature India; and Joydeep Gupta, Director, The Third Pole deliberated on the dynamics of the spread and depth of science in mainstream media in a panel discussion: Science in the Indian media: The unfinished agenda. The panel also recognized the often highlighted low levels of interest evinced by publishers, the demand for information on science and technology developments, and returns through science reporting as a career as challenges that need concerted action. ISMF is an impetus in this direction.

ISMF, through financial and professional support, will empower a group of selected Indian journalists to explore and report on life sciences with a focus on biomedicine, application-based or basic biological research, and health. The fellowship will help fellows produce stories with sound science, nuanced perspective, and valuable context. An overarching aim of this fellowship is to enhance public understanding of and appreciation of science and health research thus leading to improved discussion and engagement in related policy issues.

Subhra Priyadarshini, Chief Editor of *Nature India*, said that *for media houses, these fellowships are an opportunity to build capacity in science reporting by creating a strong corps of science-engaged journalists who are either reporting on science already or have an inclination for science reportage. For scientists, it will offer a wonderful chance to build confidence and willingness to engage with the media, address issues of mistrust or misrepresentation, flag pseudoscience, and support journalists in accessing new scientific information. Through the fellowship, we would offer skill training and mentorship to write nuanced science stories and orient Indian media houses towards recognising science as a separate beat of journalism.*

*‘The theme for this year's National Science Day is ‘Science for the People, and People for the Science’. To benefit people, science and evidence should drive policy. To engage people, science should be reported accurately, simply, and in an interesting way. For both, media plays a crucial role through advocacy and generation of public interest. Only a meaningful partnership between journalists and scientists can achieve this. India Alliance aims to achieve that through the Indian Science Media Fellowship, which we launch today on the eve of National Science Day. We thank*

*Nature India for partnering with us in this initiative of building capacity of science journalism in India,*’ said Dr Shahid Jameel, CEO, India Alliance.

The selected media fellows will participate in a two-day orientation workshop in New Delhi. This workshop will provide the fellows a platform to discuss the nuances of impactful reportage with mentors from the fields of both science and communication. In addition, there will be an expert coordinator to facilitate the media fellowship programme. The fellowship will allow the fellows to publish their stories using the channels of their respective media house; India Alliance and *Nature India* will cross-post the stories on their individual websites for wider audience intake.

For further information and to apply for the fellowship, please visit ([www.indiaalliance.org](http://www.indiaalliance.org)) or write to [ISMfellows@gmail.com](mailto:ISMfellows@gmail.com) with queries.

### **About the Wellcome Trust/DBT India Alliance**

**The Wellcome Trust/DBT India Alliance**—an equal partnership between the Department of Biotechnology, Government of India and the Wellcome Trust, United Kingdom— aims to build a strong biomedical research ecosystem in India that nurtures scientific talent and drives innovations to tackle health challenges. With a fellowship program that supports basic biomedical, clinical, and public health researchers at different career stages, India Alliance empowers researchers through funding and engagement to compete internationally. The goal of bridging the competency gap in Indian research ecosystem drives India Alliance to design interventions that result in building capacity, fostering collaborations, and streamlining research management processes. India Alliance stands for diversity, inclusivity, and transparency in science and works to facilitate engagement of science with society.

For more information, please visit [www.indiaalliance.org](http://www.indiaalliance.org) and follow us on Twitter (@India\_Alliance) and Facebook (@IndiaAlliance)

### **About Nature India**

**Nature India** ([www.natureasia.com/en/nindia](http://www.natureasia.com/en/nindia)) is an online publication in the Nature Research portfolio, published by Springer Nature, which highlights scientific research from India. It is designed as a one-stop portal for science news and information on the latest scientific and medical research in India. The website was launched in February 2008 to provide better information about the rapidly developing science and research scene in India. *Nature India* aims to give scientists and science professionals an insight into the latest research from the world’s largest democracy. *Nature India* also has a strong outreach programme for the scientific community in India, delivering skill development and science writing workshops, conference proceedings, and special issues from time to time.

### **About Springer Nature**

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